Alright, back to where we left off in Hebrews chapter 3. We finished down through verse 12, but there is more that I want to share with you in that verse this afternoon. Now we have to remember that in these two chapters, especially three and four, we are almost going to be repeating it and repeating it to the place that you will almost despair of it but it is a rehearsal of Israel’s rejection at Kadesh-Barnea to go in and take the Promised Land because of their unbelief. So the whole thrust of these two chapters in Hebrews is the horror of unbelief.

And I always like to point out that it was only just a few weeks previous to the Kadesh-Barnea experience that Israel stooped to the level of demanding that Aaron make a golden calf. You remember that? And in the worship of that golden calf they went down into the very abyss of moral degradation and followed in the steps of the mythological pagan worship of the Egyptians. And, of course, God dealt with it. And yet it is amazing that when they get up to the gateway of Canaan at Kadesh-Barnea and they turned away in unbelief, God doesn’t remind them of the horrible sin of the golden calf. He doesn’t remind them of any other horrible sins that they may have been guilty of, but all He is distressed with is - they could not believe what He had told them.

You see, that is the whole problem with the human race. Even today. It’s not the various sins that they are committing. It’s not the drugs, the alcohol, the immorality. It’s unbelief! Because you see, faith is the opposite of unbelief and faith does everything that squashes these things that we consider as wickedness and sin. So it boils down to the same premise. The human race’s great dilemma is simply – unbelief!

Now the book of Hebrews. Again as I have been rehearsing over and over it is written, yes, to the Hebrews, but it’s not a Book like Romans as I mentioned, because you do not find the plan of salvation laid out in the Book of Hebrews like you would in Romans or even Ephesians and Galatians. But nevertheless, just because it’s addressed to Hebrews does not mean that we ignore it or neglect it. Hebrews is also loaded with things that are still apropos for us in this Age of Grace.
Now, in my own personal opinion (I can’t find that even the great theologians agree) this Book of Hebrews is not written to the dispersed Jews in general. For example, turn back with me to the little Book of James, which is right after Hebrews, so it will be real easy to find. James chapter 1 verse 1 and this points up what I am driving at. Paul does not address this letter to the Hebrews in like manner as James does his letter, because look what James says.

*James 1:1*

"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, greeting."

Now do you see the difference? James is writing to the Jews in the dispersion wherever they were. Now if you will come back to Hebrews chapter 3 as we get ready to move on. This letter to the Hebrews is more than likely addressed to one rather substantial Hebrew congregation, and not just to the Jews out in the dispersion, but to a particular group. Now, of course, there is controversy. What group was it? Was it the Jerusalem church? I don’t think so. Was it the Alexandrian church, because Alexandria, Egypt always had a large Jewish community, a large Synagogue? And for that reason, you remember, the Septuagint, the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek was done by the 70 Jewish scholars, not in Jerusalem but down in Alexandria. So, there is that possibility that it could have been addressed to a Jewish congregation in Alexandria. But, I don’t think so.

My own pet idea and I can’t find anyone else to agree with me to confirm it, but my own pet idea is that it may have been a place like Pella. Now Pella was one of the Decapolis cities of Rome located just east of Galilee in what today is Jordan. And the reason I am kind of picking on Pella in my own mind, several years ago I read an article in one of the archaeology magazines where archaeologists had found potsherds. Now you remember that is bits of clay out of which the pots and the kettles and so forth had deteriorated but those little pieces of clay are what the archaeologists can more or less reconstruct. You see they found potsherds in the ancient city of Pella that in the same piece of clay, not in separate pieces, but in the same piece of clay they would have the mark of the fish which, of course, designated the early church. But also, in the same piece of clay, a menorah which spoke of the Hebrew. And so, we know that there had to have been Jews living at least in Pella and I am sure many other areas who were adherents of "the fish," the followers of Jesus of Nazareth and Peter’s preaching and so forth, but were still clinging to their Judaism and consequently the mark of the menorah.

So, I have to feel that this Book of Hebrews was written maybe to a Synagogue of Jews like that. I’m not saying that it was Pella but I think it had to be a congregation
on that order where you had Jews still clinging to Judaism and yet they have seen
enough of Jesus of Nazareth and now here in Paul’s approach to the crucified,
resurrected Lord that Paul is now admonishing these Jewish people to just simply
come away from their Judaism, from all of their roots of their religion in the past
and step into this Gospel of Grace. So maybe that will help a little bit to understand
the approach of Hebrews.

It has no real Church language, per se, for example. When I say there is no Church
language, you understand, never do you see and hear a Gospel of Christ having died
for the sins of the world. Rather, we see Christ in His high priestly role. You don’t
see faith in the death, burial and resurrection promoted as a means of
justification. It’s just not in here. You don’t see any reference to pastors and deacons
and bishops and so forth, like you do in Paul’s other epistles. And so this is why I say
that you cannot find true Church language in Hebrews but everything that is in
Hebrews is for our learning.

My it’s just a wealth! Every time you go into another verse, here’s just a whole
truck load of wisdom and knowledge for us today. And so this is the way we are
approaching this Book of Hebrews even though it is written to Hebrew people and
yet, my, what we can learn from it! So now let’s begin our study today with verse 12.

Hebrews 3:12a

"Take heed, brethren..." Take heed. Now that is a warning! Take heed,
brethren. Now again I think Paul uses that word brethren in the vernacular of the
Jewish people as his brethren in the flesh, but also there were some true believers.
Now I am saying some, because not all of them were. And we will be looking at that a
little further as we go back to Kadesh-Barnea as well. Alright, so he can speak to the
group and include some of them as brethren either from the Jewish point or from the
fact that they were Believers. So he says:

Hebrews 3:12

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart (of immorality? No.
An evil heart of drunkenness? No. An evil heart of anything else you can think of?
No! But what?) of unbelief, in departing from the living God."

Unbelief! Oh it’s an awful word. Now remember the only sin that will send people
to a devil’s hell is unbelief! They refuse to believe what God has said to believe
for salvation! So here again this is the whole point! Take heed lest there be in any of
you an evil heart of unbelief. And remember we are never going to lose sight of the
fact that that is what kept Israel out of the Promised Land when Moses took them up to Kadesh. It wasn’t anything else. Unbelief!

Now let me rehearse again. I know we covered this quite in detail in our last taping so for people who get these daily, that was just yesterday morning. So I have to kind of remember that. But on the other hand, remember that when the children of Israel had received the Law and the Tabernacle and the whole religion, as we call it, of Judaism, they were now ready to go into the Promised Land. And what had God told them? "You won’t have to lift a sword." Today we would say, "You won’t have to fire a shot. I am going to drive the Canaanites out ahead of you. I will use hornets. Whatever it takes. I am just going to drive them out!" God said, "I am going to drive them out slow enough that you can occupy it without the vineyards growing up in weeds, or wild animals taking over. We will just push them out. And, you can come in and settle."

What an offer! Was God serious? Absolutely! He meant every word of it. Then you remember the first step of unbelief was, "**Well can we send in some spies?**" God didn’t tell them to send in spies. That was Israel’s idea. That was their first step of unbelief. They couldn’t take God at His Word that the Promised Land was there for the taking.

But they asked, "Well, let us send in spies." So, God in His love and His grace condescended and He said, "Alright, I will let you do that. Pick out one man from each tribe and they can go in." So the spies go in and they see the fruit of it and they come back with the fruit of it. The proof that it was a land flowing with milk and honey. Now I always have to explain that. That didn’t mean that the honey was coming down through the gullies. It didn’t mean that milk was running from the other side, but all the attributes of a country or a land that would promote the production of milk and honey was there. Then all you’ve got to do is just use a little sense. What does it take to produce milk?

Well, you have to have grass and pastures and cattle. And that, of course, gives rise to all the by-products of a dairy cow. It brought in their cheeses. Now if you don’t think the Jews don’t like cheese, you haven’t been to a Jerusalem breakfast. Oh, all the cheeses are laying out. Well, you see that was all implied with that statement, the land of milk. And, that would require grass and forage and so forth.

Now then honey, of course, as most of you are aware that you don’t get honey unless you have bees and bees can’t make honey unless they’ve got what? Flowering things. Fruit trees and flowers and so forth and so when you hear the term "**land of milk and honey**" look at the big picture. It was a land that provided all the necessities of dairy
cattle. It had all the things necessary for the production of bees and their honey which spread out into a land of beauty. Production.

Alright, and they brought back the fruits of it. But, what did ten of the twelve say? The majority report of ten of the spies was, "Can’t do it!" The minority report says, "Yes we can!" by Joshua and Caleb. But, what did the nation listen too? The majority. That’s why from day one on this program, I have made the statement over and over. When it comes to the things of God and the Spirit, the majority is usually wrong. You can’t follow the majority. And I always have to come back to the verse that the Lord Himself spoke. "Narrow is the way and few there be that find it!"

Beloved, that word few is getting smaller every day. I was just reading that our whole younger generation, the vast majority of our kids, not all, but the vast majority have no concept of what is right and wrong. They are taught nothing from this Book anymore. And you know a lot of our language is based on things Scriptural. In other words, you have often read even in a secular account, "a Damascus experience." Well, what does that mean to our younger generation? Nothing! They don’t know about a Damascus experience. See? And that is just one example. And so, we are now in a time when the way is getting narrower and fewer and fewer that are coming in to it. And it is sad! But we are going to see why, here, as we move on through Hebrews.

Alright, so Israel now has to be constantly on our mind as they are sitting there at the gates of Canaan at Kadesh-Barnea. God has told them to go in and in their unbelief, they rejected it. Alright, so He says:

Hebrews 3:12

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the (One God.) living God."

Now, the casual readers don’t even think of that twice. But, stop a moment. How many of the religions of this world from all the way back to the present, worship a Living God? Not many. In fact, NONE other than Christianity. Look at your pagans, Hindus and Buddhists - you name it. Do they worship a Living God? No! They worship a dead idol. And that is what the Scripture calls it. They are just dead idols. Dumb idols, is what it is called in one place. They can’t even speak. So they are not a Living God, they are a dead god. They are a god of the mind and of the imagination. And they are a god that Satan uses and empowers from his side of the court, but they are dead gods.
But you see on the flip side of that we are different. Here we stand as Believers and our Faith is in the Living God! Now, I went through my concordance the other night and I found 28 times from Genesis through Revelation, where you find this term the Living God. Now you remember, when David confronted old Goliath, that was one of the first times it was used and Goliath had the audacity to try and withstand the Living God! Well, he found out to his own doom, that it just won’t work.

And so all the way up through Scripture you have these various accounts of the Living God. And it is from two points of view. Either the Living God as the God of wrath and judgement, as He was to old Goliath. Or, He’s the Living God who brings joy and peace and bliss to the believer. Alright, now of these 28 times then that the Living God is referred to in your whole Bible, four of them are in Hebrews alone! Isn’t that amazing! Four times out of the 28 are in Hebrews. Now this is the one and the next one I think is in chapter 9 verse 14. We will just look at them quickly so that you will get the impact of just two words! "The Living God!" You see, that is why it is so paramount that we understand that Christ arose from the dead! We don’t worship a dead Christ. The tomb is empty! And our Faith is in a Living God!

**Hebrews 9:14**

"And how much more shall the blood of Christ, (that is beyond what the animal blood was in the Old Testament economy,) who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, and purge your conscience from dead works (to serve Who?) the living God?"

That’s where we are! We are serving the Living God! Alright the next one is in chapter 10 and verse 31 if I remember right. Now here’s the other side of the coin. My, this Living God can be bliss and joy to the believer but He’s going to be the opposite to the unbeliever.

**Hebrews 10:31**

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands (of what?) of the living God."

The Living God! From eternity past to eternity future, He’s always the same Living God! Now the next one is in chapter 12 verse 22. Here we come to the good part again. This is our part of the Living God! For the lost person He’s going to be the God of wrath and judgement. It’s going to be an awful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God, but for us:

**Hebrews 12:22**
"But ye are come unto mount Zion, (Zion) and unto the city of the living God, (not
the earthly Jerusalem, but which one?) the heavenly Jerusalem, and into an
innumerable company of angels."

And so here is where we are today! My, with our knowledge of Scripture and
with the unfolding of the power of the Holy Spirit, we are evidenced every day
that we are serving a Living God.

Now in the few moments I have left in this program, we want to share how we know
the Bible is true. We shared it in quite a few of our seminars over the last couple of
weeks as we traveled and we shared it with some of our classes before we went, and
we feel those were just sort of little nudges for me to maybe share this with more
people, where someone would either write or call that they had been sharing the
Scriptures with someone - the one in particular was a gentleman who wrote and said
"I have been sharing the Scriptures with my 18 year-old granddaughter and I was
getting along just fabulously, answering all of her questions, until she finally said,
"Well now, Grandpa, how do you know that that Bible is true?" And he said, "Then I
was stumped." He said "I couldn’t think of a thing to tell her."

And you know, I had the same thing happen with a lady in one of my classes here in
Oklahoma. She had come up against the same thing. Somebody had just hit her
broadside, "Well why do you believe that that Book, the Bible is true?" And she said,
"I was stumped." Well, you see I’ve taught it over and over and over and I hope that
people will finally start latching on to it. You answer those kind of questions with two
words. THE JEW. The Jew! He is living proof that this Book is true.

You see, all the way back as far as Deuteronomy chapter 30, which Moses wrote
1,500 years before Christ, which is 3,500 years ago from now. Moses wrote that the
Nation of Israel would be scattered into every nation under heaven, none excepted.
And I have mentioned so often in my teaching, James Michener and his book The
Source, chases a Jewish family from antiquity up to the present. In his research he
found that indeed, there were Jews in every sovereign state on the planet.

Moses said that that would happen. But Moses wrote in the next verse that one day, he
didn’t say when, but that one day the Nation of Israel would be back in their
homeland. And we are seeing it! Against all the odds. Now the average person doesn’t
stop to think. Can you imagine a nation of people as small as Israel. Never more than
ten million. Today they are around fifteen or sixteen million Jews around the world,
and that is probably as much as there have ever been. And yet here this small little
nation of people were driven out into every nation under heaven. Persecuted like you
and I have no idea, and yet never lost their identity.
Now you would have thought that under ordinary circumstances they would have assimilated into the Gentile Nations and they would have disappeared. But they didn’t! They kept their national identity. And here they are 3,500 years later just exactly like this Book said they would be – they are back in the land.

And they are not just in the land. They are in the news every day of the week! I have been asking the crowds of people everywhere we have gone, "Can you believe this? Can you believe a little nation of five million people, living in a geographical area no bigger than part of New Jersey and yet they are in the news everyday! And they still have their national identity. They are still keeping the various feast days and holidays. And you think that is normal?" Boy, that is miraculous as anything can be! And, yet it’s exactly what this Book said would happen. As so there is your proof, that, along with all the other things. See, now we know there were hundreds of definitive prophecies fulfilled at Christ’s first coming. But see, that’s still easy for the scoffer to push aside and say "Well that’s just the way you look at it."

But they cannot deny that the Nation of Israel that began back here in Genesis is now in the land again today. And they are, like I have said before and I will say it again, they are in the news everyday. Why? There are other areas of the world that are in just as big a turmoil. In fact I have been using Sri Lanka every place I have been as an example. The old island of Ceylon. And after we got back home I was reading the Daily Oklahoman the other day and they’re still having all kinds of war and turmoil in Sri Lanka. Does the world get shook up about that? No, they don’t even pay any attention.

In Africa, all the places of turmoil and torture in Africa. Does the world get all upset and send the Secretaries of State all over to them? No. But, oh, that little Nation of Israel draws everybody’s attention, see? And just take heart the next time that you see Israel in the news you just tell yourself, proof positive, that my Bible is indeed the supernatural, Holy Spirit, Divinely inspired Word of God! Which proves that we serve a Living God! A God who has been in control of human history now for 6,000 years. You know I have said it on the program more than once. How miraculous that God started everything back there in the Garden and left man with a free will. He left nations with a free will. They are not puppets on a string and yet here we are 6,000 years later and we are right on His schedule! We are not off one day! We are not off a week! I think I can say, we are not off one hour. God’s Word is true!!
Lesson One • Part II

Today, If You Will Hear My Voice

Hebrews 3:12-19

You know, I am always reminded of one of the first statements of the old, I think it was the old Heidelberg Catechism. And it was a question and answer deal, for those of you who may have been through that. And the first question was, "What is the chief end of man?" And the answer was, "To serve God and enjoy Him forever."

Well, you see the way we enjoy God today, of course is first and foremost through His Word. And so we just trust that we can get people into the Book and not go by what I say, but search the Scriptures and see if these things are true. I had a gentleman come up in one of our seminars in Tennessee, I think it was, and he said, "You know Les, I’ve been an amillenialist all my life, but after hearing you and seeing you use the Scriptures, you have changed my mind! And now I can believe in the Rapture and everything as you teach it." Well, it is the Scripture that has to change your mind. I can’t. But we have to come in to the Book.

We’re going to pick up where we left off in our last lesson, and if I remember correctly we got one verse out of the way in our last half-hour so maybe we will get one verse in this one. My, if we get one verse per lesson through the whole Book of Hebrews, we should be long gone in the Rapture before we finish! Shouldn’t we? Okay, chapter 3 and verse 13. But instead of departing from the Living God, up there in verse 12:

Hebrews 3:13a

"But exhort one another daily…"

Now I am going to stop right there a moment. How many times a week does the average Christian even so much as think about Spiritual things? Once! That’s about right. Sunday morning at 11:00 o’clock. And that is about as far as it ever goes. I am not talking about everybody. I am just talking about the mundane, average church-goer. Sunday morning, 11:00 o’clock, he’s in his pew and when that hour is over, he goes home, turns on TV and he never thinks about it again until next Sunday. But you see, that is not what the Word of God teaches. The Word of God says that every time believers bump into each other, what should we be talking about? Not the weather! Not sports! Not politics! But rather The Word! Spiritual things!
And you know this is why Iris and I are always so thrilled, no matter where we go, every home that we are in. We can look back after we leave and we say, you know, 90% of our conversation was on Spiritual things. And I don’t precipitate it. I mean I don’t go in and just try to worm these things in. I let our host and hostess sort of set the tone of our conversations and you know, we no more than get in and close the door and sit down with a cup of coffee and they’ve got questions. And there is nothing we like better than to answer questions. But, it puts us on a Spiritual plane that I think every believer should be prone to do. That should be our main topic of conversation, whenever believers come together.

And this is what Paul is saying now, that believers are to exhort one another not just one hour on Sunday morning. But daily! Everyday!

*Hebrews 3:13a*

"But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day;…"

Alright, now this term "today" for us, of course, is this Age of Grace. Today for us is now. For the people living today, this is their day of opportunity. And consequently, what a warning, that while it is called today, while we are still this Age of Grace and we still have this opportunity of expressing our faith and for lost people to embrace it, my, he says, do it every day:

*Hebrews 3:13b*

"…lest any of you be harden through the deceitfulness of sin."

Now I am going to take three words out of this verse. And Hebrews seems to sort of, somehow or another, enhance that and you know I did it here a while back - Lois reminded me of it. She heard it on television and she said "Les I’ll never forget it." "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation!" Well, I spent a whole half-hour on those three words. Well, I’m going to do the same thing in this verse. We’ve got three phrases here that are loaded and the average reader just skims right over them and never sees it. Alright, look at it again. "Lest any of you be hardened," that’s the third phrase I’m going to look at. *Through the deceitfulness,* that’s the second phrase we are going to look at. And "of sin." That will be the first one. I’ll take them in the reverse order.

So we are going to go back and start with that word "sin." Well, in the Greek, the word is *anomia.* Now I am not a Greek scholar, I want everybody to know that but once in a while I will look up a word and this one is *anomia,* and it is in the Greek Dictionary that I have it is translated as lawless or lawlessness. Now stop and think for...
a moment. Isn’t that exactly what sin is all about? The first step of sin is a mental act of rebellion against what God has said. That’s what it means to be lawless. Now just think about that for a moment, that the sin that so easily besets us and that plagues the human race starts out as lawlessness. God has made certain provisions for the human race, He’s laid down certain instructions, but what is the natural reaction to all of that? I’m not going to! No, God.

You know, I always like to use that in Psalms 14, where the translators have added a word that kind of takes away the punch, I think, where "the fool hath said in his heart there is no God." But you take away what the translators added which are italicized back there and it is "there is," take that away, and you have, "The fool has said in his heart" what? "No, God!" See! I’m not going to do what you are telling me. And what is that? That’s lawlessness! So, let’s go all the way back to Genesis, where it all began. No let’s go back even before that! Let’s go to old Lucifer in Isaiah 14. I didn’t intend to do this, I was just going to go to Genesis, but the thought just struck me that we find the first act of lawlessness, even before Adam and Eve, in Isaiah 14. The very first act of lawlessness - Sin. As it has bedraggled the human race from day one. Isaiah chapter 14 and we’ll just start at verse 12.

Isaiah 14:12a

"How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer...." Now I know that a lot of your new translations don’t have Lucifer in there but my old King James still does.

Isaiah 14:12-14

"How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 13. For thou, hast said in thy heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; (and here it comes) I will be like the most High."

What’s this old angel, Lucifer saying? I am going to usurp God’s throne and His authority. Did God tell him to do that? No. So what is he, lawless! He is going contrary to everything that God had stipulated and he is telling God in so many words, "I am going to take your place." So this is the beginning of lawlessness or sin as we know it even in our own human experience. Alright, now then, let’s go back and pick it up in Genesis chapter 3 where we have the first evidence of this kind of human action – lawless. Or lawlessness. And it is, of course, Lucifer tempting Eve back there in the garden. And let’s just jump right in to verse 6. And I guess I really should remind you, what had God told Adam and Eve earlier? Of that one tree in the garden, thou shalt
not eat. That’s all He said! "Thou shalt not eat of it." Now look what happens in verse 6 of Genesis 3.

**Genesis 3:6a**

"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat,..."

What had God told them? "Thou shalt not." So what is she doing? She is becoming lawless. She is disobeying the revealed will of God, and that’s what sin is. Oh, it wasn’t anything grossly immoral. She didn’t kill anybody, or rob anyone. She didn’t go out and tear down somebody’s personality with vile language. She made a simple act of plucking the fruit from the tree and eating it. But, what did it do? Not through Eve’s act, but the next part of the verse. Since she gives it to her husband, and he did eat, now as soon as Adam ate knowing what he was doing, what does he become? Lawless! And what does he introduce into the human race? Sin! And so sin has plagued the human race from day one.

Now let’s come all the way back up to Romans. Romans chapter 5, because you see, this is the whole idea of Scripture not only to give us the plan of salvation, but to give us the reason for the need of it. **Why do we need salvation? Because without it we are lawless. Without it we are not obedient to the revealed will of God. We are in constant opposition to it.** Alright, so how did it all begin? Romans chapter 5 and verse 12. Remember Paul is writing:

**Romans 5:12**

"Wherefore, as by one man, (Adam,) sin (lawlessness) entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:" Or become lawless. Now, let me show you another one in Romans chapter 8. And you know every time I read this verse I have to be amazed that the human race does as well as it does! Now we are going down the tube real fast, we all know that. But, it’s just amazing that the human race has held together for 6,000 years because look at their lot. Romans chapter 8 and let’s just start with verse 6.

**Romans 8:6a**

"For to be carnally (or fleshly) minded is death;..."

In other words, with no sign of a salvation experience, they are still in their lawlessness. So **to be carnally minded is death, spiritual death. Their doom is coming,**
like we saw in the last half-hour. They are going to meet the Living God. Not as their Saviour but as their Judge.

_Romans 8:6-7a_

"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace._ (and here is the reason in verse 7.) Because the carnal mind (the unsaved person,) is enmity against God;…"

Now what is that? He’s lawless. He doesn’t do what God says, He doesn’t pay any attention to the precepts of God. He does it his own way, He’s lawless. And consequently then, he’s doomed. But look what the rest of the verse says.

_Romans 8:7_

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

Why not? Because he is lawless. He doesn’t pay any attention to the law, He’s a scoffer of the law. Now I suppose that there are people in all of our communities who even treat the civil law the same way today. They don’t pay any attention to the civil law. They just do things their own way, but sooner or later it’s going to catch up with them. We know that. Alright now the same way here, in Spiritual things, the lost person in his lawlessness, well, he may get through this life. He just may skim through, but he’s not going to get through eternity. And so one day he’s going to come before the Righteous Judge and he’s going to be confronted with all of his years of lawlessness and he’s going to fall into the hands of the Living God. And the Living God is not going to be a God of mercy and grace anymore. It’s going to be too late for that person. Do you see that? Now back to Hebrews chapter 3 and we will pick up the second phrase. Because you see they all tie together.

_Hebrew 3:13a_

"But exhort one another daily, while it is call To day; (in this Age of Grace) lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." (and be lost)

Now we have already looked at how Eve was confronted. And after all, what did old Lucifer, Satan, the Devil say to Eve? "Hey, it will do you good! There is nothing bad going to come from eating of that tree. It will do you good. You will be like God!" Well what was that? Deceit! And you see it at every hand today. I was just reading another article on the meth drug problem. How in the world can our young people even think of taking a chance? Because it has such immediate, evidently, immediate
gratification. And it just puts them in an immediate euphoria. But what happens. Within a little while they have to have another one. And in a little while they have to have another one and pretty soon they are hooked.

My goodness, I just heard that since the gas prices have been so high, that there have been a lot of drilling activity here in Oklahoma once again and I am sure you read the same things I do. Last spring when a lot of these drilling companies were looking for men to work out there in the drilling fields, you know what the employment drop out rate was because of drugs? Fifty percent! Fifty percent of the applicants could not be hired because of their drug problem. Now listen, that is shocking. What is our nation coming to? But, you see, that is the deceitfulness of sin. Oh, it just looks so good. It’s so inviting. Yes, it gives you euphoria. It makes you feel good for a little bit. But then it drags you down and we know the end result. Ruined lives by the thousands all around us. And the sad part is that those of us that behave ourselves have to pick up the bill for it. That’s what gripes me. Why are our health expenses so ferocious? Because most of the people laying in your hospital beds are there because they have abused their bodies with cigarettes and booze and drugs and we have to pay for it.

Well, we love them for Christ’s sake, because He loves them, but the sad fact is, it was their choice. You know, I always have to think when I was just a young fellow and my brother was an intern and a bunch of those young doctors were talking about things, and I will never forget the term that they used. Self-destruction! The human race is just bent on self-destruction. And isn’t that what it is? They just self-destruct. Why? Through the deceitfulness of sin! Oh, it is deceitful.

Alright, then I am going to come on up to the first word. Hardened. We’re still in Hebrews chapter 3 verse 13.

*Hebrews 3:13b*

"...Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness..."

What does that word hardened imply? Well, the further people go into sin the more their consciences are seared against what is wrong and they know it’s wrong, but it doesn’t bother them. Then finally they get to the place where they can do it without batting an eye. And they become hardened to it. Alright, let’s go back to Romans again because I like to back everything up that I teach with the Scripture. Because after all, what Les Feldick thinks, that doesn’t mean anything. But, what does The Book say? Alright, for one thing, some of the results of man’s sins are listed here in Romans chapter 3 and we are all aware of it. We see it all around us. This isn’t anything that was unique only to Paul’s day. It is just as evident today. Romans chapter 3, and we are going to start in verse 10.
Romans 3:10

"As it is written, there is none righteous, no not one." Now that comes clear out of the Old Testament, so it has always been this way. There is none that understand it. There is none that seeketh after God. Why? They’ve got their own laws. They are lawless, so far as the things of God are concerned. Now verse 11.

Romans 3:11

"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." They are of no earthly good so far as God is concerned. And there is none that doeth good, no not one. Now here it comes. This is the description of the lawless, hardened individual in verse 13.

Romans 3:13-18

"Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have use deceit; the poison of asp (or poisonous snakes) is under their lips. 14. Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15. Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16. Destruction and misery are in their ways: 16. And the way of peace they have not known: 18. There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Why? They are lawless. They have no concern about the laws of God. Alright, keep your hand in chapter 3 and we will be back in a little bit. Now, let’s flip over to Galatians, because, see, this is what the Book called it. This isn’t my idea. This is what The Word of God calls it. Oh, the deceitfulness of sin! It has such an allurement. I don’t think any of us would deny that most sin, on the surface, is alluring. That’s why we call it temptation. It has that ability to get our attention. Alright, now in Galatians chapter 5, here they are listed. And they are listed for us to be aware of. That we never, never compromise the fact that these things are the result of sin. Lawlessness. You know, we are living in a society where nothing is wrong anymore. We don’t know what sin is. And it is a sad commentary and our nation is suffering the results of it. But, alright look at how Paul lists it here in Galatians chapter 5 verse 19. And this right along with what he wrote in Romans chapter 3.

Galatians 5:19-21

"Now the works of the flesh (of the carnal individual) are manifest, which are these; Adultery, (sexual immorality is always at the top of the list.) fornication, (which is just another word for it only in a worse state.) uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20. Idolatry, (instead of worshipping the Living God, what are we worshipping? A dead
god! That’s what idolatry is. It’s worshipping a dead god instead of the Living One.) witchcraft, (what’s that? Drawing on the powers of the satanic world.) hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21. Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Why? Because they are lawless. They are hardened by the deceitfulness of lawlessness. Alright, come back to Romans chapter 3. And oh, this just says it so clearly. It’s their lawlessness and their living in the deceitfulness of sin which is far worse than they have any idea that it’s going to be when they start in on it, then it follows that they are guilty. They know that they are guilty. And that is why they have got to constantly subject their guilt feelings with more and more of the same. But, deep down they know that in the eyes of a Holy God, they are guilty. Alright, let’s look at it. Romans chapter 3 now verse 19. Now, don’t lose sight of the verse in Hebrews: through the deceitfulness of sin, they are being hardened.

**Romans 3:19a**

"Now we know that what things soever the law (that is the law of God. The very mind of God.) it saith to them who are under the law:" In other words, the Law was originally given to what people? Israel. Israel was put under the Law and the whole system of worship that associated with it. Alright, but it doesn’t stop there. Yes, the Law was given to them who were under the Law but, that how many mouths should be stopped?

**Romans 3:19b**

"...that every mouth may be stopped,..." Every mouth! Not just the Jew but every mouth of the whole human race should be just clamped shut by what? The righteousness of the laws of God. Who’s perfect. He’s sinless. Alright, read on.

**Romans 3:19c**

"...that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world. (not just Israel, but that all the world) may become guilty before God."

Guilty!! And what does guilt always demand? A sentence. Doesn’t it? You go before a court of law and if the Judge slams the gavel down and he says, "Guilty." What follows? Sentencing. And it is no different in the Spiritual. The guilty world is going to come up for sentencing. There is no escaping it. And God is going to have the record. There will be no argument. It’s going to be awful, and that’s why the world
doesn’t want to hear about it. How often do churches ever, ever mention Hell anymore? Almost, never. I did in one church here last winter one time and they came up after and said that’s the first time in fifty years that we have heard Hell in this church!
Lesson One • Part III

Today, If You Will Hear My Voice

Hebrews 3:12-19

We’ll will be going right back to where we were in the last lesson, and that would be Hebrews chapter 3 and we’ll start in verse 14 in this lesson. And again for those of you joining us, we are just an informal, independent Bible Study. We hope not to build a big organization or anything like that. We just want to open the Scriptures for whoever you are, wherever you are. And again we always like to thank you for your letters, your prayers and, of course, your financial help. We just trust that the Lord will use us to open the Scriptures to your understanding. My, it thrills our heart to see so many lost people coming to a knowledge of salvation but many, many more believers who have never had an understanding of the Scriptures are finally getting their eyes opened.

Alright, let’s go right back to Hebrews chapter 3. And I’m going to read verse 13 again as we get ready for 14. Here, Paul writes to these Hebrews, and don’t forget that he is addressing primarily a Hebrew congregation, wherever they are. And the people are in a battle to make a clean break with Judaism and come over in to this doctrine of grace which is faith + nothing in the finished work of the cross for salvation. (I Corinthians 15:1-4) It’s faith + nothing, and without any attachment to the Law and temple worship and so forth. So always remember, that’s first and foremost the people we are dealing with here. But, as I said earlier today, we can also glean so much that applies to us even as Church Age believers. Alright, so now verse 13, the verse we looked at in our last half-hour.

Hebrews 3:13

"But exhort one another daily, (not just once a week on Sunday) while it is called Today; (your day of opportunity) lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

Remember, he is talking to people that are involved in a religious system. Now if you doubt when I call Judaism a religious system, back up with me to the Book of Galatians chapter 1, where the Apostle Paul is reviewing his own past. Let’s just start at verse 11. Because I never say any of these things to put any one group down or to make any snide remarks or anything like that. But it is just based on Scripture that the Judaism of which these people were still a part, was indeed a religion. And of course, we maintain that Christianity is not a religion. A religion is comprised of works and things that you have to do, whereas, our Salvation is by faith and faith alone.
in that finished work of the cross! And Paul is rehearsing his going into the ministry, so he says:

_Galatians 1:11-13_

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preach of me is not after man. 12. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but, by the revelation of Jesus Christ. (now here it comes.) 13. For ye have heard of my conversation (or manner of living) in times past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church (or the assembly) of God, and wasted it:"

And now verse 14 he says it again. And I "profited in the Jews’ religion." Okay? So now when I come back to Hebrews and I use the word, hopefully, I am on the right track that these people were still half in the religion of Judaism but they were also contemplating and some of them had completely embraced Paul’s Gospel of what we call the Age of Grace. So they are on the fence. Now consequently when I come down to verse 14, I am going to use the little word, "if." And it doesn’t make any reflection on our losing the salvation that we once had, but it is dealing with these people who are battling the complete break with their religion and stepping into this whole economy of grace. It’s not a matter of their being saved and then lost. It’s a matter of making a break with that which withholds their whole salvation. Alright, I’ll come back to that again later. So he says again:

_Hebrews 3:13_

"But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Or as we said in the last half-hour "lawlessness." Just a complete rejection of the things that God had laid out for mankind. Now verse 14.

_Hebrews 3:14a_

"For we are made partakers of Christ,…" In other words, when we come in to the Body of Christ, we are not like a subject of a king. We are a member of the Head Who is in Heaven and of which we are the Body. Now, I guess I should stop right there. We are not going to get very far today, are we? I thought I was going to get way into chapter 4! Goodness! Come back with me to I Corinthians, chapter 12, because this ties in so perfectly with what he says here. We are partakers of Christ, by the power of the Gospel, of course. But now, look what that means.

_I Corinthians 12:12_
"For as the body (or human body) is one, and hath many members. (now, what does that speak of? Our hands, fingers, toes, ears, eyes, all of these things make up our body.) and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." Or the body of Christ.

I Corinthians 12:13a

"For by one Spirit (by the work of the Holy Spirit) are we all. (not just some of the elite. Not just some who have had a particular experience, but every believer is) baptized (or placed into) one body, (which Ephesians calls the body of Christ.)

That composition of believers from wherever they are, whatever their station in life, at salvation they are brought in and become part and parcel of the body of Christ. Now some of us may be a little toe. Some of us may be nothing more than an ear or an eye or something like that, but we are members of the body, and we all have a function. That’s why it behooves every believer to be used of God in whatever particular purpose He has. Alright, so here we are placed into the body by the work of the Holy Spirit:

I Corinthians 12:13b

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

The human body as well as the body of Christ is not one member but many. And so, the whole analogy of the rest of this chapter is that God is building the body of Christ, individual by individual, placing them where He wants them. Just like, and I have used this analogy over and over through the years on the program and in my classes, like the little baby in the mother’s womb. My, that doesn’t just form all at once, but over nine months those cells are going to their rightful place. The cells that compose the fingernails go to the fingernail. The cells that compose the eye go to the eye. And all through that nine-month period, that little body is finally brought to a completion. Every cell had gone to where it has to be to make that little creature function. Alright, so is the body of Christ.

Now for 1,900 and some years God has been bringing them into the body one at a time. Now you know I am a farmer and I have used the example before. You go into a grain bin. I don’t care whether it is wheat or corn or whatever. I was a corn farmer and I, more than once, would stand at the top of that huge 10,000 bushel bin and I would just be amazed. That whole bin was full of individual - what? Kernels! Individual kernels and you follow that kernel all the way back to when it was being formed in the
ear, what were they? They were individual kernels, formed on the ear. Finally taken off and mixed in with the total and yet every kernel is an individual.

Alright, so is the body of Christ. We’ve never lost our individuality. And God knows every one of us as an individual and yet the composite is the body of Christ will one day be complete. And, that is why I am a proponent of the Rapture. We have to be taken out. We will not fit in the tribulation economy. That’s the best word I can find. Because the tribulation is for Israel, and for the unbelieving world. The tribulation isn’t for the believers! The body of Christ has to be taken out, and it will be. I am adamant on that!

And every book and article that people send me, and I have said it before and I will say it again. All I have to do is leaf through and the first thing I will see is that there is not one reference to Paul’s Epistles. Not one! They will quote everything from the Old Testament. They will quote the Four Gospels. They will quote early Acts. They will quote the Revelation but they avoid Paul like a plague.

Well, no wonder they come up with their crazy ideas. Because Paul alone, tells us about the forming of the body of Christ. Paul alone tells us how the body is to function in this world. Paul alone is going to give us the end of the body on earth and it’s deliverance. See that? So, here we have then, as we find coming out of Hebrews, let’s go back there again. That the body of Christ is being formed because as we became believers of the Gospel, we became partakers or companions of Christ by virtue of the fact that the Holy Spirit has placed us into the body. What a unique position, to be a member of Christ Himself! We are not just subjects of a King. Oh, He is going to be King of Kings don’t think for a minute He won’t be, but we are not the subjects of a King. We are members of the body of Christ. Alright, back to Hebrews:

*Hebrews 3:14a*

"*For we are made partakers of Christ,* (and there is that big word I made mention of earlier.) *if*"…"

Oh, that scares so many people. I get so many letters that ask, "Well what about this in Hebrews and what about that in Hebrews? Doesn’t that mean that if I do something particularly wrong that I will lose my Salvation?" Well, you know, the first thing I have to ask people is this: "Does the Bible tell you what sin will take you out? Have you ever thought about that?" My, I had a gentleman come up to me when I first started teaching outside of my own particular church. And if he hears the program, he will be able to tell his wife, "Hey, that was me!" Because he came up one night and he said, "Well now, I’m in a denomination that has always taught that you can be saved
and then lost." But now, he says, "I KNOW I’m saved!" He went on to say, "The thing I realized now is, how were we supposed to know what sin took us out?!"

Have you ever thought of that? What sin will take me out so that I have to get saved again. Well, nobody knows. So it almost becomes ridiculous. **And so, the word "if" here is not a matter of these Hebrews having been saved and losing it, because they have not totally entered in. They’re on the fence. They are considering it.** When we get to chapter 6, I will probably spend four whole half-hours on that one. But in chapter 6 again, it is impossible, if you have been enlightened. It doesn’t say it is impossible if they have been saved. But, they’ve only been enlightened. They have tasted, they have stepped in one foot. And, then what did they do? They turned around and went back into Judaism.

Now, I have had the same problem, especially with people in cults, as we call them. I’m not going to name them, but there are more than one. And, they have the same problem. Oh, it is so hard to break with that cultic brainwashing that they have been under for maybe 50, 60 or 70 years. And it isn’t that they are going to be saved and lost. **It’s because they can’t truly come in and experience a real rebirth salvation.** So, that is what we are dealing with here in Hebrews. Don’t ever get the idea that we are talking about Hebrews who were saved and lost. Or that IF they can hang on they will still be saved. **No, the IF is, have you really been saved?** And this is where I am probably shaking a few people up. And I don’t want to make people miserable and doubt their salvation if they have truly been saved. Not at all. But, listen we’ve got millions of people out there that think they are saved, and they have never had a salvation experience. And those are the people that we have to warn. Yes, this if is a big IF for you if you have never been saved.

*Hebrews 3:14*

"For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end."

**In other words, if salvation is real, if salvation had been totally completed by that act of God, then it can never end. It can never be taken away, because that is an act of God.** I have said it over and over, through the years, stop and think of all that God does. Not what we do, but think of all that God does the moment He saves us and sees our faith. He forgives us, and as we have already seen in I Corinthians, chapter 12, He places us into the body, He redeems us, He pays the purchase price, He justifies us, He sanctifies us, He glorifies us, He puts the Holy Spirit within us, Should I keep going?! Can God undo all of that? No way. God WILL not! Or He wouldn’t be the God of His Word.
And so, the whole IF problem is, have they been genuinely saved, or have they merely tasted. Have they considered it but in their heart they are still saying, I can’t quite buy this? Alright, so let’s go on to verse 15.

Hebrews 3:15a

"While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts,..."

And that goes back again into the previous verse. What hardens hearts? Sin! And who is at the head of the sin business? Satan. Let me show you in II Corinthians, chapter 4, and let’s just look at verses 3 and 4:

II Corinthians 4:3-4a

" But if our gospel be hid (in other words, of no use) it is hid to them that are lost: (they are still in their lawlessness. They are still in their sin, and in these people that are still in their lawlessness, in these people) 4. In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which (oh, what is the word?) believe not,..."

Isn’t that simple? It doesn’t say a word about all the sins of the flesh that we mentioned in the last program. No, that’s not their problem. That’s just the result of their unbelief. But, the opposite of unbelief is belief! Faith! See? Now reading verse 4 again.

II Corinthians 4:4

"In whom 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 visible image of the invisible God, should shine unto them."

So who keeps people in their darkness. Well, Satan does. And, how does Satan do it? By keeping them involved in their sin. Now, can you see why we’ve got a problem today? My, our kids are hooked on the videos and the TV programs that are nothing but rot and smut, and it simply destroys their character, their thinking. No wonder it is so hard to get through to them. And the only way, evidently, churches think they can get them is to use the world’s approach. I still can’t agree with it, but more and more are going that way. The problem is they have been blinded by the deceitfulness of sin.

Alright, back to Hebrews chapter 3, and verse 15 again, and then I want to come back to Romans again.

Hebrews 3:15a
"While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice,..."

Alright, how do we hear the voice of God? How do we hear it? Well, Romans, chapter 10 tells us. I’m sure you know and you will recognize them as soon as we start. Starting at verse 13.

Romans 10:13a

"For whosoever (none excepted, this is an invitation to the whole human race.) shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (that’s a promise. Now then, the question is,) 14. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?..." In other words, how can they become believers of someone they know nothing of?

Romans 10:14b

"...and how shall they believe in Him of who they have not heard? How shall they hear without a preacher?" I know the Greek has a better definition, I think, proclaimer. Someone that proclaims the Truth. How can they hear without a proclaimer? Now verse 15.

Romans 10:15-16a

"And how shall they preach, except they be sent? (now Who is involved? Well, God. The Holy Spirit, see?) as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach (or proclaim) the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things. 16. But they have not all obeyed the gospel...."

Regardless of what good news it was. Now, remember, when Abraham believed God, He didn’t believe the Gospel as we understand it. He didn’t believe that Christ would die and be buried and rose from the dead. How could he? It hadn’t happened. But, he believed what God said. And what did God tell him? "Leave Ur and I will make of you a great nation." And, Abraham, Romans 4 says, believed God! That’s all! He believed God! And what did God do? Called him a righteous man. Just on the basis of his faith. That’s where I get my little cliche "Faith + Nothing!" It all began with Abraham. It dropped out of sight for centuries, but now in the Age of Grace, it comes back again. And we, like Abraham, are saved by faith + nothing! So, how do we hear it? Well, you have to have someone proclaim it. We have to have the Holy Spirit behind it. Alright, now then, verse 17. Here is the answer to our dilemma.

Romans 10:17
"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

So by faith, or just, taking God at His Word comes by hearing. You’ve got to hear it to understand it. That’s why we’ve got this Book. That’s why God gave it to us. That’s why you don’t have to put your Bible on the shelf and say well, "I’ll just wait for the preacher to tell me." No! You may have to have someone explain some of these things to you which is pertinent but you’ve got the Word of God in your hand. Search the Scriptures, and see if these things are true. Alright, so verse 17 again.

Romans 10:17

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

And it’s only the Word of God that can bring salvation to the human race. And again, I guess I should use that verse that I have referred to many times on this program over in Acts. Some of you already know where I am going to go. Acts chapter 16, and Paul is up there in the area of Northern Greece - today’s Macedonia, which is in the news again every day. He’s up in Northern Macedonia, in the city of Philippi. Now verse 14, and I think it is apropos for every believer to pray the same thing that I do, on the basis of this verse. Lord, give us Lydias. Alright, here it is.

Acts 16:14

"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, (see, she had a certain amount of religion, but she didn’t have salvation) heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."

Now analyze that verse. Had not the Lord opened her heart, even a man like the Apostle Paul - would he have gotten through to her? No way. Great preacher, evangelist, missionary that he was, had the Lord not opened her heart, she would have been just as lost the next day as she was the day before. But, God intervened and opened her heart. Now, if we have time, let’s go back to Matthew 16, and we will have to do this quickly. Alright and here we have Jesus dealing with the Twelve. And, we have Peter’s confession of his faith. Matthew 16 verse 16.

Matthew 16:16-17.

"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. (now look what Jesus said in verse 17.) And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."
So how did Peter understand that Jesus was the Christ? God opened his understanding! See? God did! And so never forget that faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God!
Lesson One • Part IV

Today, If You Will Hear My Voice

Hebrews 3:12-19

I think we are ready to move on. Hebrews chapter 3 and well take a shot at verse 15 again, where it says:

Hebrews 3:15a

"While it is said, Today…"

Remember, I have been emphasizing this today so far as these people are concerned and so far as we are concerned is this Age of Grace. Where as we have been seeing the last couple of programs that it isn’t limited to the Jew, and it’s not limited to the Gentile. It’s not limited to any one class of people but it’s for the whosoever will! Now verse 15 again.

Hebrews 3:15-16a

"While it is said, To day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation. 16. For some, when they had heard,…" In other words, when God spoke and said, "Go in and take the land. It’s waiting for you. I’ll drive the Canaanites out." Alright, to them that was the good news. That was all they needed to know, but they couldn’t believe it! Alright, so let’s finish the verse:

Hebrews 3:16b-17a

"…did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. 17. But with whom was he grieved forty years?…"

Remember, I made mention several programs back, when we first started here in this chapter, they came in eleven days, if I am not mistaken. Eleven days from Mt. Sinai to Kadesh and that eleven days stretched into what? Forty years! Why? Unbelief! Now you see for people today, unbelief is not going to be forty years, it’s going to be eternity lost and with no hope. Alright, so here is the warning.

Hebrews 3:15b-17a

"…To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. 16. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of
Egypt by Moses. 17. but with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned,…"

But, remember what was their sin. I pointed it out in the last program or the one before. It wasn’t the calf, the golden calf at Sinai. It wasn’t their gross immorality that they danced around that calf. But, what was their sin? Unbelief! God said they could take it and they said what? "No, we can’t." What did the spies say? "Oh, we are like grasshoppers in their sight. The cities are walled, and we can’t take them" And yet, they had the proof of the pudding when they brought back the grapes and everything else. And yet, in unbelief, they couldn’t buy what God had said. I can’t comprehend it. I just cannot comprehend it. But, you see, this is the way it has been all the way up through human history. God told Adam and Eve in simplistic terms, "Don’t eat of that tree." That’s all, everything else was theirs. But, in a step of unbelief, what did they do? They ate. And that brought sin into the whole human experience.

So, all of these things are just examples so that we can learn from it. It wasn’t their sin, as so far as their action. **It was their unbelief, but what prompted their unbelief? Their lawlessness, they were sinners.** Now remember, Israelites were just as much the offspring of Adam as we Gentiles. They’ve got the same old Adamic nature as we do, and that old Adamic nature is lawless, and so it precipitated their unbelief. Now, I’m going to just have to speculate here, and I certainly don’t claim to have the answer. I wouldn’t even pretend to have. But I like to throw the question out just to make people think. Now of all these children of Israel who came out of Egypt under Moses’ leadership, as they walked through that Red Sea, did any of them stay behind and say, "Well, I’m scared to death the water will come crashing down." Not that we know of. So what did that take to go through the Red Sea? Faith!

Because, anybody with an ounce of sense would know that when that Red Sea water parted, and it must have parted a long ways, because three to four million people couldn’t go through a little canyon of a hundred or two hundred feet and do it in 24 hours. So that Red Sea must have opened, I think, miles. Well, however much wider it was the higher the water had to be piled. Right? And God piled it! You know He did! With invisible walls and dams to hold it. So what did it take to walk down between those walls of water? Faith. Had to. **And they came up on the other side a redeemed, bought back people. Every one of them!**

Alright, now then you follow them on down to Mt. Sinai and they come under the Law and even in spite of the golden calf experience, here they come under Moses’ leadership. The cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night and they encamp at Kadesh. And then the nation says, "We can’t do it," with the exception of Joshua and Caleb and Moses, of course. Now my question is. Were all those Israelites lost? Some of them? What do you think? You can’t give me an answer, because I don’t think any
of us have got one. But, it is sobering to think about. Or were they all saved because they came out of Egypt by Faith. I don’t know. I haven’t got the answer.

But, I know one thing. It’s something to make us think, because you see we are in the same dilemma in Christendom today. You know, that’s like we kind of enjoy getting into some different denominations once in a while as we have been this last few weeks. Because you see, twenty or thirty years ago, I would probably have thought that none of those had the truth. But they do! **I am finding that almost in any group you’ve got a certain number of people who have a true salvation. They love the Lord, and they love this Book.** And, in other groups that you probably think, oh, they are all Christians, they’ve got no love for the Book. So you see, we can’t judge. There is no way we can determine how many of that group are saved. We don’t know.

And I think this whole experience at Kadesh is a sobering experience because were they all lost, because they refused to go in unbelief? Was their Faith exercised, coming through the Red Sea all become vain? I don’t think so. **But we can’t do anything but speculate.** I would never say that they were all lost or that they were all saved or that half of them were. I would like to think some of them were. Because even in Israel’s history when the nation, for the most part, was going down the tube and they were succumbing to idolatry. Did they all? I don’t think so. Even when Elijah said, "You know Lord, I am the only one left." But what did God say? "No Elijah, I have seven thousand left." Even though the vast majority of Israel followed in the words of Baal, yet seven thousand remained true to Jehovah.

And so, all up through Israel’s history, I’m sure there were always a percentage of people who were aghast at what their leadership was doing. They were aghast at the gross immorality of the majority of people who were following pagan gods and goddesses. And then you know what I have to think? We are in the same boat today. We are getting more and more where the majority is now rejecting everything Biblical. We are seeing it, as it’s a culture war in America today, we know it is. And here we are as believers, getting smaller and smaller percentage-wise, **and one day God’s going to judge this nation like He has every other nation that turns against Him, so what’s our only hope? Our only hope is that the Lord will return before that day comes. Because it’s coming.**

Even though we have a percentage as Abraham had when he bargained with God over Sodom and Gomorrah. What did Abraham say? "Now, Lord if there’s ten in Sodom, would you spare it?" Yeah. But He didn’t have ten and so God destroyed it. And so here’s the sobering thought: if these Israelites who came out of Egypt by faith through the experience of the Red Sea with water piled up on both sides and yet were able to come up here to Kadesh with nothing any harder to believe that I can see, than to walk into the Promised Land. Go in and take the land of Canaan. And they couldn’t do it
because of unbelief. And they wept. And they cried all night and then, horror of horrors, what did they ask to do. Send us back to Egypt. Send us back to the slave yards. Oh, that is almost beyond human comprehension.

And so, here is the constant lesson in these two chapters of Hebrews. Don’t forget what can happen to people when their hearts are hardened by unbelief, and when they can no longer trust the Word of God. And see, I have said it over the years, I think America can be, to a certain degree, a parallel of the Nation of Israel. We have been singularly blessed as a nation. No other nation on earth has enjoyed the Spiritual and material blessings that we have in America. But does that mean that God will never, never change blessing us? I don’t think so. I think the day is coming when God is going to have to come up and judge America for the responsibilities that we have walked under foot.

And you know I am always rehearsing our Founding Fathers. My when they got at loggerheads, and they had some big problems to overcome, and don’t think they didn’t. Number one was, how can the small states maintain a representation, like Massachusetts and Vermont and so forth, against the big states like Pennsylvania and Virginia. And, boy, it was a tough one to crack. But, I have said it over and over, and I read it in a secular magazine, not in any religious magazine, but in a secular magazine. What did those men do when they got to the place that they just couldn’t make any more headway? They dismissed and went into prayer rooms. They got down on their knees, everyone of them and they prayed, that the God of Heaven would give them wisdom. That’s our heritage. That’s where we’ve come from.

And then today, they ridicule the concept that our President would even think to pray in the morning. I hope you realize that’s what they are doing. They are ridiculing him for it. When our Attorney General, John Ashcroft, tries to have a Bible Study, they ridicule him for it. Well, that’s exactly the way it got in Israel. Just go back and read some of the prophets of Jeremiah and so forth. But now, my question is, were they all that steeped in unbelief? I don’t think so, but the minority of the believers had to suffer the results of the majority in their unbelief. And so, this is the constant reminder now then, as we look at it again in verse 17.

*Hebrews 3:17a*

"But with whom was He grieved those forty years?…"

While they were dying off in the wilderness, one commentary puts it, that they moved from place to place and the bones were just about covering the ground of where they left, as they were dying by the hundreds for forty years. See?
Hebrews 3:17b-18

"...was it not with them who had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? 18. And to whom sware he that they should not enter into His rest, but to him that believed not?"

It just repeats unbelief and repeats it and repeats it! The biggest tragedy for Israel, as well as for the human race in general, is unbelief. God says it and He expects us to believe it. And as I said in an earlier program, He’s proven himself with fulfilled prophecy. No other book on earth can tell things a hundred years in advance, let alone 3 or 500. But this Book does. And it is being fulfilled to the jot and tittle and it will be fulfilled to the complete jot and tittle. And so here is why we can believe it. It has proven itself. Let’s see what Peter even calls it. In II Peter, chapter 1.

II Peter 1:15-16a

"Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. (remember, Peter too is writing to the Jews of his day more than to us Gentiles. Now watch this, this is the verse that I had on my mind.) 16. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables,..."

And you know that is exactly what the scoffers call this Book? I read again just awhile back, where someone was ridiculing the Bible as nothing more than a bunch of campfire stories concocted while the Israelites were in antiquity and they brought all these things to mind as they were sitting around their ancient campfires. But Peter says, "no, these are not cunningly devised fables."

II Peter 1:16b-17

"...when we made known unto you the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of His majesty. 17. For He received from God the Father, honour and glory, (now he is speaking of the Transfiguration.) when there came such a voice to him from the excellent Glory, This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Now you remember, that was on the Mount of Transfiguration when Peter, James and John were met with Moses and Elijah. And God spoke from Heaven. Alright now verse 18. Peter says, "This voice which came from Heaven, we heard!" Proof positive that God is real. He is the Living God as we saw earlier.

II Peter 1:18-19
"And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. (The Mount of Transfiguration. Now verse 19) We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that you take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your own hearts:"

In other words, I think Peter is speaking of a Spirit enlightening, that we can grasp these things. We can believe them and we don’t have to doubt them because we understand that God has proven Himself over and over by fulfilling prophetic statements. Now verse 20.

_II Peter 1:20_

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation,"

In other words, you don’t just take one little tidbit here and pull it out and do whatever you want with it. You have to compare Scripture with Scripture. We have to use the whole.

_II Peter 1:21_

"For the prophecy (the Word of God,) came not in old time by the will of man: (they didn’t sit around a campfire and concoct these things.) but holy men of God spake as they were moved (or inspired) by the Holy Ghost."

That’s how our Book came together. This is not cunningly devised fables. It is the Word of God and consequently God expects us to believe it. Alright now then I am going to take you back, I used the verse some time ago, I think in the last program. I am going to bring you back to Romans chapter 4. And we are going to look at Abraham for just a second, because I am not losing sight of what we’ve been looking at in Hebrews 3 and we will again in Hebrews 4, how that Israel at Kadesh-Barnea, with the full opportunity of entering into the land of Canaan, a rest of sorts, as they didn’t have to work, and they didn’t have to fight. All they had to do was take it by what? Faith! Believe it and move in and take it. But, they couldn’t do it. Alright now, Abraham is just the opposite. Now verse 1 of chapter 4 of Romans.

_Romans 4:1-2_

"What shall we say then that Abraham our Father, as pertaining to the flesh, (that is the Father of the Jewish race) has found? 2. For if Abraham were justified by works, (see that is what all religion demands. Religion will always give you a set of
works) he hath whereof to glory; but not before God." If that was possible, he could get to Heaven and say, "Look God, what I did, how I deserve to be here." But he’ll never be able to do that before God. Now verse 3.

Romans 4:3a

"For what saith the scripture? (What does the Word of God say? The Word of God says) Abraham believed God,…"

It doesn’t say that Abraham went out and sacrificed. Doesn’t say that Abraham went out and did this or that or some other thing. All Abraham did was took God at his Word, plus nothing! He believed God. Now then reading on:

Romans 4:3b

"...and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

God declared him righteous because he could believe. Now, it is no different today. The moment a sinner believes, God accounts him as righteous. But, at the same time God empowers him to live righteously. That’s where we get the ability and the power to live a Christian life. You can’t do it in the flesh. It is impossible and none of us can. But God empowers us and if we draw on that power, then it is possible to depart from these things that the Bible calls iniquity and we, like Abraham, can walk as people of faith. Verse 4.

Romans 4:4a

"Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt."

He’s speaking of a religious person. See, that is what we are dealing with in Hebrews. They were tied to their religion. And what did their religion demand? Temple worship, the Sacrifices, keeping the Feast Days. and yes, their tithes. All those things were part and parcel of their religion. But now, to him that worked the reward isn’t reckoned of Grace, but debt. So anytime a religious person says, "I’m doing the best I can. I’m putting God in debt to me!" He owes me. Now, if somebody owes you, he’s in debt. I don’t care how you cut it. If he owes you, he’s in debt to you. Alright, that’s what the religionist is doing. He’s going to work, and work, and work and then point the finger at God and say, "Now, you owe me. You’ve got to pay off. You’ve got to let me into your heaven." But it isn’t going to work that way because the next verse says:

Romans 4:5a
"But to him that worketh not,"

See now, Israel again back to Kadesh, and I can’t help but come back here. Israel at Kadesh, how much were they going to have to do to enjoy the Promised Land? Nothing! Just walk in and enjoy it. Isn’t that something? And they rejected it because of unbelief. Alright now, here we come again.

**Romans 4:5a**

"But to him that worketh not, but believeth..." That’s the other word for faith. That when we believe what God has said and we believe on Him who justifies the ungodly, not the person who is worthy of it.

**Romans 4:5**

*But to him that worketh not, but believeth, on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*

Let’s go back once again to Hebrews chapter 3 and I think that maybe we will slip into chapter 4 before the hour is up. And we will be ready for that then in our next taping. Alright, chapter 3 again verse 19. Boy, I want you to hear it in your sleep.

**Hebrews 3:19**

"So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."

So then, they entered not because of unbelief. Nothing else. Unbelief. Now you see had they been able to believe God and if they would have gone in as a nation of believers, do you see what God could have done? Oh, He could have blessed them. They could have been a fabulous nation of people. But instead they had to go back out and die and their carcasses rotted in the wilderness, for forty years. Now, in the last minute or two that we’ve got left. Let’s look at the Nation of Israel with a second opportunity and that was when Christ came in His first advent. It’s almost a repeat. The Nation could have had everything. They could have had the Kingdom, and they could have had the King. He offered Himself. But what did they do? They crucified Him and God in His love and mercy came back and again, just like the forty years of wilderness, what did God do with the Nation of Israel through that forty years of the Book of Acts from His crucifixion until finally the Temple was destroyed in 70 AD. You have almost a repeat performance. They rejected the offer of everything that only asked for their faith. And, as a result they went through the forty years of the Book of Acts which culminated then with the destruction of the Temple, the city and the nation.
Lesson Two • Part I

Coming Up Short of God’s Promise

Hebrews 4:1-11

So now let’s just go right back to where we left off in the last lesson and that will be Hebrews chapter 4, and verse 1.

Now then, in Hebrews chapter 4, we are still emphasizing the fact that Hebrews was written primarily, not exclusively, but was written primarily for Jews who were on the fence. They still had one foot in Judaism with all of it’s legalism and the Mosaic Law but on the other side they were contemplating Paul’s Gospel of Grace and so the whole idea of the letter is to prove to these people, beyond a shadow of doubt, who Jesus of Nazareth, as they understood Him, really was.

He was God the Son. He was the Creator. He was the Sustainer. And He was also, of course, the Redeemer. Not just of Israel but of all mankind. And consequently Paul uses the verse that He tasted death for every man, not just Israel. But for the whole world.

And so, as we’ve come through these first three chapters, this has been the emphasis, of Who God the Son really is and what He has done and how even we, as non-Jews, must understand. Now, in the last program we were in, in chapter 3, the Apostle is using the horrible dilemma of Israel’s refusing to go into the Land of Promise at Kadesh-Barnea, in particular, when as you all know the account, in unbelief. What God said they could do, Israel said, no we can’t. I guess if there was any one act of disobedience in all of Israel’s history that perturbed God the most, that was it. They could have fallen as they did at Mount Sinai into idol worship around that golden calf. They went into various other times of rank disobedience, but nothing pops up over and over in Scripture as an example of abject disobedience brought about by unbelief as Kadesh-barnea.

And again, I just have to remind folks, especially out there in television where we have so many people that have just never, never read or studied the Bible before, so remember, I always have to keep those folks in mind when I repeat and repeat and repeat. You want to remember that as Israel was there at the gate of the Promised Land, Kadesh-barnea, God had told them distinctly, explicitly that He would drive the enemy out. He would use hornets. He would use whatever He would have to use and all Israel had to do was walk in and occupy without raising a sweat. Without losing a drop of blood, just go in and take it.
But you see, Israel’s first step of unbelief was when they said, well, at least let us go in and spy out the land. Let us see if we can do it. And you know, God in His goodness, and I think those of us who are believers, the older we get the more we realize the goodness and the grace of God. And so, God in His grace and His goodness, says, "Well, alright. Pick out twelve men."

Now, most people think that God told them to do that. No He did not! If you’ll go back and recap the whole chain of events, God didn’t say send in twelve spies. God says, "Go in and take the land!" But Israel in their first step of unbelief said, "Well, can’t we send in spies." And then God said, "Yes, go ahead and appoint one from each Tribe and let them go in and spy out the land."

And then you know what happened. Those twelve men came out with a majority report of ten to two. The ten said, "We can’t do it." The two said, "Yes we can!" So who did the nation listen to? The majority. What have I said for the last ten years? In Spiritual things, in the things concerning this Book, the majority is usually, I didn’t say always, but the majority is usually wrong. Don’t go by the majority. Because Jesus pointed out the majority all too plainly Himself when He said, "Wide is the way and broad is the gate and many there be that go therein, but narrow is the way and few there be that find it."

Now, you see, the two then, represented the narrow. They said, "Yes we can." But Israel, listening to the majority of the ten, in abject unbelief said "We can’t do it." That’s all it was. Total unbelief. And God then responded in His wrath and sent them out into the wilderness for the next thirty-eight years.

And so this is constantly brought up in Scripture, as an example not only to Israel, but to everyone of us, that there is nothing that God detests like unbelief. He can forgive a lot of things. And He can, you might say, in His Grace, put up with a lot of the wickedness and the unbelief in other areas, but when it comes to abject unbelief of something that is so easily understood as our Gospel is, then the wrath of God is kindled. And so when you stop and realize that the vast majority of the human race is headed for the lake of fire, don’t blame God. A lot of people do. They say, "How can a Holy God send people to a place like that?" Listen, God didn’t send them. They chose to go. And how did they choose to go? By refusing to believe something so simple as Paul’s beautiful Gospel, that Jesus died for your sins, was buried, and rose from the dead, and all we have to do is believe it for salvation.

And so this has been the whole emphasis now, especially in chapter 3 and even as we come in to chapter 4. Don’t forget what Israel did at Kadesh-barnea, as they failed to believe what God told them. Alright, verse 1. So it starts out with one of Paul’s
favorite words, *therefore.* Because of what we’ve already covered in these first three chapters.

*Hebrews 4:1a*

"Let us therefore fear,..." Now that’s not the kind of a fear that just simply sends you out of your common sense. but rather this is a fear that makes you stop and take notice. This is a fear that makes you stop and really listen to what God is trying to say. And so he said:

*Hebrews 4:1a*

"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise…"

Now you know, I can almost stop with every word in Hebrews, can’t I? And I have been lately. What’s a promise? Well a promise is something that God has backed with His Omnipotence, with His Sovereignty and yes, with His grace. **And when God makes a promise, you and I can trust it. Because God will not lie. God will not play games.** And so here again we have the evidence that God has given promises, promises, promises, not only to Israel but to the whole human race. So he says, let us take up and be serious and take note:

*Hebrews 4:1*

"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise (one of the promises of God) being left of us of entering into His rest that any of you should seem to come short of it."

What do you suppose he’s driving at? You know, so many of us had a criteria that we thought people had to go through to be genuinely saved. And unless they went through our circumscribed criteria, we had doubts. And I’m sure that almost every group looks at some of these things this way. They’ve got their own idea of what God expects a person to do before God can save him.

And listen, **God isn’t going to set up a whole bunch of restrictive rules and regulations for a sinner to go through before He’ll save him.** God will save a person with, I suppose, so little going to him that most of us would say, hey, he could never be saved, and that’s exactly what Paul is saying. Now look at it again.

*Hebrews 4:1b*

"...lest, a promise being left us..."
Now if something has been left to you, what does that mean? It’s still yours. It hasn’t yet slipped away from you, it’s still there for you to cash in on. And so this is what he’s appealing. Lest some of these people have been wavering and yes they’re considering what Paul has got to offer, but they’re still being drawn by all the ramifications of legalism and Judaism. Paul says, God hasn’t given up on you. God hasn’t yet crossed you off.

I know, many of you have heard sermons, I know I have, more than once, where a preacher will get up and he will just make a horrible example of someone who just stood out on a public square and shook his fist in God’s face and cursed God, and then they like to make a great big sensational event of it. And how that thirty minutes later, he was violently killed. Well, that may make good preaching, but it’s not Scripture. God never gives up on even a man who will shake his fist and curse God. You know why? Because even where sin abounds and that would be sinful, no doubt about it, but where that sin abounds, what’s even greater? God’s Grace! And so don’t you ever believe that kind of stuff that God gives up on a sinner. No, God never gives up until this soul departs. And so, this is again what Paul is saying, don’t you ever believe that God gives up on you. There is still a part and parcel of His promises that are enough for you to latch on to and still escape that wrath to come. Alright, now let’s move on.

**Hebrews 4:1b**

"...let us fear, lest a promise being left (that’s still there to take a hold of) that of you (even the worst) should come (what?) short of it."

Now what’s the danger when someone tarries and lingers and fails to latch on to the promise of Salvation? Well let me give you a good example. Come back with me to Acts 24, and we’ll just start with verse 24. Here, Paul, of course, is dealing with Felix.

**Acts 24:24-25a**

"After certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ." (now verse 25.) And as he reasoned (Felix did. Just a rank unbeliever and as he reasoned) of righteousness, (in other words, God’s saving grace) temperance, and judgment to come,..." What does that tell you? Paul laid out the whole picture. Paul didn’t refrain from telling him what his doom was going to be if he did not come into salvation. And so he reasoned of all these things that Paul had covered. The judgement to come.

**Acts 24:25b**
"...Felix trembled, (that’s how much he considered it and he answered what? Paul, I’m ready to believe? No, but rather) answered, Go thy way for this time;..."

What does that tell you? Felix hadn’t crossed it off. He hadn’t just adamantly told Paul - take off! I’ll never listen to you again. But he was postponing it. See? Postponing it, and that just exactly what Paul is warning these Jews and Hebrews. Don’t postpone it for today. See that’s the word throughout these chapters. Today, harden not your hearts as they did, and as Felix did. And you see, every time that Felix would listen to Paul, what happened to his heart condition? Softer or harder? Well, harder. And now, read on and we’ll see what evidently happened to this man.

Acts 24:25b

"...Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." In other words, when I’m more in line to step out of my wicked lifestyle and become a believer. When a more convenient season comes along, I’ll call for you. And then verse 26. On top of that, his wicked mind was looking for a bribe.

Acts 24:26a

"He (Felix) hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him; wherefore he sent for him the oftener,..."

So it wasn’t just once. Not even twice. Several times this Roman authority reasoned of righteousness and judgment to come. And every time, no doubt, his heart became harder and he says, "Well Paul, if you’re not ready to pay for your way out of here, then be gone." But now the reason I know that Felix never came to the place of salvation, he put it off and put it off, is because of verse 27. What’s the first word?

Acts 24:27

"But (he never responded.) after the two years Porcius Festus came into Felix’ room; and Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound."

What happened to the man? Just exactly what Hebrews is warning against. Felix had every opportunity to yet become a believer, but what does he say? Not now. Maybe later. Now come back to Hebrews and see how apropos this is.

Hebrews 4:1b

"...(oh be careful) lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, (that is salvation, that) any of you (even a Felix) should seem to come short of it."
And he did, you see, as far as we know, he came short. He never did step in to that which he saw was the right way and I think we see this throughout all of human history. How that mankind is either absolutely destitute of spiritual insight, or they play around like a cat with the mouse. Until finally, what happens invariably? That little mouse slips away.

I saw my old cat do that same thing just the other day. He had a mouse and played with it and played with it and I almost was getting frantic. Kill the poor thing! But, what do they do? They fool around and they fool around with it, and all of a sudden it gets away. Well, you see, that’s what happens to many people with God’s plan of salvation. They play around with it - oh, they consider it, they talk about it but they will never give in and accept God’s saving grace and consequently, they come short of it. Well, that’s not God’s fault. God has done all He can do. And you want to remember, God never forces His salvation on anybody. It’s a matter of the free will, as God inspires us with the Spirit.

Alright, I guess we’ve got time. I hated to go into verse 2 unless I had a little more time, but I think maybe we can cover it. Here Paul continues the thought.

Hebrews 4:2a

"For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them:"...

Now don’t lose sight of your pronouns here. Who are the "them?" Israel at Kadesh-barnea. See that’s our whole idea of the lesson. Don’t forget Israel at Kadesh-barnea, when they had all the promises of God to go in and take Canaan without a drop of sweat or losing a drop of blood and because of unbelief turned away. Alright, Paul is using it again.

Hebrews 4:2a

"For unto us (today in this Age of Grace under Paul’s Apostleship) was the Gospel preached."

Well, that’s easy enough to understand. We all know from Paul’s Gospel, that Christ died, was buried and rose from the dead, that that’s the means of salvation.

Hebrews 4:2a

For unto us was the Gospel preached as well as unto them:"...
Now we have to be careful here. What does the word *Gospel* always mean? Good news! Now how far back in human history does good news go? Well all the way back to Genesis chapter 3. **But how far back does Paul’s Gospel go? Back to Paul’s ministry, naturally, because it’s his Gospel, that was only given to him.** Alright, so now, if you look at this word *Gospel* as good news, then all of the garbage just falls away and you’ve got nothing left but bare truth.

And so, when the good news was presented in Genesis 3:15, what was it? Let’s go back and look. Here we have good news, but not the Gospel of the grace of God. It’s not Paul’s Gospel that you must believe that Christ died and rose from the dead. But it’s still good news! My, it’s good news. Genesis chapter 3. Most of you should know what this verse said, and the Lord is dealing with Satan, right after the fall of man, as they have just eaten of the forbidden fruit. **And what’s the good news? That God is going to defeat Satan. Now that’s good news!** Alright, look at it. Where the Lord says to Satan:

**Genesis 3:15a**

"*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman,* (who’s in control here? God is.) *and between thy seed and her seed;* (well, Who’s her seed? Jesus Christ!) *it* (the seed of the woman, Jesus the Christ) *shall bruise thy head,…*"

Now how do you kill a serpent? On the head. And so, what’s the implication here? That one day the Seed of the woman, Jesus the Christ, would defeat and put out of commission, Satan. And what is that? That’s good news! It’s the only thing that the human race had left. Adam and Eve had now eaten, and the race has fallen, and Satan is seemingly gloowering in his victory. **But, God comes back and says, "No, I’ve got good news. I’m going to provide a way back into fellowship with the Creator."**

And so here we have the first instance of good news. Now let’s go up a little further to Genesis chapter 12. I’m skipping a bunch of them in between here. But, here in Genesis chapter 12. Oh, some more good news! Now we don’t ordinarily think of it as Gospel, but it was. My, I don’t know what else it could have been so far as Abram was concerned. It was Gospel! It was good news!! And what was it? Let’s look at it:

**Genesis 12:1**

"*Now the Lord had said* (back in chapter 11. He had said) *unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee:*" And now, here we come. Promises! I just got through telling you at the opening of the program, what are promises? Hey, they’re good news!! They’re Gospel. And what are these promises that God is making to Abram?
Genesis 12:2-3

"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee (because through Abram would come the Christ) shall all families of the earth be blessed."

Now if that wasn’t good news I don’t what else could have been. In order to put the frosting on the cake, let’s jump all the way up to Romans chapter 4 and see what believing this good news did for this man Abraham. Now remember what I’ve got you thinking. What has been the good news? Oh, God’s means of bringing salvation to various segments of the human race. They didn’t all believe that Christ would die and be resurrected from the dead. They couldn’t. Hadn’t happened yet. The Roman cross wasn’t even invented, until the Roman Empire. But, these people had the good news of God’s promises. So remember God’s promise to Abraham was to "leave Ur and I will make of you, I will do this and I will do that." Now, when Abram responded to that Word of God by his faith, look what God did here in verse 3.

Romans 4:3a


Do you see that? Abraham did not do like Israel did at Kadesh and say, "No God, I don’t think you can do this. I’m a hundred years old. Sarah is ninety. I can’t do this." But you see Abraham believed God, as impossible as it may have seemed. And what did God do? Saved him!! That’s all! Saved him out of paganism. Out of idolatry. How do I know? Because it says:

Romans 4:3b

"… Abraham believed God, (it was his believing, his faith) and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

Now that didn’t make Abraham sprout wings. Abraham didn’t suddenly become a sinless individual. Abraham failed miserably after all this, but did he lose his salvation? Heavens no! He merely showed how human he really was. But, in spite of all his failures, God reckoned him, what? Righteous. And why was he righteous? Because he BELIEVED God!
Lesson Two • Part II

Coming Up Short of God’s Promise

Hebrews 4:1-11

There’s a big difference between studying the Word of God and reading it. A lot of people read a few verses and they think, well I’ve done my daily duty. Well, that’s not studying. Studying is when you really sit down and put some work into it and compare Scripture with Scripture. Because, hopefully, as I teach I can tie it all together from Genesis through Revelation without just picking out a few verses on which we can build a doctrine. But rather it has to be on the complete Word of God.

Now, of course, that means we also have to be careful, because not all the Scripture is directed to us today for our doctrine in this Age of Grace! I have a pet little way of showing this, because when someone says, "Well now, Les, you are always emphasizing Paul, but I use the whole Bible." I always tell them, "Well so do I!" They’ll come right back and say, "Yeah, but you stick pretty much with Paul." That’s true. Because Paul writes to us in this Age of Grace. If you want an example of what I’m talking about you go to Leviticus chapter 5.

Leviticus chapter 5 says that if someone touches an unclean thing such as a dead animal, a carcass, then that man will bring a lamb of the flock and bring it to the priest. Now are you going to do that? Well, you can’t do that. So be careful how you talk, and how you use the Word of God. We realize that all Scripture is inspired, and all Scripture is the Word of God, but not all Scripture is written to us in the Age of Grace. That’s where we have to come to the Apostle Paul, because Paul over and over, emphasized that he’s the Apostle of the Gentiles as we see in Romans 11:13.

Romans 11:13

"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles; I magnify mine office:" Another good one is in Ephesians chapter 3, and verse 1, where he says:

Ephesians 3:1

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles." And this is what we have to be aware of. Alright, now on that same line then, we’re going to keep continuing where we left off in the last program, and that was out of Hebrews chapter 4 verse 2, and we’ll just continue with that thought.
Hebrews 4:2a

"For unto us (in other words, you and I in this Age of Grace, under Paul’s Gospel) was the gospel preached...."

Well what Gospel does Paul preach? The Gospel of the Grace of God as we’re going to see in just a moment. Now continuing with the verse.

Hebrews 4:2b

"...as well as unto them:..."

Now, as I’ve pointed out in the last program, as we began that chase up through the Old Testament, we found that the Gospel was the "good news." And there were a lot of good news opportunities that God used first to the whole human race. Not just to Israel. And then beginning with Abraham, of course, it was all dealing with Israel and so they had all kinds of good news preached, but, unless it was mixed with faith, it was of no profit.

Well, the last thing we talked about in our last program was the faith of Abraham. And because of his faith, it was accounted unto him for righteousness. Now we’re going to continue that same concept of what Gospel was preached when. And I’ll take you now from Abraham’s experience, in Genesis 12 and in Romans 4, to Matthew for just a moment, in Christ’s earthly ministry, and we’ll drop in at chapter 9, and verse 35. And again we’re going to see the word Gospel. The good news!

Matthew 9:35a

"And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching (what?) the gospel of the kingdom,..."

Now remember, the Abrahamic Covenant had promised that the Nation of Israel would appear through the man Abraham and later on through Isaac and Jacob. And then one day God would put them in a territory of land that He deeded to them, which we call their homeland, and then at a later date, He would yet provide the government. A King. Now Israel, of course, had to wait centuries and centuries for that last part of the Covenant to become a reality, the coming of their King. And so, this is the purpose of Christ’s earthly ministry early on. He came first and foremost to fulfill that Abrahamic to include bringing in their King. Now, if you’re going to have a King, you’re also going to have a Kingdom.
So, consequently, when Jesus came to the Nation of Israel and began His earthly ministry, He was now proclaiming the good news of a glorious Kingdom over which He would be the King. Now is that so hard to comprehend? Because that was all of His thrust, see that’s what John the Baptist’s purpose was, to announce this coming King. Now the King is there and so His message becomes then the good news that Israel is about to have the King and the Kingdom. I know that’s hard for people to swallow, but that’s why He came.

Just to show you what I’m talking about, turn with me, and keep your hand in Matthew, I’m not through there yet. Come all the way back to Romans once again and see how even the Apostle Paul makes this so clear. How can people miss this? Romans chapter 15 verse 8. Romans 15 verse 8. Now, remember, Paul is writing in the book of Romans to us Gentiles, absolutely he is. But look what he’s telling us as Gentiles. Romans 15 verse 8.

**Romans 15:8a**

"Now I say (Paul writes) that Jesus Christ was (past tense, in His earthly ministry) a minister of the circumcision. (who’s the circumcision? Israel, the Jew! And He was definitively the minister of Israel, not the whole world, during His earthly ministry.) for the truth of God,…" He’s the one that was responsible for everything that’s been taking place, and so, Jesus Christ was the Minister of the Nation of Israel based on the truth of a Sovereign, Holy, Omnipotent God, now read on.

**Romans 15:8b**

"…to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:" For goodness sakes, who were the fathers? Gentiles? No! Israel! Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And what were those promises? That one day they would become a nation of people. God would put them in a homeland, and God would be their King in the person of the Messiah.

Now, isn’t that plain? And so, Paul reminds us that this was the purpose of Christ’s appearing to the Nation of Israel. Now the big picture, of course, is He’s going to go to the Cross and become the means salvation for every human being. But, He came to Israel to fulfill the promises made to the fathers, and they should have known Who He was.

They should have recognized Him as that promised Messiah. But, here again, and we’re going to see this in another later verse almost a repeat performance by the Nation of Israel of when they rejected the Promised Land. A repeat performance of abject disobedience, brought about by what? **Unbelief!** Are you with me?
Alright, now come back to Matthew, and here we’ve got this Jesus to confirm the promises made to the fathers. Who now goes into the synagogue on every Sabbath day and what did He do? He preached the good news of the Kingdom. Well, where was the whole idea of a Kingdom originated? Well, back in the Covenants. That was the whole idea of bringing about the Nation of Israel to give them this glorious Kingdom, on earth. Heaven on earth, if you please. And so that’s why it’s called the Gospel of the Kingdom, or the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

Now then, in response to the ministry, of Jesus of Nazareth among the Jews, we have an example of one who hit the nail on the head with Peter in Matthew 16, and we’ll start at verse 13. Now again, so that I don’t lose you. **We’re showing how that all the way up through human history good news was proclaimed to the human race in one way or another, and not always the whole race.** Back in Genesis, of course it still was. But by the time we get to Genesis chapter 12, now God is dealing with only the Nation of Israel. And here as well in Christ’s earthly ministry. This good news was proclaimed only to the Nation of Israel.

The Gentiles couldn’t partake of this. They didn’t have any Covenant promises to be fulfilled, because that was Israel’s role. Alright now, Peter then becomes the epitome of what the ordinary Jew on the street should have believed. This is Peter’s confession of faith. Alright, let’s start at verse 13, toward the end of His three years of earthly ministry. They are up in northern Israel and when Jesus came to the borders of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His Disciples saying:

**Matthew 16:13b**

"...Whom do men say that I the Son of man, am?"

What was He driving at? What does He mean when He said, "whom do people say that I am." Well, according to all the promises since Abraham, what was Israel looking for? Their Messiah! Their King! And now He’s there to fulfill those promises.

If they’d had an ounce of faith, as Peter and the ten did, what should they have known? Who He was! He is that promised King. He’s ready to give us the Kingdom, and they should have been just as elated as their forefathers should have been at the gates of Canaan at Kadesh-barnea, when they were ready to go in and take the land. So you see it’s almost a repeat performance. In fact, I’ve used this over and over to prove that God was not playing games with Israel when I say that Jesus offered the King and the Kingdom to Israel. A lot of people don’t buy into that, and they’ll say, "Well He couldn’t have, because He had to go to the Cross." That’s moot. The important part is that when He appeared to the Nation of Israel, He appeared to fulfill those Old Testament promises and it was a valid offer.
Just as valid as when He told Moses and Aaron and the children of Israel to go into the Promised Land. I don’t think anybody argues that that was not a valid offer. I’ve never had anyone argue with me and say, "Now Les, God never intended Israel to go in and take Canaan." I’ve never had anybody say that, because they can’t buy that and so I’ll turn around and ask them, "Alright then, when God told Israel that they could have it, that He would drive the Canaanites out with hornets was He playing games or was He making a valid offer?" A valid offer. They could have had the land right then.

And it’s the same way here. But see, we’re always blocked by the things that stand in our way, but nothing is impossible with God. He could have brought about that sacrificial death, one way or another. Now, all we can look at is, it had to go the way it went, which so far as we’re concerned is true. But, on the other hand, God being God, He could make a valid offer. "Alright, Israel, I’m here as your King, I’m going to give you the Kingdom, if you’ll just believe it." But, they didn’t believe Him and so that valid offer, just like Kadesh-barnea, fell through the cracks. Do you see that? Alright, now here’s what every Jew on the street should have been able to say as Peter did when the Lord asked him that question concerning the Son of Man. Dropping in at verse 13.

**Matthew 16:13-16**

"When Jesus came into the coast of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, says, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? 14. And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; (isn’t that amazing?) some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. (they say everything but the right thing) 15. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? (and now look at Peter’s answer.) 16. And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, (the Messiah, the Anointed One, the King, see.) the Son of the living God."

Remember what we had in Hebrews just a few weeks ago? Hebrews over and over refers to the Living God. Well, that’s what Peter knew that Jesus was. He was the Living God! That’s Peter’s confession of faith. Alright, now look at the next verse.

**Matthew 16:17a**

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto thee...." In other words, Peter, you didn’t come to all this conclusion of who I am because of what people said. You didn’t suddenly realize that I am the Messiah because of what your Mama said, nor did you suddenly realize that I am the Messiah because of what one of the priests said. So how did Peter know? The same way a believer understands salvation today.
Matthew 16:17b

"...for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven."

Now, of course, we know that the Father in this case operated through the Spirit, and so when Jesus was walking the shore of Galilee and He says, "Come and follow me," what prompted Peter and the others to drop their nets and follow the Lord? Well, the Holy Spirit, of course, and they suddenly realized that this was the promised Messiah. And so they believed the good news of the Kingdom, because the King was in their midst. Now is that so hard to comprehend? And that was the good news. That Israel now had the King. And the Kingdom was just over the horizon. But, what did Israel do with it? They rejected it in unbelief, and what did they cry? "Crucify Him. We’ll not have this man to rule over us."

You see how clearly that shows what had been presented to them? How could they scream, "We’ll not have this man to rule over us," if they didn’t understand that was the concept of His offer. But, they did. They knew that He was offering Himself as the King. They knew He was offering a Kingdom. And then they had the audacity to say what? "We have no King but Caesar." What a travesty, what a pity, what another example of abject unbelief.

But, listen don’t blame Israel. They’re no worse or any better than all the rest of us, and I’ll show you why in just a moment in Acts chapter 20 verse 24. Now, of course, Acts is transitional and so we move from Peter and the eleven as the major players in the early chapters and then after we get past Acts chapter 10 or 11, the Apostle Paul fills the rest of the Book of Acts. And now here we are. The Apostle Paul is on his way back to Jerusalem for the last time and he’s meeting with the Ephesian elders and they’re having a tearful goodbye. But look what he says concerning his own ministry in Acts 20:24.

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, (like I said this is a final goodbye to the Ephesian elders.) and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel (of the Kingdom? I want all your heads shaking! No way is that what it says!! But rather testify what?) the gospel of the grace of God."

And listen! The twain can never meet! You can never bring the Gospel of the Grace of God into the Gospel of the Kingdom or vice versa, as they are two totally different concepts. Same God! The same Christ! But on the one hand it’s the Minister
of the circumcision fulfilling the promises made unto the fathers. The Gospel of the
Grace of God is going not just to the Jew but to the whole world. Offering what?
Salvation to any and everyone that will just simply believe, as we see in 1
Corinthians 15:1-4, or Romans 10:9-10.

Alright, now turn with me to Romans chapter 3, and verse 9, and I’ll continue with the
thought that I had a moment ago, that Israel is no worse or no better than the rest of
us. When we lay the blame of some of these things on Israel in their Old Testament
economy, that’s not to put the Jew down. It’s just simply to teach us that what they
experience is a tremendous lesson for the rest of us. And here’s the reason in Romans
chapter 3. Here Paul has been building God’s case against the whole human race.
Against the gross immoral people, in chapter 1. In the grossly moral people in chapter
2 and in the grossly religious people in the first part of chapter 3. And the conclusion

Romans 3:9a

"What then? are we better than they?…"

Now you want to remember while we are re
ading this, when Paul says "we," who’s he
And what’s his answer? Well it’s "no" of course. See! This is why the Jews hated
Paul.

Romans 3:9b

"…No in no wise; for we have before proved, (see, proved beyond a shadow of a
doubt.) both Jews and Gentiles, that they are, all, (including the priesthood.
Including the prostitutes, including the kings and emperors, including the princes and
the religious leaders of the Gentile world. They’re all, where?) under sin." They’re all
under the curse, they’re all sons of Adam. Alright. Then come on down to verse 10.

Romans 3:10

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one:" And then you come to that
glorious remedy over there in the same chapter, verse 21 and 22. Here’s the remedy
for Jew and Gentile alike.

Romans 3:21a

"But now…"
Now when Paul says but now, and he uses that so often, he uses it in Ephesians a couple of times, and in various other places. But now, what’s he talking about? **On this side of the cross.** On this side of the cross was salvation, and we’re going to look at that, hopefully in the next half-hour. With salvation completed and finished, there’s no more need for Temple, there’s no more need for priests, and there’s no more need for legalism, because we’re on this side of the cross, and the Grace of God has been poured out. The wrath of God was poured on that cross. Alright, now look what he says:

**Romans 3:21a**

"But now, (on this side of the cross) the righteousness of God...." Not the righteousness of the Pharisees; not the righteousness of Les Feldick or any of the rest of you, but rather it’s the righteousness of God.

**Romans 3:21**

"But now, the righteousness of God, without the law is manifested, (has been put in the spotlight) being witnessed by the law and the prophets;"

In other words, I think one of the things, I think Paul said was, "Hey, this wasn’t done in a corner." We’re not pulling something out of the woodwork that’s just to shock people. Hey, this was something that was laid out since Genesis chapter 3. That God was going to provide a salvation that would include the whole human race, a salvation so available that no one need ever miss it."

And like I just told someone within the last 48 hours: This is why no one that goes to that eternal Lake of Fire will offer one word of argument. **And when they get there for the eons of eternity, the only thing they’re going to be able to say is, "Why did I choose to come to this place?"** It wasn’t that there wasn’t an alternative. **They chose it!** God had done everything He could do. They could have had it free for nothing just like we got ours. Alright, now read on.

**Romans 3:22a**

"Even the righteousness of God which is by the faith of (or in) Jesus Christ unto all them that (what?) believe:…"

What’s the opposite of believing? Unbelief! And so if God hates unbelief what’s His response to believing? All the joy of Heaven. Nothing thrills God more than to see someone say, Lord I believe it! I trust it! See? Alright, but now the part I want to see in these last few seconds.
Romans 3:22b

"...for there is no difference:"

It comes to all them that believe for there is no difference between Jew and Gentile.

There is still no difference between Jew and Gentile today. We’re all on the same level playing field. A Jew has to be saved today, just like a Gentile, and a Gentile has to be saved the same as a Jew, and that is by FAITH + NOTHING!
Lesson Two • Part III

Coming Up Short of God’s Promise

Hebrews 4:1-11

My, we have a tremendous amount of our prison inmates that are just literally eating up our little books, and so you pray for those fellows as there’s almost a revival of sorts amongst prison inmates across the country. They are indeed a real rewarding ministry and we just consider that a mission of the ministry because ordinarily, as small as we are, we have to charge for our material but anything that goes into the prisons or into foreign mission fields we send that out free of charge. That, I feel, is a mission work of our ministry. So you pray for these fellows that are behind bars and are really growing in the Lord. You ought to read their letters. It’s just unbelievable.

Alright, so for the rest of you out in television, we thank you for your prayers and your financial help. What a joy it is when we go out on these seminars to meet you folks face to face, and to be able to put a name with you. Okay, I guess we’re ready to go back to our study in Hebrews chapter 4 and we’re going to spend a few moments in verse 2 where it says:

Hebrews 4:2a

"For unto us (that is now in the Age of Grace under Paul’s Gospel) the gospel was preached, as well as unto them:"

In other words, all the way up through human history, God has been offering salvation. Now of course in the early days of the human experience it wasn’t a faith + nothing like we are today. But as Abel so explicitly demonstrated, that when he recognized he had sinned, he brought the prescribed animal sacrifice and God accepted it. Now of course, today we don’t have to do that. A little later on when Israel got the Temple worship and the Law, the sacrifices became instrumental, mixed with faith of course. It’s always by faith. And then now we come up to where we are today where I can stand here and adamantly proclaim that we are saved by Faith + nothing. We don’t have to bring a sacrifice, we don’t have to do this or do that. Today the only requirement for salvation is to believe in our hearts Paul’s beautiful Gospel that he proclaimed, and that was given only to him for this Age of Grace. You can see that Gospel in I Corinthians 15:1-4.

Oh, again, I wish you could see the letters we get from our listeners, some as old as 90 years. They tell us things like, "Oh, I’ve been a Sunday School teacher for 50 years, memorized my Sunday School lesson, and now all of a sudden late in my life, I heard
your program and stepped into the Grace of God." And listen folks, for those who have been under the heavy hand of legalism, to step into the Grace of God is something that you cannot comprehend. It is total freedom from all the weight of a works religion. So this is why we constantly proclaim that God is only looking for those who are willing to believe, and to exercise their faith in what God has done. We’ll be looking at that a little later in this half hour. So now the problem then has been from day one, that:

*Hebrews 4:2b*

"...the word preached was not mixed (or united with what?) faith in them that heard it."

Faith! Again, lets go back to Kadesh, because that’s what the Scripture is always doing. And here we have Israel at the gates of the Promised Land at Kadesh, and God has told them in plain language, "Go in and take it, there’ll be no opposition, you don’t have to fear the Canaanites, because they’ll be gone. You don’t have to worry about starving to death, because you’re going to take over their farms and their vineyards. You don’t have to worry about the elements, because you’re going to be able to take over their dwelling places, it’s all ready for you. I’ve let them work for four hundred years to get it all ready for you." And now because of the Canaanites’ abject wickedness, God in all fairness says "I will drive them out and let you come in."

That’s what God told them. But they didn’t mix all of that with what? Faith. All they would have had to do is believe what God said, but they couldn’t. And you see it’s the same way when we proclaim the Gospel of the Grace of God. We can show from the Scriptures how it’s so simple that you just simply say, "Yes God I believe it with all my heart," and expect God to respond and he will.

But, you know I’m just reminded as I go, of a little anecdote I read before we left on our last trip, and I may have shared it with some from our seminars around the country. I think this probably goes back quite a few years, but this pastor in a huge church in Chicago had the placed packed, even the balcony. And he read II Corinthians. Let’s turn to it so that we don’t just let it go in one ear and out the other. What you see, you’ll remember a lot longer than what you hear. II Corinthians chapter 5, verse 17. And he read this verse to that huge congregation at his Sunday morning service. I don’t know what kind of a church it was, it doesn’t matter. All right, listen to what he read.

*II Corinthians 5:17*
"Therefore, if any man (now of course, that is a generic term, means women, boys, girls, etc.) be in Christ, he is a new creature: (or creation) old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

And he read that verse and he stopped and he said "Now I’m going to ask all of you a question. How many of you profess to be a Christian this morning? Please stand." How many do you think stood? Every last one of them. None excepted. He said all right, "Please be seated." He read the verse again, and we’re going to read it again.

II Corinthians 5:17

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; (or creation) old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Now he said, "How many of you know that you are in Christ and that you have been made a new creation? Please stand." How many stood that time? One here, one there. Just a sprinkling throughout that huge congregation. What does that tell you? What I’ve said from this program more than once. Our churches are full of unsaved church members. Oh, they’re "Christian," quote unquote, but they’re not in Christ. And you see only a true believer ever becomes in Christ, because the simplest believer is in Christ. But you see the vast majority of Christendom has no concept of what it means to be in Christ and to become a new creation. We’re talking about one who is not resting on self, one who is not resting on his denomination, one who is not resting on his local church. He’s not resting on his good works, he’s not resting on how much money he gives, he’s not resting on anything that he can do in the flesh, but rather he’s resting only on that finished work of the Cross. Then when we believe that, we become a member of Christ. We are then in Him!

See, my whole prerogative of teaching is to bring people out of their lethargy of thinking they’re a Christian because of something they have done or some act that they have precipitated, but they have never trusted Paul’s Gospel. There are legions of people in the church like that. That’s why it behooves me to just simply teach the truth. You see in this ministry I’m not trying to get church members, I’m not trying to twist people’s arms, and I’m not trying to build an organization. All I’m trying to do is to get people ready for eternity. And the best way to get ready for eternity is to study this Book.

Again, I guess I’m supposed to do it because it’s been ringing in my mind all afternoon. Several years ago I had a gentleman in one of my classes here in Oklahoma who had been saved out of a rather wild background and just became a testimony of God’s Grace. One class night, this gentleman, after the class (when almost everybody was gone), was over there cleaning up the coffee cups and stuff, which he just sort of
took as his way of responding to his salvation. He was standing over there minding his
own business, washing up the coffee cups and another gentleman, who was a total
unbeliever, almost an atheist I would say, came up and was arguing with me and just
trying to refute everything I would try to say from Scripture. Finally this first
gentleman couldn’t take it anymore and he walked up from behind him and he tapped
him on the shoulder and he said, "Look mister, let me tell you something. If you
ever get saved, then you will realize that you are so wrong and Les is so right,
because I’ve been there." And isn’t that exactly it? My, they can argue out of their
ignorance, and out of their tradition, but once the Lord saves them, then this Book
becomes the Living Word of God, then they can see, yes, they’ve been wrong.

You don’t know how many letters I get, that say, "Les, I’ve been active, I’ve been
this, I’ve been that for twenty years and it’s hard for me to recognize that I was so
wrong for so long. But you’ve shown me from the Scriptures." And that’s all I try to
do is just simply make it as plain as God’s Word does. All right, so all of these
opportunities for salvation, whether it was back there in the Garden of Eden, whether
it was Abel, whether it was Abraham, whether it was Moses, whether it was Peter, or
whether it was now someone in this Age of Grace, it always had to be mixed with
faith. Always.

Let me show you. Come back to Hebrews chapter 11. I think most of you, if you’ve
had any church background at all, know that this is called the what? The great faith
chapter. The whole chapter epitomizes the word Faith. Starting with verse 1 of
Hebrews 11.

Hebrews 11:1

"Now faith (taking God at his Word) is the substance (what is substance? It’s the
meat. It’s the very crux of the matter. It’s the core. Alright, Faith is the substance) of
things hoped for, the evidence of things (what?) not seen."

In the invisible. The only way you can comprehend it is by faith and don’t ever lose
sight of my definition of faith. What? Taking God at his Word! Don’t believe what I
say, believe what God says. Next verse.

Hebrews 11:2

"For by it (faith) the elders obtained a good report." Now when Paul speaks of the
elders, of course he’s talking about the patriarchs. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the
prophets. Now verse 3.

Hebrews 11:3a
"Through faith we understand (as believers) that the worlds (or the universe) was framed by (not the big bang, not by evolution, but by what?) the word of God,…"

A spoken word. God spoke and the universe came into being. God spoke and the dust came up out of the earth and formed Adam. God didn’t have to go and get putty and clay and glue. Oh, He spoke and Adam appeared out of the dust. He spoke and things happened. Alright and how do we know that? By faith. I can’t prove that that’s what God did. I don’t have to. Because that’s what God’s Word said He did. And we believe it without question. So it was by faith then that we understand the universe was framed.

Hebrews 11:3b

"...by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

Now that’s not double talk. That means exactly what it says. Everything you see out there on a starry night came out of what? Nothing. What does that mean? Well, God spoke and out of nothing and here it came. How many religious leaders of the world can do that? Well I’ll bet Buddha couldn’t, and I’ll bet none of the other big religious gurus could, but our God did, because we serve the Living God. And so it’s by faith. Now let’s just go on for a few. Now verse 4.

Hebrews 4:4a

"By faith (by taking God at his word) Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain,…"

Now here we have the epitome of two concepts. Abel simply did what God said to do, but Cain rationalized and said, "Now wait a minute, God didn’t really mean that. Surely God will accept me if he sees that I’ve done this by the sweat of my brow and I’ve gotten dirt under my nails," but what did Cain not understand? That’s not what God said to do. God told him to bring an animal sacrifice and shed blood and so he was rejected because he didn’t do that. But on the other hand, Abel by his faith did what God said to do, as he brought the lamb, he brought the sacrifice, he shed its blood and God accepted it. So how did Abel know what to do? God had told him, and he believed Him, and that’s faith. Alright, now moving on down to verse 5.

Hebrews 4:5a

"By faith (the man) Enoch (walked with God and he) was translated that he should not see death;..."
He was gone; he’s out of here. I think it’s a good picture of what’s going to happen to us one of these days. And I imagine the world will say, "Good riddance, I’m glad that guy’s gone." But it’s coming! We’re getting closer every day. Alright, now the next one in verse 6. It’s one of the verses that I call one of the absolutes of Scripture. It’s one of two absolutes that I always come back to.

**Hebrews 4:6a**

"But without faith it is impossible to please him;..." (God)

That’s an absolute! You cannot rationalize that away, you cannot compromise it, and you cannot mix it, because it’s an absolute. Now since I’ve mentioned there were two, you might as well look at the other one, and the other one is back in chapter 9 verse 22, so let’s put the two together, and they’re as absolute as anything in Scripture.

**Hebrews 9:22b**

"...and without the shedding of blood is no remission."

There is no remission, or forgiveness of sin. Do you believe it? You better. That’s an absolute. There is no salvation without the shedding of blood! See, that’s why Christ had to be lifted up on that Roman cross rather than any other means of death that Rome may have practiced. But he had to be lifted up so his blood could be shed, it was an absolute. And the corresponding one is the one we just looked at, Faith. And you put those two together and listen, isn’t that exactly what was practiced ever since back there when God shed the animals’ blood for Adam and Eve. And when Abel brought the blood sacrifice. When Noah brought the sacrificial animals into the ark. And when Judaism or the Mosaic system demanded blood sacrifice? And then when Christ was lifted up, Paul could now say that we are redeemed, we’ve been bought with that purchased price which is what? The blood of Christ. And without it there is no forgiveness. Alright, let’s read on in Hebrews. This is just a good exercise in Faith. Now verse 7.

**Hebrews 11:7a**

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not see as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark..."

**Hebrews 11:8**

"By faith Abraham when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed: and he went out, not knowing whither he went."
And all the way up through this chapter, he comes up through the whole hallmark of fame in the Old Testament. Do you see that? And they all operated under this one word we call faith. "Without Faith it’s impossible to please God." Now let’s go back to Hebrews 4, and now verse 3.

**Hebrews 4:3a**

"For we which have (been baptized? Have repented? Have done this or that or any other thing? For we who have what?) **believed** (see how simple it is. For we who have believed) do enter into rest...."  

Now remember the Canaan rest, the rest of the Promised Land is not a picture of heaven. I just rebel at that. That was never a picture of heaven. It was a picture of a repose that could have come about because of their obedience of faith. God had said it, they responded to it, they could have entered in and they could have a rest. No war, no famine, it would have just been the result of a living faith. It’s not a picture of heaven, **but it is a picture for us of our salvation rest.** That when we enter in by faith, when we enter in because of the shed blood, what can we do? Rest in it. Oh, don’t try to somehow enhance it. **But we believe it and we rest.** Now that doesn’t mean we won’t work. I’m not talking about that, but so far as salvation is concerned, we settle in and we rest in what God has done on our behalf. Now let’s read some more of verse 3.

**Hebrews 4:3b-4**

"...as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, (going back again to Kadesh) **if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation (or the very creation) of the world."** (now I’ve got to go into verse 4) **For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works."**

Now why in the world does the Holy Spirit prompt the apostle to bring in the creation account of Genesis? Well, let’s go back and look at it. Come back to Genesis chapter 1 the last verse. It’s an interesting verse, in light of what we’re going to see in chapter 2. Genesis 1 verse 31. All of creation is now finished. The animal kingdom, the birds, the fish, man. Everything is done.

**Genesis 1:31a**

"And God saw every thing that he had made, (or created) and, behold, it was (what?) very good."
Now the Hebrew, I think, implies even more than what we can put on that *very good*. It was what? Perfect. I don’t think you and I can even begin to imagine the beauty of that newly created Garden of Eden and the planet over which Adam was given dominion. I don’t think we can begin to comprehend it. And he saw that it was very good. Now let’s jump up into chapter 2 verse 1.

**Genesis 2:1-2a**

"Thus the heavens and the earth were (what?) finished, (mark that word *finished*, and don’t run over it casually) and all the host of them. 2. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made;…" Or energizing the system, it was finished now remember. And so on the seventh day he what?)

**Genesis 2:2b**

"…and he rested…"

Why? There wasn’t anything more to do. He couldn’t improve on that particular aspect, He couldn’t make that any more beautiful, He couldn’t embellish this any better. Everything that needed to be done was done, and so what did He do? He rested. Now normally, when we have been real active and I guess the older we get the more I’m aware of it, but I’m not the only one as I advance in my years. After we’ve been working a few hours, what’s the first thing we really want to do? Sit down. My old hips start to get tired and I’m ready to sit down. Well, what’s the purpose? Rest. Are you with me? And so when God finished the glorious work of creation He literally sat down. He was all done.

Now let’s go to another one. All the way up to John’s gospel. In John chapter 19 and we find Christ on the cross; these are the accounts of His final hours of the crucifixion. And then it says in verse 30.

**John 19:30a**

"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, (what?) It is finished:"

What does it mean? Just what it says. There wasn’t one more iota of anything that He could do to embellish that salvation that He had just accomplished. Just as surely as the universe and the Garden of Eden and everything in it was perfect and God rested, so also when He finished that work of the cross. We’ll carry it a little further next lesson.
Lesson Two • Part IV

Coming Up Short of God’s Promise

Hebrews 4:1-11

Back to Hebrews, chapter 4 and verse 4. In the last lesson we didn’t quite finished with that verse, where it says he spake in a certain place, speaking of Genesis chapter 2 where we were in the last program.

Hebrews 4:4-5

"For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest (and that’s the word we’re really looking at. God rested) the seventh day from all his works. 5. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest."

Now this whole idea of rest then is laying on us the simple fact that if something is complete and there is nothing more that man can do, God himself has said "It’s very good," then what are we to do? Rest. Now if you’re resting, and I’ll just use a simple childlike illustration. If you buy a ticket from Tulsa to New York and you go and take your seat and the plane no more than takes off and makes its curve and probably heading back toward the east, immediately, as soon as you’re able, you jump up out of your seat, you run forward and you may even be able to get as far as the pilot’s cabin, you say "Are you really going the right direction?"

Now we’d say that’s ridiculous. That pilot knows where he’s going. But listen, not half as ridiculous as when we doubt God. But you see this is exactly what people do. They make a profession of salvation, they may go through a prescribed ritual, and there’s no peace, there’s no assurance of salvation. So what do they do? They’re constantly running here, running there, trying to find the answers to their dilemma. I mean, we have it happen all the time. And then all of a sudden, they enter into this saving Grace of God where they suddenly realize they can do nothing but believe it and then what can they do? Rest. Just like the airline passenger that can sit back in his seat, relax, start reading something and forget all about the responsibilities of where that pilot is going. Because they have total faith in the plane and the system.

Well, that’s what we have to do with our salvation. God has said it’s finished and we don’t have to sweat and work and try to do this and do that. We just rest in it. Now that doesn’t mean we don’t work. I’m talking about the salvation experience. And see that’s why Canaan became such a beautiful picture of the whole scenario. Rest was rejected because of unbelief but on the other hand a picture of what rest really can be
for the believer. **Oh, we can just revel in the fact that we don’t have to work, work, work for salvation, as that’s all been done. It’s finished.**

But just stop and think a minute of all the things that even Christendom lays upon their adherence. Oh you’ve got to do this, you’ve got to do that. You’ve got to fulfill this obligation; you’ve got to fulfill that obligation. **And listen, God will have nothing of it because He finished it, and He cannot let man put his filthy fingers on it. It’s a done deal.** And so, come back to the text again, and read verse 5 again.

**Hebrews 4:5b**

"…If they shall enter into my rest."

**And how is it to be entered? By faith and faith alone, plus nothing, because it’s finished.** I don’t know how else to put it, I guess I could just go through various other places. Come back to Hebrews chapter 1 verse 3. And this again is just more ammunition to show that when Jesus said it’s finished, He meant what He said. Alright, we were speaking of the Son back in verse 2. Now verse 3.

**Hebrews 1:3**

"**Who being the brightness of his glory,** (He was God from the beginning, from eternity past. He was God in the flesh. He, as God took the sins of the world upon Himself. So being the brightness of His glory) **and the express image of his person,** and **upholding all things** (that is everything in this universe is held together) **by the word of his power,** when he had by himself (alone, without any help from anyone. When He had by Himself) **purged** (or taken away) **our sins,** (what did He do? What does it say?) **sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;"**

And I said in the last half hour; what does that imply? It’s finished. He rested, and there was nothing more to do. He had done everything that God demanded. Now listen, I tell people, without compunction, I don’t care how great our faith, I don’t care how great an understanding a person can have of this Book, there is no way that you and I as mortals will ever comprehend more than just an infinitesimal amount of what was accomplished on that cross. I’ll never comprehend it. And when Paul in Ephesians speaks on the unsearchable riches of Christ, was he playing with words? No way. **It is unsearchable.** There is no way that I can understand all that God poured out first from the wrath side on God the Son who became the epitome of sin itself. I cannot begin to comprehend that. And on the other hand, He poured out what? Mercy. It was a two-barreled attack. He poured out His wrath because of the sin aspect. He poured out His mercy because of the love aspect. How can mortal man comprehend that? I can’t. I’m going to keep trying to get more and more and more.
That’s the whole idea. But we could live to be a thousand years and we would never comprehend it all. And so what do we do? Take it by faith. **God, you did it, you said it, it’s complete, it’s finished. I’m resting. I’m not going to come running up there to the pilots cabin and ask are you going the right direction. I’m not going to come running in every time and say, "God, but are you sure?"**

But see, the reason Paul is making this so explicit to these Hebrews was that this was their dilemma. They still had not entered into Paul’s saving Gospel. They were still holding to Judaism, and they were still holding to their works religion. And that’s why you’ve got all these terms of conditions in this letter that scares people half to death. **Listen, never do these verses that list conditions deal with the believer.** That unless he does this, and unless he does that, he’s going to be back out there lost. No, that’s not what it’s talking about. It’s talking to these people who were on the fence. Unless you make a break with that religious system in your past and step into that finished work of the cross, you’re in danger, and this is what we have to let people know. **Listen, you cannot drag one foot in legalism. You cannot leave one foot in religion of whatever sort it is and have the other foot in the Grace of God and be accepted.** It won’t work. Because what does it say? "Well God you didn’t really finish it." And God won’t have it. No little puny mortal man is going to tell God that he didn’t quite finish the job.

And so, here is the purpose of this letter. It’s to bring these people out of that position of being on the fence. That’s exactly what he meant when he said in Hebrews chapter 6 and I’ve had so many letters and I guess other Bible teachers have had the same thing. They’ll write and they’ll write and they’ll write, but doesn’t it say, "it’s impossible if we’ve been once enlightened and we fall out that there is no more sacrifice for sin." Hey that doesn’t mean if you’ve been saved and you’re lost again. No way. **All these verses in Hebrews are dealing with the same scenario. Steeped in religion and can’t make the break into Grace.** But listen, God’s doing it. He’s breaking the shackles of more and more people who are coming out of that kind of a background into the Grace of God. Alright, let’s come back to chapter 4, and let’s come on down to verse 6.

**Hebrews 4:6**

"Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:"

Now you’re going to get sick and tired of me referring to it, but I can’t help it. What are we talking about? **Those to whom it was first preached?** Well, we’re talking about Israel at Kadesh. They were the first prime example of God giving such a glorious offer that all they had to do was take it by faith, but rejected it. And that’s what it
means, unto whom it was first preached. It doesn’t mean that anybody before that never had an opportunity of salvation, but this is the first prime example of God offering something that was so perfect, so complete. **Not an Israelite would have been killed by a Canaanite. Not a single Israelite would have gone to bed hungry. Not a single Israelite would have gone to bed cold and out in the elements. God had had those Canaanites working 400 years like bees getting everything ready.** 400 years he told Abraham the Canaanites would be given every opportunity to come out of their wickedness. But instead of coming out it, what did they do? They went deeper and deeper and deeper until they were so morally filthy, God said it’s time to move them out and let Israel have all the fruits of their labor. And so it just became a primary example of God’s offering them a rest existence without having to fight and work. They could have had it. But why did they miss it? **Unbelief!**

Look at the world around you. Look at our beloved America. We have Bibles in every home, in every hospital room, in every motel room, everywhere. How many people ever look at them? Almost nobody. Iris and I make it a practice - every motel room, we go and look and find that Bible. Has it been used? No. It’s just a skip in the day that the Gideons put it in there. Look at the multitudes around us, even here in the Bible belt. How many of them, I’m not judging, I don’t know, but I’ve got a pretty good idea. **How many of our run of the mill people going up and down the highways of life ever, for 30 seconds, think about eternity?** Not many. Precious few. Why? Because we’re no better than Israel. **We’re a nation tonight of total unbelief. That’s our problem.**

I’ve said on our program before, our problem isn’t Democrats or Republicans, the economy, our defense posture, the drug business, teenage pregnancy. Now those are all the result of our problem, but what’s our problem? Unbelief. **America no longer believes this Book.** America scoffs at everything this Book says anymore. And consequently, America is headed for the same kind of a downfall that other empires have experienced, that other nations have experienced. Because there comes a time when God says, "I’ve had it!" and so, here’s the text. Why did they not enter in? **Because of their unbelief!** Now verse 7.

*Hebrews 4:7a*

"*Again, he limiteth a certain day saying in David,...*"

Now if you think **I repeat**, I don’t hold a candle to this Book, because it’s always repeating and repeating and repeating. I think I made mention once before, I read a book by a theologian back in England in about the middle 1800’s if I’m not mistaken. That book is very thick, small print, and it only covers Romans 6 and 7. Now how are you going to write a book that thick with small print as a commentary on two chapters
in Romans? Repeat and repeat and repeat, over and over and over again. He makes the same statements but of course he had his purposes, but the Bible does the same thing, as it just does not let this thing rest.

*Hebrews 4:7b*

"...To day, (which for the Gentile world is now been going almost 2000 years. That’s today. Alright read on. Today) *if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*"

Now a few programs back we made reference to Felix as Paul dealt with that political leader. But what did Felix do? Hardened his own heart. God didn’t harden it. He hardened it with his constant refusal until finally it gets to the place that that hardened heart never does respond. Now I also said God never gives up, of course not. **But nevertheless, the warning here is, do not harden your hearts.** Alright now then verse 8.

*Hebrews 4:8a*

"*For if Jesus…*

I know your King James says Jesus in this verse, but I think most of your newer translations and your commentaries and my margin will call it Joshua, who had taken Moses’ place of leadership. And Joshua is going to lead them into the land of rest as Moses could have done at Kadesh. Joshua now is going to bring the Nation of Israel in from the East of Jordan. And as Joshua leads the nation into Canaan, what’s the scenario? War. They’re going to have to fight every inch of the way. Now God’s going to give them the victory, but they’re going to lose a lot of blood in the process. And so I do not like to use Joshua’s taking the children of Israel across Jordan into the Land of Canaan as a picture except when we enter into our Christian life in this world of sin under the curse. Is it a life of ease and rest like Canaan would have been? No. It’s a warfare. And so there is an analogy that yes, we’ve entered into that complete rest because of the work that’s finished. But on the other hand, we can look at Joshua’s occupying, that in this life, hey, there’s no easy row to hoe.

You know, I’ve so often used the illustration on this program. The Christian life today is like paddling a canoe in a river with a pretty good current. Now I don’t think I could make a canoe go upstream. I suppose a good professional could, but I don’t think I could, but even if I could paddle that canoe up against stream, which is a good picture of the Christian life, what happens the minute I take the paddle out of the water? Down stream we go. So what is the Christian life? It’s a constant battle. It’s a constant working to maintain our Christian experience. So you’ve got these two aspects. You’ve got the land of Canaan pictured as a place of total rest, a finished
work, and Christ sat down because it was finished. But on the other hand, we have to look at Joshua because that’s the real world. **We’re not living in a world where we can just sit down and not worry about anything. But positionally, in our salvation experience, yes, we’re in the land of Canaan at rest. But experientially, maybe I can put it that way. Positionally, we’re in the place of rest, experientially, we’re in a constant battle.** Alright let’s go on with verse 8 repeating.

*Hebrews 4:8*

"For if Joshua had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day."

In other words, Joshua couldn’t make the same kind of promises that Moses and Aaron could because the Canaanites were still there. The first thing they had to do was fight. They had no easy road. My goodness, you go back and read the Book of Joshua and go on into the Book of Judges - I thank God that I wasn’t living in those days. It’s death and mayhem all the way through those Books of the historicals in the Bible. There wasn’t any rest associated with that. And so Joshua, as he took the people in under a mode of warfare, all he could promise was that which was coming. He couldn’t offer them rest because after all, he had to lead them in by warfare.

You all know the account back there after they crossed Jordan. What was the first thing they had to do? They had to face Jericho and you all know the battle of Jericho. Even though God did that one without lifting a sword, yet that was just the beginning of having to gain the land of Canaan, city by city, tribe by tribe, and they never did get to the place where they had total rest, and so that’s what the verse meant. Had Joshua taken them in under the same circumstances that Moses could have, he wouldn’t have had to speak of a future day when their battles were won and so forth. But Joshua couldn’t.

And so all of these things become just a great lesson for us that what Israel rejected by unbelief, they paid their dues when they went in later and had to work by the sweat of their brow, by the blood of their sons, and then never enjoy a full occupation of the land of Canaan without the presence of the Canaanite people. Alright, then let’s go on into verse 9. I’ve got to wind this up rather quickly now.

*Hebrews 4:9*

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."

See, that’s the difference. **For the unbeliever there is no rest, as it’s a constant turmoil.** Even for these Hebrews, what can I call them? They’ve got one foot in
Judaism; they’ve got one foot in Paul’s message of Grace, and neither one is profiting them anything. They’re not in any rest. And so this is the constant plea of the apostle. "Make the break. Come out from that legalism and come into the rest that only God’s Grace can offer." Now then verse 11 may be a verse that throws a curve at a few people. They say, "Well, see, that shows you’ve got to work for your salvation." Absolutely not!

_Hebrews 4:11_

"Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall (not out of salvation, but never having attained it) after the same example of (what?) unbelief." Unbelief. It isn’t a matter of having been in and fallen out. They never came in. Now let’s look at what Peter says about this. I think it’s chapter 1.

_I Peter 1:10_

"Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied (spoke forth) of the grace that should (what?) come unto you:" At a future day. And so the prophets knew that there was a time coming when even Israel could come in without all the demands of the law.

Well the other one I was looking for where Peter says that "we were to work to make our calling and election sure." I’m not seeing the verse that I wanted. But what did he mean when he said that? Well it didn’t mean that you did physical work for somehow appeasing a Holy God. But it means that you get down into the Book. Make work of searching the Scripture and don’t just sit in some easy pew and let somebody feed you pablum. The Scripture says labor to enter into that rest. Not by doing something for salvation but make work of studying the Scripture. Because in them the Scripture says you have what? "Eternal life." And this is the whole idea. But, you see, people just don’t want to get into the Book. And here’s where it’s at and once you get into it you can’t hardly close it. I mean it just consumes you. And so never lose sight of the fact that their whole example of not cashing in on the glory of the Promised Land was unbelief.
Lesson Three • Part I

The All Powerful Word of God

Hebrews 4:12-16

This is the first time we’ve taped since the tragic events of September 11th, and so, consequently, I think we’ll digress from our teachings in Hebrews for this half hour, and comment on these events. My, we’ve been getting a lot of phone calls, and a lot of letters for our comments with regard to what’s taking place in the world today. Like I told Iris on the way up, I still hadn’t decided whether to or not to, but since we do have such a nationwide audience I do feel that it’s only appropriate that we address the fact that our hearts have gone out to those who lost loved ones, to those who went through the trying moments of hearing their loved ones say goodbye. I just can’t comprehend those kinds of circumstances. And yet, that’s part and parcel of being under the curse, because after all, that’s what precipitates all of mankind’s problems.

It’s not God. Never blame God for these things. Horror of horrors. We’re not living under the wrath of God, but rather His glorious Grace. Now the day is coming when the wrath of God will finally be poured out, but that’s not today. These disasters tear at the heart of God just as much as it does ours but it’s the work of the adversary who loves to bring misery into the human race knowing that it gets at the very heart of the Creator Himself.

So, again our hearts do go out to those who have lost loved ones amidst the turmoil of these last several weeks. We almost sympathize with our leadership. I don’t see how our President can sleep at night with the pressure that’s upon him. And again remember it’s not the wrath of God, although God permitted it to happen. But rather I think all these events are setting the stage for what’s coming. This is a wake-up call. This is just simply letting the world know what we are heading for in the days to come, like it says in Luke 21, and we may have time to look at that. But, Luke 21 says so clearly that the nations will be in perplexity. And certainly that’s where we are. There is not a visible enemy that you can send your troops out to confront. You can’t line up your artillery weapons and start bombarding on a front. But rather we are confronted with something that’s going to be hard to pinpoint. And I’m glad our leadership is letting us know that this is going to be a time consuming thing.

So what I admonish all my classes here in Oklahoma is that you just pray, pray, pray, that God will give our men in places of leadership the wisdom that they need to confront these things. No matter how bad something is there’s always some good and I think we can all realize as believers that the good that has come
from this is that once again America is not ashamed to use the term ‘God.’ And our liberals and our ACLU should probably wake up and realize that even though they have cowed people, they have frightened people into a silence, that all of a sudden the true nature of most of our people has come to the fore and we are not ashamed to say "God Bless America!" We’re not ashamed to wave the flag. And, I think that again we realize that the enemy is always out there envious of what we have.

Because remember that the whole purpose of government down through history is to protect its citizens from those who like to come in and take what someone else has. That’s human nature. And even as great as America is we have to maintain a defense posture because as we’ve already seen there are people out there that would love to destroy us. So consequently, you be much in prayer and you encourage our government people to maintain our defensive posture. After all we’re living in a world that’s under the curse. We’re living in a world where Satan is the god of this world and God in His Sovereignty of course, permits these things but He certainly does not direct it.

I’d like to bring out the point, ‘Why has all this been precipitated?’ I think I can hit the nail on the head by saying it is because of the little Nation of Israel. 90% of our problems that are arising is that the enemy detests the fact that God’s Word is being fulfilled. And never lose sight of the fact, in fact, I just rehearsed it with someone the other day who had a grandchild who was about 18 years-old, and who was kind of adamant about believing the Bible. And I just suggested to them, next time you talk to this kid, just ask, "Have you ever stopped to think, that here we have the little Nation of Israel with only five million people, living in a geographical area smaller than one-half of New Jersey and yet they’re in the news every day of the week."

I’ve made a habit now of checking the Daily Oklahoman and I can honestly say that there is not a day that the little Nation of Israel is not in the News. That should precipitate some common sense questioning. Why? Why, one little nation of only five million people constantly in the world’s spotlight? Well, you see, it just again goes back to prove that this is the only Book on earth (and I never attack other religions. I still don’t have to, as all I have to do is stand on this one.) No other Book on earth was able to tell things hundreds of years in advance and with what we’re seeing in the Middle East 3,500 years in advance. No human intellect could have ever done that. But it’s only because it is the supernatural Word of God.

We’re not going to have time to look at all of these but I just checked it again the other evening. King Josiah, one of the Kings of ancient Israel, was named three hundred years before he was born. King Cyrus of the Medes and the Persians was
named and designated as the one who would make the decree to send the Jews back to
rebuild the city of Jerusalem, one hundred years before he was born. And so all the
way through Scripture we have these things that designate it as a supernaturally
inspired Book.

Now I said the Bible foretells 3500 years in advance, so let’s start over in the Book of
Deuteronomy in chapter 30 and this is the reason why we have the Middle East the
way it is. Now remember, this was written by Moses 1,500 years before Christ. That’s
3,500 years back from today, and look what he wrote.

*Deuteronomy 30:1*

"And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, (now
remember Moses wrote to the children of Israel) the blessings and the curse, which I
have set before thee, (Now watch this.) and thou shalt call them to mind among all
the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee,"

Now what does that tell you? That at some point future from Moses’ time and back
from our time, the Jews would be scattered into every sovereign nation on earth. None
excepted, and they were, and many are still in those nations, but many have returned
to the little Nation of Israel. Alright, now look at the next verse. After they’ve been
scattered to every nation under heaven.

*Deuteronomy 30:2*

"And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all
that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with
all thy soul."

Now in order to define that a little closer, I usually like to jump up to Ezekiel chapter
37 and most of you are acquainted with that as the chapter of the dry bones. Ezekiel
saw the vision and he saw symbolically the Jews scattered out into the nations of the
world. Out of the land of blessing. Separated from their Temple, without a priesthood,
without a sacrifice. And it was just as if they were dead people, and spiritually, of
course, they were.

Out of all those graves, then (as the Bible calls Israel living amongst the Gentiles
while living in dispersion), the vision showed Ezekiel that one day those people would
come back to a life (a spiritual life) and that God would supernaturally bring them
back to the land. Now again, many times, even we as believers just take this as a
mundane thing. It’s something we’ve always heard and we think nothing of it. But just
stop and meditate. **Here you have one little group of people scattered amongst all**
the other various nationalities and races with always the constant temptation to intermarry and yet for the most part they never did. And so for the 3,500 years that have elapsed they have not lost their national or racial identity. Unbelievable! They should have disappeared 2,000 years ago at least. But they haven’t. And even in spite of all their persecution and their pressure and being driven out of first one empire after the next, yet they’ve always survived.

Another facet of Scripture has always proved itself and that was the part of the Covenant that God gave to Abraham before the Nation of Israel ever began. And that was, that He would bless those who would bless the Jew and He would curse those who cursed or turned on the Jew. And all you have to do is go to your library and be a student of history and you’ll see that that has never failed. Sometimes it takes a while, but sooner or later any empire or any nation that turned on the Jew went down the tube never again to come back to a place of preeminence. And so that’s why I think we as Americans have to realize that God has blessed us in spite of all of our sin. In spite of all of our wickedness and unbelief God has continued to bless us because we have been a blessing to the Jewish people, we have been the only ones that have stood with her. And if ever that changes then America like everybody else will go down the tube, maybe not immediately, but sooner or later. And so we have to rest on the promises of this Book, which alone proves itself as the divinely inspired Word of God.

Alright, have you got Ezekiel 37 verse 11? After he sees the vision of all these valleys of dry bones, which were symbolically indicative of the Nation of Israel, scattered amongst the Gentiles nations, verse 11.

_Ezekiel 37:11a_

"Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel:"

Again I have to stop for just a second. You know, there are those who say the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom were lost and disappeared into antiquity and that the only Jews were those that remain from the southern two tribes of Judea and Benjamin. Not according to this. It’s the _whole_ house of Israel. All the tribes are going to be involved in their end-time scenario. So these bones are the whole house of Israel.

_Ezekiel 37:11b_

"...behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts." Because they’ve been out there for so long, and now God says to Ezekiel in verse 12:
Ezekiel 37:12a

"Therefore, prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God;..." The Creator God. We’re going to go back to Hebrews in our next half-hour and again we’re going to be dealing with that ‘Living God’ that Hebrews refers to so often. And here was the same One.

Ezekiel 37:12

"Therefore, (this Living God says) prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, (and this is the part I want you to underline or highlight. He’s going to bring them out of those habitations amongst the Gentiles) and I will bring you into the land of Israel."

That’s the only reason they’re there back in the land of Israel tonight. There is no other valid reason why the Jew had been able to go back and out of a land that was desolate, treeless, rock-strewn, arid. Full of disease, predominately the malaria. Kept devastated by earthquakes for almost 2,000 years since the 70 AD dispersion and then all of a sudden the land becomes once again responsive. The Jews start coming in first in a trickle. Setting up the kibbutzes, clearing the land, planting the trees and now we’ve seen the results of it. It’s now again almost a Garden of Eden as you drive up and down the land of Israel. The green wheat fields. And the banana orchards and the nut orchards, and so forth, it’s literally a land that has been brought back from total desolation.

For some of our seminars this past summer and some of our Oklahoma classes I read a little clip from a book by Mark Twain and I don’t want to take time to read all of it here on the program. But I’ll just read you a line or two of how Mark Twain described the land of Palestine or Israel, as we know it biblically in the 1860’s. Now remember Titus destroyed the city of Jerusalem in 70 AD whereupon the Jews were emptied out of the land. But, just exactly like Leviticus told the Jews at the Babylonian captivity that when He would take Israel out of the land it would become a desolation. That even their enemies would be totally amazed at how desolate the land of Israel could become.

Alright, so this is what Mark Twain wrote then in the 1860’s and it comes from a book that is called The Innocence Abroad. I’m hopefully giving it the right credit. And this is what he wrote:

‘The soil is rich enough but is given completely to weeds. A desolation is here that not even imagination can grace with the pomp of life and action. We never saw a
human being on the whole route. We never saw a human being. We pressed toward Jerusalem and the further we went the hotter the sun got. The more rocky and bare and repulsive and dreary the landscape became. Jerusalem is lifeless. I would not desire to live there. Palestine is a hopeless, dreary, heartbroken land. It sits in sackcloth and ashes."

Now this is by a reputable man, the writer of Huckleberry Finn - Mark Twain or Samuel Clemens as he was known. This is out of his own book. That was the picture of the so-called Promised Land or the land that the Arab world would try to tell us has always been verdant and green and productive. But it hasn’t. God purposely kept it barren and desolate. Then I read not too long ago that one of the instruments God used to keep the land was earthquakes. And that from almost antiquity on up until 1900 earthquakes literally leveled any city that anyone tried to build. And those of you who have been with us to Israel remember some of the ruins at Bethshan and Caesarea on the Sea, and Sepphoris and some of these, where the Romans had built beautiful cities and they are devastated. Well, what caused it? Earthquakes. And so all the way through those 2,000 years there were enough earthquakes across the land of Palestine that nothing survived.

And as I’ve already mentioned, the malarial disease was rampant, and, one author even put it this way. Jews who tried to go back and eke out a living would never last more than two generations until disease would wipe them out. So, God’s Word was true that with Israel out of the land it would remain a total desolation. But beginning at about 1900, for the last hundred years now, God has been setting the stage. And that’s the best way I can put everything that has taken place, even in our lifetime, in the last 50 years, everything is simply setting the stage for the day when the man of sin will come on the scene. We call him the anti-Christ. Which, I think is sort of a misnomer because the term makes most people think that this guy is going to come on the scene hating God and he’s going to be anti-God, which of course, he will.

But that’s beneath the surface. **On the surface, the term anti-Christ means the master counterfeiter. And that’s what he’s going to be. He’s going to come on the world scene as the counterfeit Messiah.** And as I have taught and I guess we’re teaching this on the daily programs which are reruns of course, made almost 8-9 years ago, but when he comes on the scene, even Israel will think that he’s the long promised Messiah, because supernaturally, not under ordinary politics, but supernaturally he will be able to bring peace to the Middle East which no one today could do. But he will and he will actually get the Arab world to agree to let the Jews build a Temple.

Now, it’s not going to be a gold furbished temple like Solomon’s. It’s not going to be made with the Cedars of Lebanon. My own idea is it’s probably some kind of a prefab
thing that is already sitting in a warehouse in Jerusalem. But, whatever. It’s going to be functional, because we know that for three and a half years Israel is going to once again go back under the Law and enjoy their Temple Worship. So, this man is going to negotiate that kind of a peace treaty. Well, the world will just be aghast that after all the efforts of America and Europe to bring peace to the Middle East, this guy will do it with one fell swoop. And so this is everything that is taking place.

You know about 8-10 years ago there were a lot of books out and there was a lot of talk about a so-called conspiracy. And that certain groups in the world were conspiring to bring about world government. Well, no doubt some of those things were true, but, I’ve always said, no. It’s not a conspiracy; it’s the Sovereign God. God is setting the stage. And I guess I usually use my hands for emphasis. I always sort of bring it to a point like a pyramid, because that’s what we’re seeing.

For the last ‘umpteen’ hundred years everything has been moving the world, just like up to the point of a pyramid to the time when this one man will be able to come in and perform the things that will just astonish the world. And we call him the anti-Christ, but I call him the counterfeit Christ and he will bring about peace to the Middle East. Israel will rebuild the Temple and then we enter into all the horrors of the seven years of Tribulation.

Now, we’re not in the Tribulation today. Not by any stretch of the imagination. As I said, early in the program. **Today we’re in the Age of Grace.** God is dealing with the human people in Grace, in spite of the catastrophe. In fact, I told people shortly after we realized how many people were normally in the Twin Towers on any given day. And I just simply used fourth grade arithmetic. The articles I read said that normally there were 40,000 people working in those two buildings plus about 10,000 that were there as tourists.

Forty and ten in my old arithmetic is 50,000 people. Now for the 5-6 thousand people that lost their life, it’s horrendous, it’s awful. But don’t people stop to think how that God by His Grace spared at least 40,000 who escaped with their life? But you don’t hear any of that. But that’s where I call it the Grace of God that spared that many.

But, the day is coming, beloved, when the wrath of God will begin and that of course, is all the horrors then of Revelation and the Old Testament prophecies that we covered when we were teaching end-time events, when we were covering I Thessalonians. The ‘Day of the Lord.’ It is going to be awful. And I reminded my classes all this past week, Revelation tells us that in the first three and a half years, one-fourth of the world’s population is going to go.
The world is fast approaching 8 billion people and again fourth grade arithmetic tells me that in the first three and a half years 2 billion people are going to lose their life. Now you math majors can just figure it in your mind. How many million is that a day? Every day. A million and a half people will be losing their life. And then you get into the last half of those seven years and six billion people are going to go in three and a half years. That double or triples to 2-3 million people a day.

So, yes, this is a wake-up call. The wrath of God is not here today, but, it’s coming. **This Book is true. Israel proves it.** That just as surely, God said He would take them out of the land and scatter them. Make the land a desolation while they’re gone. But the day would come that He would bring them back and the land would again come back into production. It would blossom like a desert rose. And we’ve seen it happen, and so all of these things are just reminders that we’re fast approaching the end. Now I don’t set dates. My, it could be several years, it could be just several months. **But we as believers are told to be ready. We’re to be looking up, we’re to be realizing that our redemption is drawing nigh.**

The other point that I guess I should make is watch Western Europe because it’s out of Western Europe that the events of the Tribulation will begin to come. This coming January, Western Europe will go under a common currency. The Euro Dollar and all of that is just again in a fulfillment of the setting of the stage. That’s the best way I can put it. All the players are being put in place, the background scenery is being put in place. Everything is being made ready for those final seven years. We’re not in them, however we think we’re getting close to them, **and it behooves us as believers to just pray, pray, pray. Not for ourselves, but for our nation and for lost people around us.**
Lesson Three • Part II

The All Powerful Word of God

Hebrews 4:12-16

As we teach we just simply open the Scriptures so that whatever your background you can go into the Word of God and understand what it’s talking about. And I guess the compensation that Iris and I have gotten for our effort is to receive all the letters and the phone calls stating that for the first time in people’s lives they’re understanding and they are able to read and study their Bible. Okay, now this is a Bible study and we’re going to get right back in where we left off a couple of programs ago in Hebrews chapter 4 and verse 12. It’s a verse, I suppose that most of you have probably memorized at some time in your youth. But, what a loaded verse! Of course, I say that about all of them, don’t I? Every verse I come to is just loaded! And it’s just hard to skip over any of them. Alright, verse 12 of Hebrews 4. What’s the first word?

Hebrews 12:4a

"For…"

Is that word there just to fill space? No! It’s an important word because you see, for the last several verses all the way back up, in fact to chapter 3, we have been dealing with a subject that the Bible probably refers to more often than any other one thing that I can put my finger on. And that was when Israel refused to go in and take the Promised Land at Kadesh-barnea. That was just unbelievable wasn’t it? God had promised they wouldn’t have to lift a sword, there wouldn’t be a drop of Jewish blood lost, and that everything was ready for them. God had given the Canaanites 400 years to get the land ready and to come to the end of God’s patience with them.

And so that’s what He told Abraham, that when the cup of iniquity of the Canaanites was full then the children of Israel would be able to come in and enjoy the land. But, after God had told them to go in and take it, it’s waiting for you, then Israel with only a few exceptions (Moses and Aaron and Joshua and Caleb and maybe a few others), the vast majority of the nation wept and cried. And said, "We can’t do it, there’s no way we can beat those Canaanites." The spies came back and said "There’s giants in the land, and the cities are walled and so forth." Well, so what! But the fact of the matter was, they just couldn’t believe what God said.

And when you can’t believe what God says, what does the Book call it? Unbelief! That is the most horrible sin that a man commits. Unbelief is far worse than any act of immorality. Unbelief is worse than anything you can think of,
because it is in so many words, simply put, calling the Holy, Righteous, Almighty God a liar. When you don’t believe somebody, you simply tell them ‘you’re a liar.’

And to consequently this is something that God just cannot get off His mind. And the Scripture is reminding us they did not go in because of unbelief. The Word of God had told them, it’s there, so go in and take it. Alright, so what does the word ‘f-o-r’ refer to? The very same thing. This unbelief we’ve been looking at was a turning against the Word of God. And why is that such a disaster? Because. I suppose that’s another word for ‘for.’ ‘Because’ the Word of God.

Now don’t lose that! It doesn’t say, because God is quick, because that’s a given. But what most people don’t realize is that the Word of God, this Book, is alive! Now, I’m going to digress for just a second here. There are two ways we could look at the Word of God. Number one, we could look at all the times that God spoke and something happened. For example, at Creation. Let’s just go ahead to Hebrews chapter 11. This is one aspect of the Word of God.

Hebrews 11:3a

"Through faith (in other words again, by taking God at His Word) we understand that the worlds (that is the universe and all that’s in it) were framed (brought together) by (what?) the Word of God,…"

See? God didn’t have to commission legions of angels to go out and mix mortar and light fuses and put together energy. No! God spoke the Word and the universe came into being! Now that’s one aspect of the Word of God and it is powerful.

Now let’s come back to Hebrews chapter 4 again. I think a simpler illustration would be when they were on the Sea of Galilee and the storm was raging and the disciples were about scared to death and what did the Lord do? He stepped out on the deck of that little boat and said "Peace be still." And the disciples were amazed, and they said, "What kind of a man is this that all He has to do is speak and the wind obeys His voice?" He didn’t have to do anything, but rather He just spoke it.

Well, the same way back in the Garden of Eden. He didn’t have to bring out a pile of dirt and funnel it all up and pat it in place and do all this. No, He spoke the Word, and Adam appeared. Over and over throughout Scripture we have instances where God spoke and things happened, and, He’s not through speaking. The day is coming where once again He will speak and things are going to happen. But, that’s what I call the ‘other’ aspect of the Word of God. The one I think we should be looking at here in regard to our study of the book of Hebrews is this Book. Always remember that this Book, from cover to cover, is the inspired Word of God.
He used men to write it, but every writer of Scripture, as Peter puts it in his little epistle, "Were holy men of God who were moved by the Holy Spirit to write what they wrote." So, this part of the Word of God, which most people will cast aside, and let it collect dust, they’ll scorn it, and they’ll ridicule it, but I’ve got news for them. **This Book is one day going to stand in total judgment of their unbelief.** Now reading on in verse 12.

*Hebrews 4:12a*

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful,…"

Now the word *quick* normally coming out of the Greek in our King James speaks of "alive," but now listen, this goes a lot further than that. The Word of God is alive. And as I was looking at this, I couldn’t help but think of some zoo experiences. Especially when you go to the cage of the huge serpents and the snakes - where are they usually? All coiled up in a corner, not even an eye blinking. For all practical purposes we think they’re what? They’re dead! But are they? No, they’re alive. **But, they’re not active,** but you see the Word of God is not like that! The Word of God is not something that’s just asleep on the shelf, or something that is defunct. The Word of God is not only alive and living; it is active! The Word of God is still permeating hearts and lives of people. It is still convicting lost people of their need, and it is still encouraging believers.

In fact, we did a short commercial advertising our television program just before we began our taping today telling believers how they should react to the days in which we are living. So what can I honestly say in that commercial? **We don’t have to live in fear!** We knew all these things were coming. I’ve been telling my classes in Oklahoma for years that these things were coming and this isn’t the last. So, do we run and hide? Do we go and build bunkers and live in some mountain someplace? No, because the Living Word tells us that God is in total control. He has promised never to leave us nor forsake us and we have that hope of Glory out in front of us that is beyond human imagination. And so, the Word indeed is living, and it’s active. And so, as we move on, the Word of God is not only actively living, it is what?

*Hebrews 4:12a*

*For the word of God is quick, and powerful,…"

Now, I had to go and look up the Greek word for *powerful*. I thought it was going to be dynamos from which we get dynamics and so forth, but it wasn’t! It was ‘energy’!
The Greek word is ‘e-n-e-r-g-e-s.’ It’s energes from which we get the word energy. What do you do with energy? Hey, you get things done!

In fact, way back in Genesis chapter 2, where it says that God rested from all the work which He had done. Again, you know what the original word was? "All the energy that He had compiled." Now just look at the sun, and at the energy that it puts out every moment of every day, and has for as long as it’s been up there and will into the future. Now that’s power! We think of power in terms of electricity or even in terms of nuclear power and so forth, but listen none of that can compare to the power of this Book.

This Book is beyond, again, human comprehension. What little we understand and it’s only a particle, we take by faith. Yes, we believe it but there’s no way that we can comprehend it. As I’d said over and over on this program, can you (I can’t) comprehend how that the Creator of the universe, the One Who spoke the Word and everything fell into place, that that same Person took on human flesh. Born as baby in Bethlehem. Lived a lowly life of a carpenter’s son in Nazareth. And then went the way of the Cross and purchased man’s redemption. I can’t comprehend that. I believe it. But, it is so far beyond human comprehension.

Why would a God with such power and such authority, go to such depths of suffering and death for the sake of His created beings? But Christ did, see? Alright and so the Word of God is alive, and it’s powerful; it is beyond human comprehension.

*Hebrews 4:12a*

"...and sharper than any two edged sword,..."

Now of course, Paul, I’m sure, wrote Hebrews. I’ve stressed that often enough, and I think Paul was only too well aware of Roman soldiers. Oh, he was aware of them! And the Romans soldiers not only carried their large swords but they carried that hand to hand weapon which was the short ten-inch blade. I’ve been looking it up in the encyclopedia, usually made of brass and intensely razor sharp. And so Paul, by inspiration, of course, but also from his physical appreciation of the thing, refers to the Bible as that intensely sharpened two-edged sword.

Again, beyond our comprehension, because you see I’ve put it back on the board as we did back in Genesis. When God created man, He created us a three-part being. He created us (and I’m going to come from the inside out). He created us a spirit being with whom God Himself could communicate. He put within the physical body of the five senses, the personality, the mind, the will and the emotion. And all three of these are part and parcel.
Now let’s prove this from Scripture so that we don’t say well that’s just one man’s idea. Come back to I Thessalonians chapter 5, where the Scripture itself, gives us the whole three-part being of the human make-up. As Paul now winds down this letter to the Thessalonians he says:

\textit{I Thessalonians 5:23}

"\textit{And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; (or completely. And here it comes, and he says) and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body (all three as one unit) be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.}"

Now back to Hebrews chapter 4 again. I’ve also stressed over the years in my teaching, that humanly speaking, it is impossible for us to separate the soul and the spirit. They sort of blend in to one and I guess that’s the way most of us comprehend it. Because they are both the invisible part of us. The \textbf{body of course, we can see, but the soul and spirit are both invisible and they were both placed within man at creation but God alone can separate them.}

And the Word of God also is able to draw a distinction then between the spirit of man and his soul. I suppose the best way to explain soul and spirit is that, the soul is that which makes up our personality. You’ve seen me do this many, many times. The mind, the will and the seat of our emotions. That’s our personality. That’s the real you. This is the real me. The real person. The spirit on the other hand, is that part of us that can have fellowship with the Creator Himself.

As we remember from our Genesis study, when Adam fell, when Adam disobeyed God, his spirit became inoperative. It lost fellowship with God and consequently the lost person has no concept of God, and has no communication with God. His spirit is defunct and so the soul then became a sin-natured part of man until salvation would regenerate the spirit and give a new nature opposite the old nature.

Now, the only thing I want to point out here then is that the soul and spirit are discernable so far as God is concerned. The spirit is inoperative until God comes in with the power of Salvation and regenerates it. And then when His Holy Spirit comes and dwells opposite our spirit, that in turn has control over the new divine nature (as we’ve explained this so often.) And then these two now as a composite will have an effect on the body. The life that we live and the things that we enjoy and so on and so forth.

Alright now, I want to move on to the next part of the verse because here’s where I feel that the Word of God is so intrinsic. It is so past man’s ordinary comprehension. \textbf{In other words, men couldn’t have written something like}
**this.** Who would have ever thought to compare? Now look what I’m talking about. That the soul and spirit is compared to the joints and marrow.

*Hebrews 4:12a*

"...and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow,..."

Unless you really stop and close your eyes and contemplate, what connection do the joints have with the marrow? See this shows you how far ahead of medical science the Word of God was. I’ve lost you haven’t I? Alright, stop and think. What happens in the marrow of especially our large bones? The red blood cells are manufactured! We all know that now, especially with leukemia and bone marrow transplants and so forth. The marrow is the manufacturing plant for the red blood cells, which are basically the very root of our whole being. Our blood system.

But, it doesn’t do you any good to have a blood system if you don’t have the joints. So as I was mulling this over, I just sort of put it into two categories. Now, this may not make sense to a lot of people but it did to me. You know, with the joints, our fingers and all of that, how much could be accomplished if we didn’t have joints? Or if they were all stiff? How much could you do if you couldn’t bend your fingers? Nothing! How could you walk if your knees didn’t bend? How could our athletes perform if it weren’t for their joints? That’s why knee injuries just take a football player right out of the picture.

Okay, so I’m going to put it this way. **The joints are that which make us functional, and this is what makes us operate, but the marrow is what produces the energy to make the joints function.** Does that make sense? I hope so.

So the Scripture then is saying that the soul and spirit is likened unto the joints and the marrow. The soul (the mind, the will and the emotion), that’s what makes us operative. This is what makes us function as a human being, but, just like our joints would be useless without the blood supply that is coming from the marrow, so also, our soul (our personality) is defunct until the spirit can energize it.

This is why then a lost person is just like we saw in that first half-hour. I didn’t probably make the point, but when Israel was out of the land, and was spiritually defunct, the Scripture called them what? Dead people! And they had been out there for so long, that it was like bones that had turned white in a Texas sun. See? Well it’s the same way with a lost person. The lost person, until that spirit is energized, is like someone who is functioning without any real energy. They are spiritually dead. Now, I didn’t intend to do this but here’s a verse that comes to mind. Come back to
Ephesians chapter 2, and I guess it will all fit. I sure hope it does! I think most of you know this verse or you’re at least aware of it.

**Ephesians 2:1**

"And you (I always have to remind people, who does Paul always write to? Believers! Paul doesn’t write to the unbelieving world. So to the believer look what Paul says: And you) **hath he quickened**, (or made alive, actively) **who were** (before we were saved, what?) **dead in trespasses and sins:**"

Oh, we were living, yes, but spiritually we were dead, and that’s the vast majority of the world out there. They are spiritually dead. A world full of dead people. And they cannot function in its entirety until they get back into fellowship with their Creator. Until their spirit has been energized and that energized spirit in turn can work on that personality. And the personality and the spirit in turn influence the body.

That’s the whole idea of the Christian experience. See, that’s why we’re different. Now, when I say different, I always say, we’re not a bunch of oddballs. I don’t expect Christians to be oddballs. **We are just somebody different, and we have different values. We have different hopes, and different desires. Why? Because the spirit has been energized and it now is influencing all of that.** Now coming back to Hebrews let’s look at that verse again.

**Hebrews 4:12a**

"**For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edge sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow,**…"

I just had a thought! Do you suppose that’s why the unbelieving world doesn’t want to open this Book? They’re afraid of what it’s going to do to them. I know they are! They’re scared to death of what it’s going to do to them.

And you know what always thrills me, that people even in my classes in Oklahoma, some of you have said it, and many in our audience have said it. "**Now that I’ve got a grip on what the Word of God is all about, I don’t have any trouble witnessing.**" I just had somebody tell me the other night, "Les, I was always scared to death to open my mouth because I knew if they asked me something I wouldn’t be able to answer it. And I didn’t want to be embarrassed, but now I can give them an answer. Now I can turn to the Scriptures and show them what it says." See! And this is where we have to be, but for the average lost person, no, they’re scared to death of this Book, because it is that sharp two-edged sword that divides asunder soul and
spirit, the joint and marrow. Now then, the last part of the verse and that will wind up the half-hour.

*Hebrews 4:12b*

"...and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

The heart, the very most inner-being of everyone of us. The Word of God is able to tell us what we’re thinking. Now that’s hard to comprehend isn’t it? But you see, as you feed on the Word of God and you meditate on it, on those verses that I trust you learned as a kid, and you meditate on those verses, what does it do? It convicts. It convicts us of every evil thought. It convicts of everything that we do contrary to the Word of God because that’s its purpose. It is to reveal to us where we are missing the mark. It’s to reveal to us how far we are falling short and it’s only by God’s Grace, that He lets us get away with it.

We don’t deserve to continue on day after day being less than what God would have us to be, but see God doesn’t give up on us. God doesn’t say I’ve had it with you. Never! But the Grace of God continues to work and speak through the powerful Word!
A lot of people, as they catch our program, see this class setting and wonder who we are. Well we’re just a layman, and I’m a cattle rancher from Oklahoma, and I make no apology for that. The Lord has just sort of given us an opportunity to teach the Word to anybody from 7 to - oh we get listeners way up in the 90’s, and the answer is almost always the same. "**Been in church all my life, 94 years old and I’ve learned more in the last 3 months than I did in 93 years.**" Well, I give the Lord the credit for that because we’ve been able to just open the scriptures without attacking anyone. I see no purpose in pointing out other people’s faults and so forth. We’re just going to simply look at what the Scripture says and trust the Holy Spirit will direct it to the hearts where they need it.

So now let’s go right on with our study in Hebrews 4 and we’re going to go right in to verse 13. And remember in our last half hour we were pointing out how that the Word of God is so powerful and is totally capable of separating even the soul and spirit as you could if you were a medical person, separate the joints and marrow. All right, now then we go into the verse.

*Hebrews 4:13a*

"**Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight:**

In other words it’s just tied to this same concept that the Word of God is able to just simply penetrate into those areas that nothing else can do and so there is nothing, no creature that is not manifest in his sight. I always like to define that word manifest as a light under a microscope. That, until you turn that little powerful light on to beam up through the object that you are looking at, you don’t see anything. But once that light manifests everything that’s on that little glass slide, it’s made available for you to see. Alright, now that’s the way the Word of God is. It just simply puts God’s powerful spotlight on everything, and so he says:

*Hebrews 4:13b*

"**…but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.**"
Now, never forget that Paul is constantly referring in the book of Hebrews to the living God. We aren’t worshiping some idol of wood or stone. We’re not worshiping some man-concocted idea, but we are literally aware of, and worshiping, and are saved by, a living creator God.

Alright, now I think I’m going to let the Scripture speak for itself, and periodically, in my own time, I just love to go back and read Psalm 139. Let’s go back and look at it in this light. How that God sees everything, the unimportant, the mundane, as well as the headline grabbing events of mankind. Nothing escapes His manifestations. Here in Psalms 139, David just puts it so beautifully and like I said, I’m going to let the Word of God speak for itself. In fact, I had a Jehovah’s Witness listener and they qualified themselves as a Jehovah’s Witness and this is what they said. "I so enjoy your reading program." Well it kind of made us smile for a moment and I thought yes, that’s what I do most of the time. I read and let the Word speak for itself. And I had another letter again just yesterday that asked us to never stop putting the Scripture on the screen. This is the only Bible that a lot of people will ever read. And so this is why we put the Scriptures up as much as we do. As we begin with verse 1 of Psalms 139 we’ll just let the Spirit lead to see how far we want to go.

Psalm 139:1

"O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me."

There’s not a part of us that God doesn’t know. Again, as we go into the throne room in prayer, and we’ll be looking at that a little later, maybe not today, but maybe in our taping next month, where he says, "Come boldly before the throne of Grace." Do you realize, do you believe with all your heart, that when you and I pray and when we come into that throne room, it’s as if we are the only one. God isn’t dealing with millions and millions of people. Oh, he is, but as an individual. And I have that confidence that when I pray, it’s the Lord and I alone in the throne room, and you can have that same feeling. All right, and this is what David is saying. The Lord not only searched him but what? Knew him. Personally, as an individual man.

Psalms 139:2

"Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off."

The what? Our thought! You don’t even have to say it and the Lord knows what you are thinking. Now I think I got ready to say it a little bit ago. That doesn’t mean that God holds us responsible for every rotten thought that scoots through our mind. And if you don’t have rotten thoughts, then you’re not part of the human race. I’ll never
forget years ago when it bothered me that once in a while at just the most revered

time, my old mind could shoot these filthy thoughts through and then I read an article

by a dear old pastor of a large church in Philadelphia years back. And this was his
testimony. He said "It amazed me that there I could stand behind the communion table
and as my deacons were out there passing the elements of the Lord’s supper, I would
have the most awful thoughts."

And you know what I said? Praise the Lord! Because that tells me he was no different
than I am and I’m no different that you are. We do have thoughts like that, but as long
as we don’t stop and dwell on them, I don’t think God holds us responsible. Our
subconscious can shoot them on through and if we let them go, He’s not going to hold
us responsible. But if we’re going to stop it and say now wait a minute, I’m going to
think about this a little longer. Then it becomes something that we’re going to have to
give an account for, and lose some rewards. But never lose sight of the fact that
God is a discerner of the very thoughts of our thinking. Now verse 3.

Psalms 139:3

"Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my

ways."

Now you know what that means? There’s not a moment in your time of living that
God isn’t completely around you. Now I’m talking to believers. David was a believer.
So this is the assurance that we have, that God is that aware of us as an individual. Not
just as one of masses, but we’re an individual in His sight. Lets go on. This is
interesting isn’t it? Man, I could just about spend the whole day in this chapter. Now
verse 4.

Psalms 139:4

"For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, that thou knowest it
altogether." There is not a word that God isn’t aware of. That’s quite something isn’t
it?

Psalms 139:5

"Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me."

Now verse 6, and this is almost a repetition of what I said a program or two back. That
I cannot begin to comprehend some of these tremendous truths. Now look what David
said.
Psalms 139:6-7

"Such knowledge (what knowledge? That he is an individual in God’s sight and that God knows everything about him, the individual, such knowledge) is too wonderful for me; (it’s beyond understanding, it is too wonderful for me) it is high, I cannot attain unto it. 7. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? (or whither) shall I flee from thy presence?"

What does that tell a believer? You’d better be careful where you go. Because you see, no matter where we go, God is there with us. We can’t check him at the door, because He’s with us every place we go. Alright now verse 8.

Psalms 139-8

"If (now that’s a conditional word, doesn’t say that he does, but if it were possible) I could ascend up into heaven, thou are there: (well that’s not too hard to comprehend) if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there."

Now you want to remember, David is writing from the Old Testament perspective and Hell was that place of the departed and was separated into two sides, Paradise and Torment, as we see in Luke 16, with the story of the rich man and Lazarus. And I’m quite sure that David isn’t putting himself in Torment. So when he went down into the Paradise of Hell of the Old Testament economy, God was there. Now verse 9.

Psalms 139:9-10

"If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; 10. Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

What does that tell you? There’s not a place on this earth where you could go beyond the hand of God upon you. Not a place. Now verse 11.

Psalms 139:11

"If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me." In other words, darkness doesn’t stop God. The thickest, darkest night doesn’t keep God from seeing. He knows everything, and sees everything. Now verse 12
"Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." So darkness doesn’t make any difference to God. Now verse 13.

**Psalms 139:13**

"For thou hast possessed my reins; (in other words, the desires of his life) thou hast covered me (where?) in my mother’s womb."

What does that tell the abortionists? When does God pick up interest in us as an individual? In our mother’s womb! Paul says that God saved me by His Grace, from where? From his mother's womb. Alright reading on.

**Psalms 139:14a**

"I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;…"

Well now, in our age of technology and information the average person probably knows more about the physiology of our bodies than MD’s did a century ago. And the more we learn, and the more we understand, the more we realize how complex this body really is. Just beyond human comprehension of how complex it is and yet God is aware of every little detail. Now verse 15.

**Psalms 139:15-16**

"My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth." 16. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." In other words, God knew the end from the beginning before the beginning ever started. Now verse 17.

**Psalms 139:17**

"How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!"

Now you want to remember, David, according to Scripture "was a man after God’s own heart." But David wasn’t in a class all by himself. We’re just as much prone to be in that kind of a mindset.

**Psalms 139:18**
"If I should count them, (that is all these precious thoughts, if I should count them) they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee."

19. Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: (now of course remember this is in the Old Testament economy) depart from me therefore, ye bloody men." Now verse 20.

Psalms 139:20

"For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain."

And so on, and on it goes, but what a gorgeous, gorgeous explanation of the Omnipotence of the God. Never lose sight of it. Even if you have to go back and read this Psalm once or twice a week and just get encouraged as well as convicted that the God of heaven, with whom we have to do, knows all about us.

Alright, lets come back to Hebrews again for the few minutes that are left. And so everything, not only of the human race, but of all God’s creation are manifested in his sight. Nothing happens that God isn’t aware of it. Now as we go into verse 14, we shift gears. Paul is great on that. Now all of a sudden, we go from the Omnipotent, Almighty, living God and this Book that is powerful, can even divide asunder soul and spirit, now all of a sudden we slip into the high priestly role of Christ.

Hebrews 4:14a

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is (now watch those next few words, that is what?) passed into the heavens,..." 

Now you remember when we first started way back in Genesis 1:1, in the beginning God created heaven and earth, and way back then already I pointed out that through all of Scripture God deals in two realms. The earthly and the heavenly. Israel was God’s earthly people, and we are His heavenly. Alright, now when Christ finished the work of the cross, rose from the dead, and ascended or passed as the Book of Hebrews puts it, He passed into the heavenlies. Do you realize what that means? Up until that time, all worship, all concerns of the Word of God were primarily centered in Jerusalem, weren’t they? In the Temple worship and Israel. But once Christ passed into the heavens, where is now the seat and the core of all spiritual activity? Heaven. And so Paul is constantly reminding you and I now then as Grace Age believers that we’re not an earthly people, we’re a heavenly people, because He has passed into the heavens. He ascended gloriously into the heavens.

Alright now let’s just look at a few verses to go along with that. Come back to Ephesians, the little Book of Ephesians, in chapter 1, verse 3.
Ephesians 1:3

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

Or better is the heavenlies, rather than in heavenly places. That’s the seed of everything. The heavenlies. We’re not tied to a temple worship; we’re not tied to a set of rituals here on earth, because we are heavenly. And as we saw in just the previous verses, we are involved with a God that we can come into his presence and he knows us as an individual. And we’re going to see, like I said a moment ago, a little later in one of the verses where he says, "come boldly into the Throne of Grace." Now let’s look at another one over in Colossians chapter 1,

Colossians 1:12-13

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet (or prepared us) to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13. Who (speaking of the Father, remember) Hath delivered us from the power of darkness, (where’s that? On the earth. He’s delivered us from that power of darkness,) and hath (past tense) translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:" Well, where’s the Son? In heaven. Alright, now let’s back up a page to Philippians chapter 3 verse 20. Here we have concrete evidence of where our seat of worship is now located.

Philippians 3:20a

"For our conversation (or citizenship is a better word, for our citizenship is where) is in heaven; from whence we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ:"  

So our citizenship is already in heaven, and not here on the earth. We’re just strangers passing through. We’re foreigners, and we’re looking for our Saviour. We’re much closer to our Lord’s coming than Paul was. You remember I referred to a cartoon quite a few months ago and this old boy was sitting in front of his cave door, bearded and everything else, and over the cave door he said "The end is near" but he had added "er." Remember that? And that’s what made me think of it. Paul wrote in about 63 or 64 AD that he was looking for the Savior from Heaven. But here we are 1900 and some years later, the end is what? Nearer. So we should be even more expectant than the Apostle Paul was. So remember "our citizenship is in heaven from whence we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ:"

And when he comes, now you see, Paul is speaking as though we’re going to be alive when this happens. "Who shall change our vile body, (this one) that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." That’s why if the Lord decides to come yet
before we leave this afternoon, that ceiling isn’t going to stop us. No way, because we’re suddenly going to have a body like he had. Did he have to walk around and find the door? No, he went right through the wall. He could have come in through the ceiling and we’re going to leave the same way. Never lose sight of that. That the scripture’s so plain that we’re going to have instantly a body like his resurrected body. And it’s going to work even as his did. Well anyway, the few moments we have left, let’s get back to Hebrews 4.

And so we have this great high priest, not in Jerusalem, not waiting in the sanctuary of the temple there, that’s long gone, but he has passed into the heavens. Jesus the Son of God. Now you remember when we were back there in the early chapters of Hebrews? We were emphasizing the Son. How that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son in Whom everything had been placed. Alright, we’re reminded again that He is the One Who is the core of our confession or profession. And that is what? That Christ, the Son of God, the creator of the universe, the One Who was born in Bethlehem, Who grew up in Nazareth, Who went the way of the cross, rose from the dead and ascended back to glory, that’s our confession. You know, I told one of my classes the other night, I think it was here in Tulsa, my, if I asked someone how do you know that you’re going to be in heaven, either after the rapture or after you die? How do you know? I only want to hear one answer. And what is it? I believe with all my heart that Christ died for my sins and I know that he arose from the dead. Now when I hear that, then I can say yes I have to agree, you’re going to be in glory. Because that is the only reason. You can work from now till doomsday and you’re never going to work your way into heaven. But our confession is this Jesus the Christ Who has passed into the heavens, Who is the Son of God. Now then in the moment or two that’s left, verse 15.

Hebrews 4:15

"For we (now back to Hebrews 4) have not (or do not have) a high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities;"

Now I always like to put it into the positive. We have a high priest who can be touched with our infirmities. Doesn’t that make it easier to understand? Yes. We have a high priest who knows all about us. He sees our every thought as we just saw from the Psalms. There’s nothing that we can hide from him. There’s not a heartache that he doesn’t feel. There’s not a joy and an exuberance that he doesn’t know.

Now since we know that we have such a high priest, we can also rest on the fact that not only does He know all about us, but He knows where we are, because He too was touched with temptations. Now I always have to be careful and qualify it. He never was tempted to succumb, He was tempted only so that He could understand from virtual experience what we have to face. He never had the possibility of succumbing.
Of course, the best ones, I suppose, that we are aware of, are the temptations in the wilderness when Satan said, turn these stones into bread. Now don’t think even for a split second that the Lord considered it. No way. But He went through those temptations so that the scripture could tell us that nothing, nothing that enters the life of a believer as temptation is something that He hadn’t already experienced. And so that’s what it means. Now we have a high priest who knows exactly what we’re putting up with. He knows what its like to be tempted. The only difference was that He did it apart from sin and we are so prone to sin. But He knows all about us.
Lesson Three • Part IV
The All Powerful Word of God

Hebrews 4:12-16

Let’s go back where we left off in our last lesson and that would be in chapter 4, and verse 14 and I don’t feel like I really finished that verse as much as I should.

Hebrews 4:14a

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens,…"

And remember, going back to chapter 1, that when He passed into the heavens having purged our sins, He what? He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High.

Hebrews 1:3b

"…when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;"

And you remember I made the point that when He sat down, what did it indicate? That it was finished. Right. Oh, that the finished work of cross took care of everything. There wasn’t another iota that could be added to it. And consequently, He could rest and be aware that it was totally finished. So here again:

Hebrews 4:14-15b

"…we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

And on the other hand He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities because He was in all points tempted or tested like as we are, yet without, or apart from sin. In other words, even the thought of yielding to temptation never entered His mind.

Now the three categories of temptations that cover every possible scenario of the human experience can be found in the little book of I John chapter 2. Now we did this way back when poor old Eve was caught in temptations in Genesis chapter 3. We probably used it when we covered the temptations in our study of Matthew, but it
never hurts to repeat some of these things. But first let’s look in I John chapter 2 beginning in verse 15.

I John 2:15-16

"Love not the world, (in other words this world system) neither the things that are in the world. (or materialism). If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (now here’s the world) 16. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

Now I’ve already mentioned Eve, so let’s jump all the way back to Genesis chapter 3 and see how that she was pummeled with all three of them at one time. Most of us are dealt with these one at a time. We may suddenly find ourselves confronted with something that is desirable to an appetite of the flesh, still another thing may just appeal to our pride, but sometimes it may appeal to our eye. But see, Eve was confronted with all three at one time.

Genesis 3:6a

"And when the woman (poor Eve) saw that the tree was good for food, and it was pleasant to the (what?) eyes,…"

So what have we got? Here was a fruit that was an object of the lust of her eyes. It was a beautiful fruit. I don’t think it was an apple, but whatever it was it must have been beautiful. It was alluring, it must have just looked delicious and of course with Satan’s prodding it just looked all the better. And then the next part was that this same beautiful fruit was something that would make her wise.

Genesis 3:6b

"…and a tree to be desired to make one wise, …"

Now what does that appeal to? The pride. Pride that it would make her wise, and remember that Satan’s temptation was that she could be as God. Then the third step was:

Genesis 3:c

"…she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat."

Now listen, have any of you ever been so full of a good large dinner that you couldn’t eat another bite? Of course you have. Just the thought of another bite just almost
becomes repulsive. So really, in order to enjoy something, you have to be a little bit what? Hungry. My wife knows that better than anybody. When you are hungry just about anything can taste delicious. So, even though the Scripture itself does not definitively say it, Eve must have had enough of an appetite to really want to satisfy the desire to eat. And then what does she do? She plucked the fruit, she looked at it again, and she suddenly desired the flesh of that fruit to satisfy her hunger. But also her old mind was just spinning like everything. What’s it going to do to her? It’s going to make her wise. And so here she is pummeled with all three categories of temptation at one time. I guess it’s no wonder she succumbed is it?

But you see, the Lord went through those same three categories in Matthew chapter 4, but remember, apart from sin. He never had any inkling to give in like Eve did. But nevertheless, in Matthew chapter 4 at the temptations, this was the whole purpose. This was the purpose so that when he became our great High Priest He knew exactly what we go through. He too was tempted with making those stones bread when He was hungry. He too was tempted to fulfill a desire of the eyes. He too was given the temptation, I guess the one that’s the easiest to understand, is chapter 4 and like I said, don’t ever get the idea that He even thought about succumbing but this is simply given to us to understand that He knows what we’re going through. Because you see you can’t really understand unless you’ve been there.

Just the other day I got a letter from a gentleman who had just lost his wife of 46 years or something like that. And I just wrote a short note to him and I said something like this: "I can’t say I know how it feels because I haven’t been there. I can’t really say that I can sympathize with you because I haven’t walked in your shoes. I haven’t lost my wife."

And isn’t that true of anything? You can’t really understand the feelings that people are going through unless you’ve been there. And unless you have lost a spouse, you don’t know what it’s like. Unless you have been faced with a certain dilemma that’s unique to your own situation, you don’t know what it’s like. But see the Lord did. The Lord faced these three categories so that He would know exactly what the human race is going through. He knew what it was like when He was hungry to have Satan mention bread. He knew what it was like when Satan said, "Fall down and worship me and all the kingdoms of this world, I’ll give them to you."

Well now it never affected Him because they were already His. But what we have to learn from it is, Satan was tempting Him with something that would make a human being proud. That’s why men attain to be emperors. That’s why they attain world power, to satisfy their pride. And so the Lord could honestly say without any doubt whatsoever, I’ve been there. I know what you are going through. I know exactly what
its like. And that’s why we can go to Him with full assurance that since He has tasted temptations, He has been confronted.

Let’s even go a little further with this thought. As He was going through the suffering leading up to the cross, and He cried out at one time "Father if it be thy will, let this cup pass from me." Do you realize what He was really saying? If there was any way that God could perform salvation without His having to go through that which was coming, do it the other way. What was that? Well it was really a temptation that He could have somehow avoided the sufferings of the cross. But He didn’t. He never did. And so always take these things into consideration when you read a verse like this. That He can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities because He’s been there. He’s walked in our shoes. Now back to the Book of Hebrews, and let’s go on down to verse 16. And again one of Paul’s favorite words:

Hebrews 4:16a

"Let us therefore…"

I love the way Paul uses therefore over and over and over throughout his letters. I guess the first one that comes to mind is Romans 8:1

Romans 8:1

"There is therefore (that’s right, I see you’re already wording it. Therefore, because of all that Paul had written in those first 7 chapters of Romans, there is therefore) no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,…"

In other words to those who have come into salvation by faith + nothing. Oh the world thinks it’s faith plus some works, you know, do this and do that. Fulfill this little prescribed ritual, and fulfill this little operation and then you can have eternal life. No, no. It’s FAITH + NOTHING! I guess if I’m known for anything it’s that. It’s Faith + nothing. But be sure it’s faith in the right place. It’s faith in that finished work of the cross, that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose from again, + nothing else. You are to believe that in your heart for salvation. Alright, now then, verse 16 of Hebrews chapter 4 again.

Hebrews 4:16

"Let us therefore (because of the high priest that we have, because He has passed into the heavens, He’s not someplace on earth. We don’t have to go to some headquarters, nor even our denominational headquarters. We don’t have to go someplace in order to get into the right mood and mode for prayer, but rather we can:
Hebrews 4:16b

"...come boldly unto the throne of grace,..."

Now I just went back and had to look up some of the Greek and some of the commentaries. Do you know what that word *boldly* means? Just exactly like you get it on the first impression. **We go into the throne room without any apology.** I don’t have to say, "Well now Lord here I am. You know I really don’t have any right to ask you this." No. **We are instructed; we are commanded to go boldly into His presence.** Now why? Because again it just affirms what a great salvation we have. Now if I didn’t have this great a salvation, I couldn’t go boldly into God’s presence, but I can with anything that I want to approach Him with.

When we work cattle, I have no compunction about saying "Now Lord, let those critters behave themselves today." Those of you who know livestock, know there’s a big difference from one day to the next. Some days they can be as cantankerous as they can be. Other days they’ll just walk into that chute like docile little teddy bears, so I have no compunction going right into the throne room and saying, "Now Lord make it a little easier on us today."

Now that’s mundane I know, but nevertheless, that’s just an example that you and I can go into the throne room of heaven boldly, without any excuse, without any doubt, knowing that He knows Les Feldick, He knows Charles Daniels, He knows Jerry Pool, He knows everyone of you by name. And you don’t have to introduce yourself when you get there, because He knows who you are. He knows what you’re going to ask before we do. Alright, Oh what a precious verse we have here. I can just feed on it.

So, let us therefore remember all that has been coming out of these first four chapters. Don’t be like those Jews at Kadesh-barnea and in unbelief say "No God you can’t do it." **But come with faith, believing Who He is. He’s God the Son, He’s the Creator, He’s the Sustainer, He’s the One Who finished the work of salvation, and nobody can add anything to it. It’s done.** And listen, all of Christendom is trying to add something to it. They’re patching on something here, and they’re sticking on something there, but remember you come into that pure unadulterated Gospel of the Grace of God, and you just believe it!

You know, I had a pastor write the other day, and he said, "Les, why is it the more I preach the grace of God the less people want to hear it?" And it’s so true, because people don’t want to hear it. They’d rather go and hear a big booming instrumental group entertain them than to hear what you’re hearing today, and you know it’s true, because that’s where the masses are and all they want is to be entertained. They want
some feel-good, ear-itching stuff that they can go home and then go through the week and coast until they get another little high. But listen, we are resting on that finished work of the cross. The Christ Who has passed into the heavens. The One Who has faced every temptation that we face and consequently then, therefore, we can come boldly without any qualifications on our part to the throne of Grace.

What’s Grace? Unmerited favor! Do you and I have any reason to expect something like this? No. There’s no reason God should say, "Well come on in boldly and share your needs, share your joys, share your sorrows, I’ve got an open ear." No there’s no reason for Him to do that. Except Grace. Oh how God loves to be gracious, how He loves to just pour out all of His goodness.

_Hebrews 4:16b_

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

Alright, so we come into the throne of Grace that we may obtain mercy. But what do we deserve? Judgment. But what do we get? Mercy. Let’s go back to Exodus chapter 33, and that’s the first place that this is really explained in perfect order. This goes clear back into the Law of Israel. Even under Law, what made it possible for a Jew to get right standing with God? His Grace! My goodness, you all know it as well I do. Time after time, what did God have every right and reason to do with Israel? Wipe them off the face of the map. They didn’t deserve His Grace. But it isn’t just Israel. We’re no different. My as much as we love our beloved America, do we deserve another day of our liberty? No, we don’t deserve it, any more than any other group of people. But, oh, we’ve been enjoying it now for several hundred years because of God’s mercy and grace.

_Exodus 33:19_

"And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; (and now here it comes) and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy."

What’s that telling you? God in His Sovereignty can show mercy to whomever He will. Now He doesn’t have to, but He does, because in His Sovereignty that’s just His bent. He is the God of all grace, and He is the God of mercy. And so in order for us to come into this throne room of Grace, vile sinners couldn’t get there, no one polluted with the sin of this world could possibly come in to the holy presence of God, so what did He have to do? He had to make a provision because we couldn’t do it. And here we come right back full circle to that work of the cross. **And so when Christ died**
and shed his blood and paid the price of our redemption and proclaimed it as what? Finished. Now what can we do? We can come right in to the throne room without having joined anything, without having done anything, without having given anything.

You know, somebody was telling me how his pastor was so hung up on tithing. And I said, "Next time you see him, you ask him if tithing is so all important to you people, why is it that 90% of church members don’t tithe?" Have you ever thought of that? Now I’m pulling that number out of the air, I’ll admit. But I get that number from years and years ago - a group of us were just having coffee after an evening church service and we got to talking about church finances and so forth. And it just so happened that our church treasurer was in our midst and we were not the kind of people that ever found out who was giving what.

But as we were talking about our church finances and so forth, our treasurer made this statement. He says, "Fellows do you realize that about 90% of our giving comes from 5% of our people?" Now you take that into your own church and I’ll bet it’s not very far off in most congregations. Well if tithing is so almighty important so far as eternal destiny is concerned, what are they doing with these 90% that aren’t tithing? That would scare me to death if I were a preacher and I was depending on that. You know what I’d have to say? I’m doing something very wrong.

But see it isn’t on that. We are not boldly coming into the throne room of grace because I gave 20% of my income. I don’t come boldly into the throne room because I’m such a good guy. Every one of us comes in there on the same premise and what is it? The mercy and the Grace of God. That’s all. And oh, God is so good. My goodness, I have to tell him every morning, "Lord I don’t deserve all these blessings." And neither do you. We’re all alike, we’re all human. Not one of us can go into that throne room and say Lord I’m here because I deserve it. No I’m here because of what you have done. So we come boldly that we may obtain mercy and find that unmerited favor especially when? When we need it. When’s that? All the time. That’s all the time. There isn’t a moment that we don’t need the grace and the mercy of God especially in the world in which we’re living today. We’re bombarded from every direction with everything imaginable and it’s only the grace of God we make it through each day.

That reminds me of a verse that we share so often when people call with a particular prayer request and many of you know where I’m going. Philippians chapter 4. What a basis for prayer.

*Philippians 4:6a*
"Be careful (or in our present day language we’d say worry) about nothing; (be careful or worry about nothing) but in every thing…"

Now what does the word everything mean? Everything! God doesn’t limit. Now there are some people that say God doesn’t listen to anything unless it’s spiritual. I don’t buy that. God listens to your every legitimate need. Now we’re not going to be frivolous, or silly when we come into God’s presence. But there isn’t anything that is of any note that God isn’t willing to hear about, wants to hear about it. So we’re not to worry about anything, but in every thing:

**Philippians 4:6b**

"…by prayer and supplication (but the secret is the next two words) with (what?) thanksgiving (in other words you thank the Lord before you even tell him what you’re asking for and you thank him for what he’s going to do and so with thanksgiving you) let your requests be made known unto God."

Does God not know what you need? Of course he does. But what does the heart of God long for between Himself and the believer? Communication. **God wants us to talk to Him, God wants us to commune with Him. And that’s what prayer is all about.** It’s a two way street. He speaks to us through his Word; we speak to Him through prayer. Iris and I usually tell people, "Now that doesn’t say that He’s going to give a direct answer to everything we ask for. He may say yes. You may have an immediate answer. He may say no. He may not answer the way we think he should. Or he may tell us to wait a while."

But the next verse is your immediate answer. The next verse is what we get every time we come to the throne room boldly and what is it?

**Philippians 4:7**

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

That peace of God. Not the peace with God. You got that when you were saved but rather the peace of God. But now as a believer you come into the throne room boldly and you share all your needs and your desires of your heart and whether God says yes, no, maybe or later - but whatever the answer, you have that peace of God that passeth all understanding.