We’ve just finished the book of Hebrews, and now we’re starting book number 53 - and this will be as they’re normally called, the little Jewish epistles of James; I & II Peter; I, II, & III John and Jude. And whether we’ll get all of them into the next twelve programs, I’m not guaranteeing - but we’re going to start in this particular series with the little letter to James. Now, at least this first half hour is going to be exclusively introduction, because I don’t think any portion of Scripture has raised so many questions for us regarding the Grace Age, as this little book of James has (because of its legalism). And, consequently, many people get confused. People will say, "James says you can’t have faith unless you’ve got works. And Paul says you have faith without works. Well, what’s the deal?" We know that Scripture never contradicts for the sake of contradiction, so there has to be a logical, as well as a spiritual, answer for that dilemma.

So the first thing you want to realize is (as I’ve said over and over on the program), with every portion of Scripture that you read, before you even begin to pick it apart, you should ask yourself just two or three simple questions. **Who’s writing? To whom is he writing? What are the circumstances around this writing?** And this is exactly what we’re going to do before we even start any further introduction. Turn to James chapter 1, verse 1. The very first word, of course, tells you who is writing.

*James 1:1a*

"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,..." So it’s James who is writing. Now, we have to qualify again. Most are agreed that this is not the James of the original twelve who was beheaded quite early after Pentecost. But this is no doubt the James who was the half-brother of Jesus. He was the son of Joseph and Mary. He was also the James who became the head man of the Jerusalem church and, consequently, was the moderator of that great Jerusalem Counsel that we delve into over and over as Paul covers it in Galatians chapter 2, and as Luke records it in Acts 15. And those are both the same counsel in Jerusalem, which took place about 51 or 52 AD - over which this James was the moderator and also referred to by the Apostle Paul as a pillar in the Jerusalem church. And so we feel that this James is a legalist, par excellence. **When we go back after a while and look at some of the things he**
emphasized (even after he realized that Paul was the Apostle of the Gentiles), it will come through that he indeed was a legalist. In verse 1 we also see to whom he is writing.

*James 1:1b*

"...to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting." Now when you read something like that, the first thing you have to stop and analyze is: Who’s writing it? James. The James who was so intense on the legal aspect of Judaism. James who was the head honcho, instead of Peter, of the Jerusalem Jewish church. The church that you have starting there in Christ’s earthly ministry and so forth. But now, you see, as a result of Saul of Tarsus' persecution, those believing Jews have been scared out of Jerusalem and scattered throughout the then-known world, especially in the eastern end of the Mediterranean.

And so, consequently, they were established in the Kingdom economy. Many of them had probably become believers during Christ’s earthly ministry - others in Peter’s ministry in the early Acts. But then, because of Saul’s persecution, they had to flee Jerusalem, and now they are scattered throughout the Roman Empire. Well, James is concerned about them, as well he should be, because he had, at one time, been the leader of that church. **And so he is addressing this little epistle to those Jewish believers.**

Now I can’t emphasize that enough. They are Jewish believers who as yet have not heard or understood Paul’s Gospel of Grace that you and I believe for our salvation and, consequently, it can be the legalistic treatise that it is without causing any flack amongst his followers because it was right in line with what they’d been hearing. **Alright, in the same way, I’m going to have you turn to I Peter so that you will see that all these epistles now are written in the same flavor.** They’re all coming out of the same bolt of cloth. Now, look at what Peter writes in verse 1 of chapter 1 of I Peter. And again, who is the writer? Peter. One of the Twelve. One of the main leaders of the Jerusalem church.

*I Peter 1:1*

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." Well, who were these scattered strangers? Again, Jewish believers who had been scattered out from that Jerusalem church because of Saul’s persecution. Well, when you continue on then, John doesn’t make it quite that distinct, but still, when you study the content, it’s all in that same area of thinking. It’s Jews who had embraced Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah but they were still practicing Judaism. The Temple is still operating. That won’t be destroyed
until many years later. **And so always get the connection that these little Jewish epistles are indeed written to Jewish believers.**

I don’t call them Christians because the Bible doesn’t, but many people do. Remember believers were first called Christians at Antioch, and not Jerusalem. So they’re not Christians per se, they are Jewish believers in the Kingdom Gospel, and they believed for salvation that Jesus was the Messiah of Israel, but they’re still under the Law. They’re still practicing Temple worship. Nobody has told them not to so they’re not being disobedient. That fact had not been revealed to them yet.

So, James, Peter and John are writing to Jewish believers who have been scattered away from their home area of Jerusalem (and they are also facing hard times). Tribulation is right out in front of them. Now, amongst a lot of people who recognize that these letters are written to Jews, there are still two areas of thought. Some say that these were written to the Jews contemporary with their own day. In other words, Jewish congregations that had been established after they had scattered away from Jerusalem, but before the horrors of the 70 AD destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by Titus.

You’ve got to keep your time frame in mind. Now, I’m going to have to go slow or I’ll get myself all fouled up. You see, Pentecost was about 29 AD. Then, from Pentecost until Saul’s conversion, is about 7 or 8 years. Which makes Saul being converted around 37 AD – and he begins his ministry in 40 AD. And then you see from 40 until 64 or 65 AD, when he’s martyred, there’s another 24 years, where Paul is out doing his thing amongst the Gentiles; and during which time he writes his epistles.

But, James is writing probably (as most commentaries that I’ve looked at, they all agree that it’s probably the first bit of New Testament that was ever written. And so he’s probably writing) in the early 50’s, maybe the late 50’s. At least there is no indication that he has any knowledge whatsoever, as yet, of Paul’s ministry amongst the Gentiles. Nothing that alludes to it at all. Peter, on the other hand, will now let us know that he definitely is writing after Paul’s ministry has been completed. And as Paul finishes up, while in prison in Rome no doubt, Peter is martyred shortly after he writes. And we can show that from II Peter then, because I want you to see that we’ve got two tremendous time frames here. We’ve got Jews of the dispersion right after Pentecost, up until the 70 AD destruction of the Temple. But then you leap 2,000 years, up in our own time and, once again, we’re going to have the same kind of Jews facing even worse tribulation, which is the seven years that are still in front of them.
And so these little epistles are written to Jews at both ends of the spectrum. They are written to Jewish believers who are facing the persecution of that day, leading up to the destruction of Rome, of Jerusalem, but also when we leap 2,000 years, it will be Jews who are facing the horrors of the seven-year Tribulation period. And so these little epistles will be appropriate at both ends of the spectrum. Now, as I was driving up here, I was just thinking - this group over here thinks that all this was written to the Jews of Peter’s, James’ and Paul’s day. You’ve got your other group who will say this was written to Jews facing the seven-year tribulation. Well, I’m going to step in where angels fear to tread and say, "Look fellows. You’re both right! They’re writing to Jews of the contemporary time, and also they’re writing to Jews at the end of time."

Alright, here is the only indication that Peter has an awareness now of Paul’s revelations. And I believe that we’ve used these verses a hundred times. II Peter chapter 3 verse 15. And remember, Peter is now writing shortly before he’s martyred, and I think he and Paul were probably put to death at nearly the same time, within maybe a month. Now this is what Peter said:

**II Peter 3:15**

"And account (or understand) that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; And of course, when we taught Hebrews, I specified that it’s the Book of Hebrews, I think, that Peter is alluding to that Paul had written to the Jews.

**II Peter 3:16a**

"As also in all his epistles, (Romans through Philemon) speaking in them of these things; (that is pertaining to salvation) in which (that is Romans through Philemon) are some things hard to be understood," Why? Peter was a legalist!! And just like legalists today, they have a hard time comprehending my message of grace. It just flies in their face. They say, "It can’t be that easy. It can’t be that simple. I’ve got to do something!" Well, that’s legalism and Peter was steeped in that. Peter was steeped in the Law. And so I can see why he writes that in Paul’s epistles of grace were things hard for a good Jew to understand. And then Peter goes on saying that he’s not alone. There are others that are going to be far more guilty.

**II Peter 3:16b**

"…which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest,…" (twist). If they use Paul’s epistles at all, that’s what they’ll do with them. They’ll twist them all out of shape to
make them fit their own legalistic doctrine. Alright, Peter gives a warning, then, that they who do that in their unlearned state are in trouble.

**II Peter 3:16c**

"...as they do also the other scriptures, (which, of course, identifies Paul in with all the rest of our Bible) unto their own destruction."

Now, I’m going to put our prophetic timeline on the board - and when I say prophetic, I mean the timeline that comes out of all of Scripture except Paul’s epistles.

Now, as we begin the timeline, we come all the way from Adam - and at 2,000 BC, it really starts getting interesting. And that’s the call of Abraham, or Abram, as we first know him. And out of that river of humanity, we have the appearance of the Nation of Israel, or the Jewish people. Now, find Genesis chapter 12 because we’re going to go back there for a moment – and there we find that Abraham is given the Covenant promises. And the whole idea now, as we come on up through the Old Testament prophets, is that, after Christ is crucified, buried and resurrected, He ascends back to glory forty days afterwards (according to Psalms 110 verse 1), where the Lord says, "Come sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool."

His enemies, then, were to be made His footstool during the seven years of Daniel’s prophecy. Daniel, chapter 9, where he delineates seven years of a treaty made between Israel and the nations of the world. Then in the middle of that treaty Israel is finally turned-on and is persecuted these last three and one half years like never before in all their history. **That of course, would bring about, then, the Battle of Armageddon, and then the Second Coming, and Christ finally setting up the Kingdom.** Now, many people don’t understand the concept of the earthly Kingdom. But I think those of you who have been listening to me now over the years are beginning to see how the Scriptures proclaim it.

So, coming out of that Old Testament prophecies, Christ came and had a ministry of three years. And I don’t know whether to put it on the board first or show it from the Scripture first. Maybe I should use the Scripture first. That’s more authoritative anyway. So I guess we’ll go ahead and read over in Genesis chapter 12, where it says:

**Genesis 12:1-2a**

"Now the LORD 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: 2. And I will make of thee a great nation,..." Now you see here’s already prophecy beginning. In fact I always say that true prophecy began here with the Nation of Israel, even though
the Lord did give reference to His coming in Genesis 3:15. But true prophecy really starts right here. Here is where God is promising things that will come to pass in the future. That’s what prophecy is and that’s why I’m always holding this Book up above every other book on earth. There is not another book of religion or philosophy or anything you can name that can tell things hundreds and thousands of years into the future and be letter perfect; but this one does.

For example, King Cyrus, the king of Medes and Persia who finally gave the decree to Israel to go back after their 70 years of captivity and rebuild the Temple. Cyrus was named 150 years beforehand in the Word of God. And history substantiates it, so there’s no room for argument. And that’s just one little instance.

Christ’s first coming, all the prophecies in the Old Testament concerning His birth at Bethlehem and His suffering, His resurrection - it was all back there. It was all prophesied and all fulfilled to the jot and tittle. Now, of course, there’s still a lot left to be fulfilled but we can trust that if this much has been, the rest will be. And that’s where we have to place our faith. Now continuing on.

**Genesis 12:2a**

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

Now I always have to stop on some of these things. We’re so programmed today to think in terms of America and Russia and some of the other great highly populated nations; and then we look at the little Nation of Israel and how could God called them a great nation. Well, you’ve got to remember that back in antiquity, Israel, by the time they came out of Egypt with 5-7 million people, were the largest single group on the planet. And so in the language of antiquity they were a great nation.

**Genesis 12:2b-3**

"…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, (Israel) and curse him that curseth thee: (Israel) and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." What do I mean? Well the Book that you’ve got in front of you, every word of it was written by a Jew, out of the offspring of Abraham. Jesus of Nazareth, our Redeemer, our Savior, our Coming Lord, a Jew, born out of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Alright, so when the Old Testament said that in this man all the earth would be blessed, it was through Israel.
Now, we’re going to leap up several hundred years and come all the way up to Exodus chapter 19. **Remember this is all just an introduction to these little Jewish epistles.** That’s a long way around but I think it’s necessary because so many people just can’t comprehend why we would have these little Jewish epistles back here at the end of our New Testament that are still directed to the Jew and are still legalistic and have nothing to do with Paul’s Gospel of Grace. That’s what I’m attempting to do. I’m hoping I can make it understandable.

**Exodus 19:6**

"And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." Now Israel had just come out of Egypt and they’re gathered around Mt. Sinai. It’s been a miraculous exodus and now God is making promises again, that they were to be a kingdom of priests. Now what’s a kingdom? Well, it’s a governmental jurisdiction. It’s an area over which there is a given authority. Now, Israel then, is going to be a kingdom, not of just rank-and-file people, but priests. Every Jew would be a priest of Jehovah. Oh, not a high priest that would go in behind the veil, but a go-between. **And all the religions of the world have their priesthood, who are just simply go-betweens between the ordinary man out there, as we say in the street, and his god, whether it be Buddha, or Shinto or whatever, they all have their priesthood.**

Our Catholic people have their priest. Well, what’s his roll? He’s the go-between, between his parishioner and God. That’s their teaching. Well, every Jew was to have someday become, then, a priest of Jehovah. That’s the promise. Now don’t lose sight of that as we come up through the Old Testament promises; and the whole idea of setting apart the Nation of Israel was to prepare them for this priesthood.

Now, come with me to Isaiah. My, I won’t even get half-way through this all afternoon. I was wondering this morning how in the world I would stretch the Book of James through 4 programs, but I don’t think we’re going to have any trouble. Isaiah 42, and the whole idea of what I’m doing here is to show you that on the basis of the Abrahamic Covenant, the Nation of Israel appears; they are to be the vehicle through whom God would deal with the whole human race by giving us the Word of God. But also by preparing the Nation for the coming of the King and His Kingdom in which time they could evangelize the non-Jewish world.

Now, I’d better stop a moment. You see, most of us can’t quite get it out of our craw, when we look at it in this light, that Jesus told Nicodemus, in John chapter 3, that you must be born again, that unless you are born again, you cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven. Well, you see, we’ve just naturally gotten the idea then, that what Jesus was talking about is that no one could come into this earthly kingdom short of the new
birth. Well, that is true. **No one is going to go into the kingdom except believers.** But in the Old Testament economy that does not become evident. It’s quite the opposite, that Israel would go in and become the subjects of their King of kings and Lord of lords and they, in turn, would bring the masses of the Gentiles to a knowledge of their King and their Redeemer.

That was the Old Testament concept. And that of course, changes when we see that Israel is going to reject it. But if you can, just put that aside for the time being, that nobody but believers can go into this coming earthly Kingdom. We’re going to see here in the Old Testament that Israel would go in and evangelize those around them.

*Isaiah 42:1*

"Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: (now we’re talking about an individual. Who is it? The Messiah. Jesus of Nazareth. Alright) he shall bring forth judgment (or rule or authority) to the Gentiles."

God hadn’t forgotten about the Gentiles even back then. Oh, granted they’re going down the river to their doom by the millions, but God hasn’t forgotten about them. The day is coming, even in the Old Testament program, that Israel would be able to bring the salvation message to all these Gentiles by bringing them to a knowledge of their Messiah.
Alright, now in the last lesson we started the little Book of James, after having finished Hebrews. But I want to take a little extra time to set up the background for not only the little letter of James, but also for the rest of the little epistles at the back of your New Testament – I & II Peter; I, II & III John; and Jude - and then comes the first three chapters of Revelation. They all fit in that same scenario that we’re dealing with; Jewish congregations who are still not under Paul’s Gospel of Grace, but rather the Gospel of the Kingdom that was taught by Christ in His earthly ministry and later by the Twelve.

Now, we finished up in our last program having started with Israel’s promise or prophecy of being a nation of priests out of the Abrahamic Covenant. And then we showed from Isaiah how that the Messiah would come, and that Israel would be the vehicle to take salvation to the Gentiles once they have their King. Now, once you see all of this, then everything begins to make sense. Why were Peter and the Eleven so reluctant to go out into the Jewish world? Well, they knew they couldn’t until they had the King. And until they had the King, they did not have a message for the Gentiles.

Alright, so back up with me now, and we’ll go ahead from where we were in Isaiah 42 as we closed the last lesson, and let’s jump up now to Isaiah 59 and keep building our case that the Nation of Israel is being prepared, at some day in the future, to have their King and His Kingdom, and they would evangelize the world - every Jew being a priest of Jehovah. Now don’t forget that. "And you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests" as we saw in Exodus 19:6 in the first lesson.

Isaiah 59:20a

"And the (what?) Redeemer…" Well what does the Redeemer speak of? Salvation! Redemption! Being bought back from whatever lost state, whether it’s Jews or for us today. We all need a Redeemer.

Isaiah 59:20

"And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD." Now again, I always have to stop and remind people – don’t go by the hymn writer. Zion isn’t up in Heaven. Where’s Zion? It’s in
Jerusalem. It’s one of the mountains of Jerusalem, Mt. Zion from which David ruled. Alright, so "the Redeemer shall come to Mt. Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob." In other words, what segment of Israel? The believers!

Isaiah 59:21a

"As for me, this is my covenant with them,..." And then he repeats the new covenant as we have it in Jeremiah 31:31. But I’m not going to go over all that again. Now drop down into chapter 60 and pick up again this whole concept of Israel being the vehicle to go to the Gentile world.

Isaiah 60:1

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee." Now again, remembering what we taught at the beginning of the last half hour, when you read a portion of Scripture, what are the questions you ask? Who’s writing? Well, Isaiah, a Jewish prophet. Who’s he writing to? The Nation of Israel. What are the circumstances? Prophecy. Alright, so remember now, Isaiah is writing to the Nation of Israel. And he says, "for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee." Upon whom? Israel, the nation. Now verse 2:

Isaiah 60:2

"For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, (spiritual darkness) and gross darkness the people: (even Israel was in spiritual darkness. But in spite of all that, God is Sovereign and He can overrule.) but the LORD shall arise upon thee, (now are you getting the language? The Lord’s going to come to whom? The Nation of Israel.) and his glory shall be seen upon thee." Who? Israel.

Now, in Jesus’ earthly ministry, what did He tell the Twelve? "You are the light of the world." He wasn’t talking to us Gentiles in this Age of Grace. He was talking to the Twelve. (Israel) And in the very next statement or maybe it was the statement before, they were also to be the what? The salt of the earth. He wasn’t talking about us. He was talking to the Jews. That was what their prospect was. Now verse 3. As a result of God dealing with His covenant people, we find:

Isaiah 60:3

"And the Gentiles shall come to thy (Israel’s) light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." Now that’s Israel’s future. It hasn’t happened yet, but it’s going to. But so far as our timeline is concerned – and I see it’s been erased. We realize that people catch us on television by noticing little things that you would never dream of. They’ll
see this old blackboard and since we’ve always used a blackboard, we don’t want to change to something else. So, I’ll put the timeline we had in the last lesson back up.

The second thing that people notice with this program is my short-sleeved shirt. It’s become my trademark. I wouldn’t dare come up here in a suit and tie. Our mailbox would be flooded. So we’ve got these little things that Iris and I have learned over twelve years - that this is our program, and the letters say, "Don’t change a thing." So with God’s help, we’re not going to. We’re not going to give in to pressure to get highly technical and all that. We’re just going to keep it nuts and bolts.

So as I go back and re-draw my timeline, you be turning in your Bible to the Book of Zechariah. You’ll find Zechariah is the next to last book in your Old Testament and I’m going to have you look first at chapter 8 verse 20. We started back with Abraham 2000 BC and the covenant promises and out of that came, of course, the Nation of Israel.

Out of the Abrahamic Covenant - and all the Old Testament prophets are talking about Israel’s future, which of course, will lead up to Christ’s first coming and His three years of earthly ministry. And maybe that’s as far as I need to go for now. I may get it erased again before the next program. Okay, now if you’ve got Zechariah chapter 8, this is all in view of this very premise that Israel is to be a nation of priests. But they can’t operate as such until they have their King. Now, am I making that plain? They have to have the King and the Kingdom so that they would now be in that position to be priests of Jehovah.

Zechariah 8:20a

"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; (that’s God speaking through the prophet) it shall yet come to pass,..." Now again what’s the word I’m using? Prophecy. It’s something out in the future. Do you see that? This is all prophecy.

Zechariah 8:20b-21

"...that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: 21. And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD,(before Jehovah) and to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also." In other words, that’s the mentality of their thinking. Let’s go and meet the Lord of hosts, Jehovah. Verse 22:

Zechariah 8:22a
"Yea, many people and strong nations, shall come (it hasn’t happened yet, it’s future, it’s prophecy) to seek the LORD of hosts (where?) in Jerusalem,..." Now it can’t get any plainer, can it? And when will He be in Jerusalem? When He sets up His Kingdom. That’s where His throne will be, on David’s Mt. Zion. Now verse 23.

Zechariah 8:23a

"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days (when prophecy has been fulfilled and the King is on His throne and He’s ruling from Jerusalem. And Israel, remember, is going to be a nation of priests) it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations,..." So what kind of people are we talking about? Gentiles. Every kind of Gentile imaginable. And they’ll be coming to the Jew and they’ll take hold out of all languages of the nations. Reading on:

Zechariah 8:23b

"...even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you." Now remember, what is every Jew by now? A priest! Oh, not running around with long robes and all the regalia of Judaistic priests but, nevertheless, in their everyday life role, they’re going to be a go-between to take these unbelieving Gentiles to a knowledge of their King. That’s what’s been promised to them.

Alright, and so they will say to these Jews, "We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you." He is their King. This is Israel’s prospect. That’s why they are yet going to be the most glorious nation on earth, when they have the King. Alright, now just turn the page a little bit in Zechariah and let’s see what’s going to have to happen before they get their King. We find that over in chapter 14. This is one of the terminologies for the tribulation in the Old Testament, the "Day of the Lord." This day of wrath and vexation, as the Psalmist calls it. But in Zechariah 14 we can just start at verse 1. Now we’re going to take it slow. Like I said earlier, I may not even get any further into the Book of James today other than this verse 1, and an introduction of why he says what he says. But we’re going to take it slow so you can catch it all.

Zechariah 14:1

"Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, (what is that? Prophecy. See, you’re catching on. It’s talking about something out in the future. This is prophecy) and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee." In other words, they’re going to be overrun. Verse 2:
"For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; (now you see that hasn’t happened yet, so it’s still prophecy.) and the city shall…"

In fact let’s just stop a moment. I’ve been talking about the Lord’s coming for as long as I’ve been on television, 12 years. But if I thought the Lord was coming twelve years ago, what do you think I think today? Well it’s twelve years closer. Now, stop and think. Why is every little rogue nation on the planet concerned about making weapons, not of just war, but of what? Mass destruction. That’s what they’re calling them now. Weapons of mass destruction. WMD’s - that’s going to be an acronym here before long - Weapons of Mass Destruction. What in the world are they all getting ready for? Who wants to kill everybody? Well, everybody wants to kill everybody. Why? Because, you see, by the time we get to this scenario right here, that we’re reading about in Zechariah, there will only be a few people left. The vast majority of the world’s population is going to be destroyed and we can see the world getting ready for it. It’s not going to stop. But I’ve always said that the Lord will not permit it until it’s tribulation time and it will be time for the Day of the Lord. But, the whole world tonight is getting ready to destroy itself. Now verse 2.

Zechariah 14:2-3

"For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; (or raped) and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, (in other words, we’re going to be literally overrun by these Gentile armies) and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." (In other words, it’s just going to almost be total mayhem) 3. Then (just before it’s too late) shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle." And of course, as we know from the Book of Revelation this is that last great final battle when the Lord will return and smite those millions of troops that have come in to the Middle East. Alright, now look at verse 4 - after the horrors of the Day of the Lord have come to an end (the tribulation), with the Second Coming.

Zechariah 14:4a

"And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east..." (and so on and so forth). Now let’s skip on down to verse 9.

Zechariah 14:9a
"And the LORD shall be (what?) king…" See, this isn’t gobbledy gook. This is pure language. That after He’s destroyed the nations throughout the wrath and vexation of those seven years of tribulation which, like I said last program, is introduced in Daniel 9 - and He has destroyed the nations except for those who are going to be ready to go into the Kingdom. Now He sets up His Kingdom and He’s going to be King, not just over Jerusalem, not just of Israel, but over what?

Zechariah 14:9b

"…over all the earth:…"

Back up if you will to chapter 12 and verse 10. And again, this is prophecy, but this is telling us the various things that have to take place before the Lord can set up His 1000 year earthly Kingdom, after the seven years of Tribulation that is yet to come.

Zechariah 12:10

"And I will pour upon the house of David, (who is that? Well, that’s Israel) and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: (not wrath and vexation)and they (Israel) shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." Now that language is a little bit confusing but the best way to clear it up is to go back to when the brethren went down into Egypt to get grain from Joseph. Now you remember when they went down the first time, Joseph knew them, but did they know Joseph? No. But the second time they were made to know who Joseph was. Now if you know your Old Testament, what happened between Joseph and those brothers? What did they do? They wept! They wept on each others necks. Not like we would think here of bitterness, but it was tears of reunion and love and joy to think that all the past had now culminated in that which was all for their own good. Alright the same thing is going to happen when Israel suddenly realizes that this One Who has now returned at His Second Coming is the One Who died for them, who suffered for them and they’re going to recognize Him Whom their forefathers of course had pierced.

Alright, now come back to chapter 13 verse 6. And this all happens pretty much at the same time – at Christ’s Second Coming.

Zechariah 13:6

"And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." Now there it
is. The nail prints in His hands are going to be the evidence that He is the One that they had crucified. Now, here is where I’m coming to my point. We always have to realize that the whole Old Testament program was prophetically set up to all take place within a matter of a few years. In other words, after His crucifixion, then, we know that forty days later He ascended as we see in Psalms 110 verse 1. The Holy Spirit came down at Pentecost in Acts chapter 2. And then there was an undetermined period of time, that I still say is probably around seven or eight years, and then was to come the seven years of what? Tribulation! The Tribulation was supposed to come in and last for seven years, and then Christ would return and set up His Kingdom.

Alright, now, in that time frame then we have the Lord Jesus coming by His birth at Bethlehem, begins His three years of earthly ministry, up and down the Nation of Israel, for three years. Alright, in this three years of His earthly ministry, then, He introduces what I’m going to show you next, what He called Himself the Gospel of the Kingdom. So turn to Matthew chapter 9, and let’s take a look at the Gospel of the Kingdom.

**Because you see, prophetically, even if you add up the three years of His earthly ministry and if you want to use six or seven years in here before the actual Tribulation would break loose, and then seven years of Tribulation, we’re still talking in terms of 20 years between the beginning of His ministry and His Second Coming according to prophecy. Do you see that?**

Alright now, why can the Old Testament call this approximately 20 years the last days? Oh, isn’t indeed 20 years just a drop in the bucket compared to 4,000? It’s almost nothing. So all the Scripture is speaking of, is these period of times of prophecy as the last days. **Even the Apostle Paul, refers to that period of time in which he’s ministering as what? The last days.**

Now you’re looking puzzled. I’ll have to show you from Scripture won’t I? Turn quickly to Hebrews chapter 1. Oh my our time is going to get away from us again. And as I pointed out to one of my classes here in Oklahoma the other night, I’m sure you all realize that whenever Paul spoke about the Rapture of the church, who did he include? Himself. He didn’t say, "..and when that day comes YOU." But what does he say? "But when that day comes, WE shall be caught up and WE shall be changed." Paul thought the Rapture was going to be in his lifetime. And it **wasn’t until his letter to II Timothy that he realized that he would be martyred. Paul never had a concept that everything wouldn’t be consummated within this little period of time after Christ’s first coming.**

*Hebrews 1:1-2a*
"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2. Hath in these (what?) last days..." See, "...hath in these last days...." Well, now stop and think. You know I have to do this once in awhile. I’ve just got to stop and think. Let’s do the number aspect to keep everything in the right perspective. Pentecost – 29 AD. Saul’s conversion – 37 AD. After Paul’s three years in the desert, he begins his ministry among the Gentiles – 40 AD. The Jerusalem counsel, when they meet with the Twelve (or at least with Peter, James and John, that’s when Paul and Barnabas go down from Antioch to Jerusalem) – 51 or 52 AD. He starts his epistles around 55-56 AD. The last ones are written from prison in Rome in 64 or 65 AD, and then he’s martyred. Then in 70 AD everything is destroyed by Titus. All of that is in what Paul refers to here then as the last days. Okay, let’s read it again.

Hebrews 1-2a

"Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,..." Now this is the Apostle Paul writing in his lifetime, so when did it have to be? Somewhere between 55 and 65 AD. I think probably around 60 AD when he wrote this Book. Anyway, he was still calling it the last days because, in Paul’s mind, all of this was going to be consummated with the Second Coming of Christ and the setting up of the Kingdom within that 20-year time span. He had no idea that there would be 2,000 years of the Church Age, nor did anybody else.

But all of prophecy, is resting on the Covenant made to Abraham concerning Israel - that out of Israel would come the Messiah. He ministered to the Nation for three years and He opened up to them the Gospel of the Kingdom and they rejected it and they crucified Him. Now come back to Matthew chapter 9 again so we make our point before we close this program. And let’s just drop in at verse 35.

Matthew 9, verse 35

"And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people."

Since all of this was promised to Israel, Jesus could not be anything to anybody but the Nation of Israel, because that’s who He had made the promises to. Otherwise, God’s Word wouldn’t be worth anything. Alright, so now then you come across to chapter 10 and here’s where our time is going to run out. Jesus has chosen the Twelve and now in verse 5:

Matthew 10:5
"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, or into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:" Do you see how clear that is? Don’t you have anything to do with Gentiles or the half-Gentiles, Samaritans.

Matthew 10:6

"But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."
Lesson One • Part III

The Setting for James Through Jude

James 1:1-2

One of our favorite letters that we received contains – "I get my cup of coffee, my Bible and my notebook and sit down and watch Through the Bible." So again, we like to thank our television audience for your prayers, your help and your letters - my it just makes our day.

Now in the first two lessons today we’ve been introducing the Book of James because it’s been such a controversy I suppose through the ages because, of course, it is so legalistic, with all of its works. And remember, there is nothing in the Book of James that even speaks of the Body of Christ, the Church. Nothing of the power of the Resurrection, as we find in Paul’s writings. But, rather, it’s all Jewish and that’s hard for people to swallow, because so many want this letter and the other little letters following it to be Church letters to make their doctrine fit.

And so, this is what we’re attempting to show - why are these little letters written and what’s their purpose? And as Luther reminded me at break time, always remember who wrote it, to whom was it written, why it was written and so forth. But this is a good example of showing that in this little Book, as you’ve seen in our previous programs, the first verse of chapter 1 of James says:

James 1:1b

"...to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting." So we know it’s written to Jews. Peter opens his little epistle, "....to those scattered," which meant that he, too, was writing to the Jews of the dispersion.

So now what we’ve been doing in the last two programs, in case you’re just catching us for the first time in this series, is to show that everything, all the way from the Covenant made with Abraham and the establishment of the Nation of Israel is to bring us up to the place where Israel would be ready for their promised King and his Kingdom. And as soon as that was established, then Israel could evangelize the nations.

Now I haven’t got time to go and repeat all these things all the time, but remember Zechariah said, "And then shall ten men take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew and they will say, We will go with you for we have heard that God is with you." Well now, that is so obvious, then, that it has to be a scenario where the unbelieving Gentiles are
following the Jews to be introduced to their Messiah, their King, the Jehovah of the Old Testament.

Alright now in the last moments of our last program, we jumped on up into Christ’s earthly ministry and we showed then from chapter 9 verse 35 that He went about all the cities of the Nation of Israel, going into their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. Now the word "Gospel," you know as well as I do, means "the good news." So the whole thrust of Christ’s three years of earthly ministry was to proclaim to the Nation of Israel the good news, that the King was now in their midst and he’s offering the opportunity to have the Kingdom. And if He would have the Kingdom, then Israel could become the evangelists and bring in the Gentile world. But, what was Israel’s problem? Unbelief, as always before. And so, in unbelief, they didn’t recognize him as the King and instead they said, "Crucify Him. Away with such a fellow." And one of them said, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" You know all those statements. And so they crucified him.

Alright now, you have to realize then that according to my timeline that I had on the board, and I’d better put it back up because every day I have somebody call and they say, "I’ve just caught your program for the first time." Well, you see if I move on not using the timeline then somebody that catches this the next time won’t have the foggiest notion of what I’m talking about. And so, I think that I’m probably recognized in my program material for the timeline, so we’re going to stay with it. Now, after Abraham’s call to come out from among the pagan city of Ur, and he gets the promises that brought about the Nation of Israel, or the people that are known as the Jews - and for the most part, for those 2,000 years from Abram until Christ’s first coming, it was Jew only.

Now granted, there’s always the exceptions, but everything written in the Old Testament concerning prophecy was concerning the Nation of Israel. And as we’ve been seeing now in the last two programs, they were to be a nation of priests. And they were to be a light to the Gentiles. And that one day their Messiah would come and He would be their King, but the Scriptures also foretold His death, burial and resurrection. And that He would ascend back to the Father’s right hand, that’s Psalms 110 verse 1. And then, after an undetermined period of time then would come what Psalms 2 says is the wrath and vexation, describing the seven-year Tribulation period. Now maybe Psalms 2 is a good place to start. Be turning to that as I finish my timeline. Daniel chapter 9 gives us the time frame of this seven years of Tribulation that is yet to come. And then after the wrath and vexation, Christ was to return and set up the Kingdom.

Now I haven’t done that before this afternoon, and maybe I’m remiss - I should have. If you were to take Romans through Philemon out of your New Testament, which are
the letters of Paul, and all the Church doctrine, this is what you would have left. **If it weren’t for Paul this Old Testament program is the only thing I could teach.** These remaining letters are the Old Testament program. Most of you know that. And out of the Old Testament prophecies, we have the Four Gospels, we have Peter and the Eleven preaching in the early chapters of Acts, and they are pleading with Israel because of the wrath to come. And out of that wrath to come would be the return of Christ to set up His Kingdom - which as I pointed out in the last program, when you take these ten or twenty years (between the ascension and His Second Coming), that’s the last days of Scripture. But the writers didn’t know there would be this 2000 years of what we call the Church Age, sandwiched in between. Alright, now you have Psalms chapter 2, right?

**Psalms 2:1-2a**

"Why do the heathen (the non-Jew people, the Gentiles) rage, and why do the people (Israel) imagine vain things? 2. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers (that is of Israel, the religious rulers) take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed,..." In other words Jew and Gentile connived together to reject the Messiah, the Christ. Now verse 3.

**Psalms 2:3**

"Let us break their bands asunder, (that is God’s rule and control) and cast away their cords from us." You see the pronoun there, I always point out, always refers to the Triune God. Now look at verse 4.

**Psalms 2:4**

"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision." Mans foolishness in rejecting the Anointed One causes the Lord to have a laugh of derision. Now verse 5:

**Psalms 2:5**

"Then (time word. After they’ve rejected and crucified the Messiah, and the Lord literally laughs at the foolishness of men not wanting Him as their King - then the next event on God’s prophetic calendar is) shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure."

Now I want to take this slow because I’ve read several commentaries in the last year or two where they say everything about Psalms 2 except this. I haven’t read one that shows that this is a prophetic outline of history, but it is. The Messiah would come
and He’d be rejected by Jew and Gentile together. And shortly after His rejection would come the wrath and vexation, or what Daniel calls the seventieth week, or what we now call the Tribulation. Then the next verse in Psalms 2 is verse 6:

_Psalms 2:6_

"Yet (in spite of everything that’s happened, God’s program moves on and what’s the next event?) have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion."

So according to Psalms 2 and according to all the prophecies of the Old Testament, what is to follow the seven years of wrath and vexation? _The King!_ "Yet have I set my king on the holy hill of Zion." And so, according to all the Old Testament prophecies, after Israel has had the Messiah, His three years of earthly ministry, His preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom, then was to come the Tribulation, and then the Second Coming and then the Kingdom.

Now with Paul’s letters out of the picture, this would be so easy to understand - that all of it would just come right down the pike. And like I said in the other program, this three years plus probably six or seven, for a total of ten; another seven in here, so somewhere around fifteen or twenty years from His earthly ministry until His return to set up the Kingdom, would just be a few years. So these years right here were the last days. I don’t think you have any trouble seeing that.

Now then, if that is the case, then let’s move on out of Matthew where we have the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom; no let’s stop in chapter 16 briefly because the good news of the Kingdom was actually completely centered on one great fact that they had to believe. _And that was, Who is Jesus of Nazareth?_ Who is He? Well you see, the whole purpose of those three years of ministry and miracle after miracle after miracle was to prove to the Nation of Israel that He was that Messiah. That was the purpose – to validate Who He was.

Now then, Peter and the other Eleven recognized that. You pick that up in Matthew 16. This is Peter’s profession of faith or the fact that he was believing the Gospel of the Kingdom, that Jesus was the promised Messiah, the King of Israel. It’s been a long time since we’ve reviewed some of this so I guess it’s about time, because we’ve got a host of new listeners who have probably missed all of this in the past.

_Matthew 16:13_

"When Jesus came into the coasts (borders) of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, (The Twelve) saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" In other words, fellas, who do the rank and file of Israel really think I am? Now look at
their answer after three years, this is at the end of His ministry. From here they go up to Jerusalem and the crucifixion.

**Matthew 16:14**

"And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; (Elijah) and others, Jeremias, (Jeremiah,) or one of the prophets." Isn’t that something? Israel’s unbelief that after three years of miracle after miracle after miracle. Now you’ve got to remember we’ve only got just a little tip of the iceberg recorded in Scripture. Just a tip of the iceberg, because what’s the last verse of the Gospel of John say? "And many other works did He do which if it were written, the world couldn’t hold the books." Well I’m sure that’s a play on words, but nevertheless the whole impression is that His miracle working was far beyond what’s recorded in the Four Gospels and yet they could not believe Who He was, except a few.

**Matthew 16:15**

"He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?" Are you going to tell me you think I’m John the Baptist? Are you going to tell me I’m Jeremiah? Who am I? Now here comes Peter’s profession of faith. This is the basis of Peter’s salvation, or all the other Jews that believe in His Messiahship, or His name, or believe the Gospel of the Kingdom - this was the root of it.

**Matthew 16:16**

"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, (the Messiah, the Anointed One) the Son of the living God." Period! Now let me read it the way most people think it should be read: "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God Who died for me, Who arose from the dead and I have repented and have been baptized." No, it doesn’t say that. All Peter believed was that Jesus was the Christ. There is not a word about believing in His death, burial, and resurrection as required in Paul’s Gospel for the Church Age. And it wasn’t required of him. All they were to believe was, Who am I? And when Peter said, "You’re the Christ," Jesus was satisfied. In fact, He commends him in the next verse and He says:

**Matthew 16:17**

"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."

Alright now let’s flip up through the Four Gospels and let’s come past the crucifixion, of course, which had to happen - it was prophesied. And then, when you come to Acts
- and Peter now is preaching on the Day of Pentecost, again nothing has changed. It’s just an extension of all the Old Testament prophecies except now they have fulfilled the rejection, and Christ’s resurrection and the ascension, but other than that everything is still based on the Old Testament promises that God the Son is going to be the King of Israel. And He’s going to rule from Mt. Zion in Jerusalem.

Alright now let’s slip into Acts chapter 2, the Day of Pentecost. God the Son has gone back to Heaven. God the Spirit has come down and has manifested himself, but now look what Peter says in verse 22. Now this is just again the skimming, I’m not hitting half of the details, but here we are on the Day of Pentecost. The Jews gathered from every nation under heaven for these feast days. The Temple is still operating, remember and Peter says:

**Acts 2:22-23a**

"Ye men of Israel, (how many Gentiles are in there? Not a one! How some can think this is Church language is beyond me.) hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, (for three years) which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: 23. Him, (speaking of the Messiah) being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,..." God wasn’t taken by surprise when they rejected Him. This was all in the blueprint before even the creation.

**Acts 2:23b-24**

"...ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: (or killed) 24. Whom God has raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." (or held by it)

Any reference to Israel’s salvation yet? NO! It’s not tied to His death, burial and resurrection. So now Peter was going to go back into the Psalms, back into prophecy to show that all the way back here, from David especially, one thousand years BC, David prophesied without understanding of course, what he was writing - but David prophesied that the Messiah would be put to death, He would be buried, death couldn’t hold Him, He’d be raised from the dead. And in Psalms 110:1 shows so graphically that He would ascend back to the Father’s right hand. You all know Psalms 110:1 "The Lord said unto my Lord, come sit at my right hand until (time word) I make your enemies your footstool." Well when will that be? The end of the Tribulation when God will have destroyed the enemy and then He will set up His kingdom.
Alright, so Peter now is showing from the Psalms that everything that has just happened in these last few weeks was fulfillment of prophecy. Not a word about being a salvation for the Nation of Israel. Now you come on down to verse 32:

**Acts 2:32**

"This Jesus (who has been crucified, buried and resurrected and ascended back to glory) hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."

Now goodness sakes, just be logical. Jesus and the Twelve, on top of everything that the prophets had been writing, is talking about a Kingship and a Kingdom - and now all of a sudden the nation has recognized that He’s been put to death; in order for that King and that Kingdom to still be fulfilled, logic tells us, what had to happen to the One they killed? Well, He had to be brought back to life; how else could He fulfill the prophecies? And this is what Peter is proving. Yes, you killed Him but God raised Him from the dead, the Kingdom is still valid. It’s still a valid promise. Alright now with that thought in mind, read on.

**Acts 2:33**

"Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, (I just quoted Psalms 110:1) and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." The evidence of the Holy Spirit coming down. Verse 34:

**Acts 2:34-35a**

"For David is not ascended into the heavens; but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my LORD, (now he’s quoting Psalms 110 verse 1) Sit thou on my right hand, 35. Until..." Now every Jew knew that word "until" was a time word. That after He had sat at the Father’s right hand for a given period of time, He would yet be returning to set up the Kingdom. But according to the Old Testament timeline, how long would it be? Just a few years. Just a few years and He’d be coming right back and establishing the Kingdom. Now remember, I’m taking Paul writings to the Church out of the picture for all this. Now read on:

**Acts 2:35-36a**

"Until I make thy foes thy footstool. 36. Therefore..." Now whenever you see a "therefore" what do you do? You realize what it’s there for. Because of everything He has just said. That yes, you killed the Messiah, but God raised Him from the dead. He’s up there at the Father’s right hand waiting for the day when He will defeat His
enemies and He will return, and you’re yet going to have the Kingdom. That’s Peter’s message. But in order for Israel to enjoy the Messiah and His Kingdom, what did they have to do with the spiritual side? Verse 38:

Acts 2:38a

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent,..." Well now, of what? Having killed and rejected the Messiah. That’s obvious. It was a horrible national sin for Israel to have rejected their promised Messiah. So what did they have to do? They had to repent of it and that’s the message. Repent is the message!

Acts 2:38a

"Then Peter said unto them, (Israel) Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins,..." Well, this was a national thing concerning Israel, that they were to repent of having crucified the Messiah Who was now alive and well at the Father’s right hand waiting for the day when He could yet return and give the Nation of Israel her King.

Alright so the admonition for the Jew of Peter’s Pentecostal audience was repent and be baptized. Now wait a minute. Who was the first one that preached that to Israel? John the Baptist! Same thing. The only thing then that they had to repent of was their national sins, of the typical sins of the flesh, adultery, greed, and the various other sins that the Law forbade and of which Israel was guilty. They were to repent of all that and get right spiritually, so that they could have the King and the Kingdom. But they also had to bring about the fulfillment of the prophecies, so they rejected Him, Christ was crucified. But now God still comes back and He’s offering the nation a second opportunity of repentance. "Repent," Peter says.

Now of course, the major sin is having crucified their Messiah. So he says "Repent" and just like John the Baptist, show that repentance with water baptism - no doubt about it, this is water baptism. "And then they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." And, of course, we know that many of them did. Also remember this is still all Israel, so you can never confuse this with the Body of Church that the Apostle Paul shares with us in the Gentile Age of Grace.

Alright, now then, slip over into chapter 3 and if you think I’m pulling your leg when I say that Israel was still being promised the prospect of Christ immediately coming back after the Tribulation had run it’s course (which would be a matter of seven years), and set up His kingdom, then you can’t read Acts chapter 3, because it’s plain as day. Okay, chapter 3 verse 12. They have just healed the lame man much like they did in Christ’s earthly ministry. Nothing has changed, or nothing all that much has
changed. And they’re still performing these kinds of miracles and the Jewish leaders are still confounded.

Acts 3:12-14

"And when Peter saw it, (the healing of the lame man’s wandering) he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, (how many Gentiles? Not a one!) why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we made this man to walk? 13. The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, (see how Jewish this is? There are no Gentiles in here) hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. 14. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, (One) and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;" Now verse 15.

Acts 3:15a

"And killed the Prince of life,..."

Now look at the last half of verse 15. Even though Israel killed Him, what did God do? He raised Him up again. Israel isn’t going to stop God’s program.

Acts 3:15b

"...whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses." Any hint of salvation based on His death, burial, and resurrection? Not a word. There’s no salvation attached to that death, burial and resurrection. It’s just a fact for Israel to understand that even though they killed the King, God raised Him from the dead and He is still able to be their King. Now, I’ve got to move on quickly to verses 19 and 20.

Acts 3:19-20a

"Repent ye therefore, (again of having killed their Messiah) and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing (what would that be? The Kingdom!) shall come from the presence of the Lord; 20. And he shall send Jesus Christ,..."

For what purpose? To be the King. See how simple all that is? Israel is told to repent and God will yet send His Son to be their King.
Lesson One • Part IV

The Setting for James Through Jude

James 1:1-2

I received a letter that I would like to have read on the program, but Iris and Laura thought people would think I was bragging and I don’t want to read them with that idea at all. But the lady was 94 years old, and had been in church all her life and just through our program she suddenly realized she had never experienced salvation. She had never understood the Scriptures. She had never believed Paul’s Gospel for her salvation. Oh, she had read her Bible through from Genesis to Revelation, but that’s just so typical.

I wanted to read it to let people know that if they’re experiencing this, they’re not alone. We’ve got people from all walks of life, from all different backgrounds, that are suddenly seeing the Scriptures, not for what I say, but for what the Scriptures say. In fact, I had one gentleman call from Florida just yesterday and he said, "Les, you know what brought me out of darkness into the light? It wasn’t what you said, it was the Scripture that you had on the screen." And I don’t forget that. It’s the Word of God that is powerful. It isn’t what I say or anything like that. And hopefully all I can do is point out what the Scriptures say.

We’re in our fourth program this afternoon, and I’m still trying to introduce the setting for these little epistles here at the end of our New Testament that are addressed to Jews who were believers only in Jesus as the Messiah - which was appropriate at the time they became believers, and it was preparing these Jewish believers for pressures that were to come. Now I trust you’ve opened up to James 1:1, even though we’re not going to stay here long, but let’s just go look at it a minute again for the sake of our television viewers:

**James 1:1**

"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting." Notice James is writing to the twelve tribes scattered abroad. In other words, they’re not in Jerusalem anymore, they’ve been scattered out. And as I pointed out in an earlier program, it was because of Saul’s persecution that we see in Acts chapter 8. And we’ll be seeing that soon. But then the purpose for his writing this letter is more or less headlined in verse 2:

**James 1:2**
"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;" Now the word ‘temptations’ is unfortunate. I trust that maybe the newer translations… does anybody have ‘testing’ in your Bible? Okay, that’s what it really should be. It wasn’t temptation to sin, but it was the testing of persecution.

Now again, like I told you in one of the earlier programs, some people will think these letters are written to Jews contemporary with the writers, early Jewish believers, recently scattered out of Jerusalem, which is certainly apropos. But many think that these letters are written to Jews who would be believers during the seven years of Tribulation. Well, I say it’s both. Because you see, these Jews scattered throughout the Roman Empire and were certainly under horrible persecution from their own people as well as from the pagan world. But it’s also going to be a time of testing for Jewish believers who find themselves in the Tribulation.

So remember, these little Jewish epistles at the back are written primarily to encourage Jewish believers under the pressures of persecution and hatred. And when you look at the two possibilities (and that’s why I’ve been putting all of this on the timeline), all of the Old Testament prophecies come right down the pike, one right after the other, with no hint of a 2,000 year interruption of a Church Age.

Consequently, every portion of Scripture, except Romans through Philemon, which are directed to the Body of Christ will be directed to this timeline, and hopefully you’ll all remember that, after the call of Abraham, 2000 BC, we have 2,000 years between Abraham and Christ’s first coming of the Old Testament, which is all Jew only with some exceptions, of course. Nineveh, and Rahab and so forth were some of the exceptions, but all of these prophecies were preparing the Nation of Israel for the coming of their Messiah.

Alright, so Christ comes and presents Himself to the Nation of Israel and His three years of earthly ministry and, in spite of all the miracles and wonders and signs, they crucified Him anyway. But God raised Him from the dead, called Him back to the Father’s right hand (Psalms 110, verse 1). And then as we saw in the last program, according to Psalms 2, shortly after His ascension there would come the seven years of wrath, or as we call it, the Tribulation. Then Christ would return to the Mt. of Olives and set up His Kingdom (promised to Israel), and then Israel could be priests of Jehovah and they, in turn, could reach out to the Gentile world. Now that’s the whole Old Testament program in a nutshell.

Come back now to Acts chapter 3 and I think that’s where we left off, where Peter now is appealing to the Jews of his day, shortly after Pentecost, remember, to repent of having rejected and killed their Messiah. Peter says that He was now alive and He had gone back to the Father, but that He was ready to return and yet bring Israel the
Kingdom - but there was one other item that we didn’t have time to cover. So to get us into the flow, let’s repeat where I left off with verses 19 and 20. Remember Peter is addressing the Nation of Israel. There is not a Gentile in the bunch.

Acts 3:19-20

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;" Notice that’s not a period, that’s a semi-colon. The thought goes right on in to verse 20. The times of refreshing would come when...

Acts 3:20a

"And he shall send Jesus Christ,..." God would send Jesus Christ. Now, where is He? He’s at the Father’s right hand. Where would God send Him? Back to Jerusalem to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies.

Acts 3:20-21

"And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:" But now, Peter says it can’t happen tomorrow, because first...

Acts 3:21a

"Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things,..." Jesus couldn’t just return to the world as it was. He couldn’t return to that sinners’ planet covered with all the wickedness of mankind and set up His Kingdom. So what does He have to do? He has to regenerate it first. He has to cleanse the planet in order for the Kingdom to be set up. And now, that’s why the wrath and vexation is that period of seven years in which God will deal wrath and judgment on mankind, but also to cleanse the planet of all of the stuff that man has brought into the picture and make it ready for His Kingdom.

Now, you’ve heard me allude to this on the program many, many times. By the time we get this glorious heaven on earth scenario, what has to happen to all the garbage that’s on the planet now? It has to go! I don’t know how God’s going to do it, but it’s going to go. And I use this illustration over and over. In all of our travels lately, there is construction, construction, construction. Men are as busy as a colony of ants. And every time I go by one of these sites, I can’t help but think of my going over a hill of ants with my hay machine and just smashing that ant hill to smithereens. Well, that’s what God’s going to do with all of man’s activity. Oh, they’re building
and building, and they have to, but it’s just an act of futility because the day is coming when God is going to cleanse the planet of all this stuff.

If you think I’m stretching the envelope, stop and think. Can God have all these nightclubs and these discos and these gambling casinos in His Kingdom? NO WAY! Can He have all the houses of prostitution and the bars and you name it in His Kingdom? NO WAY! Is He going to have all these multitudes now of ungodly, wicked people in His Kingdom? NO WAY! So what does He have to do? They’re going to have to go. It’s going to have to go. There’s going to be peace in the Middle East some day - absolutely there’s going to be peace when He returns. And there will be no argument because He’s going to be King of Kings and Lord of Lords. But all the rest of that stuff is going to go.

If you think I’m stretching the point (since I’m on that very concept), come back with me to Jeremiah 25 once again. We’ve done it in our Oklahoma classes until I think they see it in their sleep. And well they might. But Jeremiah 25 verse 30, and this is exactly what Peter is talking about in Acts 3. Now as you’re looking it up, let me read the verse in Acts 3 again in your hearing: "Whom heaven must receive as He is ascended and sat down at the Father’s right hand. Whom heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things." Now what does restitution speak of? The same thing as regeneration. And when you regenerate something, what do you do? You make it like it was in the beginning. When you reconstitute something, what do you do? You make it like it was in the beginning. When you restore something. Now my oldest son and his son are getting interested in restoring old cars and stuff like that. They’re not actually doing it but they like to read about it. I like to read about restored tractors and stuff like that. Oh it’s interesting. And what do they do? They take an old piece of junk that they find out someplace and they take it in to their shop and they restore it until it’s just like when it was brand new. Now, that’s restoration.

Alright, that’s what Peter is talking about in restitution. It’s going to be made like it was in the beginning. Regeneration, like it was in the beginning. Now how is He going to make it like it was in the beginning unless He cleanses the planet of everything that is here. And here in Jeremiah 25, is what He is talking about. It’s going to happen! Start at verse 30:

Jeremiah 25:30

"Therefore prophesy thou (this is telling Israel what’s coming in their future) against them all these words, and say unto them, The LORD shall roar from on high, (what’s that a reference to? His Second Coming, like we saw a few programs back. He’s going stand on the Mt. of Olives) and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; (that is this old planet)
shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth." That’s not my idea; I’m not interpreting. That’s what the Book says. He’s going to crush the inhabitants of the earth like those who tread the grapes in the grape vat. Reading on in verse 31.

**Jeremiah 25:31-32a**

"A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; (not just the Middle East. It’s going to be around the globe) for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, (Why? They’ve rejected Him. Out of hand) he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord. 32. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation,..." Are you seeing the evil tonight? You pick up the daily newspaper and it’s all the same. Nothing but murder and rape and robbery and it’s awful. Well, and I’ve always said America is still head and shoulders morally above the rest of the world. So can you get a picture of the world’s moral climate today? It’s absolutely awful. Now here comes the effects of His Second Coming.

**Jeremiah 25:32b**

"...and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth 33. And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day (His Second Coming, the end of the seven years) from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, (there will be no funerals) neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground."

And that’s why the birds of prey will be called in to clean up the flesh. That’s what’s coming and the world goes on their merry way as if they’re going to rejuvenate it and make it themselves. No they’re not. They’ll just keep making a bigger and bigger mess every day. The politicians can try all they want - I’ve always said it on this program and I’ll say it again; the Democrats aren’t going to make it right, the Republicans aren’t going to make it right, nor will anybody else until Christ returns.

Alright, back to Acts chapter 3. So Peter, here, just shortly after the day of Pentecost (we’re probably back in 30 AD now), is still preaching repentance and water baptism. Peter wants the Nation of Israel to repent of their sins. Alright, read verse 21, again now, in light of what we’ve just read:

**Acts 3:21**

"Whom the heaven must receive (or hold) until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world
began." That’s why I took you back to Jeremiah. Alright now let’s go down to verse 24:

**Acts 3:24**

"Yea, (Peter says,) all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold (prophesied) of these days." Peter isn’t talking about 2000 AD. Peter is speaking in about 30 AD and he’s expecting all this to come within the next few years. So that, within a matter of 10 or 20 years, Christ would be ready to return and set up the Kingdom. That’s all Peter knows. He knows nothing of 2,000 years of what we call the Age of Grace. Now let’s read on in verse 25, and this isn’t Church language...

**Acts 3:25**

"Ye are the children of the prophets..." Well, I’ve always made the point, to whom was all prophecy directed? Israel - not the Gentile world, but Israel. Now as prophecy is fulfilled on Israel the whole Gentile world will get involved, of course.

**Acts 3:25a**

"Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." What’s he talking about? When He would return and set up this glorious Kingdom promised to Israel in which there will be Gentiles. They are going to survive the Tribulation, and they’re going to be in the Kingdom, as believers.

So now the setting, then, is getting closer and closer for the coming of the Messiah after the horrors of the seven years of Tribulation, but years are going by, and Peter and the Eleven, as well as the other six that were appointed, are pleading with the nation to yet repent and believe that this Jesus Whom they crucified was the Christ. And years have been going by and they had been preaching their hearts out to these unbelieving Jews.

Now you come all the way to Acts chapter 7, and now we have one of the six that were chosen to wait on tables back in Acts chapter 6. Alright, but now Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit is going to make one last appeal to the Nation of Israel. God is using this man, who was not one of the Twelve, but one of the six to make a last appeal to the Nation of Israel. And we don’t have time to take it verse by verse, but we’ll just hit the highlights. So let’s begin in Acts chapter 6, verse 15.

**Acts 6:15**
"And all that sat in the council, (what council? The religious leaders of Israel. All the religious leaders of Israel are now sitting here in judgment of this man, Stephen) looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel."

Acts 7:1-2a

"Then said the high priest, Are these things so?" (in other words what they were accusing him of) 2. And he said, Men, brethren and fathers,...."

How many Gentiles would a Jew call his father? Not a one. And so Stephen is addressing Jews. And he goes all the way, as Paul does himself, back in chapter 22, back to Abraham, and again, reviews the history of Israel and how God, step by step, was bringing them to the place where He could present their Messiah and their King. Now let’s go all the way up to the end of his message - let’s go to chapter 7 and begin with verse 51, Stephen is now ending up and remember he’s addressing the elite of Israel. And He says:

Acts 7:51-55

"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: (or Spirit) as your fathers did, (back in history) so do ye. 52. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:" 53. Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. 54. When they (this elite again of Israel) heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. 55. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing (not seated) on the right hand of God,"

And, wow! That threw fear into those Jewish leaders because what verse did they know better than their name and address? Psalms 110:1, "Come and sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool." And they understood that when God would subject His enemies to the rule and reign of the Son of God, then He would be able to set up His Kingdom. And they saw it. **He’s not seated, He’s standing.** What does that mean? He’s ready to come back; He’s ready to pour out His wrath and judgment - and in their fear, I think, and in their nonsensical reaction to that, what did they do? The next verse:

Acts 7:57-60
"Then they cried with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, (now that was conviction supreme) 58. And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul. 59. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

Now verse 1 of chapter 8, and here we have a complete change in the personalities of the Book of Acts. Saul of Tarsus:

Acts 8:1a

"And Saul was consenting unto his death,…"

Now looking again at the timeline as far as we’ve come, all the way up through Christ’s earthly ministry - we saw He was rejected, but God rose Him from the dead; and called Him back to the right hand of the Father, waiting for the day when He could return and yet set up His kingdom.

So in this period of time, between His ascension and the stoning of Stephen is about 7 or 8 years in here - and during this period, Peter and the Eleven plus the six, like Stephen, are pleading for the Nation of Israel to yet accept the fact that the One they crucified was their Messiah, because they could see all the ramifications of the wrath and vexation coming and they were to be ready for the coming of the King and His Kingdom. And so everything that they preach is on this basis, but as we get to where we are right now, in this Age of Grace, all of a sudden God moves in with a whole new character, Saul, who will become Paul and He’s going to send him where? To the Gentiles.

Alright, I haven’t got time, we’ll have to do it in our next program, but when we come back next month, we’re going to draw the second timeline that shows how this prophetic line is now going to be totally stopped right here after the ascension, with the Tribulation and the Kingdom Age all pushed out into the future and we’re going to come into a parenthetical period of time of 2,000 years where God is going to be dealing with the Gentiles in the Body of Christ instead of Israel.
Lesson Two • Part I

The Word Complete

James 1:1-23

Now in our last taping session, I really didn’t intend to take all four lessons just as an introduction to the book of James. And that introduction isn’t just to the Book of James but all of those Jewish epistles that follow the Book of Hebrews - James, Peter and I & II & III John are all basically written to the Jew and that’s why we call them the Jewish epistles, as well as Jude and Revelation.

I told Laura and Iris this morning, I will probably almost drop a bomb in people’s laps today because I’m going to make a statement that I haven’t made before on television. It’s always been in the back of my mind - in fact, if you’ve seen my series on Revelation, you’ll remember that I did not touch on those seven letters to the seven Churches because I was never convinced that that was Church language. There’s not a word of Church language in them and, consequently, I was also never convinced that the Book of Revelation was not written until 95 AD.

Well, I can no longer agree on the date given for Revelation, and you’ll see why in a little bit. We’re going to come back and take a little better look as our introduction continues on. I’m not going to change anything from what we said before but you remember, the last four programs we had our Old Testament program, and the prophetic timeline coming out of all the Old Testament prophets on the chalk board. And then we have Christ’s earthly ministry, the three years in here before the cross, where we have specified over the years that Christ ministered only to the Nation of Israel with a couple of exceptions, because of the Covenant promises that were given only to Israel. (Romans 15:8)

Then we are introduced to the rejection of His Messiahship. He’s crucified. He goes back to Glory according to Psalms 110 verse 1 to sit at the Father’s right hand "until" His enemies are His footstool, which would be at the end of the seven years of Tribulation.

So here on the chalkboard, if you leave Paul and his message out of the picture (and by doing that you would leave everything from Romans through Hebrews out of the Biblical picture), this is your timeline we have on the board. Looking at it that way, you’re coming through the crucifixion, the ascension, and then the ministry of Peter and the Eleven - and then they were looking for the Tribulation and the Second Coming, and then the Kingdom, in that order. And remember, that’s the way it’s
prophesied in Psalms chapter 2, as there is not a mention of this past 2,000 years of
the Age of Grace.

And even the Apostle Paul, who begins his ministry back there at about 40 AD, still
was looking for even the out-calling of the Church in his lifetime. He had no
comprehension until we get to II Timothy that he was going to lose his life by
martyrdom and evidently time would go on. All right, so according to most of the
chronologers, and I’m taking a little liberty, I’ll admit that, because not every
chronologer is year to year in agreement. There’s usually four, five, six years,
sometimes more than that, in their differences. And so I’m just taking a more or less
average of the chronology. What we find, then, is that the Four Gospels of Matthew,
Mark, Luke and John, the Book of Acts, as well as these little Jewish Epistles of
James, I Peter (not II Peter because that was written several years later) and all of
these Jewish writings coming on through I & II & III John and Jude, as well as
the book of Revelation, were all written in this time frame between 40 and 58
AD, and I’ll show you why in a moment.

By the time that has been pretty much accomplished, then, we have the Apostle Paul
and his epistles starting with Thessalonians, the Corinthians, the Galatians, the Roman
letter and Hebrews and I Timothy and Titus. And he more or less wrote those in the
same period as a lot of those we just mentioned including the Four Gospels and so
forth. Paul probably started his earliest letters of Thessalonians probably from about
58 AD, and then he winds up his letters with his prison epistles beginning with
Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon (that’s 64 to 68 AD), and then I
think at 68 AD we have II Peter and II Timothy. So, here’s where I’m probably
going to shock a few people, I think II Timothy is the end of the New Testament
writings. That would be the last book written. Now I have to prove that from
Scripture don’t I?

Come back with me first and foremost to the Book of Romans. Romans chapter 15
because, even though I may take a little liberty with chronology, I will not take
liberty with The Word because that has to be left as it is. In Romans 15 verse 4 is
an amazing statement. And I remember when I taught Romans several years ago, I
used this verse to indicate that everything that had been written in Old Testament time
is what he’s referring to. But now, after these last several years of deliberation and a
lot of lost sleep, believe me, I’ve come to a conclusion.

I can show this kind of a time-frame for the Jewish writings, the Four Gospels, and of
course Acts is Luke’s account of the activity in that period of time between the
ascension and the close of the Scriptural writings. Then you come down to James and
I Peter and (I, II, III John) Jude through Revelation, then that completes all of the non-
Pauline writings. Now then, look what Paul can say. Since everything else in the New Testament has already been written, now look what the Scripture says:

Romans 15:4a

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime (in other words, before he came into the picture) were written for our (what?) learning,..." And isn’t that exactly what they all are? We never tell people, "They’re inappropriate, don’t read the Old Testament, don’t read the Four Gospels." we never say that. But, all we do say is that you won’t find Church doctrine in the Old Testament. You won’t find Church salvation in the Old Testament nor in the Four Gospels. Those are only found in Paul’s writings. So this verse is so appropriate - that everything written before Paul begins his writings was written for our learning. It’s background, but you can’t go in there and find salvation, and you can’t find the order of church behavior. That all has to come from Paul.

All right, then, I found another verse just several weeks ago that really put the frosting on the cake and I, just about in exultation, said, "Lord thank you!" because this is what I needed. Turn with me to Colossians chapter 1 and this is going to blow you away, I know it is. But you can’t refute it because it’s what the Book says. And let’s just drop down to verse 25. And I invite you folks with your electronic concordances and so forth and Greek, you just check me out. And here Paul writes:

Colossians 1:25

"Whereof I am made a minister, (that is for the Body’s sake up in verse 24) according to the dispensation of God to which is given to me for you to fulfill the Word of God:" If you happen to have a different translation or if you have a margin, what is a better translation of the word ‘fulfill?’ Who’s got it? Complete! What does complete mean? Just exactly what it says! Now read it in that light.

Colossians 1:25

"Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you, to fulfil the Word of God;"

One of my Greek definitions went even another step further, ‘to put an end to.’ That says it all. Now you have to stop and analyze a minute then. What did Paul write last of all? II Timothy. Now I hope I’ve got time to do all this because, like I said, I’ve lost a lot of sleep on this particular concept and I want to make sure that I get it across so that people can see where I’m coming from.
All of Scripture, as I’ve pointed out in the last four programs, understood only this one timeline. They had no concept of this 1,000 year Kingdom being pushed out into the future for 2,000 years. Everything was looking forward to the coming of this horrible wrath and vexation, followed by the return of Christ at His Second Coming, and then the Kingdom Age. Now let’s just chase a few of these down. If I don’t finish it in this half-hour, we’ll just pick it up in the next one. Let’s go all the way back to Matthew. We can just start in Matthew 24, and these all are Scriptures that are so obvious, that everything was looking forward to the end of everything, and the coming in of the Kingdom.

Here in Matthew, let’s just look at the last three verses of 23. Now we always have to realize, and never forget, that Jesus of Nazareth WAS God. He never stopped being the Deity. So He knew a lot – in fact He knew it all – but He knew a lot of things that He never revealed. He kept it secret, which was His prerogative. And so you have to understand that, even though He could have given the whole scenario (that this is what’s going to happen and that’s going to happen), he didn’t because of the things that are kept secret. All right, so here in verse 37 we get an inkling that He now sees that Israel is not going to accept the King and the Kingdom, so He says:

Matthew 23:37-38

"Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, (way back in the Old Testament) and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! 38. Behold, your house is left unto you (what?) desolate." That doesn’t sound like a Kingdom, does it? Now verse 39.

Matthew 23:39

"For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till (there is a time coming) ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." According to all of prophecy, when will that happen? Well when the Kingdom begins when Christ returns. See? And so Jesus is indicating now that all of these things that have been prophesied are not going to bring in the Kingdom at that time.

I was so thrilled (I think it was in the article Charles gave me), where the gentleman that wrote the article explained all this just exactly like I do, with not one difference of opinion. In fact, Charles said, "You know, I’d have sworn he copied what you wrote." No. That wasn’t the case. We’re just simply both reading the same Book. But, anyhow he made it so plain as well, that when Jesus began His earthly ministry (these three years), and as He was proclaiming that He was the fulfillment of all those Old Testament promises, Israel could have had the King and the Kingdom.
That was their prerogative. They could have had the Kingdom at that time. And how many times have you heard me say, "It was a valid offer." He wasn't lying. They could have had the King and the Kingdom but they rejected it, which of course God knew they would in foreknowledge. All right, so these Scriptures we just read are where Jesus now is giving us a little indication that He knows what they’re going to do. They are not going to succumb to His offer of the Kingdom, but they’re going to reject Him until the place that they become ‘desolate.’

Now let’s move on into chapter 24, and drop down to verse 3. Here Jesus is sitting on the Mount of Olives speaking to His disciples.

**Matthew 24:3-5**

> "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples (that is the Twelve) came unto him privately, (in other words, there was no press of crowds or anything like that. It was just Jesus and the Twelve in a private meeting.) saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? (Ages) 4. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. 5. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." So now He starts laying out in perfect accord with Revelation chapter 6 all the events of these seven years. Step by step how that these things would unfold. And when you get to verse 15 He says:

**Matthew 24:15a**

> "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet,..." Which is the mid-point of the Tribulation. See, He’s got it all right in a row. All right, so he’s speaking of these days of wrath and vexation shortly following everything that is going to happen with association with His crucifixion and His ascension. All right, now then let’s move on over to Luke chapter 21, because I was just wanting you to see how that all of these, what I call these Jewish Scriptures, are all speaking in full accord with the Old Testament prophecies. And let’s just drop in at verse 20. Now I hope those of you on television will bear with me. I’m not going to be in a great big sweat to hurry up and get through the little letter of James - in fact, like Laura knows only too well, I haven’t looked forward to it with a lot of expectation because James isn’t like Genesis and James isn’t like Revelation; it’s just more or less like Proverbs. James just speaks of practical behavior. So, I’m in no great big hurry to get into the Book of James, but on the other hand I felt this was so imperative that our people understand why these things were written the way they were written. It’s because it’s in the fulfillment of the Old Testament. And it has nothing to do with this period of time that you and I are from – the Church Age.
That’s going to be totally set apart and insulated. Here in Luke Jesus is again speaking in His earthly ministry. And He says:

**Luke 21:20-22a**

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof (that is, of Jerusalem) is nigh. 21. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. (why?) 22. For these be the days of (what?) vengeance,…" Vengeance. Now, stop and think. How does Psalms chapter 2 put it? "Vexation and wrath." All the same period of time. So now He says these are going to be days of vengeance.

**Luke 21:22b-24**

"…that all things, which are written may be fulfilled. 23. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." And that, of course, will bring in the time of Kingdom, the rule and the reign. All right, now John, in the Gospel of John, speaks almost nothing of those kinds of prophecies so we’re going to go right through John and come on over into Acts. Acts chapter 2 and this is all I want you to see is how all of these letters and writings concerning the Nation of Israel are looking only at the next great event in history, which would be the Tribulation and the return of Christ at His Second Coming. All right, so in chapter 2, and Peter has now stood up on the Day of Pentecost and he tells this crowd who are aghast at the miracles that are taking place...

**Acts 2:15-17a**

"For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. 16. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; (Old Testament prophecies being fulfilled.) 17. And it shall come to pass in the last days,…" In our last session I explained what the ‘last days’ of Scripture were? The last days of Scripture included that period of time from the beginning of Christ’s earthly ministry until His Second Coming. That was the ‘last days,’ which was to include not only the crucifixion and the resurrection and ascension, but the coming in of the horrors of the Tribulation and the Second Coming. That was the last days. And over and over Scripture refers to these as the last days. Even Paul will refer to it as the last days.

**Acts 2:17-19a**
"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, (Now remember he’s quoting from the Old Testament book of Joel.) and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18. And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; (that was what happened there at the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came down) and they shall prophesy: (or speak forth.) 19. And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath;..." See, all of this, so far as Peter was thinking, was right down the pipe. There wasn’t going to be any interruption. All right, here it comes - the Tribulation.

Acts 2:19b-20

"...blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: 20. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:" This is exactly how Revelation describes it, see? That is the wrath and vexation. All right, that would usher in the Kingdom and, again, just like Jesus said concerning the hen and her chicks back there in Matthew 23, we have in verse 21 the following:

Acts 2:21

"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Now that is not the same setting of calling on the Lord that Paul is talking about in Romans chapter 10. This is what it would be when Christ would set up His Kingdom. Israel was going to evangelize, you remember, in our last four programs - how that Israel would go out and "ten men of ten nations would take a hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew." Remember that?

And "they will tell these Jews that we will go with you for we have heard that God is with you." And then what? The Gentiles would respond. And how would they respond? They would call on the name of the Lord and they could be saved. Now there’s nothing in here yet of the Age of Grace that has been going on now for 2,000 years. Do you see that? This is all talking about the Kingdom economy, when the Tribulation has run its course. Christ has returned and the world is now ready to recognize Him as their King.
Lesson Two • Part II

The Word Complete

James 1:1-23

I’m going to introduce some special people today. We get letters asking if that pretty lady on the front row with the reddish hair and glasses is our daughter? No. This is Sharon Martin. She’s not our daughter. We love her like one because she now works with Jerry and Lorna Pool as they do the little books for the ministry. Sharon is also doing all the closed captioning for television. So Sharon is intricately involved with the work of the ministry and her husband Andy Martin is sitting right over there next to her.

And then today, we’ve got four of my family with me. And number one we’re going to put the camera on my daughter, Laura, whom many of you talk to over the phone. She answers a good portion of them. We’ve got some help now, so she’s not all alone. So we have my daughter Laura. Next to her is her husband, Jerry, whom we love just like our own son. And then next to Jerry is his niece, or Tara’s cousin, and her name is Randi Thomas and then in the red we’ve got Tara, which is Jerry and Laura’s daughter and my precious granddaughter. I think everybody knows how much I love Tara. She’s our oldest. So anyway, those are the four over there. They’re family.

Now we’re going to continue with our line of teaching that we’ve got, more or less, on the blackboard - and that is that everything coming out of the Old Testament is looking forward to the wrath, the vexation, the Tribulation, the Second Coming and the Kingdom. And we just ended up in our last program where Peter is quoting from the prophet Joel and Peter had no idea of anything any different than that, but that after the period of time of what Psalms calls derision, confusion and so forth - and then would come the Tribulation and then the Second Coming, and then the King would set up His earthly 1,000 year Kingdom.

So James is getting these Jewish believers ready for this Tribulation that was to come, and we’ll look at that first, and then I’ll show how Paul alludes to it. So come all the way now to the little book of James, which we’re really supposed to be studying verse by verse but we haven’t gotten there yet, but we should start with that before the afternoon is over. So, if you’ll come back with me now to the book of James, chapter 5, you’ll see James says the same thing. Here he’s getting these Jewish believers ready for this coming of the wrath and vexation and the coming Kingdom. Let’s just start with verse 8.

James 5:8
"Be ye also patient; (now remember James is writing to Jews in that period of time right after Pentecost) *stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*" Notice James says, "...the coming of the Lord draws nigh" He doesn’t say it’s at least 2,000 years still ahead of us, like it has been. So he thought the Lord would be coming within a matter of a short period of time.

All right, let’s go over and see how Peter puts it in his first epistle and that’s in I Peter chapter 4 verse 7. And Peter, now, according to the times I’ve got here on the board, is writing I Peter probably in the late 50’s AD, or somewhere in that neck of the woods.

*I Peter 4:7*

"*But the end of all things is (what?) at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.*" Do you see that? He’s not talking about something 2,000 years down the road. Peter says, "...the end of all things is at hand therefore be sober and watch...."

All right, now then, in II Peter he doesn’t make quite that strong a statement but he’s certainly looking all the way to the end of the Kingdom Age, and on into eternity, so we won’t stop with that one. But now in the little letter of I John, which according to my time-frame on the board, I’m putting it right along with the rest of the Jewish writings. The Gospels and James and Peter and now look what John said:

*I John 2:18*

"*Little children, (and remember he, too, is writing to Jewish believers) it is the last time: and as ye have heard that anti-christ shall come, (now what’s he referring to? The Tribulation. It’s just over the horizon) even now are there many anti-christs; whereby we know that it is the last time.*"

John also is not thinking in terms of another 2,000 years. The Tribulation and Kingdom age are just over the hill and you can pick it up in chapter 3, and just start at verse 1, because even though these things are appropriate for us, and you’ve heard me use these verses, yet, in their original intent they were looking at a near-term end of all things. All right, so John writes, like I said I think in the late 50’s AD, not 90 AD like most of your Bibles put it, although if that’s what you want to believe that’s fine, because it won’t effect your salvation or anything like that. But I feel that John writes at the same time as all the other writers, and look what he says:

*I John 3:1*

"*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not because it knew him*
not." Now that’s appropriate - we’re in the same situation even today. All right, now verse 2:

_I John 3:2_

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

Well, what’s he talking about? The soon coming of Christ. He’s not talking in terms of 2,000 years out into the future. All right then, of course, it’s obvious that the book of Revelation is talking about the end of all things. But all right, now, like I said, I want you to see how Paul alludes to some of this. It’s certainly not a big thing with Paul. He only talks this prophetic program in a few verses in II Thessalonians.

It’s the only place in all of Paul’s writings that he makes any allusion to this end-time scenario of the Tribulation and the Second Coming and so forth. All right, II Thessalonians, chapter 2 verse 3. Here Paul says:

_II Thessalonians 2:3_

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day (that is the day of the Lord spoken of in verse 2 which is the Tribulation) shall not come, except there come a falling away (or a departure) first, and that man of sin will be revealed, the son of perdition;" Which of course, we understand as the anti-christ. And then he describes the anti-christ in perfect accord with Daniel and Revelation,

_II Thessalonians 2:4_

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

All right, the other point I wanted to make before we move on any more in all of this is how that even the Apostle Paul honestly thought that everything would be consummated in his lifetime. He thought the Lord would Rapture the believers out and that in would come the Tribulation and then in seven years, Christ would return and set up the Kingdom.

All right now, come back with me then to I Corinthians chapter 15. And all I want you to watch are the pronouns, how that the Apostle Paul is including himself in a near-term event. He’s not saying, "concerning them," But it’s concerning us.
"Behold, I shew you a mystery;…" Now that’s a word that Paul uses over and over. Now we had a class the other night on just the mysteries. Two hours. And my, as the people filed out, they said, "That’s the best class we’ve had in years." Well it’s just simply because, again, even though they’ve heard it over and over and over, it never gets old, **how that these secrets were revealed to the Apostle Paul that had been kept in the mind of God and now they’re for our understanding.** Now here’s one of them, and this is just one of many.

"Behold I shew you a mystery; (a secret,) We (now I’m emphasizing it for a reason, he’s including himself) **shall not all sleep,** (die physically) **but we shall all be changed. 52. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, …"** The Rapture of the Church is what Paul is expecting in his lifetime. All right, now then, let’s come on over to the other portion where he speaks of this sudden departure of believers and that’s in I Thessalonians chapter 4. And again, all I want you to see in this series of verses is how he is including himself in this sudden departure of believers that still hasn’t happened.

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren,…" How about the church today? That’s what they are. They are just totally in the dark about all this. And the Scripture pleads, don’t be ignorant of this. Understand it. All right, so he says:

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, (or who have died physically) **that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.** (now look at the pronouns again) 14. **For if we** (including himself) **believe that Jesus died and rose again,** (which is Paul’s Gospel of salvation) **even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." In other words from their place in His presence down to the atmosphere to be reunited with their new resurrected body. All right, verse 15:

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (or precede) them which are asleep. 16. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the
voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. 17. (watch how he includes himself) Then we which are alive and remain (are still living in the flesh) shall be caught up (and you remember I’ve told you in past programs the Latin Vulgate word here is ‘rap-tur-ed,’ and we shall be rap-tured or as we in the English call it, raptured, and so we shall be) together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Isn’t that beautiful? But everything in Scripture is expecting these last days to all be fulfilled in a matter of ten or twenty years. Now remember, Paul is talking in this time frame (10 to 20 years) here on the chalkboard as Christ has ascended, but the Tribulation hasn’t begun yet. Peter and the Eleven are preaching in Jerusalem to the Nation of Israel and Paul has now begun a ministry to the Gentiles and we’ll put that timeline on the next program, and not this one. But all I want you to see for now, is that all of Scripture seemingly is telling us that all of this would happen within a matter of a few years after His crucifixion. No hint, with one or two exceptions (well I guess I could take the time to show you the exception). There’s just one real exception.

Incidentally, I’ve had a few of my listeners and one of them is just a miracle to me. She’s only come out of a dead religion within the last nine months - and the other day, she wrote and asked about these series of verses, so I’m going to take you back to them. And how she found it, I’ll never know. Maybe I alluded to it once someplace in the past. But, I don’t remember it. But go back to the little Book of Hosea. Hosea, which is right after the book of Daniel. And other than this, I don’t know a thing in the Old Testament or in the Four Gospels that refers whatsoever to what we call the Church Age. Hosea chapter 5, the last verse and the first two verses of chapter 6. But you know, it’s funny that almost no one in the biblical scenario in Israel or any place else ever alluded to these three verses. And yet I think it is a hint. I think this is the Lord is speaking:

Hosea 5:15

"I will go and return to my place, (in other words, from Heaven to earth, which, of course, He did when He ascended back to the Father after the resurrection) till (there’s your time element) they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: (which was their rejecting their Messiah) in their (the Nation of Israel) affliction they will seek me early." Now then drop down into chapter 6 and you have Israel responding.

Hosea 6:1

"Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, (in other words, He has chastised them) and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up." Which
will happen at His Second Coming at the end of the Tribulation. Now chapter 6 verse 2:

**Hosea 6:2a**

"After two days…" Now here is one of those instances you can take a day in Scripture as how long? A thousand years! So after 2,000 years...

**Hosea 6:2b**

"...will he revive us:..." And we’re seeing the beginning of that in the Middle East right now. Israel is back in the land. They are once again a nation and one of these days the whole end-time scenario is going to kick back in gear - so here is an indication that it would be a 2,000 year interval; but other than that, you can’t find anything in Scripture. After two days, or I think, 2,000 years, he will revive us, He will bring them back to the land.

**Hosea 6:2c**

"...in the third day (which is the Kingdom, now remember, the next thousand years) he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." Pretty plain isn’t it? It’s just pretty plain. But other than that I can’t find anything in all of Scripture that speaks of this end-time scenario as being 2,000 years out into the future. All right, back to I Thessalonians chapter 4, and verse 17, where Paul is using the pronoun "we:"

**I Thessalonians 4:17-18**

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Now drop into chapter 5 and if this doesn’t clearly depict a pre-Tribulation out-calling, I don’t know what does. This is as plain as you can get it that the Church will be gone before the wrath and vexation begins.

**I Thessalonians 5:1-2**

"But (Paul says) of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. (in other words, he’s not going to set dates) 2. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord (that’s the Tribulation remember) so cometh as a thief in the night. 3. For when they (not us) shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden
destruction cometh upon them, (not us) as travail upon a woman with child, and they (not us) shall not escape."

Those who have been left behind. The unbelieving world, see? You see the difference in the pronouns, what that can do? All the others he’s including himself, he thinks it’s going to happen within his lifetime. **But, he makes it so plain that only one group are going to be taken out and the rest are going to be left for the horrors of the Tribulation.**

All right, I have to show you how that both Paul and Peter do not realize they’re going to go through the valley of the shadow of death, they’re not going to see the return of Christ in their lifetimes, but instead are going to have their lives taken. All right, I’m going to take II Peter first, chapter 1, and verse 14. Now you remember last program when I delineated these various writings, I don’t know if it comes out clear or not, but after the prison epistles of Paul (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon, that took place between 64 and 66 AD, while he was in his first imprisonment), then he was out for a short period of time. And then he was brought back into prison the second time, during which he writes II Timothy (and I think within the same time-frame Peter also writes his second little epistle several years after I had him writing I Peter over here on the board, with this list of Jewish writings). All right, so after the prison epistles including I Timothy, now a couple of years later, **Paul is back in prison and he’s going to be writing II Timothy, which I showed in the last program will finish the New Testament writings, but look what II Peter writes at about the same time.**

**II Peter 1:14**

"Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, (in other words, the body of flesh) even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me." Now you remember when that was? You remember at the miracle of the fishes, when the Lord told him, "Peter feed my sheep," three times? And then the Lord told him that he would suffer a martyr’s death in veiled language. I think Peter forgot all about it during his years of activity, but then as he gets to the year 68 AD, he realizes that his life is going to be taken. And so he writes, "I know that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle (this body of flesh) even as our Lord Jesus Christ shewed me."

All right, now, at almost the same time, I think - and I’m going to say within a matter of a few days or months at the most, **look what Paul writes now in the last book of our New Testament. And that would be II Timothy.** II Timothy chapter 4 and what a difference in language. U’p until II Timothy, Paul wrote as if he was going to be here at the end. He was going to be here for the Rapture, and then after that, in would come the Tribulation. Christ would return at His Second Coming, and the Kingdom
would be set up. **And the last days would all be fulfilled in a matter of ten or twenty years.** Now that’s the way it’s laid out in Scripture. But now, you see, by Holy Spirit inspiration, he lets us know that he realizes that he’s not going to see the Rapture.

*II Timothy 4:6-8*

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." Do you see how plain that is? Suddenly the Apostle Paul realized he is not going to get out of prison this time. That he’s going to be martyred. He’s going to suffer execution and, of course, we know that he did. Within a matter of days or weeks after writing II Timothy, then, he was, we think, according to most church tradition, executed by beheading. **So now, II Timothy then, I think can rightfully be called, as I showed in the last program, the last Book that was written of our New Testament.** That finished everything that God wanted the human race to know for the next 2,000 years. And all the rest of these books that were written earlier were with the idea that it would all be fulfilled in short order. That’s why they were all lumped together in this period of time between Pentecost and 58 AD. Because it was all looking forward to the culmination of everything before they got an idea that it wasn’t going to happen. **God did not bring in the Tribulation at that time, but instead He opened it up for 2,000 years of Grace that we’re now enjoying, and I’m glad He did!**
Lesson Two • Part III

The Word Complete

James 1:1-23

All right, now before we go on into our verse-by-verse study, I want to make another timeline explanation so that you get a clear picture (like I said in the very first program in our introduction to James, which was now six programs back), that not only were these little Jewish epistles written to Jews who thought the Tribulation was coming right down the pipe in their lifetime, but it is also appropriate for the Jews who will be living when the Tribulation yet comes, which is, of course, we think near in the future.

So in order to explain the opening up of the timeline I have here on the chalkboard, I’m just going to briefly again look at where the Scripture delineates the Apostle Paul as the Apostle of the Gentiles - and no one else has that distinction. So turn with me if you will to Acts chapter 9 and, after his conversion on the road to Damascus before he even gets his sight back, God speaks to a believing Jew in Damascus and gives him this tremendous bit of information.

Now I know this is a complete departure from everything that has been going on because, as we’ve always taught, all the way up through the Old Testament economy, especially from the call of Abraham in Genesis chapter 12, God pulled off of the mainstream of humanity from the offspring of Adam, one man - and through that one man brought about the Nation of Israel, or what we call the Jewish people. We’re also going to see that, after Israel has rejected the Messiah and they reject Peter and the Eleven in their preaching, the day will come when they will be dispersed once again back into the whole river of humanity, which of course, began with the invasion of Titus of Rome in 70 AD.

Now then, prior to that (about 30 years in 40 AD), we have this conversion of Saul of Tarsus, which leads to another group of people pulled off of the mainstream of humanity, and it’s the Church, the Body of Christ, the Gentile believer, which is still being pulled out even as I speak. All right, now let’s just look at that briefly before we go back and look at James.

Acts 9:15a

"But the Lord said unto him, (that is unto Ananias) Go thy way: for he (Saul of Tarsus) is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles,..." Now I always have to stop and qualify. What did the average Jew on the street think of
Gentiles? Oh, they were the pits, and they were. They were pagan, they were idolaters, they had no morality. And so the Jews never had anything to do with the Gentiles.

In fact, whenever I get on this I always have to think of Jonah. Jonah was the perfect example of a good godly Jew. And when the Lord told Jonah to go to Nineveh, that pagan Gentile city, what did Jonah do? Well, he went the opposite direction. Instead of going east across the desert, he gets on ship and he’s out on the Mediterranean, see? In other words I always put it this way just for the sake of keeping people awake. Jonah was such a good Jew that he’d rather walk the plank out there in the middle of the Mediterranean as go to a Gentile city. Well, that was their mentality. They were to have nothing to do with Gentiles, unless God made the exception, as He did with Jonah.

All right, so when the Lord reveals to this good Jew, Saul, that He’s going to send him to the Gentiles, I want you to realize that must have been a shock supreme. "Me? A good Jew, go to those pagan Gentiles?" That’s where you’re going Saul! And I’m going to "call out a people for my name." All right, so we’ll finish the verse here in Acts 15, and then I’ll take the verse where I just took that from.

Acts 9:15

"But the Lord said unto him, (Ananias) Go thy way: for he (Saul of Tarsus) is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:" So the Jew can become believers just like the Gentiles, even today, but they must come to salvation the same way the Gentiles do. And Paul’s Gospel of salvation tells us, that we must believe in our hearts that Jesus died for us, was buried, and rose again., and that will give us eternal life. And then He says in verse 16:

Acts 9:16

"For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake." And we know Paul suffered more than anyone, with the exception of Christ Himself! All right, so that was the beginning, then, of God turning toward the Gentile race of people and beginning to let Israel slip through the cracks. All right, now, years later, of course, after about twelve years, in about 52 AD, Paul has now been out there ministering among the Gentiles especially up in Asia Minor - and he would establish these little Gentile congregations based on his Gospel of Grace, not of works but by faith plus nothing.
However, the Judaisers from the Jerusalem church would come in behind him, and begin to cast doubt on that and say, "You can’t be saved by faith alone, you have to keep the Law, you have to practice circumcision." So they had this counsel in Jerusalem in about 52 AD where Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem and confronted the Twelve about this problem.

And as I shared with Laura, I had one young lady (I couldn’t imagine that she had this kind of insight because she’s only been a believer out of a religion for the last six-seven months), and she asked the question, "Weren’t the Twelve getting awfully close to the anathema that Paul spoke of in Galatians 1:6-9, that ‘if any preach any other Gospel than what I have preached then let them be accursed.’?" And I said, "You know, I’ve thought of that." Yes they were close. Because they were promoting it evidently. They said they didn’t command it but they certainly didn’t forbid it, and that’s why Paul and Barnabas go up to Jerusalem and confront the Twelve over this question.

All right, now, the reason I’m rehearsing all that is because I’m taking you now to Acts chapter 15 (and at the culmination of this Jerusalem counsel now in around 51 or 52 AD, when Peter, James and John finally make a gentleman’s agreement with the Apostle Paul that they would confine their ministry to Israel and they would quit sticking their nose in Paul’s dealing with the Gentiles, and Paul and Barnabas could go to the Gentiles). That was a gentleman’s agreement, and I don’t think they ever broke that agreement after they shook hands on it, and the Bible doesn’t indicate they did.

All right, now then, here’s where James, of the James and Peter and John that writes in the back of our Bible - this is the statement that James makes at the end of this counsel in Jerusalem. Starting in verse 13:

*Acts 15:13-14*

"And after they had held their peace, (in other words, the argument was finally settled and everything quieted down) James (not Peter. James who is moderator of this Jerusalem counsel) answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: 14. Simeon (or Peter) hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name." What’s he referring to? The house of Cornelius, when Peter was forced by the miraculous power of God to go to that Gentile Roman household, and he saw the proof that God was now saving Gentiles - even those pagan Romans, see? All right, so James says, "this is the conclusion that at the first He did visit the Gentiles to take out of them (out of the Gentiles) a people for His name." And then look at verse 16.
"After this (after what? The calling out of the Church, the Body of Christ, the calling out a people from amongst the Gentiles) I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David,…" In other words, after He’s through calling out the Church, God will pick up where He left off with the Nation of Israel. Now, since this Old Testament timeline has been interrupted, I’m going to draw a second timeline to clarify. This top timeline was interrupted because God is going to call out a people for His name beginning with the Apostle Paul there in about 40 AD, and that is still going on today. And since this top timeline was interrupted, God just funneled the Nation of Israel because of their unbelief, back into the flow of humanity in what we call the dispersion in 70 AD, and they were scattered amongst all the Gentiles of the world.

Now here’s where people get confused when I talk about two Gospels. Well, it stands to reason, while you’re in that transitional period of almost 30 years here on the timeline, that you have Peter and the Eleven still preaching to the Nation of Israel. And their message was believing that Jesus was the Christ, the One they had been looking for. So that message was called the Gospel of the Kingdom. Repentance and water baptism was also preached under that Gospel of the Kingdom. But before that Gospel of the Kingdom message comes to an end (and it did come to an end), God has already set the Apostle Paul aside and sent him out with that revealed mystery, the Gospel of Grace that you and I must believe in our hearts for salvation tonight. Oh, how that Jesus died for our sins, was buried and rose again! Plus NOTHING ELSE!!

So the two are operating for a little while contemporary with one another. Peter and the Eleven are still preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom to the Jews, and Paul has now begun to preach the Gospel of Grace to the Gentiles. That stands to reason. That’s a transitional phenomenon. But once Israel has finally fallen through the cracks because of their unbelief, and God has finished dealing with them and He’s going only now with Paul and his Gospel, then yes, now there is one Gospel of salvation. There’s one Gospel for Jew and Gentile, black and white, rich and poor - there is only one plan of salvation today.

Now, of course, we know (as we saw a little bit in the last program) that when the Gentile Body of Christ is finally filled (and we think we’re getting real close), it’s not going to go back into the human race (like God did with the Jews), but rather God will just take the Body of Christ off the earth. It’s going to be taken out. It’s going to be caught up in what we call Paul’s teaching of the Rapture.
After the Rapture happens, then God will bring Israel back onto the scene, and as we’ve already seen, she has now been reappearing since 1948 - she’s been amongst the family of nations in dispersion and so, once again now, after the Rapture is over, the world is going to be faced with this seven years of Tribulation that is still on the timeline. You can’t cast it aside because it’s prophesied. And so this seven years is still out in the future. This Body of Christ out of the Gentile world can also include some Jews, we’re not going to leave them out. There are not many but there can be. And so once that Body of Christ is removed and Raptured out, then will come the wrath and vexation that has been promised ever since the Old Testament prophets. When the seven years have run their course, then Christ will yet return and yet set up the 1,000 year Kingdom rule.

Now the reason I’ve done all this is; as these Jews who have been out here in the dispersion now for almost 2,000 years - as they come back and establish the homeland, and they are being prepared for these end-time events that were originally intended to come here, just a few years after Christ’s ascension - that means that these little Jewish epistles are just as appropriate for Jews who will be facing and going into this horrible seven-year period now as it would have been if the Tribulation had happened back there. Now does that make sense? Am I making it plain? So yes, you remember in my very first program six weeks back I said that, yes, these little epistles are not just for the Jews of the day that the Scriptures were written, but it would also be for Jews as they were approaching the end-time Tribulation as we still see it.

So, hopefully that’ll clarify it and that’s why I told you, I’m not putting it at one end or the other, I’m putting it at both. It was appropriate for the Jews of Peter’s day because they thought this was all coming, and it’s appropriate for the Jews of today. Now the question came up at break time, "Was Peter looking for the Rapture? Or the Second Coming?" Peter didn’t have, I don’t think, a foggy notion of the Rapture, and I’ve got a reason for that. Now before we start James, I’ll let you look at that one. It’s found over in II Peter. We’ve used it over and over through the years, but let’s look at it again, and then we’re going to come back to James.

Now you remember a couple of programs back, I put it on the board that II Peter was written at the end of Peter’s life about 68 AD and almost within, I think, a month of Paul’s writing his last letter II Timothy, and both men spoke of their martyrdom. They both realized that they were not going to continue on and they were not going to see the return of Christ, but that they would be martyred.

All right, so before Peter loses his life, and as he writes his second letter, verse 15 of chapter 3, a verse I’ve used many, many times to show how that even Peter now recognizes that Paul is now the man of the hour. It’s Paul’s epistles where the human race has to go for all their instructions during the Church Age. And
that's why many will miss glory because they haven’t gone to Paul’s teaching for salvation.

II Peter 3:15-16a

"And account (or understand) that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; (and it always has been. God has always been concerned about the salvation of lost humanity.) even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath (past tense, it’s all done) written unto you;" (Jews) 16. As also in all his epistles (which makes me think that II Timothy is either just written or Paul is now in the process - the Holy Spirit knew - but anyway, Peter writes by inspiration) speaking in them of these things; (that is things pertaining to the salvation of the whole human race. Now this is amazing. Here’s old Peter at the end of his life having been a contemporary now of the Apostle Paul for some 25 years, and yet he says,) in which are some things hard to be understood."

Now, when people write and tell me I’m saying things that they’ve never heard before, and that they find kind of hard to swallow, I can understand that, because, here dear old Peter went with the Lord for three years, and preached for umpteen years and, yet, after 25 years he couldn’t comprehend what Paul had written. It was beyond him. All right, so he says finishing the verse.

II Peter 3:16b

"...which they that are unlearned (that is in the Scriptures) and unstable wrest, (twist) as they do also the other scriptures (and if you want to know what’s going to happen to false teachers, here it is) unto their own destruction." (their eternal doom)

All right, so now then we’ve established that after the Church Age is finished and the Body of Christ is Raptured out, then the Tribulation is still facing the whole human race, and Israel in particular. All right, so now we’ll start looking at the little letter of James. James chapter 1 verse 1. I think I clarified it in an earlier program, but this is not the original James of the Twelve. He’s been beheaded some time before. So this must be the half-brother of Jesus, a son of Joseph and Mary.

James 1:1

"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to (now watch this - my, I guess if I’ve taught anything over the years, it’s to watch who a portion of Scripture is written to. It’s tantamount to understanding it. All right, and he says he’s writing to) the twelve tribes, which are scattered abroad, greeting."
Now you want to remember that Israel, before being dispersed in 70 AD, had already been dispersed way back in 606 BC (between that and 550 BC) with the Babylonian captivity. And after the Babylonian captivity, only a few thousand Jews came back to Jerusalem in order to get ready for Christ’s first advent. So what happened to the rest of them? **Well, they were scattered throughout the whole then-known world.** Well, then, you see, it’s going to be compounded a few years after all of this has taken place with the next big dispersion, which is the destruction by Titus. **But when James is writing about Jews dispersed, I think the primary reason was the horrible persecution of Saul of Tarsus.**

Now then, let’s go back to the book of Acts and pick this up a minute - how that those Jews of Christ’s day who had embraced Him as the Messiah, the Promised Redeemer of Israel, were persecuted to no end by this religious Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus. All right, so as you come back then to Acts, we pick up who these Jews are that James is writing to. Come all the way back to Acts chapter 8. Stephen has just been stoned in chapter 7. Now, so I don’t lose you or my television audience, remember what are we establishing? **Who are these scattered Jews to whom James is writing?** Well, they were Jewish believers of the Kingdom Gospel that Jesus was the Christ, but they had been ravaged by the persecution of Saul of Tarsus.

*Acts 8:1a*

"And Saul, (the one who becomes the Apostle Paul) was consenting unto his (Stephen’s) death. (Now here it is.) And at that time, there was a great persecution against the church(or the assembly) which was at Jerusalem;..."

Well, who was that assembly at Jerusalem? Believing Jews. Believing Jews who had come out of Christ’s earthly ministry (and others, you remember, on the day of Pentecost, how many were added? Three thousand). So that Jerusalem congregation of believing Jews that believed that Jesus was the Christ, was a goodly number. But old Saul came in there and as he said himself in Galatians 1, he what? **He wasted it. He destroyed it.** And how did he destroy it? By causing them to scatter like a bunch of quail. All right, so here it is.

*Acts 8:1b*

"...and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles." They were scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria - and that’s north of Jerusalem, but I always make the point - who refused to leave? The apostles! **Now these people that hang on that Great Commission, I always ask them, why in the world didn’t the Twelve go out and keep the Great Commission?** Well, they can’t answer.
But you see they couldn’t do that until they had the King and the Kingdom. Israel couldn’t be an evangelist to the Gentiles, according to the Old Testament, until they had the King and the Kingdom, and then, yes, they would be able to. But, as of yet, that hadn’t happened - so these Jewish believers gathered there in the church in Jerusalem are scattered throughout the then-known world because of Saul’s persecution. Now, we can go look at one more in Acts chapter 11 verse 19. And if there’s one verse that opened up this whole scenario to my understanding, this is it.

**Acts 11:19**

"Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only." Do you see how plain that is? They weren’t scattering to go out and take the Gospel to the Gentiles. No. All they understood was the Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah - and as a result of Saul’s persecution, they are now going out and that’s what they’re proclaiming to other Jews; that Jesus of Nazareth was the Promised Messiah.
Lesson Two • Part IV

The Word Complete

James 1:1-23

Remember, the Apostle Paul gave us, in the Church Age today, the Scriptures for salvation, and Church doctrine, and how to live Godly lives, and don’t ever forget that. Now we’re going to go right back to the letter of James in just a moment, but before we do, I want to go back to the verse that we closed with in our last half-hour because I want it clearly established in everybody’s mind - who are these Jews, these Twelve Tribes scattered that James is writing to?

All right, here we’ve got them in Acts chapter 11 verse 19. And remember the last program we picked these Jews up in Christ’s earthly ministry. They moved on into the Jerusalem Church at the day of Pentecost and in the meantime, years are going by. This is about 7 or 8 years already after Pentecost, that we read here in Acts 11.

Acts 11:19

"Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen (which was started by Saul of Tarsus) travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only."

Because, after all, they as yet had no commission to go to the Gentile world. Matthew 10:5-6 is still in effect at that time. Going to the Gentiles was left up to the Apostle Paul. Remember when Peter, James and John shook hands with Paul and Barnabas on that very deal? (Galatians 2:9)

All right, now then, we come back to the little letter of James, as well as Peter and John and Jude and Revelation - all those books are written primarily to these Jews that are in congregations scattered throughout that part of the Roman world. Now I made comment of it several months ago, at least, and maybe in the beginning of my introduction of James that archaeologists have found pieces of clay in areas far removed from Jerusalem that had not only the seven-candled candlestick, and I still think that’s a Menorah, but they have also found pieces of clay, not that large, in which was not only the Menorah, but also the sign of the fish, which was typical of the followers of Peter, and so forth. So archeology has even proved that we have these Jewish congregations who know nothing of Paul’s Gospel of Grace - they are out there believing only that Jesus was the Promised Messiah and He’s coming in short order.
Now I think I proved that with Scripture in those first programs, how that all of Scripture was looking forward to the coming of the Tribulation, the Second Coming and the Kingdom. And so that’s the situation with these Jewish congregations. All right, if the next thing on the calendar is the Tribulation for these people, what do they need? Encouragement! And that’s what these little epistles will all do. James and I Peter especially. And then John’s three little epistles, they’re all written to encourage these Jews in view of the coming horrors of the Tribulation. All right, verse 1 again:

James 1:1-2

"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes, (Jews) which are scattered abroad, greeting. (now I hope I’ve proven where they came from) 2. My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;" Well now, what’s the testing? The Tribulation. How in the world did these Jews take any joy in this coming Tribulation? Because of what’s to follow! What’s to follow? The King. The Kingdom! Remember, all of the Old Testament laid that out so clearly, that after the Tribulation would come the King and His Kingdom!

Let’s go back and let’s look at one of the first instances. Matthew chapter 19 verse 27. Now this is Christ still in His earthly ministry, but toward the end of it now. And Peter is going to ask a pertinent question. I mean, these guys are just as human as we are, remember?

Matthew 19:27

"Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" Now Peter’s not talking about his Salvation; he knows he’s got that. So what’s he talking about? Reward. What are we going to get for having left our fishing and our families and all the good life on the Galilee? What’s the reward? All right, and Jesus doesn’t put him down. It was a valid question. All right, now here it comes.

Matthew 19:28a

"And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory,…” Regeneration. What’s that referring to? When this old world will be made back like it was in the beginning. It’s going to be regenerated. Now the best example I always give is your car battery. Leave your lights on. Get out there and it’s dead as a door nail. What do you do? Well, you put a charger or a jumper cable on it and we
regenerate it - and that old battery which was dead is brought back to its original condition. That’s regeneration.

All right, so this is what the Lord is telling the disciples. **That before the Son of man can sit in the throne of His glory, the earth is going to have to be regenerated.** Now, in order to pick up what that regeneration is going to amount to, come back with me now to Acts chapter 3, and again, never forget, all these statements are concerning the coming Tribulation, and the return of Christ, and the setting up of His Kingdom. All right, in Acts chapter 3, it’s a follow up of the Pentecostal sermon in Acts chapter 2; and again Peter is appealing to the Nation of Israel to repent of having crucified their Messiah - and that, if they would, here was the promise.

**Acts 3:19a**

"Repent ye therefore,..." Now remember, go back up to verse 12 so we establish to whom is Peter preaching?

**Acts 3:12**

"And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel,..." Plain enough? Now come back to verse 19, and let’s read that verse.

**Acts 3:19**

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing (now that’s the Kingdom) shall come from the presence of the Lord;" Now lets read the next verse also. Because, if Israel will repent, look what happens.

**Acts 3:20**

"And he (God) shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:" But in verse 21, we’re reminded that He couldn’t set up His Kingdom until the earth was regenerated. Now it’s a little different word but the same meaning.

**Acts 3:21a**

"Whom the heaven must receive..." That’s when He ascended and the Father said, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool." In other words, you’ll
have completely subjected the unbelieving world under your foot. All right, here it is in a different language.

Acts 3:21b

"...until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." How much difference between restitution and regeneration? Almost nothing. Again, I’ll go back to my dead car battery. If it’s dead and I recharge it, what have I done? I that restituted it. I have made it back like it was in the beginning. All right, so Peter here again, even though he’s admonishing Israel to repent and experience salvation, yet the time of refreshing (the Kingdom) cannot come until everything has been regenerated or the restitution of all things, "which God had spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the ages began."

Now if he’s talking about the prophets, I’ve got to take you back, don’t I? All right let’s go back to Psalms chapter 2. One of the simplest portions of Scripture showing this Kingdom that is coming. I’m still going to get a verse or two in James before we leave today. Remember, this is the prophecy that Jew and Gentile, in concert, would reject the anointed One. All right, then come down to verse 4.

Psalms 2:4

"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision." That’s where I use that indeterminate period of time between Pentecost and what could have been the Tribulation. All right, the Lord will have them in derision - "Then," there’s your time word. Do you see that?

Psalms 2:5

"Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure." That’s the Tribulation period of seven years. Now as soon as the Tribulation has run its course, then verse 6.

Psalms 2:6

"Yet I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." Now there’s the order, or the agenda. The rejection and the derision that would come about in the nations of the world, or the "ways of perplexity" as Luke puts it. And then we come to wrath and vexation, or as Daniel lays it out, "those last seven years." And then what? The Kingdom. That’s the process.
Back to James, so keep all this in your mind now. That these were Jewish believers that believed that the King and the Kingdom were at hand, but they were going to have to go through the seven years of Tribulation. All right, so this is the admonition - verse 2 again, Peter says:

James 1:2a

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;" (or testings)

We have much the same attitude today. You and I, as believers, see this world going the direction that it’s going - and I had a letter the other day and the lady put it so perfectly. "Les," she said, "the faster it gets worse by the minute, the closer we are to the Lord’s coming." And that’s the way we look at it. Yes, it’s getting awful! But listen, for us, it’s just telling us the Lord’s at hand.

All right, so Peter is telling these Jews the same thing. Yes, things are going to be tough, it’s going to be awful, but just stop and think - at the other end of it, the King and the Kingdom! So, "...count it all joy when you fall into these diverse testings."

Now verse 3:

James 1:3-4

"Knowing this, that the trying (or the testing) of your faith worketh patience. 4. But let patience have her perfect work that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

Now always remember the word perfect in the New Testament, in the Greek, does not mean sinless perfection. It means spiritual maturity. When Paul says, "be ye perfect as I am perfect," he’s merely speaking of a spiritual maturity. Well, the same way here, James is admonishing these Jews to grow into a spiritual maturity. Now verse 5.

James 1:5

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

Now remember, here the language is going to be much the same as it was in the Four Gospels or as Peter may have preached in the early chapters of Acts. Almost comparable.

James 1:6-8

"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7. For let not that man think that he shall
receive any thing of the Lord. (that is, if his faith is weak.) 8. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."

Now, for some reason or other, a verse is shooting through my mind so I guess that’s the Spirit’s nudging me to go back and look at it. Go back with me to John’s Gospel, chapter 14, and like I said, all these things are comparable now with the Four Gospels, not with what Paul writes. Jesus is speaking and He says in verse 12.

John 14:12

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, ‘He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.’" Now look at verses 13 and 14:

John 14:13-14

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14. If ye shall ask any thing in my name I will do it." Now we know that doesn’t work in this Age of Grace. There isn’t a person in this room that hasn’t prayed and it hasn’t happened. God didn’t do what we ask. He’s not duty bound to do it, because Paul doesn’t make that kind of a statement. Paul says, "Ask with thanksgiving," and then it’s implied even though he doesn’t say it, whether God says yes, no, or maybe later, the answer of that request is the next verse. I’m talking about Philippians 4. And what’s the next verse?

Philippians 4:7

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." That’s our answer. But, Jesus doesn’t say that. Jesus says, "whatever you’ll ask, I’ll do it." Well, naturally, He was looking in terms of the King and the Kingdom when everything would be spiritually perfect and then when you continue reading in John in verse 15 it again sends us right back to where it was at the time of Christ’s earthly ministry, Look at it.

John 14:15

"If ye love me, keep my commandments." So that was still a situation under the Law. Remember Jesus never tells the Jews they are no longer under the Law, as he does through the Apostle Paul to us here in the Church Age. All right, now maybe that’ll help a little bit to understand James. He’s going to be talking in that same kind of language. All right, now back to James, and verse 9.
James 1:9-10

"Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: 10. But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away."

In light of the constant reference to wealthy people, especially in James’ little letter, I’m still of the opinion (and I expressed it on the program years ago) that I do not see the world going into a 1930’s depression where everybody was dirt poor. Not just in America. You want to remember the whole world went into a depression even before it got here. But, I have always been of the mindset, because of Scripture, that the world will be in a relative period of prosperity when the anti-Christ makes his appearance. And the reason I say that is because there are references for example to Sodom and Gomorrah at the height of their wickedness, what was the material status of Sodom? Oh, they had much! And they were so well-to-do that they were literally in luxury for their period of time. The same way before the horrors of the Flood. What was the economy just before the Flood? Same way. They built, they bought, they sold, they married, they gave in marriage. What does that tell you? It was a world of intense activity. And so, I’m still of the impression that as the world approaches the Tribulation it’s going to be a world that has an abundance of wealth and materialism, because that’s why James is reminding these Jewish believers not to let their wealth get in their way. So let’s read that verse again.

James 1:10-11

"But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. 11. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways."

Now whenever you see a tremendously wealthy individual that has been diagnosed with a cancer or some other debilitating disease - what do we common folk automatically think? Well, with all of his money, he’ll probably get the best surgeons and the best doctors and he’ll make it. But you know what? They often don’t. They die. And that’s what the Scripture says, their wealth is not going to guarantee their overcoming anything that can come their way. Now verse 12.

James 1:12

"Blessed (happy, joyful) is the man that endureth temptation: (testing) for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." Now I’m switching that word ‘temptation’ to ‘testing’ because I think it’s a better definition, "Blessed is the man that can endure testing for when he is
tried or tested, he shall receive the crown of life." It’s going to be one of the rewards for people who have had to suffer for their faith. "Which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

Now, let’s see again what Paul says about suffering. Come back with me to Romans chapter 8, and we’ll begin in verse 18. If you get a little depressed once in a while, just come back to this verse.

**Romans 8:18**

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

Oh listen, maybe we’re going through hard times - maybe financial reverses. But listen, take heart. It’s nothing compared to the Glory that’s waiting for us. Now the Bible doesn’t do a lot of description of what eternity has in store. And I always tell people this is enough for me, because I know that my God knows how to make things beautiful. He knows how to make things scrumptious. And it’s going to be just that. It’s going to be beyond human description. And so we take heart that for us the glory that is awaiting us is far above and beyond any of the suffering that we may have to go through.

Back to James again, and remember he’s talking to Jews who were looking at the Tribulation of that day. But it can also apply, I think, to Jews who will be going into the Tribulation that is still ahead, and many of them will become believers, and they’re going to come under abject testing. Reading on now in chapter 1 verse 13.

**James 1:13**

"Let no man say when he is tempted, (I still like tested) I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." God isn’t in that business. He permits these things but He does not direct it.

**James 1:14-15a**

"But every man is tempted, (or tested) when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15. Then when lust hath conceived,..." And where does that have to start? In the brain. That’s where all our thoughts originate and those thoughts in return have their effect on the operation of the flesh. All right, so when lust, or the thoughts of our mind, are conceived and they actually are turned into action –

**James 1:15b**
…it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Now verse 16:

**James 1:16-18**

"Do not err, my beloved brethren. 17. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. 18. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." That’s why he’s left these Jewish believers - that they can continue to be a testimony and a witness to those around them. Verse 19.

**James 1:19**

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:"

I always have to say, when you read these little epistles back here, it’s the practical part that we as Gentiles take out. You can’t pull doctrine out of this, but the practicality of it all, we certainly can. This can certainly be applicable even for us. And the same way with the Beatitudes and other things that are not doctrinally directed to us but they are applicable in their practicality. All right, verse 20.

**James 1:20-22a**

"For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. 21. Wherefore (it was just as imperative for believing Jews as it is for us today,) lay apart (aside) all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. 22. But be ye doers of the word,..." Now here’s the legalistic part of James. See how it comes through so plainly?

**James 22-23**

"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. 23. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:" Well, that’s the way James depicts a man who does not follow his faith with good works.
I think, over the years, if I have opened a lot of people’s eyes to one concept of Bible study, it is that you should always determine first and foremost, "To whom is the Scripture that you’re reading addressed?" Is the Scripture you’re reading addressed to Israel? Or, is it addressed to the Gentile church, the Body of Christ we’re living in today, which was all written by the Apostle Paul?

The Apostle Paul wrote to us in the Church Age, and the other writers wrote to the Nation of Israel. And knowing that just solves a multitude of problems, and answers important questions on salvation, and how to get along in life, and the order in the local Church and so forth.

Now we’re in the letter of James and we’ll be going on in the days ahead to the other little Jewish epistles. James; I and II Peter; I, II and III John; Jude and Revelation. And those are all primarily written to the Jew.

Now, come back to James chapter 1 verse 1, just for a little review and to make the point that these little letters are not written to the Gentile church. When Paul wrote to the Gentile church, he would begin in some of his epistles, "Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ writing to you Gentiles." But in these Jewish epistles we’ve got just the opposite. James says:

*James 1:1*

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

Now language can’t make it any plainer than that. Where were these twelve tribes that James is addressing? Turn to I Peter chapter 1, and you’ve got the same scenario, only now Peter gives us a geographical area.

*I Peter 1:1*

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers (in other words, the Jews of the dispersion, and where are they?) scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia."
Now where are all those geographical areas? Well, in what we would today call the land of Turkey. The land of Turkey was where Paul labored the most, in Galatia and Ephesus on the western coast. And then you take those seven letters to churches in the Book of Revelation, they’re all in what today is the land of Turkey.

Now the reason that so many of these Jews are being written to in that area of the world goes back to Christ’s earthly ministry - we find that those Jews had become believers that He was the Messiah - and of course were incorporated in what we call the Jerusalem Assembly there in early Acts. And then after Christ ascended back to glory, Peter and the Eleven keep on preaching to the Jews in the area of Jerusalem and Judaea; and that Jerusalem Assembly of Jewish believers grew and grew, to where it was probably several thousand. Because you know, it was probably three thousand on the Day of Pentecost alone.

And then just a few years later, in comes old Saul of Tarsus with his intense persecution - and so what happened to all those thousands of Jews in Jerusalem? They scattered for their lives. And, evidently, the biggest percentage of them went up into Asia Minor, or what is today Turkey. And so, these Jewish congregations that are now established up there in Asia Minor and Galatia and so forth, they have formed little congregations patterned after the Jerusalem church. Now there’s not one word, and I have to emphasize this without apology, there is not one word of Paul’s doctrines in these little Jewish epistles. There’s not a word regarding the Gentiles, there’s not a word regarding the Body of Christ. There’s not a word regarding the power of the Gospel in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus for salvation. All their little congregations were all patterned for these Jews scattered out there and practicing their Messianic faith along with legalism. They’re still adherents of the Law, they’ll still go to the Temple whenever they get a chance. But, here they’ve been scattered because of the persecution arising around Stephen, and so forth.

Now the other point I like to make is as we did in those earlier programs introducing these epistles - they all thought the writers of Scriptures assumed that all of this was going to be winding up in a few years and the Lord would come and set up His Kingdom. Now don’t ever lose sight of that. All of these Jewish believers are looking for the soon coming of the Messiah and the Kingdom Age. But, before the Messiah could return what had to happen? The seven years of Tribulation. And the Tribulation was just as much a promise of suffering and turmoil and persecution as what we’re looking at today. All right, so if you’ll reflect back now, on one of the first programs where I introduced these letters, I made the point that these letters are written to Jews facing imminent trials and persecutions of the Tribulation, waiting for Christ to come.

But, Christ didn’t come and God set everything out in the future, and so I thought of it in a concept last night. Iris knows I didn’t sleep much last night, I guess because of
this afternoon. But, I came to this concept that it was established that the Old Testament prophecies now were going to be interrupted and God is going to turn to the Gentile world through the Apostle Paul, and call out the Body of Christ, for now almost 2,000 years. We have come full circle. And that’s the way I’m going to present it.

From the time that God left off dealing with the Nation of Israel, sent them into dispersion, opened up the Age of Grace, and now after 2,000 years, we have come full circle and we are right back to almost the same scenario. Oh I know it’s different population-wise; whereas back then the world’s population was probably 500-600 million at the most. Today we’re over six billion. Back there, of course, they still fought with swords and spears and animals were their chief beasts of burden and today we’ve got all our technology. But, in the realm of geo-politics, in the realm of economics, in the realm of empires, in the realm of Israel’s position in the land (and now the prospect of the Tribulation coming in the near future), hey it’s almost deja vu all over again.

And so now these letters are so appropriate for Jews who will be saved during the Tribulation. And so the reason I’m doing all this introduction is there’s this constant reference to the Law, and this is getting them ready for Tribulation pressure. Get ready to suffer for your faith. Well, they were in that scenario back there in the Roman Empire and when the Tribulation hits, they’re going be under it again.

I hope you’re watching Western Europe. I’ve been telling my classes that for 30 years. That’s your revived Roman Empire and out of that revived Roman Empire is going to come all the events associated with the anti-Christ and the Tribulation and so forth. Now, I’ve got a gentleman, I’ve referred to him before - and Charles must spend hours in some big library, and he sends me clippings from newspapers from all over the world. He sent me one the other day that just almost made me hit the ceiling - because over the last couple of years, the European community has been expanding from ten, twelve, fourteen, fifteen countries (and last week another bunch was added to it), and I suppose a lot of people thought, well Les was wrong. He thought the first ten nations at the beginning of the revised Roman Empire and so forth was going to be the ten toes of Daniel, but it can’t be, because now they’re almost twenty.

This is what he read. He sent me an article out of the Financial Times in London and this big wheel in the European Community said, "Oh yeah, we’re growing in numbers but we’ll always rest on the Ten." And isn’t that exactly what I’ve always said? I said, I don’t care how many nations go into the European Community, the original Ten are going to be like veto power in the United Nations. And so watch Western Europe as well as the Middle East.
So, we’ve come full circle and here Israel’s back in the land, and out of their
dispersion, at least partly. The Roman Empire is reappearing. And the whole geo-
political and economic and religious systems and everything are almost back to where
we were. On a grander scale, of course; far more people are involved; but in
generalities, it’s almost déjà vu. All right, now with that as another rehearsal of the
introduction, James chapter 1 and let’s jump in at verse 22. Now watch the language.
Oh, what a difference here, then, from Paul’s Epistles of Grace.

James 1:22

"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

All right, now let’s go all the way back to Exodus chapter 19, because I want you to
see how this hooks up so perfectly with everything which is Jewish, and the Nation of
Israel back here. Let’s just begin with verse 7:

Exodus 19:7

"And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces
all these words which the LORD commanded him." Now remember the scenario -
Moses is up on the mountain, face-to-face with the Lord. In chapter 20, he’s going to
get the Ten Commandments, but now the Lord has just been telling him how He’s
going to deal with the Nation of Israel fresh out of slavery. Now verse 8. This is the
verse I wanted you to see.

Exodus 19:8

"And all the people (now remember this is the Nation of Israel) answered together,
and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will (what’s the next word?) do." Do
you see that? What is it? Works! We’re not going to wait for salvation to be
accomplished and take it as a free gift, we’ll work for it. Oh, "All that you’ve said,
we’ll do." See? And it’s repeated again in Deuteronomy. We won’t take time to look
at that one, and so now back again to James. So watch this language now:

James 1:23-24

"For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding
his natural face in a glass: 24. For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and
straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." Got the picture? And it’s sort
of the same illustration that I give with regard to the Law. James is using the
illustration that you come in from an afternoon of working in the yard and you’re
sweaty and grimy and you look in the looking glass, or the mirror. You see everything
that needs to be done to yourself, but you don’t do anything about it - you just go on out of the bathroom and you go out and do something else. **Well, the mirror didn’t change a thing, did it?**

Well, James says, this is the way it is if someone is supposed to be keeping the Law and doesn’t. It’s just like looking in a mirror and then not responding to it. Now I use the mirror concept this way. The Law, the Mosaic Law, the "thou shalt not’s" and "thou shalt’s" are like a mirror. And as we look into the mirror, the Law tells us everything that’s wrong with us. And that’s what confirms, then, when Paul says in Romans 3:23 that *"all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."* The Law shows that. But, just like James’ illustration of the mirror, so is my illustration of the mirror - you can look at the Law of Moses and study it until you’re blue in the face, but will it ever change you? NO! Because the Law has no redeeming power. All the Law could ever do was tell a person what’s wrong. That’s all.

**And Paul makes that so plain in Romans chapter 3 - that the Law could do nothing but condemn the human race.** All right, but now James isn’t using that concept. **James is telling these Jewish believers that they are falling short at keeping the Law.** And, my, what a difference, compared to what Paul says for us. All right, move on down, back to James 1 and verse 25.

*James 1:25*

"**But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."** Well that’s works, see? James is not saying a word about grace, but rather that keeping of the Law. Now we’re going to see it more and more as we come on through. Verse 26.

*James 1:26a*

"**If any man among you seem to be (what?) religious,..."**

Now I think most of you and most of my audience from coast to coast and all over Oklahoma, know that I don’t have much time for religion. It’s not a good word. It’s never used in a good light except when James uses it here that as keepers of the Law, yes, they’re religious. Now Dwight just gave me a good definition - I get all kinds of help, you know! Dwight’s definition of religion is, *"It’s all the different ways of going to hell."*

Well, you know, that’s about it, because most religion is doing exactly that. It’s just simply leading people the wrong direction. Something like this came up in one of the
letters I received and, trying to keep their answer short (because I write in longhand), I wrote back to this individual – “Too many people are being pied-pipered." I thought everybody that had been to grade school knew what that was. But the gentleman wrote back again and he said, "I don’t get what you’re driving at." Well, I called him and I said, "Haven’t you ever heard the story? I think it took place in Europe if I’m not mistaken, where the Pied Piper played the pipes and what did he do? He led (I think it was rats, wasn’t it? Yeah.)…he led the rats all down into the river - just literally hypnotized them."

That’s what most of religion is doing to people today. They’re ‘pied-pipering’ them. Oh, it sounds good. It appeals to the flesh. And they’re following them like a bunch of dumb rats. Sad, but so true. All right now, so James is using this legal approach - that if you’re going to look at that perfect law of liberty, let it have an affect on your life. **But Paul teaches us that the Law has no power to change your life and so, here again, is where I can again, without apology, say James knows nothing of Paul’s teachings in this Age of Grace.** And that’s why in my introductions I tried to make it clear that James is probably one of the first books written in our New Testament. Matthew might have beat him by a little bit but not much.

So James was evidently written before the Spirit even intends him to allude to anything that Paul teaches. You just can’t find it in here. I don’t care how hard you look. All right, but his writings are still Scripture, but just doesn’t apply to the Gentile Body of Christ as it’s all Jewish. Now, come back with me to II Timothy, chapter 3, and verse 16, because I don’t want people to get the idea, "Well Les, if it’s that far out, then why should we even look at it?" No, I’m not saying that. For this very reason, always remember this - that even though I may maintain that this isn’t written to us, that doesn’t mean it’s not profitable.

**II Timothy 3:16a**

"*All scripture* (from Genesis 1:1 to the last verse of Revelation) *is given by inspiration of God and is profitable..."* See, all scripture is profitable. So just because James isn’t addressed to us Gentiles under grace doesn’t mean you can’t profit from it. We’re going to pick out little tidbits here and there that are still apropos. Well, it’s the same way with the Four Gospels. The Four Gospels were Christ dealing with Israel, but yes, we can go into the Four Gospels and we can take some applications. We can feast on it. But it’s not going to have basic doctrines that Paul lays out and that’s where the difference comes in.

Now, while we’re on that inspiration of Scripture, I think I should take you on over to Peter’s little epistles. II Peter chapter 1 and here, of course, Peter agrees with the Apostle Paul one hundred percent. II Peter chapter 1. And in order to understand this
series of verses, I have to come all the way back to verse 16. II Peter chapter 1, verse 16 where now the Apostle Peter writes.

**II Peter 1:16a**

"*For we* (speaking of himself and the Eleven) *have not followed cunningly devised fables,...*" Boy, does that sound familiar? See that’s what the scornful try to tell us, this is just a Book of fables and legends. But Peter says, no! "We haven’t followed cunningly devised fables,"

**II Peter 1:16b**

"...*when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,...*" What’s he talking about there again. The soon coming of Christ. Now watch for these. They were all looking for the Tribulation and the coming of Christ and the Kingdom within a matter of ten or twenty years – within their lifetime. I showed you that in the last taping. All right, now verse 17.

**II Peter 1:17-18**

"*For* (Peter says) *he* (Jesus the Christ) *received from God the Father honor and glory,* when *there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory,* (and now remember this is on the Mount of Transfiguration, back there in Matthew) *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. 18. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.*" That is the Mount of Transfiguration. Now verse 19 and, oh, I love this!

**II Peter 1:19a**

"*We have also a more sure word of prophecy;...*" (or truth)

How much more sure can you get than to see the Lord Jesus transfigured right in front of them? Shining brighter than the noonday sun! But Peter says, I’ve got something even better. Now this is something. Peter says, "We have a more sure" than even Christ’s transfiguration showing to those three - Peter, James and John - Who He really was.

**II Peter 1:19b**

"*...whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn,* (that is the return of Christ!) *and the day star arise in your hearts:*" Now here it comes:
II Peter 1:20

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy (or speaking forth) of the scripture is of any private interpretation." In other words, you can’t just take a verse and build a doctrine on it. You have to use the whole, from Genesis through Revelation. Now here’s the capstone.

II Peter 1:21

"For the prophecy (that is the Word of God) came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The writers of Scripture, all of them, from Moses who wrote the beginnings of it on up through David. The writers of the historical books. The prophets. The writers of the Gospels. Luke writing Acts, Paul’s epistles and now these by Peter, James and John again. All of it, and never forget that. Every word in this Book was brought about through the inspiration or the moving of these men’s minds by the Holy Spirit.

Now I don’t think that the Spirit dictated audibly to them. But, the Spirit so took over their minds that as they wrote (or in Paul’s case, most of the time he dictated to a secretary of sorts), their minds just simply flowed with the Word of God. And that’s what we have to understand, now coming back to James, that all Scripture, even these little legalistic epistles, they’re still profitable and we can glean from them. Now then, down to verse 26 again. James 1 verse 26. And Iris, bless her heart, asked me on the way up if I was going to finish James today? I don’t think so. All right verse 26:

James 1:26

"If any man among you seem to be religious, (now of course, that’s what legalism was. Judaism was a religion) and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is (what?) vain." So, what were most, even Jew’s, religions? Vain, because they were guilty of all these things. Now, come back with me to Galatians chapter 1, and we’ll get Paul’s use of the word "religion." Back to Galatians chapter 1. Galatians chapter 1, my we have to hurry, time’s gone, and we’ll have to drop in at verse 13, where he’s rehearsing in these verses his Damascus road experience. And his past.

Galatians 1:13

"For ye have heard of my conversation (manner of living) in times past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church (or assembly) of God, and wasted it:" So what was Paul? Religious! He had no qualms about murdering people, but he was religious.
Lesson Three • Part II

The Legalist Viewpoint of James

James 1:24 – 3:6

We’re just an informal Bible study. I don’t try to pick arguments or attack anybody, we’re just going to simply teach The Book verse-by-verse and let the chips fall where they may. You don’t always have to agree with me. I don’t expect that. There can be points of disagreement as long as we don’t disagree on the basics and the fundamentals. In other words, the Deity of Christ, His finished work and atoning blood for our salvation, and so forth. But, I don’t mind if someone disagrees on some technicality here and there.

Okay, let’s get back to where we left off in the little epistle of James and we still have one verse left in chapter one but it doesn’t make that much difference because the chapters weren’t in the original anyway. All right, the last verse of James chapter 1, which is verse 27, and I might as well read verse 26 with it:

James 1:26

"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain." And remember I pointed out their religion is what mankind can ‘do’ and the next verse points it up.

James 1:27

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." What’s missing? What keeps us as believers on the straight and narrow? Well, not our own energy, I’ll guarantee you, but Who? The Spirit! See? The Holy Spirit. That’s almost absent here in the Book of James. I have to say ‘almost’ because I think we’re going to run across one verse in here someplace where the Spirit is alluded to, but it’s not that constant driving home of the fact that it’s the Spirit, now, that controls you and I in this Age of Grace as Paul tells us - and not the Law.

People encourage me to keep repeating and I appreciate that because I know it’s the only way folks can get these things straight. Come back with me again to Romans because, in order to understand what I’m saying concerning these little Jewish epistles, it is important to make the comparisons. Just compare with me how that James and Peter and John are not refuting Paul. They’re not condemning him - it’s just like he isn’t there. It’s just like they had nothing to do with him. Remember we’re
comparing with what James says which is, listen, if you’ve got true pure religion, then get out there and go to work. Visit the fatherless, the widows and the orphans and ‘do’ these things. Do them. Do them. Do them. But look what Paul says.

Romans 7:5a

"For when we were in the flesh, (before we were saved) the motions (or the acts) of sins, which were by the law,..." What does that mean? Those things that we did contrary to the Law. In other words, the Law said, "Thou shalt not gossip." But we spoke evil of somebody. So what were we? Guilty. The Law said, "Thou shalt not steal." But we took advantage of a situation. And we stole. We were actively in opposition with what the Law taught. Now finishing the verse.

Romans 7:5b

"...which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." In other words, that’s why the lost person just continues to pile up his debt load that will face him at the Great White Throne Judgment. Can’t be any other way. Now for the flipside in the next verse.

Romans 7:6a

"But (on this side of the cross. On this side of our salvation experience) now we are delivered from the law, (now you can’t make it any plainer than that. We’re delivered from the Law) that being dead wherein we were held;..." In other words, when we died the death with Christ, that death separated us from the control of the Law, so our identification in death at the cross, has now set us free. Now finishing the verse.

Romans 7:6b

"...that we should serve in newness of (what?) spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." (Law). What’s the spirit? The Holy Spirit. The indwelling, and that instead of trying to keep the Law through our own efforts, now we’ve been severed from the Law, we’re dead to it and now we "serve in the newness of the spirit and not in the oldness of the letter." See the difference. All right, let’s look at a couple more in II Corinthians, chapter 3. And let’s start at verse 3. As you know, I don’t like to just jump on one verse, you’ve got to sort of let it flow. Paul is now writing to these Gentile believers in Corinth - there may have been a few Jews in the congregation but it’s primarily Gentile, and he says:

II Corinthians 3:3a
"Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the (what?) Spirit of the living God;..." What’s he saying? You and I, as we move about in that unsaved world, they see Christ in us and they read us like a typewritten page. That’s what we are. We’re living epistles. And that’s how we have to behave ourselves. All right, so read it again, "That you are the epistle of Christ ministered by us." In other words, Paul was the one responsible for bringing them to this salvation experience. "Written not with ink (as his epistles are) but with the Spirit of the Living God." Now finish the verse.

II Corinthians 3:3b

"...not in tables of stone, (now what’s that a reference to? The Ten Commandments. This isn’t like those Ten Commandments written up there on the Mount Sinai in stone.) but in fleshy tables of the heart." That’s the response that salvation is supposed to bring to the believer.

II Corinthians 3:4

"And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward." This is because of what God has accomplished in us. That we now have a relationship with God Himself. Now verse 5.

II Corinthians 3:5

"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; (why? Next part) but our sufficiency is of God;" Does James say that? No. James says go out and visit the fatherless, and the widows and the orphans. Pick yourself up by your own bootstraps and go do it. But Paul says, you can’t. You can’t - because you need the Spirit’s unction. The Spirit’s driving us. Now verse 6.

II Corinthians 4:6

"Who also (that is God up in verse 5) hath made us able ministers of the new testament; (this whole new relationship because of the cross) not of the letter, (now there again, remember, what’s Paul referring to? The Law) but of the spirit:..." You see that big comparison? James is speaking of the letter without the Spirit; Paul says you can’t do it by the letter without the Spirit. Now I really like this next part of the verse. And you know I’m always amazed, even in my classes in Oklahoma. I think I’ve been in McAlester, how long? Thirty years? Twenty years! Twenty years, I think we started in McAlester in 1980 and yet a while back I was pointing this out and people were just flabbergasted. They just can’t comprehend that this is what the Bible says.
II Corinthians 4:6b-7a

"...for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. 7. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones,..." What’s he talking about? The Ten Commandments. "Ministration of death?" That’s what it says. What does most of Christendom think the Ten Commandments are? Hey, that’s their highway to Heaven. I’ll keep the Commandments and I’ll make it. The Commandments are nothing but condemnation, they’re a ministration of death. That’s a tough pill to swallow for most people. But, The Word is true. All right, let’s continue on with verses 7 and 8:

II Corinthians 3:7-8

"But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: 8. How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?"

Glorious! See? And that’s what we’ve been seeing in the book of Hebrews over the last year and a half, how that, yes, the Law was good in its own time and for Israel under the circumstances - but today, oh, the Law is nothing compared to the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

All right, back to James again. Now we’ll go on into chapter 2, and verse 1, but we won’t stay here very long, because if I were to stay here, yeah, then I could tell Iris we’ll finish James before we leave because I could just go right straight down through, but I can’t do that. I’ve got to keep showing you where it is, compared to where it’s been. All right, verse 1.

James 2:1

"My brethren, (so who is James writing to? Jewish believers) have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons." What was James’ concept of the faith of their Lord Jesus Christ? Let’s go back - Matthew, chapter 16. Now some of you know that almost from memory, we’ve used it so often. At least you should be able to tell me, what’s it’s going to be about? Peter’s confession of faith! Now this is all for sake of comparison. I want you to see now what James is talking about when he speaks of their Lord Jesus Christ. Matthew 16 verse 13. Here they are at the end of the three years of His ministry. They are shortly going to be going up to Jerusalem and the crucifixion.

Matthew 16:13-14a
"When Jesus came into the coasts (or borders) of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" (simple question isn’t it? Who am I?) 14. And they said,…" And every time I read this verse, I’m flabbergasted. I can’t help it. I am utterly flabbergasted to think that after three years of miracle, after miracle, after miracle - I mean real miracles, not the fake kind. The real ones. And what was their answer?

Matthew 15:14

"And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: (my goodness, they all knew, what happened to John the Baptist; he got beheaded a long time ago) some, Elias; (Elijah lived a long time ago) and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets." What in the world is the matter with these people? Unbelief! It’s just unbelievable such unbelief. All right, but Jesus in His compassion and His goodness, comes back in verse 15.

Matthew 15:15

"He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?" Now remember He’s talking to the Twelve, so I could without endangering the Scriptures, I could just say, "But who do you twelve men think I am?"

Matthew 16:16

"And Simon Peter (the spokesman) answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Notice there’s a period there at the end of that statement. Do you see any reference to His death, burial and resurrection that we must use for our profession of faith? Not a word. They don’t even know He’s going to die. Was Jesus satisfied? Absolutely. This is all they were supposed to know and believe that Jesus was Who He claimed to be, He was the Messiah of Israel in fulfillment of the Old Testament promises.

All right, you go on into the book of Acts and Peter is going to be doing the same thing, but I’m not going to stop there or we’ll never get through James. So let’s come on back to James, and I just want you to see that when he speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ in verse 2, it was in regard to His Messiahship. They understood that He was the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises. But not a word about the finished work of the cross, not a word. All right, now then, to these religious Jews who had embraced Jesus as the Messiah, but who are still keeping the Law, James says, "Now let’s be practical." If you’re going to be a good religious Jew, this is how you have to live.
James 2:2a

"For if there come unto your assembly…" (Synagogue). Now this is interesting. Here’s where sometimes I think even the translators have thrown us a curve. Do you know what the Greek word here for assembly really is? Synagogue! That’s what it should have been, the Greek is Synagogue. Not spelled exactly like we do, but it’s certainly close enough that this should have been translated "if any come into your synagogue." They were Jews.- now reading on.

James 2:2-3

"For if there come unto your assembly (synagogue) a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; (wow, that gets pretty close to home, now doesn’t it?) 3. And ye have respect to him that has weareth the gay (or good) clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there or sit here under my footstool:" What are they doing? Well they’re favoring the man who’s wealthy and up and coming and they’re putting the poor fellow down. And what does James say? "Hey, that’s bad religion." Now verse 4.

James 2:4

"Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts." Now that’s a good place to stop. What do most of us think evil thoughts are always connected with? Immorality. That’s where we, most of us, just put evil thoughts. Hey, that’s just a small part of it. To think favorably about this well-to-do person and put the poor fellow down in the gutter, is just as evil as having immoral thoughts. It’s all evil. It’s all in the same bailiwick. All right, so James now says, "And you’ve become judges (or practitioners) of evil thoughts." Now verse 5.

James 2:5a

"Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith,..." Well now here’s where you can take a good tidbit from James and say, "Yeah." All through Christian history, for the most part, what class of people have been Christians? The poor and the downtrodden. It’s only in the last hundred years where Christianity has enjoyed the wealth and the prosperity that you and I are acquainted with.

All the way up through the last 2,000 years it was the downtrodden, it was the persecuted, it was the hated who were the Christians of the world. And so James is saying the same thing. What did the Lord Himself say about poor people? "Hey,
you’ll always have them with you.” That’s never going to change. The welfare system hasn’t changed it. Europe has tried it and what has it done? Bankrupted them. So you can’t remove the poor from the world situation, it’s always been that way and always will until the Lord comes. All right, so James says, you’re missing the point, poor people are really the gemstones of the operations of God because those are the kinds of people that he finds in faith. Now verse 6.

*James 2:6a*

"*But ye have despised the poor…*" Why? Because, they had bad religion. I can’t get over that. Because that’s exactly what we’re driving at here, religion just won’t cut it.

*James 2:6*

"*But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?*"

Now let me come back to my introduction of all this (the historical scenario again). Here these Jews have been scattered out of the area of Jerusalem and Judaea under Saul’s persecution and a lot of them have already been out there throughout the Roman Empire - ever since 606 BC when they went into the Babylonian captivity. This wasn’t recent. So some of these Jews that had become involved with these Jewish congregations up there in the land of Turkey, some of them have been out there long enough that they became successful businessmen and had become wealthy. And we know that the Jews have a knack for it. They have a talent. And so even though there are a lot of poor Jews down through history, there have been some wealthy ones.

And so, evidently, in these congregations there were, again, a mix of wealthy and intensely poor Jewish people. So he says, "Don’t the rich men oppress you?" Well, of course they do. They always have. And they always will. They take advantage. You know, I’ve got a real smart economic precept, or whatever you want to call it. You know why poor people stay poor? Because they always have to buy the cheapest, poorest product in order to afford it. Now when you buy the cheapest product in Wal-mart, how long is it going to last compared to the good one? About one-fourth as long. So how have they programmed it? The poor man has to buy, and buy, and buy. The rich man can buy once and it’ll last a lifetime. That’s the difference. And it’s always been that way. So, the wealthy element takes advantage of the poor and once they get in there, it’s almost impossible to get out.

All right, read on, I mean this is practical. You can take a lot of this to heart. Verse 7.
"Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?"

What’s he talking about? You’ve got to remember history. I think a lot of people realize that I’m a history buff. Well, I could just read history twenty-four hours a day. Now at this point in time in the Roman Empire, the Roman political officials had no problem with the Jewish religion and the Temple worship. They had no problem with the Jews. In fact, I’ve put it on the program years back. I read one time that the Romans made sure that whenever these offerings for the Temple were being transported from one end of the Empire or the other, the Roman authorities guaranteed that every dollar as we would call it today, got to Jerusalem. They didn’t persecute the Jewish religion. They recognized it as an ancient religion and they embellished it really.

But, it was these Jews now who had withdrawn from the mainstream of Judaism and had embraced Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah - they were outcast to the mainstream of Judaism. Now, what’s my best example? Saul of Tarsus. Perfect example. What was Saul? He was the typical practitioner of Judaism. Pharisee of the Pharisees. Wealthy. And what did he think of these Jews who had embraced Jesus of Nazareth? He wanted them put to death! Throw them in the dungeon. They’re nothing but the off-scouring of humanity. Well, that’s the mentality as you come into even these little epistles now - that the Roman Empire had no problem with the Judaism of the Temple worship but they consorted with those Jews to persecute these Jews who had come apart as believers in the Messiah. See that? And Saul is my perfect example of all this. Okay, we’ve got a little bit of time left. So verse 7 again.

"Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?"

Well, what was that name? Jesus of Nazareth. They were followers of Jesus. Now verse 8.

"If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well:"

Now goodness sakes, who promoted that Golden Rule more than anybody else? Jesus did - in His earthly ministry. What did He tell, I think it was one of the rich young rulers that came to Him, and He said, "After you’ve given your all to the poor, then do unto others as you’d have them do unto you, which is the Law that fulfills all the rest of the Law." And James is repeating it. See? See how legalistic all this is? And it’s
right in perfect accord with the Jews who’d become followers of Jesus during His earthly ministry and in those early years of Acts.
Lesson Three • Part III

The Legalist Viewpoint of James

James 1:24 – 3:6

Let’s get into our study of James, and in the last program we were down to verse 9 of chapter 2. And remember that James is writing the legalistic point of view of law-keeping. And as we pointed out in the last program, not a word yet about being led of the Holy Spirit, but in his little epistle it’s only "know the Law and keep it, for these Jewish believers". All right now it just continues on, verse 9.

James 2:9a

"But if ye have respect to persons,..." In other words, he said earlier in the chapter, if you’re going to put the rich man in a place of preeminence and you’re going to put the poor downtrodden man over here, then you’re guilty of bad religion.

James 2:9b-10

"...ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law (the Ten) as transgressors. 10. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Well, you see the Lord said the same thing. And the Law got meticulous to the place that even if you lusted in your thoughts, the Lord Himself said, "that when you lust in your thoughts you’re breaking the commandment of ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery!’" And so the Law, as I’ve said over and over through the years, was severe. The Law was demanding. All right, getting back to the text. If you break one, you’re guilty of breaking them all.

James 2:11

"For he that (is the Law) said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." Not just part of it, all of it. My what a horrible state to be under, see? All right, now then verse 12.

James 2:12

"So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty."

Now I pointed this out in our seminar the other night at Oklahoma City, in Romans chapter 2, again for the sake of comparison between James’ and Paul’s writings, and
it’s not a contradiction. One is just as much the truth as the other, but one is more applicable to us than the other because it’s addressed to us in the Grace Age, the Church Age.

I told my group the other night, I wonder how many church members across America even know that this verse is in their Bible. Not many. Because if they did, they would look at Paul in a little different light instead of scornfully putting him down, ignoring him and having nothing to do with his epistles. But they’d better wake up because this is how this Age is going to judged. Not according to the Law of liberty, but according to this Scripture right here.

Romans 2:16

"In the day (Paul writes) when God (the Sovereign, Holy, Righteous God) shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, (He’s going to be the judge remember at the Great White Throne where all the lost will be gathered - and he will judge them) according to my gospel." So the lost that have lived on this side of the cross, won’t be judged by the Law or religion. Every man woman and child that has lived on this side of this Age of Grace is going to be judged by Paul’s Gospel. Now you all know what Paul’s Gospel is, don’t you? But I’m sure there are some out there in television that probably don’t. And we’re going to look at it so that there can be no mistake. Paul’s Gospel of Salvation was given to him by the resurrected Lord, and is found in I Corinthians chapter 15, verses 1 through 4. It’s been a while since we’ve put it on the air. I guess it’s about time we did it again. I wasn’t intending to use this, this afternoon, but we just go as the Spirit leads. Here’s Paul’s Gospel, and this is the Gospel by which mankind is now going to be judged. Verse 1.

I Corinthians 15:1

"Moreover, brethren. (now remember Paul is writing to believers) I declare unto you (not a gospel, but) the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;" These Corinthians had already believed the truth of his Gospel. Now don’t forget, what were these Corinthians maybe a few months or years back? Pagans, idolaters, worshippers of the mythological gods and goddesses. But now, because they had believed Paul’s Gospel, Paul could call them brethren. All right, verse 2.

I Corinthians 15:2

"By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." He says, "It’s by this Gospel that you’re saved, if you keep in memory." In other words, if you know what it is, and you’ve believed it.
**I Corinthians 15:3a**

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received,…" In other words, they had never heard it from anybody else. Paul alone was the apostle of the Gentiles. (Romans 11:13) Peter, James and John haven’t been to Corinth. Paul alone comes into this pagan city. And this is what he presented to them for salvation.

**I Corinthians 15:3b-4**

"…how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4. And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:" Now folks, that’s Paul’s Gospel (that we must believe in our hearts for salvation) in this Age of Grace. It’s plain and simple. And that’s what you have to share with people around you.

You know, for those of you out in our television audience, I shared something with the studio class just before we started this afternoon. A lady out in Montana (and she’s going to be thrilled that I’m sharing it with my nationwide audience) had a young man come to her door selling ice cream - and while she was looking at the order list, I just happened to come on television. You know, that’s what the Scripture says about Ruth landing on the field of Boaz, "she happened." **Hey, with God nothing just "happens."** It’s what? Predetermined appointment with destiny.

So this young man who wasn’t even her routine driver came to the door and she brought him in and I had just come on. She catches us on Sky Angel. And she said, "Les, he was glued to that TV." And so she said, "I noticed it and I just kept looking at his order book for the whole half-hour program. He did interrupt your teaching once by saying, "Who is this guy anyway?" She said, "Oh, that’s just a cattle rancher down in Oklahoma." But by the time the half-hour was over I could tell that the Lord was dealing with him and as we were walking to the front door, the young man said, "I’ve always been scared to death of religion." He said, "I won’t go with my wife to church because it scares me to death." But he said, "This guy doesn’t scare me." And so she said, "Well wouldn’t you like to have the joy and the salvation that he’s been talking about?" And he says, "Yeah." And Les, she said, "I led him to the Lord right there in my front door! And sent him on his way rejoicing."

Well you see, she knew Paul’s Gospel, and you and I have opportunity after opportunity to just simply share this simple fact that Christ died for our sins - He paid the price. And He was literally dead. He was buried for three days and three nights to prove it. And then, through the power of the Sovereign Almighty God, He was raised from the dead, victorious.
And then Paul goes on in this same chapter to teach that, because of His resurrection now, we also can have new life. Well, that’s Paul’s Gospel and that’s the message that every human being is going to be judged on in this Age of Grace. Not whether they kept the Law. Not if they’ve been good, but rather, have they believed Paul’s Gospel?

Let’s come back to James. And so the comparison is, James is still telling his Jewish people here, they’re going to be judged by the Law of liberty. Oh, those early Jewish believers before Paul are going to be in glory, because they believed what was presented to them by Peter, the apostle of the Jews (Gal. 2:8-9) about 10 years before Paul’s Gospel came on the scene. At that time, those early Jewish believers had to believe that Jesus was their promised Messiah, the Son of God. They also had the works requirement of repentance and water baptism. (Acts 2:38) I trust you never try to mix them together, because they won’t mix. Law and Grace simply cannot mix. Too many try to add things to Paul’s Gospel that God did not put in there! Now can you see that beautiful difference between Law and Grace? Now verse 13 in James chapter 2.

James 2:13

"For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment." That’s not very nice language is it? But you see, we trumpet the Grace of God. God is saving sinners for no other reason than the fact that He loved them and He gave Himself for them.

All right, now here we come to the big area of James that causes so many questions. And it shouldn’t, if you understand where James is coming from. He’s a legalist. He is still a practitioner of Judaism but he has recognized Jesus of Nazareth as the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises, and so he was part and parcel of those Jewish believers that Saul of Tarsus hated so. And persecuted - but he, as yet, knows nothing of Paul’s Gospel of Grace. If he did, it would be in here, but it’s not in here. Now verse 14.

James 2:14

"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?"

Now, when you’re under a legalistic system, the answer would have to be what? No. Do you remember way back in Exodus, I made the point about when Israel was encamped around that tabernacle – now build a picture in your mind. The Twelve Tribes, four on every side of the tabernacle. Now with those several million Jews, that
put some of them in the outer perimeters of the camp quite a ways away from the altar, didn’t it? And those of you who’ve been with me now, all these years, you remember I drew the analogy, what if one of those Jews way out there on the corner of the camp had broken the Law and he rummaged up a lamb, or brought one of his own, and he took the lamb all the way up to the tabernacle and presented it to the priest as a burnt offering for his sin. Well, he came back to his tent justified because he had done what God had said to do.

And don’t ever forget, what does the Book of Hebrews say? "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission..." So this first Jew does it all – ‘A-okay.’ He recognized his sin. He did what the Law demanded. Took it up to the priest and his case was settled.

All right, so a couple of days later his neighbor does pretty much the same thing and he suddenly is driven with guilt for having broken the Law, but he stops to think what his neighbor did. And so he rationalized it and he said, "Now wait a minute. I know I’ve sinned. I don’t have to take that lamb all the way up to that altar like my neighbor did. God knows my heart. He knows I’m guilty. I’m confessing my sin, but I’m not going to take a lamb." Now you remember way back then, what was my question? Was that man made right with God? No. No. Because he didn’t follow God’s instructions in doing what the Law said.

And so you always have to look at the big picture. And James is coming from that same point of view. How can a man under the Law possibly be right with God if he doesn’t fulfill the works that the Law demanded? I mean all of it!!

Okay, I can go one step further with that same analogy. Let’s say the third neighbor commits a sin on the outer perimeters. And he knows what the other two have done. But now he rationalizes and he says, well since my neighbor took a lamb up there I guess that’s what I’d better do. So he negotiates for a lamb and he takes the lamb up there, not because he’s convicted in his heart. Not because he is a man of faith, but he’s doing what his neighbor did. Was that man justified? No. No, because he didn’t do it by faith. He did it because his neighbor did it. Now am I making myself plain? Under the Law you did it all right or it was worth nothing and so you either did everything that was prescribed or they had no forgiveness.

All right, now James is making that same analogy and that’s where he’s right on for James.

*James 2:14a*
"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works?..." Just like the fellow that wouldn’t bring the lamb. Oh he knew that he was wrong, and he knew that God had to make restitution, or had to forgive him, but he wasn’t going to do the works that would be required, so could that man have forgiveness? No. Of course not, all right read on. Verse 15.

**James 2:15-16**

"If a brother or sister be naked, (or in need of clothing) and destitute of daily food, 16. And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be warmed and filled; (with my goodness, my attitude, my compassion) notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?" Nothing! Doesn’t do any good to tell anybody how badly you feel for them, how sorry you are for them, and send them out into the cold without a coat. So what is James teaching? Common sense. Now you bring it into our own scenario as believers today - it’s the same thing. If you have a neighbor who has a need and you’re in a position to fill that need, what are you to do? Give him what he needs. I think we all realize that. And we don’t just simply say, "Well, I’ll pray for you and I hope God gives it to you." No that’s not sufficient. All right, so here’s where you can make some application, that it’s the same scenario, even though we’re under grace, yet if there’s a neighbor who is in need and we have the wherewithal to help fill that need and we don’t do it, then we’re going to be held accountable. And so we’re to do it. We’re to do good works for all the right reasons, even in this Age of Grace. Now verse 17.

**James 2:17**

"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." Well, we can agree with that up to a point. But now I’m going to bring you back to Ephesians chapter 2 where Paul, I think, gives us our Grace Age answer to such a scenario. And let’s just start with verse 4. Now here’s the Pauline concept as over against James. James just simply says, "If I don’t see works, then you don’t have faith." Paul says, "If you have faith, you’re going to have works." We don’t have to worry about it. They’re going to come as naturally as sunshine follows the dark.

**Ephesians 2:4-5**

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5. Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together (or made us alive) with Christ. (by grace ye are saved;)" In other words, God has accomplished it of His own volition, when He sees our faith, of course. Now verse 6.

**Ephesians 2:6-7**
"And he hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places (or the heavenlies) in Christ Jesus: 7. That in the ages to come (for all eternity) he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Kindness and love and mercy and Grace - they all mean the same thing, see?

Now verse 8:

Ephesians 2:8a

"For by grace (by God’s unmerited favor) are ye saved through faith;..." Not works. Faith! By believing it. No questions asked. Trusting it. All right, but God doesn’t stop there. The moment He saves us, God enters into our being whether we realize it or not, and He’s not going to slap you down. He’s not going to put you on an operating table. He’s not going to put you under some water. God, by His invisible powerful way of doing things, is going to enter into your life and your life is going to be changed without your having to really lift a finger. Why? Reading the verse again.

Ephesians 2:8-9

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: (because) it is the gift of God:" (you don’t work for it, it’s unmerited favor) 9. Not of works, (you don’t go visit the fatherless, and the widows to gain salvation) lest any man should boast."

Now here’s the verse I was heading for. Takes me a while to get there, doesn’t it?

Verse 10. For once we are saved, once we have entered in by our faith in Paul’s Gospel (that Christ died, was buried and rose from the dead), we’ve entered in by faith then:

Ephesians 2:10a

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works,... " Whose workmanship? God’s! God moves in and He works a work in our heart and life without our lifting a finger, so we are "His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works,..."

Now I always have to emphasize that word ‘create.’ Who alone can create? God. So the moment God sees our saving faith, He begins to create in us that wherewithal to do what? Do the good works. And the believer is going to do good works. Now that doesn’t mean you all have to be missionaries. It doesn’t mean you all have to be Sunday School teachers, or deacons, or preachers or any of those things. No, no, no.
Our good works can be manifested thousands of ways and the Lord will direct you. You know, I’ll never forget a lady I had in my class up in Iowa. Oh, she was bemoaning, one night, that she had no gifts and she couldn’t do anything for the Lord. Good heavens, every Saturday night she had 50 college-age and high school kids in her living room waiting for me to teach. And I said, "You think you can’t do anything?" That was her gift. The kids just worshipped the ground she walked on. But, they sat there and they just soaked up the Word of God because of her. And it’s the same way with any one of you, you can practice a gift and the Lord will work in you without your even realizing it.

All right, so, "We are created in Christ Jesus unto good works." There’s not a command here that says, "Get out and visit the fatherless and the widows, like James did." Paul was telling us that when we become a true believer, and the Holy Spirit begins to work the work in our lives, you’re going to do good works. Now, some more than others, of course. But listen that’s the way it is. All right reading on, finish the verse:

_Ephesians 2:10b_

"...which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." In other words, He set the stage that we could walk a walk of good works because of what God has done for us. Not because of what we do for Him. **It’s because of the out-working of what He has done for us.**

Come back to James and let’s read verse 17 again:

_James 2:17_

"Even so (James says) faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."

Well, I maintain it’s impossible to have faith without works. The two are going to go hand-in-glove. But James doesn’t teach that scenario because James is still under the legalism of the Law.
And again, I always like to thank all of you in the studio audience for coming in and making all this possible, because Iris and I always have to say, "What would we do if we came up someday and nobody was here?" Well, we would turn around and go back home because people are used to seeing you here. For those of you out in our television audience, if you want to copy any of our material, you feel free to do so, provided you don’t try to make a profit from it. We know that time is short and we feel that it’s imperative that we get the Word of God out.

All right now let’s get back again in the book of James and we’ll keep moving on, little by little. We’ve been showing in the previous three programs that the best way to understand these little Jewish epistles is to compare them back with what Paul writes to us here in the Age of Grace, because all these little Jewish epistles are first and foremost written to Jews out in the dispersion - and as we pointed out in the first half-hour today most of these congregations were probably in what is today the land of Turkey (and there were others, of course, but predominately in Galatia and Asia Minor and so forth).

And so, under the Law, James is not saying anything much different than what Jesus and the Twelve taught in the earthly ministry. And I’ve already had some people during break time today realizing that. There’s not that much difference between the Four Gospels and what you have back with James, Peter and John, and Jude, because they know nothing of Paul's Gospel of Grace.

Now Peter, of course (by the time he gets to his second epistle, which was probably written several years after I Peter), now realizes there is something different in the works, and we use those verses often - II Peter chapter 3, verses 15 and 16 - where he says that the whole idea of Scripture is salvation, and that if they want salvation they have to go to the epistles of Paul because of the wisdom that had been given to him.

Well, that makes all the difference in the world - but back here in these earliest ones (James and I Peter), there is still no comprehension evidently of Paul’s doctrines of grace, or a Gospel of salvation based on the death, burial and resurrection of the Messiah, the Christ.
All right, so back to James chapter 2 where we left off. We’re in verse 18. And James is dealing with this whole concept of faith plus works and we’re showing the comparison where Paul says, "It’s faith plus nothing for salvation." And then, as we pointed out in our last program, when we become a believer, the work concept enters in almost automatically by the power of the Holy Spirit. But back here James is still demanding that if you’re going to have faith, you have to show it with works.

*James 2:18*

"Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works."

Now we made the analogy in the previous program, of a Jew out there in the tabernacle enclaves - and if a person out on the outer perimeter would say, "I believe the Law, I know I’ve sinned, but I’m not going to take that lamb clear up to the tabernacle." Well, he had all the faith in the world, but was he accepted? **No, because he didn’t do the works that the Law demanded.**

And then I gave you the opposite example: what if a man says, "Well my neighbor took a lamb up there, my neighbor got right with God, so I guess that’s what I’d better do." So he grabs a lamb and he goes through all the process, but it’s without faith. He did it because he saw his neighbor do it - so is he accepted? **No. And so it had to be the combination of a heart-faith, followed with the work that the Law demanded.** And that, of course, is where James is coming from. Now verse 20.

*James 2:20*

"But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" Well, under the Law it would be. But for us under Grace, faith is precipitating the work of the Holy Spirit and that’s where the difference comes in. All right, now verse 21. Here, James is going to come up with some valid arguments, and this is where people today get all confused. He’s going to use Abraham - but so does Paul:

*James 2:21*

"Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?"

Now let’s stop and think a minute. Was it at that time in Abraham’s life that he became a man of faith and a believer? At Isaac’s offering? Why heavens no - he’s been a believer for years. That came long after the fact, so that’s really no valid proof.
But now we can go back to Romans chapter 4 and pick up Abraham’s faith, so far as saving faith is concerned, and when did it become a reality? When God spoke to him way back in Ur of the Chaldees. And he doesn’t have Isaac until years later. All right, Romans chapter 4, and this is, again, for sake of comparison. James is using the offering of Isaac as a works that was proving Abraham’s faith. Paul on the other hand is showing us that Abraham’s faith was intact before any works. Romans 4 verse 1.

**Romans 4:1**

"What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?" In other words, Paul never made any excuse of the fact that he was a Jew’s Jew, Pharisee of the Pharisees. So, Abraham was the father in the flesh. All right now verse 2.

**Romans 4:2-3a**

"For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; (brag) but not before God. 3. For what saith the scripture?…"

Now you remember we talked about Scripture in our first program this afternoon. Every word of this Book "...inspired by the Holy Spirit, holy men of God wrote as they were moved by the Spirit."

So, Genesis 1 to the last verse of Revelation is Scripture, it’s the Word of God. Now there may be places that seem contradictory, but they’re not contradictory; it’s just a change of modus operandi. God is dealing differently today under Grace than He did with Israel under the Law. It’s not a contradiction. And so we have to sift it out, as we’re doing with the difference between James written under the Law, and Paul’s writings of pure Grace.

All right, but here we find Abraham as the epitome of God’s saving someone by faith and faith alone, because that’s why Paul uses Abraham then as an example for us, even in this Age of Grace. Verse 3 again.

**Romans 4:3**

"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, (and offered up his son Isaac? No, it doesn’t say that. Abraham believed God – period!) and it (his believing) was counted unto him for righteousness." How much did Abraham do to become a believer? Believed it! God spoke it, Abraham believed it! And, oh, my goodness, that brings to mind another verse here in Romans. Let’s come back a little
further in Romans, back to chapter 1. Romans chapter 1 verse 16. A verse that we use over and over and over. Most of you should just know it from memory. This is where Paul writes again to the Gentile believers, and says:

Romans 1:16a

"For I am not ashamed of (not ‘a gospel’ but rather) the gospel of Christ: for it (just like Abraham in chapter 4, that act of faith) is the power of God unto salvation to every one that (what?) believeth;…" Plus how much? Nothing! Believing it. But does that mean that someone makes a profession of faith, and is going to go on living like they always lived before? No way. When someone makes a profession of faith, they’d better be ready for the fact that God is going to work a change in their lifestyle.

And they are going to begin to work out that salvation that has begun with their faith. And so, yes, to that degree, we can agree with James - a believer that does not respond to his faith with acts accordingly. But it is not a mandated thing for salvation. Salvation is going to come by itself and it’s going to stand on faith and faith alone - but with the understanding that a changed life is going to follow. The believer is going to have a hunger for the Word. A believer is going to be only too anxious to share his faith. But, it’s not a mandatory thing for salvation. Now let’s turn to Romans chapter 3 and look at verses 24 through 26.

Romans 3:24-25a

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption (the process of buying us back) that is in Christ Jesus: 25. Whom (speaking of Christ) God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood,…" Now again the Word has declared that it’s the blood that has made payment for our sin. Now continuing the verse.

Romans 3:25b-26

"...to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; (now here’s the verse) 26. To declare, I say, at this time (that is on this side of the death, burial and resurrection now) his righteousness: (God never compromised His holiness and His righteousness when He set up the plan of salvation) that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Not the one who believes plus something else. And so the moment God sees that sinner confess his sin and cry out for salvation, God declares him just, by simply believing in that finished work of the cross. Well, we could go on, but we won’t take any more time. We’ve got to make a little headway in James, so now verse 22 of James chapter 2. Here we find James enlarging on his argument - and well he
may - because James doesn’t understand Paul’s doctrine of grace as yet. **James is still the legalist.**

*James 2:22*

"Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works (or his works) was faith made perfect?" (or complete). I mean James just can’t get it out of his craw. That’s all there is to it. If you haven’t got works, you must not have faith, and you cannot have saving faith unless you’ve got the works. My, that flies in the face of what I teach. When we maintain that as soon as we’re condemned by the Law, and we know that we’re a lost sinner, we gain salvation by faith and faith alone in what Christ has already done. It’s finished.

You know, I told someone the other day, we’ve got a lot of kids watching our program; you’d be surprised. Most people think that since most of us are gray-headed, then my audience is also. Don’t you kid yourself, we’ve got a lot of 8, 10, 12, 14-year old kids watching. Well, one of them approached me one time at one of my seminars and he said, "Les, you’re always talking about the finished work of the cross." I said, "Yes." He said, "Well, it really wasn’t finished when Christ died, it wasn’t finished until He rose from the dead." Boy, now that’s smart thinking isn’t it? Sure it is. These kids aren’t that dumb. I said, "You’re right!" But yet so far as the payment for sin and the suffering and all that, Jesus could say from the cross, "It is finished." But yet, you’re right - in order to bring it all to fruition, He had to be raised from the dead. And that of course, put the frosting on the cake.

So yeah, I get a kick out of these kids. Iris and I got a letter from a couple of kids just the other day, one twelve and one fourteen - so don’t cross them off. Don’t think that old Les is going clear over their heads. No we’re not. All right, back to James, and verse 23.

*James 2:23*

"And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God." So James is still coming back - and remember it’s Holy Spirit inspired - we’re not going to take anything away from that, because he’s approaching these Jews that are still under the Law and **so everything for them has to fit, like it has to fit for us under grace.** And so he’s still on that legalistic bent that Abraham had to have works to prove his faith.

*James 2:24*
"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."

Now, I have sometimes put forth an argument. I don’t know how valid it is, but at least it helps me a little bit - that this whole business of faith and works is looking at it first from God’s point of view. Did God have to see Abraham perform some work in order to see his faith? No. God sees the heart! But, for mankind to see the evidence of faith, what do we need? We need to see works. We can’t look on the heart. We can’t tell if a person is a believer or not, only God can do that. And so what we have to go by is, if this man professes to be saved and he follows that salvation with (as I think will come automatically) some kind of works, then the two are tied together.

And this is what James’ argument is, if a man doesn’t have works then he must not have faith. Well, anyway, let’s move on to verse 25. Now he’s going to use some examples from the Old Testament. And I can use them, too, to prove the other side.

James 2:25

"Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?" Now that’s James’ way of looking at it - that Rahab proved her faith by putting her own life on the line in hiding the spies. But I’m going to take you back to where James is taking you. Let’s go back to Joshua chapter 2 verse 9. And you know the story, how the Jewish spies have come into the home of Rahab the harlot, up on the wall around Jericho. Now remember, the citizens of Jericho were pagan idolaters. They knew nothing of Israel’s God, but look what she says:

Joshua 2:9-11

"And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. 10. For we (the people of Jericho) have (what?) heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did to the two Kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side of Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. 11. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath."

They had heard all that. Well now, most of Jericho could care less about what they had heard, but what did it do to this gal? It prompted her to put her faith in the God of Israel. Not a word yet about her works. And so we can look at it that her salvation began the moment she believed in the God of Israel, on the basis of what she had
heard. And then, of course, her works and her preparing the way for the Nation of Israel followed. But, you can follow this all the way up through Scripture how that faith opens the door to a life of works. And we will never deny that. Now coming back to James, and he’s going to make another analogy in verse 26.

James 2:26

"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." In other words, he’s not talking about the Holy Spirit, he’s talking about the living part of a human being - that just as soon as a person dies and the soul and spirit leave, that person is dead. He can accomplish nothing. Well, he says, it’s the same way if you’re going to tell me that you can have faith and not works. Well remember, now, just the analogy that James is looking at works under the Law and it’s valid for these Jewish believers, but it is not the same as we under Grace can operate. All right, chapter 3.

James 3:1a

"My brethren,…" So again we understand that James is talking to fellow Jewish believers. They had believed the Gospel of the Kingdom as I pointed out in the last program; they had the same profession of faith that Peter did. "Thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God." Period. So he says:

James 3:1-2

"My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. 2. For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, (or a mature man) and able also to bridle the whole body." Now you know what he’s building up to, don’t you? The tongue! That’s what he’s going to deal with next.

James 3:3-4a

"Behold, we put bits in the horses’ mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. 4. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm,..." Which, of course, is going to control the rudder, and the rudder is a small part of a ship. But that small little rudder can cause that ship to turn. The bit in the horses mouth can cause that horse to turn. This is his argument.

James 3:5
"Even so (we’re talking about the same thing - one little part of our physical body of flesh that has tremendous power) **the tongue is a little member**, (not much compared to the whole) **and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!**"

You know what he’s talking about? Gossip. Oh you can ruin a life of integrity and honesty and uprightness with just a little bitty fire of gossip that just explodes. Now the politicians are getting great with what they call ‘spin.’ And what do they know? That if you can bring an accusation against someone, especially a good person (that’s the ones they usually pick on), the media just simply blares it out over the whole nation. And maybe three, four weeks later, we find out there wasn’t one word of truth to it. Does it heal all the damage? No. The damage is done. A life is ruined. And we see it over and over. **All right, James is dealing with the same thing, and so here again, we can take a good lesson from this. We have to be careful that we don’t destroy a life with our tongue.**

**James 3:6**

"**And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.**" Now we’re speaking of a tongue that is being used deceitfully and in order to bring reproach upon someone. False accusations. Don’t misunderstand what he’s driving at, and where does it have its beginning? In hell itself.

And all you have to do is just stop and think - how much damage is done throughout the whole human experience by wicked tongues. It’s beyond our comprehension. **And so the admonition here is that, for us even as believers in this Age of Grace, it’s still a danger; that we can bring reproach upon someone by passing on a false tidbit of something that has no truth. But the damage will be done.**