Through the Bible with Les Feldick, Book 67

LESSON * ONE PART I

BUT GOD! (Where Sin Abounded)

Rom. 5:20, Rom. 6:22, I Cor. 1:23, I Cor. 1:27

It’s a beautiful January day in Oklahoma. It’s good to see everybody in. We’re going to go right into the Book and continue on where we’ve been for the last several programs on the But God, But Who, or But When. Regardless, you know it’s always the “flip side.” I’ve expressed so often, that if you want to be a serious Bible student, you must determine: to whom is it written, what went before, and what went after. This is the whole premise of this line of teaching. We’re going to show what comes up on the “flip side,” and then we’ll see what a difference that makes.

All right, for the next “But God,” we’re going to go to Romans chapter 5 and verse 20. We’ll go to the flip side and then go back and see what goes before. Again, remember that Romans is a doctrinal book. Ninety-nine percent of our Grace Age doctrine has its roots in the Book of Romans, and that’s what so many people fail to realize. Acts is not a doctrinal book. Acts is a record of the transition from Judaism to grace. But Romans is strictly a doctrinal book. We see things in Romans that you almost will not find anywhere else in Scripture, and here is one good example.

Romans 5:20b

“But where sin abounded,” Now, I hope you can stretch that word abund to what it really means. It just is overwhelming. It’s beyond borders, and that’s where sin had become, even at the time that Paul is writing. You want to remember that the Roman Empire was totally devoid of any spirituality. It was pagan. It was under all of the gods and goddesses of paganism and mythology. Consequently, the moral fabric of the empire was as rotten as you could expect the human race to get. So Paul, I think, is using that background of his present day civilization to show that this grace of God is greater even than the horrendous sins of the Roman Empire.

Let’s go back to Romans chapter 5 verse 12 and see the very beginning of this sin problem. Now I know, from what I gather from my listening audience and from my own experience that we hardly ever hear anybody talk about sin anymore. Oh, it might disrupt a little bit once in a while, but they won’t call it sin. It’s either the parents’ fault, or it’s the school teacher’s fault, or it’s somebody else’s fault. But they refuse to call it
sin. But Paul has no compunction. Paul, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, calls sin exactly what it is. It is total rebellion against a Holy, Righteous God. But where did it begin? All right, Romans chapter 5 verse 12, “Wherefore.” You want to remember, in these first four and half chapters, this is what he’s been explaining – the human sin problem. Remember, if you go back to chapter 1, he lays out all the ramifications of the immoral individual. Then he goes into chapter 2 and lays out all of the sin problem of a moral person who thinks he’s pretty good. Then he goes one step further in the last part of chapter 2 and on into chapter 3, and he lays out the dilemma of the religious man, which of course in his day was the Jew, and they were just as devoid of spiritual life as the immoral man. So, sin has been the subject of this letter to the Romans for the first four and a half chapters. All right, now he’s telling us where it all began. All right, verse 12.

Romans 5:12a

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world,...” Now, of course, you all know who the one man was. Adam! Now you know, there are those out there that are trying to tell us that there were humans before Adam. Well, if that’s the case, then the Bible falls apart, because everything in the Bible goes back to the creation of Adam and Eve and their fall, which sent the human race under the sin dilemma. All right, this is what the Apostle Paul is showing us. This is where sin and death began – with Adam when he partook of the forbidden tree. So, by one man Adam--

Romans 5:12b

“...sin entered into the world, and death by sin;...” Now, I always have to stop and remind people that sin and death are synonymous. You can’t separate them. Sin and death are as tied together as Siamese Twins, because sin, sooner or later, is going to bring about death. Even in the garden experience, the moment Adam ate of that fruit his spirit died and his physical body began to die, even though it took 930 years before that was consummated. But sin and death, Beloved, are synonymous. You take sin out of the picture and death goes with it. That’s why eternal life, you see, is totally separated from sin and death.

Romans 5:12

“Wherefore, as by man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so (Here’s the result.) death passed upon (How many?) all men, (None excepted, but the Lord Jesus Himself, of course. But every human being that has ever come into the world has come in with a sin nature and death riding with it. There’s no way that you can avoid it.) for that all have sinned:”
Now you remember years back I put on the board, “We’re not sinners because we sin. We sin because we’re born sinners.” It’s there in every human being. You know, I always like to repeat and repeat and repeat, because that’s what my letters tell me to do. I’ve used the example so often of that innocent, little infant that’s born into the home. He is just as sweet and innocent as anything can be. But how long is it until that little infant shows a temper? Not long. We call them temper tantrums. Then you go on a little further and it isn’t long until that little child knows how to lie. No mother or father is going to teach that kid how to lie, it comes naturally. They can lie like a rug! Then, it isn’t long until the language of the neighborhood slips in. Have you ever noticed kids never use bad words in the wrong place? Ever noticed that? Why? Because their old sin nature knows exactly how and where to use them. It goes right on up as we grow up in physical and human life experience; that old sin nature just becomes more and more evident all the time.

I can remember when I was a kid, small enough to still sleep on my Mom and Dad’s laps as they sat together. I didn’t mind staying awake during the song service, but as soon as that preacher got behind the pulpit, you know what this little kid did? I stretched out on Mom and Dad’s laps and went to sleep. Why? I didn’t want to hear what he had to say. I know that was the case. And I couldn’t have been even over three years old. That’s human nature. They rebel at anything that pertains to the truth, and the older people get, the stronger that rebellion gets. But it all began back here with one man – Adam. All right, now let’s move on, verse 13. Now, this is kind of a tough verse to handle, but we’ll face it for a moment.

*Romans 5:13a*

“(For until the law…” Now stop and think. This is what I’m so thrilled about when people are writing, and it’s proving to me that I’m getting through to them. They’re stopping to analyze the Scriptures, which they never did before. All right, how long was it from Adam until Moses was given the Law? Come on you mathematicians, figure up real fast. How long from 4000 BC to 1500 BC? Twenty five hundred years - there was no Law. Now, think about that.

For twenty five hundred years there was no Mosaic Law. So, what held the human race together as much as it did? Now, it was awful. That’s why God destroyed them with the flood. But, what held them together at least for the first 1400-1500 years. Conscience. Now, let me show you that from Scripture. I’ve got to do everything with Scripture. Go back just a couple of pages in Romans to chapter 2. These are concepts of Scripture that the average Christian never even hears about or looks at. But you see, from Adam until Moses was given the Ten Commandments, there was no written Law. There was no formal system of worship. Those people before the flood didn’t have churches or synagogues or temples. No formal system of
worship whatsoever. So, the only thing they had left that held it together a little bit was - here it is in Romans chapter 2 verse 14.

**Romans 2:14**

“For when the Gentiles, (or the non-Jewish world) who have not the law, do by nature (or naturally) the things contained in the law, these, (non-Jewish people) having not the law, are a law unto themselves:” Well, now where does that come from? Next verse, verse 15.

**Romans 2:15a**

“Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their (What’s the next word?) conscience….” Now, you’ve all heard the word since you were little, “let your conscience be your guide.” Well, there’s truth to it. But the problem is, the conscience can be so easily manipulated or seared, so it’s not an all encompassing solution. But nevertheless, this is what mankind started out with. He had the law of God written in his heart by way of conscience, even though it wasn’t on a written page.

**Romans 2:15b**

“…their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts (prompted by conscience) the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another;)” Now, that’s all they had. Consequently, what happened to the human race between Creation and the flood? Well, you all know the picture of humanity before the flood. It was wicked. It was violent. It had no thought of God in them from morning to night. Why? Conscience utterly failed, and so everybody did what they were comfortable in doing.

All right, then came the Law. Now, when Israel received the Law, God laid out explicitly the moral code for human behavior. Now see, here’s where I get a little bit rankled when they get all upset about showing the Ten Commandments as though it is a religious instrument. No, it’s not a religion, per se. It’s God’s moral law for the whole human race. I don’t care whether they’re Muslim or Hindu or whatever. If they basically keep God’s moral law, they’ll have a far better community than they will without it, because God’s law is perfect. No man can keep it, but at least there is enough substance there that it keeps society on track. Because as soon as you have a society, I don’t care what their form of religion is on the door, when you have a society that has no compunction about sexual immorality, there is a breakdown of the home. When you have a society that has no concern about human rights, you lose property rights.
Now, you say, where do you get that? Property isn’t even in the Ten Commandments. Well, where do you pick it up? “Thou shalt not covet.” Now, when you go on into Leviticus, what are the things that people were not to covet? Well, they were not to covet another man’s spouse, but it doesn’t stop there. Neither his maid servant, nor his man servant, nor his donkey, nor this…nor that. So, what does it tell you? That based on God’s Law, there is supposed to be the right to personal property. One of the fundamentals of our Western civilization is property rights. As soon as that’s taken away, our system of government will go down the tube. I don’t care if you only own $100 worth of property, or whether you own millions, the concept is the same. It’s yours. And the Bible stands behind that.

Okay, now come back to Romans chapter 3. The Law was not given or written until Moses, but in that 2500 year period of time God had given man the knowledge, through conscience, of what was right and wrong. But like I said, you can sear conscience. You can manipulate it, so it really doesn’t control. All right, but now God has brought in the written Law. Romans chapter 3 verse 19, verses that we’ve used over and over through the years.

\textit{Romans 3:19a}

“\textit{Now we know} (See? No ifs, ands, or buts about it.) \textit{that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law:}” Now, when I taught Romans, I specified that the Law, in general terms, covered three aspects of Jewish life – the ceremonial or the Temple Worship, or what we would call the ecclesiastical law. What sacrifice to bring and under what circumstances. Then they had the civil law - how to deal with your neighbor, family relationships, and so forth. Then they had the moral law, which was the Ten Commandments. All right, the word law here, as I understand this text, is the moral law, the Ten Commandments.

\textit{Romans 3:19a}

“\textit{Now we know that what things soever the law (Ten Commandments) saith, it saith to them who are under the law:}” Now, if you know anything about Biblical history, there was only one people on earth that were under the Law and who was it? Israel. That’s all. The rest of the Gentile world had no comprehension of keeping the “Law,” per se. All right, so it was given to Israel, right back there at Mount Sinai and Moses, and then pretty soon they put together the priesthood, Aaron and so forth. The law became functional, but only for the Nation of Israel.

Now again, I’m just reminding you of things that sometimes you never even think of. Did God ever tell Israel – go out and bring the Gentiles in so they can be under this Law? No, they were never told to go out and share this with the non-Jewish world,
quite the opposite. They were to keep it meticulously for themselves. They had no commandment to go out and bring the Gentiles under their Law. Okay, now let’s come back to the verse again.

Romans 3:19a

“Now we know that what things so ever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law (The Nation of Israel, but it doesn’t stop there.) that every mouth… (Now, that takes in the whole human race.) That every mouth may be stopped,” Or today, if you want to be rude to somebody, you tell them to what? Shut up. I get a kick out of these coaches when they’re pacing the sideline. I don’t know which ballgame it was. I’ve watched so many lately. But, I remember seeing one of those coaches, and one of the kids was ranting. The coach walked up, and you could read his lips. What was he telling him? Shut up! Shut your mouth.

On the cruise – we had one lady – she’s a character so I knew the way she said it. I said something that, oh, it wasn’t rude, but I said something, you know, to kind of put her down. She just looked at me and she said, “Shut your mouth!” Well, that’s the way we do it. You just simply say you haven’t got an inch of room to stand on. Just shut your mouth.

All right, now this is exactly what this is saying, that God brought the Law to the whole human race to shut their mouths. Well, what do you suppose He’s talking about shutting their mouth about? Well, I don’t need Your Law. I can get along without You, and all the other things that they put with it. God, through the Law, says to just shut your mouth, because the Law is so perfect. It is so Sovereign that not one human being has the right to argue with it.

Romans 3:19b

“…it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world (Not just Israel, but that all the world, the whole human race) may become guilty before God.” Now, that just flies in the face of most of Christendom’s approach to the Ten Commandments, doesn’t it? They never look at it as a guilt thing. But that’s all it is. That’s all the Law was given for; it was to show Israel, first, their sin. Now, when they saw their sin, then what’d they have to do? Then they had to step into the other part of the Law and follow the directions on what sacrifice to bring and how to get right with God, but it had to start with the Law convicting them of sin.

It was the same way, then, with the whole human race. Conscience hadn’t done its job, so now God laid out the written Law on tables of stone to show it’s permanent. It was never given to bring somebody to Heaven. It was never given to bring anyone to
salvation. It was given to convict, and when you convict of sin, like I’ve already said at the beginning of the program, what’s the next step? Death - spiritual and then physical. All right, now let’s go into the next verse, verse 20.

**Romans 3:20a**

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh (nobody) be justified in his sight:…” My, that flies in the face of Christendom, doesn’t it? But by the Law nobody will be justified in His sight. Why? Because the law was not given for salvation.

**Romans 3:20b**

“…for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” I think I may have shared this when I was teaching Romans. I’ll never forget it, quite a few years ago now, more than I like to admit, I was speaking to a men’s breakfast out in one of the eastern states. It was a rather large group sitting around tables, probably forty or fifty men. Amongst that group of men was a young assistant pastor of one of our major denominations. The tables went out this way from me, and I was sitting up here, and he was sitting about over where Iris is. And when I read this verse, without making a single comment, all I did was read it, that young man’s mouth literally dropped. And what’s the first thing I thought? Young man, you didn’t know this was in your Bible, did you? Even as an assistant pastor you could tell that he did not know this was the biblical approach to the Ten Commandments.

“They are ministrations of death,” Paul says in II Corinthians chapter 3, and that shocks people. That’s not the part that they hear. But that’s what the Bible says – it’s a ministration...let me show it to you, otherwise somebody out there in television is going to say, now, where does he get that. II Corinthians 3, now, I certainly didn’t expect or intend to get off on this track. I thought I would be ready for the next But before this half hour was over, but we have to take it as it comes, I guess. II Corinthians chapter 3 and let’s start at verse 5. Now, we’re showing that the Law was a ministration of death, not life.

**II Corinthians 3:5-7a**

“But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones,...”
Now, I’m reminded, I think I used this maybe a couple of programs back. What was engraved in stone? Only one thing in all of Scripture and what was it? The Ten Commandments. So, we know this is what the Apostle is referring to.

*II Corinthians 3:7*

“*But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious,* (In its own time and in its own economy and in the functioning of the Law, of course it was,) *so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:*” When? When the cross satisfied everything that the Law demanded. So, it was done away with.

That’s the one thing that Israel has never been able to comprehend, that the work of the cross has completely done away with the work of the Law. Well, we didn’t get very far in this one, but let’s come back to Romans chapter 5 a minute, in the last minute that’s left, continue on. Romans chapter 5 now verse 14, so from Adam until Moses there was no written law, conscience failed miserably, and now we come to 14.

*Romans 5:14a*

“*Nevertheless death reigned…*” I’m going to use the term that I think William R. Newell used in his commentary on Romans, which I read years and years ago, that “death reigned like a king.” Whenever you use that word *reign* here in these early chapters of Romans, you can just emphasize that, “like a king.”

Now, you know how a king reigns. He reigns with absolute power and authority. All right, now we bring that into this verse, “*death reigned*” over the whole human race. Reigned like a what? Like a king. It was in total control. Death. We all, I think, have a horror for death, because it is that which has just reeked throughout the whole human race - death. And death and sin have always been synonymous.
LES SON ONE * PART II

BUT GOD! (Where Sin Abounded)

Rom. 5:20, Rom. 6:22, I Cor. 1:23, I Cor. 1:27

It’s good to see you all back, and I see you’ve got your coffee cups. We’ll get right back into where we left off in the last program, which is in Romans chapter 5. But first, we want to thank our television audience for all your cards and letters as well as your contributions. My, it just thrills our hearts. As I’ve said over and over through the years, our mail time is the best time of the day. So again, from the depths of our heart we thank you for everything.

We’re going to pick right up where we left off. What we are coming to is “But where sin abounds.” We’re laying the ground work for that – this whole subject of sin that Paul is dealing with in these early chapters of Romans, and what a cancer it has been on the whole human race. Sin, of course, is at the heart of all of humanities’ problems. And in our last program, we saw that sin wasn’t really delineated until God gave it by virtue of the Ten Commandments. That’s where we left off. So, verse 14 is where we ended up.

Romans 5:14

“Nevertheless death reigned (like a king) from Adam to Moses, (Absolutely, even though there was no specific written law, they had it in their conscience, remember.) even over them who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.” Now, all that says is the whole human race didn’t eat of the forbidden tree. That’s obvious. That was merely the step of disobedience that Adam took that plunged the whole human race into sin and every form of sin followed. All right, but Adam’s transgression was “the figure (or an example) of him that was to come.” Now, Paul is introducing us to the whole biblical concept, which is especially in Paul’s epistles, that sin came from one man, and the remedy from sin comes from another man, the man Christ Jesus. All right, now that’s what we’re going to see in the succeeding verses. But, here’s another but. This isn’t the one I started with, but they’re always the flipside.

Romans 5:15a

“But not as the offence, (not like eating of the forbidden tree) so also is the free gift....” Now, in a way, they’re identical, and in a way they’re as separate as daylight and dark. The way that they are identical is that one man plunged the human race into
sin and death, and one Man did something to overcome it. But on the other hand, we have to realize that even though Adam sent every human being into condemnation, Christ has accomplished everything that needs to be done to give salvation, but only those who come in by faith will benefit from it. So, it’s not an automatic universalism - I guess is the word - that the whole human race has been saved through the work of the cross. It is only when they believe it. All right, now let’s just read on, verse 15.

Romans 5:15

“But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one (Adam) many be dead, much more the Grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, (the God man) Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.” So, there is no excuse for a single human being to miss salvation. There is not any lack in what God has done to bring the whole human race to salvation.

In fact, let’s just look at what it says in other portions. II Corinthians chapter 5, because there are those who speak that the work of the cross was only for the believer. Well, that’s not what my Bible says. I don’t like to pick an argument with people, but I do have to point out where I disagree. No, the work of the cross wasn’t limited to the believer. It accomplished everything that needed to be done for every last human being. All right, II Corinthians chapter 5, jump in at verse 14.

II Corinthians 5:14-15

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; (drives us) because we thus judge, (or conclude) that if one died for (How many?) all (not just a few) then were all dead: (Dead spiritually. Well, that’s obvious. But, He did die for every last human being.) 15. And that he died for all, that they which live (as a result of their faith) should not henceforth live unto themselves, (Because they’re no longer under the old sin nature.) but unto him who died for them, and rose again.” So, here’s the whole biblical concept that the work of the cross was sufficient for every human being that ever lived – none excepted. So many come back and water it down and say it was only for those who became believers.

All right, back to Romans chapter 5, remember where we’re heading. We’re heading to that place where we get that profound statement that “where sin abounds, God’s Grace does more abound.” But we’re not there yet. We’re still building up to it, now verse 16.

Romans 5:16a
“And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift:...” Now, that sounds like doubletalk, but what Paul is saying is that as one plunged the human race into death, One gave the offer of salvation as a free gift. Like I said a moment ago, in one respect they are alike, and on the other respect they’re as different as daylight and dark. All right, now read on.

Romans 5:16b

“...for the judgment was by one to condemnation, (Adam, when he sinned, the whole human race went down the tube with him.) but (Here’s a flipside.) the free gift is of many offences (or many sins, but it’s going to lead) to (What?) justification.” Totally acquitted. Made as if we had never sinned. That’s what God does.

Romans 5:17a

“For if by one man’s offence (The act of disobedience when he ate the fruit.) death reigned (And again I’m going to put it in – like a king.) by one;...” Who’s the one? Adam. Because of Adam’s fall, the whole human race came under the subjection and the rule of sin and death. All right, reading on.

Romans 5:17b-18a

“...much more they who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign (Again like a king, but not in death, now what?) in life (Now the believer can have life ruling and reigning like a king, and it was all brought about how?) by one, Jesus Christ.) (Now, here we come - verse 18.) Therefore as by the offence of one (the fall of Adam) judgment came upon all men to condemnation;...” Every human being is going to an eternal doom unless they accept God’s Plan of Salvation.

Romans 5:18b

“...even so by the righteousness of one (Now we’re talking about Christ.) the free gift (without merit - without cost) came upon (How many?) all men (None excepted.) unto justification of life.” Now, I wasn’t going to do this, but it was just coming to mind and you know by now, that when I feel the Spirit leads, we’ve got to go chase it down. Go back with me to John’s Gospel chapter 1, and drop in at verse 9 where we’re talking about John the Baptist, first, but that he was merely the forerunner of Jesus the Christ, who we’re talking about in verse 9. Not John the Baptist, but Christ.

John 1:9-10
“That (Christ) was the true Light, which lighteth (Some of the people? No. How many?) every man that cometh into the world. (Beginning with Cain and Abel and all the way down through human history) 10. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, (He’s the Creator of it.) and the world knew him not.” They rejected him.

All right, now let’s go to another verse that Paul uses. Go all the way back to Titus. We’ve done this before, but I think it’s quite a while ago. Titus chapter 2 verse 11, now this, of course, is Paul writing from his period of time, after 60 AD.

**Titus 2:11**

“For the grace of God, (This message that Christ had now paid the sin debt for every human being.) that bringeth salvation hath appeared to (How many?) all men.” Now, I can’t tell you how that happened. I cannot even begin, no more than I can John 1:9.

How can I explain that Christ as the Light of the world appeared to every human being someway or another? I can’t explain it. But that’s what the Book says. And Paul comes back now and says basically the same thing that, “this saving grace has already appeared unto all men.” Well, if it had appeared in Paul’s day, then I have to sit here and say, it includes us today. There is not a human being slipping out into eternity, even today, who will have an excuse, which brings up the next verse, doesn’t it?

Romans chapter 1, now, these are thought provoking concepts. I know they are. And I certainly do not have all the answers. All I can show is what the Book says. Romans chapter 1, verse 20 and this, again, goes back to what we saw in Romans 5, that from Adam to Moses, even though they didn’t have the Mosaic Law, they were responsible. God had given them conscience. Now look what Romans 1:20 says.

**Romans 1:20**

“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world (That is from Adam.) are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, (or the things of creation) even his eternal power and Godhead; (Who He is) so that (What?) they are without excuse:”

In other words, lost people are going to come up before the Great White Throne and they will not have one word of excuse. They’re going to stand there condemned and guilty and with a closed mouth, because they know they’re guilty. Well, I guess the Lord did say, “And they’ll say in that day, but didn’t we do this and didn’t we do
that,” but basically, they won’t have a word to say, because God has offered salvation as a free gift to the whole human race, none excepted.

Now, I wish I could explain how that all comes about, but I can’t. But God is Sovereign. He’s in total control, and we have to take it on the basis of His Word. All right, back again to Romans chapter 5, if you will. Verse 18 again, I don’t think we can repeat this too much, because even the Scripture itself keeps repeating and repeating. Well, there’s a purpose.

Romans 5:18-19

“Therefore as by the offence of one (Adam’s fall) judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one (the work of the cross, the power of His resurrection) the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. (In other words, like I’ve already said, it is total acquittal.) 19. For as by one man’s disobedience many (or all) were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” Don’t miss the language. The disobedience of Adam is more than compensated for by the obedience of Christ. Not all. But many. Now verse 20. We’re getting close to my beginning.

Romans 5:20a

“Moreover the law entered,…” Now, like we said in the first half hour today. 2,500 years after Adam the Law comes in, the Ten Commandments written on tables of stone.

Romans 5:20

“Moreover the law entered, that the offence (or that sin) might abound.” Not that the Law made people sin more, but the Law made the human race aware of what’s right and wrong. Now, I think I made the comment in our last taping several weeks ago, when I didn’t have a voice. You remember that, don’t you? And how did I put it? Our kids today do not know the difference between right and wrong. I had a letter from some teenagers, clear up in Washington State. And it was a dilemma. Their friends did not see anything wrong with things that are biblically wrong. And they were church people. So, what’s the problem? They’re ignorant of the Word of God. They are ignorant of what’s right and wrong. It is all the way to the top of our corporations. Why all the corruption in high places? They don’t really see that there’s that much wrong with it any more. If you can get away with it, power to you. Buy another yacht, that’s all. But listen, the Law entered to show the human race what is right and what’s wrong. I think I made the comment on a program years ago, that if the human race could keep the Ten Commandments, we could send all our
lawyers home. We could close the courtrooms. There would be no lawbreaking whatsoever.

Why? Because the Ten Commandments so completely covered every facet of the human experience. You know that. There is nothing in the human experience that the Ten Commandments don’t deal with. But see, we’ve shut them out, and, consequently, there is no conscience of right and wrong. But that was the purpose of them. All right, so that’s why the Law came, to show men what’s right and wrong. Now then, reading on, here we come.

*Romans 5:20b*

“In spite of the horrific slide of the human race into gross sin, immorality, corruption, theft, and murder, and while the Law condemns every bit of it, it’s not hopeless. Why?) where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:” Now, do you know what that means? There is not a sinner on this world so vile but that if he will come in simple faith, believing, God’s grace is sufficient to save him.

I debated, as I lay awake a little bit last night, whether I should use this or not, but I think I’m safe, because I think all of us are aware. There is one name in human history that stands above every other name as the epitome of evil and wickedness. Who is it? Hitler. He was the epitome of wickedness and of sinfulness. But, now here’s my point. Had that man, in his bunker, as everything was falling in around him, had that man in contrite faith, come to accept God’s offer of salvation, would God have saved him? Absolutely! And that’s what this verse is showing, that “where sin abounded,” even in the life of a man like Adolf Hitler, God’s grace would have been sufficient to save him. Now, that should stick with you for a while, shouldn’t it? We look at humanity today and we think, oh, there’s no hope. Yes, there is. There’s hope for the vilest sinner.

We’ve had some in our ministry. I don’t even like to share them on the program, but, oh, how they’ll come out of the dregs of sin and become a useful citizen. That’s what God’s saving grace can do. All right, “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” Why? Because Christ’s work of the cross is so much more powerful than the condemnation laid on Adam. No matter how far someone goes into the Adamic curse, or into the Adamic life of sin, God’s work of redemption is still greater.

Now then, for you and I who have not gone to the depths of that and we have been saved by God’s grace, is there any reason for us to doubt. Absolutely none. Because if God can save the worst of sinners, then it’s a settled fact He’s saved us who didn’t go that deep. So, always remember that where sin abounds, the grace of God is always greater. All right, now verse 21.
**Romans 5:21**

“That as sin (that old Adamic force to go disobedient to the things of God) hath reigned (like a king) unto death, (physical, as well as spiritual) even so might grace reign (as king) through righteousness unto eternal life (But, there’s only one way.) by Jesus Christ our Lord.” And that’s the only answer to mankind’s dilemma. It is to put faith in that finished work of the cross.

I can’t comprehend why people oppose my line of teaching. I can’t understand it. I suppose the next guy thinks the same thing of what he’s teaching. But I make it so simple that when Christ finished the work of the cross, everything that God could demand of a human being was consummated there, and all we have to do is take it as a free gift. Why do people rebel at that? And they do. Oh, they don’t like it. And I can’t comprehend it. Now, if I was way out there with some kooky – now, you’ve got to do this and you’ve got to do that, then I could say, well, they can’t comprehend it. But I’m just laying it out here so simple that Christ offered salvation as a free gift because of that death, burial, and resurrection. Why do they hate it so? I can’t comprehend it. I just can’t help saying it over and over.

All right, but now we’ve got to go a little further on this. When the grace of God is abounding on the human race, in spite of their sin, Paul asks a logical question in chapter 6 verse 1.

**Romans 6:1-2**

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in (Or, shall we continue to practice) sin, that grace may abound? (And what’s his answer?) 2. God forbid.” Banish the thought! Don’t even think such a thing that the grace of God is license. You’ve heard me say it on the program over all the years, grace is not license! Grace is not license. Grace doesn’t say, well, don’t worry about it, go ahead and do what you want to do, because God’s grace is going to be greater.

No, that’s not what we mean. We mean that when it comes to that point of salvation, yes, God’s grace is greater than anyone’s sin. But when we’re brought up out of that cesspool of sin, God does not expect us to continue a life of sin with the excuse that His grace will bring us out of it again and again and again. No, that’s not the teaching of Scripture.

All right, so when we come out of that cesspool--verse 2 reading on.

**Romans 6:2b**
“How shall we that are dead to (that life of) sin, (that old Adamic nature) live any longer therein?” Well, that’s a logical question, isn’t it? If you’ve once come out of a horrendous background, should there be any desire to go back to it periodically? Heavens, no! That should be something totally behind us.

I think we can almost – well, I’m not going to. We’re too close to the end of this lesson, so we won’t cover verse 3 right now. All right, jump on over to, still in chapter 6, let’s go to verse 5, because my next one is going to be down in verse 17 for the next program. But for now, to finish this minute that’s left, let’s continue on as the person who has been saved out of a cesspool of sin, where God’s grace abounded. Now then, Paul is explaining how it all took place.

**Romans 6:5**

“For if we have been planted (In other words, in the likeness of His death and His burial and His resurrection) together in the likeness of his death, we (as believers) shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection:”

Okay, now I’ve got time, I think, for one more verse. Find it quickly, Philippians chapter 3. Drop down quickly to verses 20 and 21. This all becomes a reality, now, because of our believing the Gospel of salvation.

**Philippians 3:20-21**

“For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: (Now, here it comes.) 21. Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.”
LESSON ONE * PART III

BUT GOD! (Where Sin Abounded)

Rom. 5:20, Rom. 6:22, I Cor. 1:23, I Cor. 1:27

Again, we want to remind our television audience that we are just a simple Bible teaching program. We don’t try to attack anybody. I don’t try to move people from one thing to another, but we’re so thrilled that folks are writing and responding that they are learning to study their Bible. I had one young man, maybe I shared it on a previous program, I hope I didn’t, but anyhow, he called and he said, “Les, I’ve been in church all my life,” he wasn’t very old – 26. But he said “I always sit there with my arms crossed.” Now, I could just picture these things, I hope you can.

He said, “I sit there with my arms crossed and whatever came across that pulpit that was God’s truth.” “But,” he said, “I started listening to you on the radio going back and forth to work,” in one of the Eastern states, and he said, “I was hearing things that I had never heard before. So,” he said, “I decided to check it out and read my own Bible.” He said, “I suddenly realized that what was coming off the pulpit wasn’t in the Bible at all.” He said, “I’m now thinking about leaving that particular thing, because,” he said, “They’re not teaching what the Bible says. They’re teaching what some man thinks.”

Well, this is what we love to hear. Not that we want to take people out of their particular church, that’s not the idea, but to be able to know that this is what the Book says and not what some denomination says. You know, I got away from that, thank God, when they asked me to come out of my own umbrella denomination and teach in home Bible studies where I had all these different denominations bombarding me with questions that in a denominational setting I’d never heard. Nobody ever asked. So, I’ve learned. My goodness, don’t just sit there smug and think well, this is what my church says. Get into the Book. Don’t go by what I say. Get into the Book!

We’re back in Romans chapter 6, and we’re still on “But Now’s” or “But God” or “But…” whatever, to show how you can take the Scripture and read up to a point where all of a sudden everything is different. That reminds me of another verse. Go to Philippians before we even start Romans. This is a good one, I just can’t help it. This is my way of teaching. Philippians chapter 1 and look at verse 10. Here Paul is writing this letter of commendation. Not condemnation. I can’t find a single word in the Philippian letter where he is admonishing them or condemning them, but it is all commendation. Now, look what he says in verse 10. Well, let’s start at verse 8.
Philippians 1:8-10a

“For God is my record, (the Apostle writes) how greatly I long after you all in the bowels (or in the very most inner most being) of Jesus Christ. 9. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; (or discernment. Now, verse 10) That ye may approve things that are excellent;...” But you know how that Greek word translated here ‘excellent’ is translated in many other places? ‘Different.’ Now stop and think about what Paul says, “That you may approve things that are different.”

How different? My, it is the difference between Law and Grace. And even for church people today, if they could just get into the Book and see things that are not just according to their denominational dogma, but things that are different. I wasn’t going to mention it, but sometimes I can’t help it. I get ahead of myself. A guy called last night all excited that he was reading a book, I think it was by Martin Luther, it was one of the Reformers, and it was right in the middle of a football game, so he probably didn’t have my full attention.

But anyway he said, “Les, I’m just reading something,” he said, “It is as if you wrote it yourself. But you know what’s so unique about it? It was quoted by an anonymous writer who was writing in 1069 BC. Now, that’s 400 years before the reformation started.” And I’m waiting. He’s going to mail me a copy of it. And he said, “Les, you could have written it yourself.” Now, I’m waiting to see what it is. If it is, I just may bring it along to the next taping and share it at least with the studio audience, if not with the television.

But see, this is nothing new – what I’m teaching – but it’s different. It’s not according to the denominational dogma of Christ’s earthly ministry and under the Law and all the legalism associated. This is totally different. You’re not under Law, you’re under grace. That’s one of the verses that we’re going to read. All right, are you in Romans chapter 6? Now, the verses we’re going to look at to find the “But Now” will be way down in verse 22. I’m not going to start there, but that’s what I’m heading for.

Romans 6:22

“But now, (Oh, what does that mean? That it’s a total difference from what went before.) being made free from sin, (or the old Adamic nature) and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end (And that’s the most important.) eternal life.” Because see, this is what we’ve got to make people aware of, there’s an eternity out there. There’s an eternity that people are going to spend one way or another. And how much better to have eternal life as to have eternal doom? But
here’s the “But” that we’re reading toward when we go all the way back to verse 14 and build up to it. It may take two more programs. I don’t know.

Romans 6:14

“For sin (That’s the other word for the old Adamic nature.) shall not have dominion (or control or rule) over you: (Why not?) for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” Now, you’ve heard me teach this for as many years as I’ve been around – that we’re not under Law, we’re under grace. Two totally different economies. All right, let’s go on.

Romans 6:15a

“What then? shall we sin, (Now of course it’s a verb tense - shall we just go ahead and be a lawbreaker...) because we are not under the Law, but under grace?” See, that’s the argument all through these early chapters. Listen, just because you’re saved by grace doesn’t mean you now have license to sin. Quite the opposite. We are under more stringent guidelines as a believer than the unbeliever is under his ungodly lifestyle.

Because see, I think I put it on the program years and years ago. We have two fence lines that kind of keep us hedged in. And they’re all based on love. The first side of our alleyway, if I can use a farmer’s language or a rancher’s language, the one side of our alleyway is the love of God and the love for God. What’s the other side? The love for others.

And that’s what salvation brings about. Salvation makes us a different kind of a person. We’re based on love, which is the very epitome of the work of the cross. So, we’re hemmed in on this side by our love for God and our wanting to be obedient to His precepts, and we’re also hemmed in by our love for others. That’s the whole idea of loving your neighbor as yourself. You’re not going to do to your neighbor what you wouldn’t want done to you. Well, then our love for God is prompted because of how He loved us. Look at it again.

Romans 6:16

“What then? shall we (continue to) sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? (Well, again, the answer is the same.) God forbid. 16. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants (or slaves) to obey, his servant ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” In other words, we’re going to be a servant of one master or the other. We’re either going to be servant of sin and live the sinful lifestyle of the world, or we’re going to be the servant
of God and His righteousness and live accordingly. Now verse 17, here’s another “but.”

**Romans 6:17**

“But God be thanked, (Don’t thank yourself. Don’t thank some church or denomination or me. We thank God.) that ye were (past tense) the servants of sin, (of the old nature) but (the flipside of that) ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you.” What did I say in the first program? Romans is a book of what? Doctrine.

It’s not just a historical record like Acts primarily is. Romans is doctrinal. Well, what do you suppose the doctrine is that Paul is referring to? The Gospel of the grace of God. And what’s the Gospel of the grace of God? That “Christ died for you and He was buried and He rose from dead in power and glory” and He’s ready to impart eternal life when you believe it, plus nothing. Plus nothing! Because He’s done it all. Now verse 18.

**Romans 6:18**

“Being then made free from sin, (and the old Adam’s power) ye became the servants (or the slave) of righteousness.” Two totally different lifestyles. You can’t mix them. It just won’t work. You can’t amalgamate unrighteousness with righteousness. You’ve got a bad mix. It won’t fly. So, it’s one or the other. Now, verse 19:

**Romans 6:19a**

“I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh:…” Now, what’s Paul saying there? I’m coming down to your level. I’m going to talk language that you as ordinary human beings can understand. And of course, this is a Roman church over there in Italy, far removed. Paul, I don’t think ever got there until he was there in prison. But nevertheless, he writes to these people, and he’s going to bring his language down to their level.

**Romans 6:19b**

“…for as ye have yielded your members servants (or slaves) to uncleanness and to iniquity;…” Now, you remember what I said during the opening remarks at the first program this afternoon? What was the moral climate of the Roman Empire? Rotten to the core. We were just over in the Aegean Sea area a few weeks ago. And the guides like to show you, don’t they Bill? They like to show you the directions to the houses
of immorality, because that was all part and parcel of the Roman existence. It was
everyday life in their worship of the gods and goddesses and all of its attendant gross
immorality. It was an every day occurrence. And it was into that kind of a lifestyle that
Paul brings the Gospel of Salvation. All right, that’s what he’s talking about. Verse
19 again:

Romans 6:19

“I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: (I’m going
to come down, and I’m going to talk your language.) for as ye have yielded your
members (in other words, their physical bodies - you have yielded your physical
bodies...) servants to uncleanness and to iniquity; (That’s all they knew.) even so now
yield your members (Just as stringently to the other side of the coin, and what is
it? Instead of living for the debauchery of the flesh, now live to the glory of God. Two
totally different lifestyles) servants to righteousness unto holiness. 20 For when ye
were (in their past life) the servants of sin, (That’s all they could think about, that’s all
they could live for.) ye were free from righteousness.” Hey, good thoughts, good
deeds never entered their thinking. It wasn’t part of their life. I could say more, but I
won’t.

Romans 6:21a

“What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?” Now, doesn’t
that tell you? They didn’t even want to think about that past life, because it was so
rotten. It was so filthy morally that they wanted to put it out of their mind. All right,
so Paul is recognizing that.

Romans 6:21b-22

“...for the end of those things (The end of that kind of a lifestyle was not just physical
death, but what?) is death. (Eternal doom. And here’s my “But” for this lesson.) 22. But
now (Oh, the flipside. Coming out of a life of degradation and ungodliness and no
concept of God and eternity--) But now being made free from sin, and become
servants to God, (Now, look at the whole difference in that lifestyle.) ye have your fruit
unto holiness, (But the most important part of all was what?) and the end everlasting
life.”

Now, never forget it. My, we don’t hear it anymore. But for the believer, yes, it’s
everlasting bliss. It’s everlasting glory. It’s everlasting life. And everlasting is just
what it means. It’s from now until no end of time. But, for the unbeliever, eternity is
just as long. It’s just as endless. And it’s going to be total regret from start to finish,
because they’re all going to have the same thought – I didn’t have to come here. I could
have escaped this. But they didn’t want to. All right, so this is what Paul is driving home, that “But now” on this side of our salvation experience, this whole new life.

Well, let’s see, we’ve got time. Jump over to Galatians. These are verses we have all been through so often. But, I can’t beg for forgiveness for repeating, these things need repeating. Galatians chapter 5 and this is as good a place as I can think of in all of Scripture that shows one side of the coin compared to the other side, the flipside. All right, Galatians 5 starting at verse 19, this is the sinful side of the coin. This is the man living as a servant of the old Adam.

*Galatians 5:19-20*

“Now the works of the flesh (that’s another word for the Old Adam) are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, (Now you see, they’re not the same. A lot of people think fornication means adultery. No, it doesn’t.) uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20. Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,” Not a very pretty picture is it? As I’ve said before, would you like to live in a community where this is common day practice? It’d be awful! Then you’re right back in the Roman Empire. This is what they were.

*Galatians 5:21*

“Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” They’re not going to be in Heaven. They’re going the other way.

All right, now here’s the flipside. This is exactly what we’re talking about up here in Romans with the “But now.” Verse 22

*Galatians 5:22-23*

“But (the flipside) the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23. Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” Why? Because they’re what you could hope for. My, to live in a community, as I’ve said before, where this is 99% of the daily practice, why, it’d be heaven on earth, wouldn’t it? Sure it would. It’s not going to happen. But for the individual believer, this is where we have to see the difference.

Okay, now let’s come back to Romans chapter 6 once again, verse 23. After the “But now” that we reached in verse 23, this is the frosting on the cake.
 Romans 6:23a

“For the wages of sin is death;…” Now, take that slowly. What are wages? What you work for. It’s what you expend energy for. All right so, the wages of living the sinful lifestyle is going to pay off. It’s going to pay in full with what? Death. Hell. Spiritual death as well as physical. That’s the wages of the ungodly lifestyle that he’s been talking about. But now look at the flipside?

 Romans 6:23b

“...but the gift of God (That which God has offered freely, without cost, to the whole human race, if they’ll take it.) is eternal life (not doom) through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Eternal life! You know, I guess the Bible has purposely not given us the description of Heaven and eternal life. You know that?

I’ve said it so many times before, there is nothing in Scripture to give us any clue as to what we’re going to be doing or how we’re going to be doing it throughout all eternity. All I ever tell people is that I know one thing, it’s going to glorious! But how and where and whatever, no, it doesn’t tell us. You know why? In the first place, it could never be put it into words that you and I as humans could understand. I don’t think there is any way of explaining the glory that’s awaiting the believer in words that we can understand. So, God, in so many words, says I won’t even try. We’re just going to have to wait until we get there. But this much we know, we’re going to have “eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Well, we’ve got five more minutes. If we don’t finish the next one in this half-hour, we’ll just carry it over into the next one. Let’s go all the way up to I Corinthians now, and we’ll get out of Romans for a little bit. Corinthians, you remember, is a letter written to a church that had a lot of problems. I’m going to take us to I Corinthians chapter 1. Oh, goodness, I’ve got so many in this one. I don’t hardly know where to go. Verse 23 will be our “But.” Verse 23, got it?

I Corinthians 1:23-24

“But (Paul writes by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.) we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, unto the Greeks (That is the intellectual philosophers of the day.) foolishness; 24. But unto them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, (the believing element of Jews and Greeks) Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”

All right, now, again, we’re going to come to this from further back and build up to it and see how this becomes another big flipside, or other side of the coin. All right, let’s
go all the way back to verse 17. We’re going to build up to this “But we preach Christ crucified.” Now, a lot of people would like to say but we preach baptism. Now, I’m going to make people smile. Way back in the beginning of this TV series and that’s quite a few years ago now, you know – 15? 14? It wasn’t long after I started that I made the comment that my experience amongst Christian people is that there’s one word in Scripture that can set people at odds with one another, can raise the hair on the back of their neck faster than any other word in Scripture. And what is it? Baptism. Because you know, so many people have got different concepts, different practices, and if you disagree with their particular take on baptism, boy, you’ve got an enemy instead of a friend.

Well, I’m not going to do this purposely to raise the hair on people’s necks, but all I want to do is show, again, how Paul is putting the emphasis where it really belongs. So much of Christendom has put it in the wrong place. And I say it kindly. All right, we’re going to start here in verse 17, we’ve only got three minutes left, where he says:

*I Corinthians 1:17a*

“For Christ sent me not to baptize,…” Now again, I’m going to pick your brain a little bit. Not only you in the audience, but everybody out there in television. Why did John the Baptist come to the Nation of Israel? What was his number one priority? He was to do what? To baptize, the baptism of repentance is what it’s called in the Book of Acts, and to prepare the Nation of Israel for the coming of their Messiah. So, he preached a baptism of repentance, which was part of the Gospel of the Kingdom, not the Gospel of Grace that we’re in today.

All right, now it’s that baptism, then, that carries on through Christ’s earthly ministry and on into the Book of Acts, and this is what Paul is jumping up against. He did not come, like John the Baptist did, with a baptism of repentance. Paul is making it so clear. Now, let’s finish this verse before the time is up,

*I Corinthians 1:17-18a*

“For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. 18. For the preaching of the cross (not the preaching of John’s baptism) is to them that perish (That is to lost humanity. So, as far as they are concerned, it’s a bunch of-) foolishness;” That one man, 2,000 years ago, should die? Whoever heard of such a thing? It doesn’t make a bit of sense to the unbeliever, so it’s foolishness. But don’t stop there.

*I Corinthians 1:18b*
“...but unto us who are saved” (Now the preaching of the cross is what? It’s--) *it is the power of God.*” How much power in baptismal water? None. I don’t care what denomination you’re from. But the preaching of the cross includes Divine power. And you’ve heard me say it on this program a hundred times. It took more power of God’s power to set this sinner free from the chains of Satan and sin, than to create the universe. Now, that’s a stretch, but I’m making my point. Without that redeeming power of the Gospel of Salvation, you and I would still be in Satan’s chains. And that’s where it’s at.
Okay, we’re still on the “But Now’s, But God, But – whatever.” In our last program, we just got started with the next one that we want to look at. It’s in I Corinthians chapter 1 and I’m heading down to verse 23 where Paul said, “But we preach Christ crucified.” You know, this is the thing that I cannot comprehend, and I still run into it all the time. Why do people detest Paul and his epistles? And if they don’t detest him, they at least ignore him. Why? In fact, we were just talking about it at break time. Why is Christendom so adamantly against Paul’s gospel of salvation? Paul isn’t elevating himself. He’s lifting up the crucified and resurrected Christ. I just can’t comprehend it. But it’s evident almost everywhere we go.

All right, back to I Corinthians chapter 1 and we might as well retrace our steps in the closing minute of our last program. Let’s go down to verse 17 where, contrary to John the Baptist who was sent to baptize the Jews with “the baptism of repentance,” Paul goes on the other side of the coin and says:

**I Corinthians 1:17a**

“For Christ (Not some man, not some organization, but Christ Himself) sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel:…” Now, isn’t that simple? To preach the gospel of salvation, and that’s all it takes. Because when the gospel of salvation that Paul preached takes a hold of people, it transforms lives. All right, so he was sent to--

**I Corinthians 1:17b**

“…preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words,…” Not as a showoff order, not as a pulpit pounding preacher. I think Paul simply laid out the truth in language that anyone could understand. In fact, on our Aegean cruise, Bill, didn’t you appreciate when the fellow dramatized Paul? I was really impressed with the young man. He was dressed as Paul probably was dressed and believe it or not, in one of his dissertations, he quoted almost, not quite, but almost verbatim all of I and II Timothy. It was like a sermon. I mean, I just soaked it up.

Well, same way here. I don’t think Paul ranted and raved at people. I don’t think he tried to show his intelligence. He didn’t try to show people how much more intellectual capacity he had. He simply got down on the ordinary man’s level and preached the
gospel that “Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again.” All right, now let’s read on. Verse 18, this is why he preached the gospel.

I Corinthians 1:18

“For the preaching of the cross (the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ) is to them that perish (the lost world, it’s a bunch of) foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God.” And as I mentioned in my closing remarks in the last half-hour, the power that it took to save every one of us in this room; the power that it took to save all of you out there in television; it was a power exhibition. How all of the forces of sin and death and Satan were broken when He brought us into salvation. All right, now let’s read on in verse 19.

I Corinthians 1:19-20

“For it is written, (Now, he goes back to the Old Testament.) I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. 20. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world?  Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?”

Now again, Bill, I’m picking on him because I know he was along on the cruise with us. You remember at Mars Hill, Bill, there was only one big bronze plaque, and it wasn’t to any of the Athenian philosophers. It wasn’t to Archimedes. It wasn’t to Homer. It wasn’t to any of the others. Who was it to? Paul. Here’s this brass plaque commemorating that it was on this Mars Hill where the Apostle Paul confronted the intellectuals of his day. Whenever you read these verses, this is what you have to understand. All of the intellectual big-wigs of Athens came to nothing. They aren’t even remembered by the secular world for tourist’s sake on Mars Hill. But here’s this bronze plaque commemorating the Apostle Paul. This is exactly what I think he’s referring to.

I Corinthians 1:21a

“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God,” Now, I’ve got to think. Let’s go back to Romans, and I think it’s in chapter 1. Romans chapter 1 verses 21 and 22. Now, don’t get me wrong. I don’t ridicule educated people. That’s not the point. The only time I make it a point of ridicule, is when they think their education is superior to the Word of God.

Yes, then I ridicule it, because they don’t know what they’re doing. And that’s what Paul is referring to. How the philosophers that he confronted on Mars Hill were so arrogant that they looked down at the little Apostle who was God’s instrument for that
day and what did they call him? A babbler. Today, we’d almost say “somebody who wasn’t all there.” That’s how they looked down at him. All right, but look what the Apostle is led to write.

**Romans 1:21-22**

“Because that, when they knew God, (In other words, conscience had made the presence of God known to them.) they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. (Now look at it.) 22. Professing themselves to be wise, they became (What?) fools.” Fools. Why? Because they’re putting the intellectual things of this world above the things of the Creator Himself. And listen, they’re just as guilty today as they were in Paul’s day, or in the days of the flood, or as far back as you want to go. All right, back to I Corinthians, again, chapter 1 verse 21.

**I Corinthians 1:21**

“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, (Because they got puffed up in their own self importance.) it pleased God by the foolishness (That is in the eyes of the world.) ofpreaching (or proclaiming the Gospel) to save them that believe.” And again, like I did in the last taping, can you add anything in there?

Is there anything else in there? Does it say to them that believe and are baptized? No. Does it say to them that believe and join the church? No. Believe and whatever else you can think of? No. It’s not there. And I use the example of plain arithmetic. If you’ve got a one digit number, we’ll say five (5), and you put a plus zero (0), what’s the answer? It’s still five. That’s plain arithmetic. Five plus nothing is five. The gospel of salvation plus nothing is still the gospel! You can’t add anything to it. Reading on in verse 22.

**I Corinthians 1:22a**

“For the Jews require a sign,...” Now, think about that for a moment? When did signs become a part of the spiritual life of Israel? When? Way down in Egypt! Now, think a minute. What kind of signs did God use for the Jews in Egypt? Well, you remember when Moses came and had to prove that he was God’s messenger, what did he do? He threw the rod on the ground, and it became a serpent. He put his hand in his breast, and it became leprous. He put it back in and took it out and it was perfectly whole. Now, what were those? Those were signs to prove that Moses was God’s instrument.
All right, they came to the Red Sea. What happened? It opened up by the power of God. What was it? It was a sign to Israel that they were now under the power and control of the Creator. So, all the way up through Israel’s history, it’s the revelation of the power of God through miraculous signs and wonders. But, it hit a crescendo, when? When Jesus began His earthly ministry. The very first miracle, what was it? Transforming water into the best wine that they had ever seen, heard of, or tasted. For what purpose? Again, just like with Moses, to prove to Israel who He was. So, the Jews were just saturated with that concept, you’ve got to show me a miracle or I can’t believe. Well, God did, over and over and over and over. All right, so now Paul is rehearsing that. “The Jews require a sign.” Those are not empty words. It was a fact of life. They did. But, now look at the next part of the verse.

I Corinthians 1:22b

“…and the Greeks (Gentiles, they don’t look for miracles, they’re all hung up on what?) they seek after wisdom.” Philosophy. Now again, I’ll take you, in your mind, back to Paul in Athens. My, it tells you as plain as day that those philosophers gather up there on Mars Hill, overlooking the city of Athens, for one purpose. What was it? To tell anything new that they had heard or seen that would add to their wisdom. That’s all they were concerned about – wisdom. Earthly wisdom. Man’s wisdom.

All right, so you’ve got the two concepts now. Israel is constantly looking for a sign or a miracle to prove God’s existence or His presence. On the other hand, the pagan Gentile was looking for wisdom. Got the picture. All right, now we’re ready to go on, verse 23.

I Corinthians 1:23a

“But (Paul says we don’t pay any mind to either one of them. We’re not here proclaiming miracles and signs and wonders. We’re not here proclaiming our intelligence in the affairs of humanity.) we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews (Who are looking for a miracle, he became what?) a stumbling block,…” A stumbling block.

Now remember, the Scripture also refers to Christ as the chief cornerstone. The analogy is that as the builders were building the Temple and the cornerstone came in – I’ve got to watch my grammar, I’ve got English professors watching me – as they saw these stones come in, here came one they didn’t know what to do with. So, what did they do with it? They cast it aside. Well, the symbolism was that when Christ, who is symbolically the chief cornerstone, when He came, they cast Him aside in the same
way. They didn’t know what to do with Him. They cast Him aside, and He became a what? “A stumbling stone.” Okay, that’s all the analogy that’s brought in here?

I Corinthians 1:23

“But we preach Christ crucified, (buried and risen from the dead) unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness;” They stumbled over who He really was. The Greeks look at the preaching of the cross as a bunch of what? Foolishness. Now, do you see the two different concepts? The Jews looked at Christ crucified as a stumbling block, something cast aside for which they didn’t know how to use or wear. The Gentile, on the other hand, cast it aside because it was just a bunch of foolishness. It didn’t fit their philosophy. Oh, but now I love the next verse. Here’s the frosting on the cake, if I may use that expression.

I Corinthians 1:24

“But unto them who are called, (that is into salvation, the believers) both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God,….” Now, the power is a reference to the what? The miracles. Now, I’ve got to take this slowly, or you’re going to miss it. Christ, as the power of God, was evidenced in Israel’s miracles. The greatest one, I think, was the Red Sea. What a miracle that the Red Sea opened up wide enough for the children of Israel to come through in a matter of hours. Water piled up miles down this way and miles up this way. What a miracle! The power of God! But now look, as a believer, you have that same power! It’s within us. And it’s going to culminate in eternal life in His presence for eternity. All right, now look at the other side of the coin.

I Corinthians 1:24b

“…both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” To us, Christ is the power of God. He’s the miracle working God, but He’s also what the intellectual was looking for, and that was what? Wisdom. Now, turn with me to II Peter. I wanted to get there all afternoon, and here’s my opening. II Peter chapter 3, now we’ve used these verses over and over. Primarily I use them to confirm Paul’s authority as an apostle of the Gentiles, and that not just part of his writing, but every last word of it is Scripture. And we know from other portions of Scripture that Scripture is inspired of God. So, when Paul says something like “my gospel,” was that his idea? No. That’s expressly what the Holy Spirit wanted him to say.

Turn to II Peter 3 verses 15 and 16. Now, this is Peter writing at the end of his life. He’s probably martyred in a matter of weeks or days after he finishes this letter. I think I mentioned in one of my recent programs, have you ever stopped to think, and I’m going to keep reminding people, I tell them on the phone over and over – have you ever
stopped to think that everything that needed to be done before the temple would be
destroyed was accomplished within a year or two of the temple destruction. Just think
about that.

These little epistles at the end, I mean II Timothy and II Peter, were written just before
Paul was martyred and just before Peter was martyred, which was probably about 68 or
69 AD. When was the temple destroyed? - 70AD - If you really think about that,
everything was now in place for the removal of the temple and all the ramifications of
the Law and Judaism and what Israel lived for. But before it disappeared, everything
was in place. Okay, now Peter writes, again probably just a year or two before the
temple is destroyed, and look what he says in verse 15.

*II Peter 3:15a*

“*And account (or understand) that the longsuffering (the patience) of our Lord is salvation;…*” Well, that’s what we’ve been talking about all afternoon. How Paul is
showing how God wants all to be saved. He didn’t just die for a few, He died for
all. Okay, so His patience is salvation. Now watch it.

*II Peter 3:15b*

“…*even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him* (What? This is what
brought me here. What’s the word?) *wisdom* (Not men’s wisdom. Not his rabbinical
education. But those revelations from the ascended Lord and his inspired writings in
his epistles and then people scorn it? I feel for them. My, I’d hate to be in their shoes
at the judgment seat. But here it is. Peter says you go to our beloved brother
Paul.) *according to the wisdom given unto him* (Well, from whom? From the
Ascended Lord.) *hath written unto you;*”

Now, Peter is writing to Jews, and if he’s referring to a letter that Paul had written to
them, then that tells me Paul wrote Hebrews, even though there are a lot of arguments
otherwise. I say, hey, Scripture says Paul wrote it, because there is no evidence of any
other writing. So, he must be referring to the Book of Hebrews. All right, so he
says, “*According to the wisdom given unto him, he has written unto you.*” Now, look
at verse 16. For you out there that may have some friends that detest Paul and think he
shouldn’t even be in our Bible, show them this verse.

*II Peter 3:16a*

“*As also in all his epistles, (That’s Romans through Philemon.) speaking in them of these things; (Salvation - as we’ve been seeing all afternoon.) in which (That is Paul’s epistles now.) are some things hard to be understood, (Peter had a hard time
comprehending the grace of God for, especially, Gentiles.) which they who are unlearned and unstable wrest (twist),…” And I’m even going to say, they go further than that. They reject it.

II Peter 3:16b

“…they who are unlearned and unstable twist, as they do also the other scriptures,…”

Now, what does that tell you? That Paul’s epistles are Scripture, just like all the rest of the Bible. Don’t ever let anyone say it shouldn’t be in our Bible, because Peter says everything that Paul wrote is Scripture. That’s where I adamantly stand.

II Peter 3:16c

“…they twist, as they do also the other scriptures, (But when they do, what’s their end result?) unto their own destruction.” They’d better wake up before it’s too late. Okay, let’s come back to I Corinthians again, verse 24. I haven’t gotten down to the one I wanted. I want to do that before we close.

I Corinthians 1:24b-26

“But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. 25. Because the foolishness of God (So far as man is concerned.) is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, (Not the high IQ’s of 200 plus. They’re very rarely called.) not many mighty, (That’s why you don’t find royalty in the ministry very often, do you? Of course not. That’s beneath them.) not many noble, are called: They’re not the kind that God calls, but here it comes now.

I Corinthians 1:27

“But God (Who deals in areas totally different than humans do) hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;” Do you see what that’s saying? I don’t have to comment on it. All I have to do is read it to you. “But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world.” The things that the world ridicules, that’s what God uses. And what does he use them for? To confound those who are ridiculing it. That’s what it amounts to. Only God can do that. Then he goes on to say, “He’s chosen the weak things.” He doesn’t use military might. He doesn’t use political parties. He doesn’t use great outpourings of earthly power. He uses the weak things.
You know, even his twelve disciples, if you like to go back to His earthly ministry, did He go into the Temple and pick out twelve of the strongest and mightiest priests in the priesthood? No. He goes up to Galilee and chooses twelve common fishermen, and so forth, who probably barely had enough education to read. They didn’t go through colleges in those days if they were fisherman. But see, that’s where the Lord chose even the Twelve. In fact, Paul is probably the exception. He was an educated man. He sat at the feet of Gamaliel, one of the chief rabbis of Israel. But all the rest of God’s servants were common, ordinary people. It was that that He used to confound the wise. All right, let’s read on. He just keeps multiplying this whole concept.

I Corinthians 1:28

“And (He takes) the base things of the world, (The things that the world won’t even give a second look.) and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are:” Oh, I know we don’t see it that way. It doesn’t look like Christianity is making any impact on the world, and we’re not. But on the other hand, when a true believer enters into this, he knows what Paul’s talking about. The true believer has an understanding of Scripture that the intellectuals of this world will never understand. All right, why has God chosen to do it in this particular way? The next verse gives the answer.

I Corinthians 1:29

“That no flesh (that no individual) should glory in God’s presence.” So, God uses the humble things of this world so that you and I can never exalt what we’re doing before God. Never. We are just fortunate to be the clay in the Master’s hand, and that’s all we are. But don’t ever forget what the Master can do with the clay.
LESSON TWO * PART I

BUT GOD! (Gave the Increase)

I Corinthians 3:7 and Other Pertinent Scriptures

Good to see everybody in again this afternoon. For those of you out in television, we’ve got these folks in for four programs this afternoon. As we welcome these here in the studio, we also welcome all of you out in television, wherever you are, whether it’s morning or evening or any other time of the day. And for those of you that may be new to this program, we’re just a simple Bible study. We’re not trying to twist arms. I don’t try to move people from one situation to another. We just want to teach the Word of God, to teach what It says and what It doesn’t say!

You know, one of the biggest improvements in my own understanding of Scripture came when I’d been here in Oklahoma for a few years. A gentleman who was in my class almost wherever I was, all the nights of the week, came up to me and he said, “Les, you’re always telling us that it’s just as important to see what’s not in the Scripture as what is.” I said, “Yeah, of course.” He said, “Well, I can’t find one word of church or Body of Christ language in the first eight chapters of Acts.” And I said, “What?” He said, “It’s not in there. Everything is Jewish.”

Well, that’s how I learn from my students. I got home that night and I searched the Scriptures until probably one o’clock in the morning, and all I could see was – that guy’s right! It’s just as important to see what’s NOT there. There is no word of church language in those first eight chapters. It’s still the extension of Christ’s earthly ministry. That’s a class all on its own, and I didn’t intend to do that. That just comes free for nothing! But, anyway, this is the way we teach. We’re going to point out what the Scripture says, and we’re also going to point out what It doesn’t say. I think this is imperative.

Now, before we even get started, you know so often I refer to a statement by an old Bible theologian way back in the 1500’s. This time, I decided I’m just going to put it on the screen so you can see the whole print of it. We switched it from the old English, changed the thee’s and the thou’s and ye’s to you and yours. Nevertheless, I’m going to have the camera on it. There it is right there, the statement by Coverdale that, “It shall help you to understand Scripture if you mark not only what is spoken, or written, but ask yourself of whom, to whom, with what words, what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstances, considering what goes before and what follows.”
Now, if you’ll do that in your Bible Study, you’ll be amazed at what a difference it makes. I’ve already alluded to it – the first eight chapters of Acts are all written to Israel. The language is plain – “Ye men of Israel.” In chapter 4, verse 1 it says “Peter and John went up to the Temple, because it was the hour of prayer.” Well, that’s not church language, but it fit for those folks that were associated with Israel. So, always remember that this is the whole idea of dispensational teaching.

Now there again, that makes me think of something else. I walked into one of my classes in Oklahoma quite some time ago and I was shaking hands with the folks. One of the guys looked me straight in the eye and said, “Les, what’s a dispensationalist?” I said, “Well, you’re looking at one.” He was kind of dumbfounded. He said, “What does that mean?” I said, “I’m a dispensationalist. I make no apology for it.” He said, “Well, what does that mean?” The quote just said it. When you study Scripture, to whom is it written? Is it written to Israel, or is it written to the Gentile church? Who’s writing? Is it an Old Testament prophet, or is it the Apostle Paul? What are the circumstances? All these things - that’s what you do when you separate the Scriptures or rightly divide them as Paul says.

That’s what makes Bible study simple, understandable, exciting, and all the rest that goes with it. But most of Christendom is just feeding off of a jumbled-up mixture. You’ve heard me use the illustration over and over through the years of a young man that came up and said, “Well, they put it in a blender and turn it up on high and ladle it out to me and wonder why I get sick to my stomach.” Well, that’s exactly what’s happening.

I had a letter again yesterday, all mixed up, and I just pitched it in the wastebasket. I had a notion to write back and say you’re best blender I’ve ever seen, yet. But, that’s what they do. They mix everything up, and everybody’s in total confusion. So, the Bible goes back up on the bookshelf and collects dust, because after all, who can understand it? But here we are; we’re rightly dividing. We’re separating it. We’ve been doing that now for the last 15 years, and they haven’t kicked me off the air yet! We hope they won’t.

Okay, now we’re going to continue on with our series of “But God” or “But Whom” or “But When.” Today we’re going to jump in at I Corinthians chapter 3. Verse 7 is the “But God” that I’m going to head for. But, like we’ve done all the other times, we’ll go back and read what goes before. But first read verse 7.

I Corinthians 3:7

“So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; (What are the next two words?) but God that giveth the increase.” What does that mean? No matter
what we as human instruments do, it counts for nothing until God steps in. And He
does! Every one of you here that are a believer, you know that’s what happened. God
stepped in, and He opened your understanding, and it all made sense.

Except for rare exceptions, now I know there are a few. There are a few who claim to
have been saved without an intermediary, by just simply reading the Bible on their
own. I get quite a few who find salvation in one program! Now, that seems
unbelievable, but we get phone call after phone call, “Les, just found your program, and
I’ve been a devout this or whatever the case may be and by the end of the program God
opened my eyes, and I became a believer.” Now, that’s rare, but it does happen. For
most of us, it took, probably, a little time of instruction. It took a lot of prayer on the
part of our loved ones. But we came to knowledge of salvation, because God moved in!

All right, so the verse we’re going to head for is verse 7 “…but God giveth the
increase.” But we’re going to pick up what goes before. Just like old Coverdale said,
“What goes before? Who’s writing? To whom?” Well, Paul is writing to a Gentile
congregation, a congregation that knows nothing of Judaism or the Law, because
they’re under Grace! Just like we are! So, Paul is writing to Gentiles, but he’s going
to go back and use various Old Testament situations for illustrations. That’s the beauty
of the Old Testament. It’s all laid out in such a way that it teaches us lesson after
lesson. All right, now in I Corinthians chapter 3 we’ll start at verse 1, where Paul writes:

I Corinthians 3:1a

“And I, brethren, (So, who’s he writing to? Believers. He’s not writing to the unsaved
world, but rather he’s writing to believers.) could not speak unto you as unto
spiritual, (as people who were mature) but as unto carnal,...” In other words, they
were still weak, fleshly-minded believers.

Now, it’s interesting, and I suppose here’s where I should stop. Paul uses this
word “carnal” in two different scopes. Here he’s speaking of believers who are still
weak spiritually, and he calls them carnal. Come back with me to Romans chapter 8. I
do this so that in your own private study or reading you won’t get confused. Now, in
Romans chapter 8 he uses the same word, but now he’s talking about the rank unbeliever
who knows nothing of spiritual things. It’s the same word but two totally different
applications.

All right, in Romans chapter 8 verse 5, here’s the same Apostle Paul but now he’s
writing to believers at Rome, still predominately a Gentile congregation. Now, when I
say the word predominately, I’m inferring that there was probably a sprinkling of Jews
in these early congregations. It is very possible that some Jews had come in recognizing
not only that Jesus was the Messiah, but also that He had finished the work of the cross.
Romans 8:5

“For they that are after the flesh (in other words, the things of this world) do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit (In other words, the person who has been born from above. He now has a spiritual understanding. God is a part of his life.) the things of the Spirit.” Those are the things that are the most important.

Romans 8:6-7a

“For to be carnally minded is death; (So, there’s no figment of faith in the life of these carnal people, because they are still lost. They are headed for eternal, spiritual death.) but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7. Because the carnal mind (the unsaved person) is enmity against God:” See, that’s never the attitude of the believer, but for the carnal individual; he’s an enemy. He’s a total enemy. He has nothing to do with the things of God.

Romans 8:7b

“...the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” That’s why we have people who have no concern about any aspect of spiritual things, or the Word of God. They’re carnal, cannot please God.”

All right, back to I Corinthians chapter 3 but now Paul is using the word to simply describe less than spiritual believers. They’re saved, they’re going to be in Glory, no doubt about that, but they just haven’t taken on any spiritual growth. Well, of course, I think our churches are full of those kinds of people. I won’t deny their salvation. They may all well be saved, but they have no hunger for the Word. They have no desire to live a dedicated life and be a testimony of God’s saving grace. But they’re saved. And if we have time today, we’ll go on and we’ll pick them up in verses 12 and 13. Okay, but now, come back to chapter 3 and verse 1.

I Corinthians 3:1

“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.” So, there it’s very plain that he’s not talking to carnal unbelievers, he’s talking to believers who are still fleshly. All right, verse 2.

I Corinthians 3:2a

“I have fed you with milk, and not with meat:...” Now, I won’t make you go back and look at it, but Peter uses the same analogy in his little epistle in the back of your Bible in I Peter. I think it is chapter 2 and verse 2. Iris and I memorized it when we
were first married. I’ll never forget it. We struggled with it for a week, didn’t we? We finally got it. “As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word.”

It took us a week to learn that one, but we’ll never forget it. Peter says the same thing. That a new believer starts out like a physical baby. They need milk for their sustenance, but just like in the human realm, the baby finally gets to the place where milk is no longer the major portion of the diet. He goes on to stronger food. Well, that’s what we’re supposed to do. Some will take a little longer than others, but it should be a growth process that, as soon as a new believer comes into the picture and he hungers for the Word, he should start showing some growth. Then after a few years he should start showing a little maturity. Just like in the physical.

Okay, but the Corinthians weren’t. They were so carnal. One of the poorest examples of Christianity in the whole Bible was the Corinthian church. That’s why I can’t imagine why people want to copy them. Why copy that which is the poorest? But they do.

I Corinthians 3:2

“I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: (or strong food) for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, (that is the stronger food) neither yet now are ye able.” Even after they’ve been believers several years, they still couldn’t handle the deeper things of Scripture. So, he says:

I Corinthians 3:3a

“For ye are yet carnal: (You’re still more concerned about the things of the world than you are of the things of the Spirit.) for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions,…” It was not a very peaceful congregation. The Corinthians were in constant turmoil over some of the most stupid things. But you know what? Is it any different today? I can remember when we were back in Iowa. Iris was working with a bunch of people from various denominations, and then one church, a huge congregation, split right down the middle. What was it over? Iris, do you remember? Carpet!

The color of the carpet. See, she knew exactly what I was talking about. They split over the color of the carpet! Foolishness! Now, if a church splits over doctrine, that’s one thing, but most of them don’t. They’ll split over financial situations or things that just don’t amount to much. Corinth had all kinds of foolishness in their church, and Paul was constantly trying to deal with it. So, he says in verse 3.

I Corinthians 3:3b
“…whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions….” Now, what caused the divisions?

Well, who are you going to follow? You going to follow Jesus? You going to follow Peter? You going to follow Paul? You going to follow Apollos? Who are you following? They had four distinct groups in that one congregation. One group said, well, I’m going to follow Peter. And another would say, I’m following Paul. Others would say, na…you’re all off on a deep end, I’m going to follow Jesus. Well, there again, it is pretty much the same today, isn’t it? All right, so that was their strife.

*I Corinthians 3:4*

“For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; (If that’s the case, Paul says--) are ye not (What?) carnal?” Because, no doubt Apollos had things that could contribute to their spiritual life, but on the other hand, Paul was the one who brought them out of their pagan idolatry and everything. He should have been number one in their view, but he slipped away from that, and they just began dividing the congregation. All right, now drop down to verse 5. He’s going to make a point.

*I Corinthians 3:5*

“Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?” Now, let’s stop a minute. Again, for those of you who have been with us all the way up through Scripture, you remember that after Paul had established the Corinthian church and brought them out of paganism, a couple made their appearance, because Rome had made a decree that Jews could no longer stay in Italy.

So, if you remember, Priscilla and Aquila were two of those Jews. They were believing Jews of the fact that Jesus was indeed the Christ, but they had heard nothing, yet, of believing in the finished work of the cross for salvation. So anyway, Priscilla and Aquila, you remember, came into Paul’s congregation. In fact, it makes it quite plain that since they labored together in tent-making, Paul evidently rented a room from Priscilla and Aquila, and the three of them lived under the same roof.

Well, what did that mean? They talked and they talked and they talked! Well, what did they talk about? Well, the spiritual things. And it wasn’t long until Paul was able to impress upon Priscilla and Aquila this tremendous finished work of the cross, the Gospel of Grace. How that it has nothing to do with Judaism and the Law and everything. That we’re set apart from all of that, and, boy, they just latched onto it! The more they visited with their fellow laborer, the stronger they got.
Well, Paul had to leave, of course, and went on, I think, to Ephesus. And it wasn’t long until another Jew arrived in Corinth who had recently been at Alexandria. Now, the Scripture doesn’t say it. I’m always up front, and I’ll tell anybody, but I’m just assuming that Apollos was probably a graduate of one of the big Jewish Seminaries that was down in Alexandria, Egypt. It doesn’t say that, but he was so learned in the Scriptures that I have to feel he must have been. But anyway, in comes Apollos into the situation. And with all the pomp and circumstance of all of his education and who he was and everything, he thought he was pretty important. But after he had finished speaking, who took him aside? Priscilla and Aquila. Not publicly, but they took him aside, and all the Scripture says is they showed unto him the things of God more perfectly, or more completely. Again, the Scripture leaves it up to you. What do you suppose they shared with this man Apollos? Paul’s Gospel! Paul’s revelation of the mysteries! How we’re not under the Law; we’re under Grace. How the Old Testament economy is nothing more now than just stepping stones to this tremendous Age of Grace.

Well, did Apollos argue? No! He just latched onto it. He went from there on as one of Paul’s best co-workers. All right, so that’s what we have here. Apollos had made such an impression upon these Corinthians, that even though he’d gained it all by virtue of Paul’s revelations and from the patient teaching of two other simple Jews, Priscilla and Aquila, he became a great apostle, I suppose, in his own right. So, some of the Corinthians said, hey, I’m going to follow this man Apollos, this guy’s sharp! Boy, he can preach. He’s an orator. He knows his stuff. And others said, well, we’re going to stay with Paul, because, after all, he brought us out of all this paganness. And then others said, well, now I’ve learned enough from Scripture, I’m going to follow Peter, because Peter had three years with Jesus. Can’t you just picture it?

Now, this is what the Scripture leads us to do. You know, I’m always trying to get people not to just read it and then say I don’t know what it means. Stop and analyze it a little bit. Put some details in there. We’ve the freedom to do that. In fact, I’ve got time enough. One of my favorite places that taught me to do this, and you have to, otherwise the Scripture is just going to leave you hanging time and again. Now, I didn’t intend to do this either. I don’t know why I’m doing it, but turn back with me to John chapter 12. This is the perfect example that you have to logically put together some of the pieces. Because, after all, if Scripture would give us every little detail, and you’ve heard me say this before, this Book would be so big you’d have to have a pickup truck to carry it around. So, the Holy Spirit sees fit to keep things, you know, as brief as possible.

But this is a good example. That’s the only reason I’m going back here, just to show you that you have to fill in details, John’s Gospel chapter 12. The crowds are gathering for Passover. This is the same Passover at which Christ is going to be crucified. So,
there’s the setting, as Mr. Coverdale said, what’s gone before, what’s going on now, who’s it written to, who’s it concerning? Okay, we’ve got the Jews gathering for Passover, the same Passover at which Jesus is going to be crucified. So, from verse 20, we are about 72 hours from His death, burial, and resurrection.

**John 12:20**

“And there were certain Greeks (non-Jews) among them that came up to worship at the feast (of Passover).” Now, more than likely, they were curiosity seekers. And you can just sort of put that in there without doing any harm to Scripture.

These Greeks were evidently just there to watch these Jews carry on at one of their big feast celebrations. But, they’d been in Israel long enough that who had they heard about? Jesus of Nazareth and all of His miracles and signs and wonders – how He could feed the five-thousand, and how He had walked on water and all these things. They’d heard it. Listen, do you think people 2000 years ago were any different than we are today? Not one whit! Not one whit! If someone would come into Tulsa next week and begin to perform the miracles that Jesus did, do you think that it would be confined to Tulsa? Why, the whole United States of America would be hearing about this man that’s in Tulsa – he can walk on the water, he can raise the dead, he can make five loaves and five fishes. Why, it would just cover the country. Well, it was the same way then. These things just went out by word of mouth. So, these non-Jewish Gentiles here had heard about Jesus and all of His miracles and so forth. All right, verse 21.

**John 12:21a**

“The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee,…” All right, now, logically, here’s this humongous crowd of Jews, thousands and thousands of them. How do you suppose these three foreigners knew to go to that man over there? How’d they know that Philip was the guy to ask? Well, use common sense? What would you do? Well, you start asking. You know, I’m one of those dumb men that doesn’t mind a bit to stop and ask where I’m at when I get lost. Most men don’t want to do that, I know that, but I’m not afraid to swallow my pride. When I get lost, I pull into some place, jump out, and say, okay, where am I? Where am I going?

Same way here. These men were not afraid to ask around where is this Jesus that’s been performing all these miracles up and down Israel? Sooner or later, somebody must have said, well, there’s one of His followers. And that’s the way I want you to study Scripture. Just analyze it. What must have happened here? So, somebody said, well, there’s one of His followers, go ask him. So, that’s what it says, “they came and asked Philip who was of Bethsaida of Galilee.” And what did they ask him?
John 12:21b

“…Sir, we would see Jesus.” That’s plain enough isn’t it? All right, now then, the next statement, unless you know a little bit of His early days of ministry you don’t know what they’re driving at.

John 12:22a

“Philip cometh and telleth Andrew:…” Now, are you going to stop and analyze it, or are you just going to read on and just get half the story? Well, you’d better stop. What in the world do you suppose Philip tells Andrew? Are you getting with me? Well, Philip tells Andrew, there’s Gentiles over here. They want to talk to the Lord Jesus, and we know that He won’t have anything to do with them. How did they know that? Because at the beginning of His ministry He told them – “Go not into the way of a Gentile, into the house of a Samaritan enter ye not, but go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” And these two men hadn’t forgotten that.

So, they were in a quandary. What were they going to do? These guys are Gentiles and they want to see Jesus, and they knew how He felt about Gentiles. So, they probably hashed it over for a minute or two and finally they said what? Well, let’s go tell Him. See, that’s what you have to do with Scripture, and then it gets so interesting.

John 12:22b

“and again Andrew and Phillip tell Jesus.” All right, read on. Well, what do they tell Him? There’s Gentiles out here that want to see You. Do you see that? Now then, you’ve got to read between the lines some more.

John 12:23-24

“And Jesus answered them, saying, (See, Jesus doesn’t say a word here in red about these Gentiles. He doesn’t say a word about Philip and Andrew being remiss or correct them. He just simply comes out and says--) The hour is come, (Like I said – 72 hours.) that the Son of man should be glorified. 24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn (or a kernel) of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

What in the world was He talking about? Well, unless you know Scripture, it doesn’t make sense. But He’s driving home the fact that He couldn’t talk to those Gentiles out there until He had finished the work of the cross. Like a kernel of wheat that falls to the ground and dies, He had to be put into the tomb for three days and three nights. He had to go through death. And through death what happened? New life! It’s a fact of
nature. You can’t get away from it. Every spring it’s all around us. Resurrection power! Everything is coming to life that’s been dead.

Every farmer knows that if you’re going to get a crop you can’t leave the seed in the bag in the machine shed, you’d better get it out there and plant it. Well, it’s the same way spiritually. We’ve got to get out there, and we’ve got to convince people they will never see heaven until they die to the Old Adam and are raised to new life by the power of the cross. That’s what Jesus is alluding to. That unless that kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it will never spring up and bear a hundred kernels. But see, you’ve got to read so much in between the lines! Otherwise, it’s just so many empty words. That’s what I mean by taking the Scriptures and learning how to study.
LESSON TWO * PART II

BUT GOD! (Gave the Increase)

I Corinthians 3:7 and Other Pertinent Scriptures

All right, it is good to see you all in here again. For those of you out in television, again we want to invite you to an informal Bible study. We do not have any organization holding their thumb over us. We’re totally independent. It’s between us and the Lord. We just want people to learn how to open the Scriptures and study them, and which we trust we might have accomplished a little bit in that last program.

Now, toward the end of that last lesson I totally digressed, but maybe it’ll help people understand that once in a while you’ve got to fill in some details. Do it scripturally and prayerfully, but whenever the Scripture just seemingly says, well, now what’s it talking about? That’s when you get in and dig. Find out what it’s talking about!

All right, we’re going to do like we did in our last program. To show what I’m always talking about by rightly dividing the Scriptures, there is a statement by a gentleman way back in the 1500’s. There it is. Okay, I didn’t think I was seeing it, but anyway, what Coverdale wrote way back in the 1500’s, and again, I’ll just read it off of our monitor, “It shall greatly help you to understand Scriptures if you see what is written, what is spoken, and all these things ask of whom and to whom, with what words, and what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstances, what goes before and what comes after?”

Now, if you take all that into consideration as you study, then things will finally start opening up. First thing you say, “Well, who wrote this?” Well, Paul did. “What were the circumstances?” He’s writing to a church of Gentiles that have got a lot of problems. All these things sort of help you understand.

Well anyway, we digressed in our last program. We didn’t even finish the one we started, so we’re going to go back on this program to I Corinthians chapter 3. We were down to verse 5, I think it was, and I explained that sometimes you just have to fill in some of the details. I guess where I took off was with this man Apollos. Apollos wasn’t a Corinthian. He wasn’t a native of Corinth. He was actually from Alexandria in Egypt, and he was a highly educated Jew. What we pointed out in our last program was how Priscilla and Aquila took him aside and explained to him more fully the Pauline revelations.
The man was humble enough, that, in spite of his pomp and circumstance, his education and his oratory, he was willing to listen to a couple of simple lay-people who “expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly” as they had learned from the Apostle Paul.

But anyway, he became a man of influence even in the Corinthian church. Now, somebody at break-time just asked me this question, because Peter comes into the picture, not right here, but he does a little bit later when they say, well, we follow Peter. They asked me how Peter got involved. As far as we know, he was never over at Corinth. But, like I said in the last program, were people any different then than they are today? Well, of course not. So, Apollos had probably known all about Peter, having been an educated Jew, and others may have come their way that knew all about the Twelve and their ministry. So, the Corinthian believers had a pretty good handle on who Peter was and what kind of influence he had in Christ’s earthy ministry. So, he gets lifted up as someone to be followed instead of Paul. There are many that still do that today. Sad, isn’t it? All right, let’s come back where we left off in verse 5.

I Corinthians 3:5

“Who then is Paul, (In other words, he’s putting himself on the same level with these others to whom they were dividing their attention.) and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, (In other words, it was through the instrumentation of men opening up the things of God.) even as the Lord gave to every man?”

Now, I think that’s an appropriate place to stop. Scripture with Scripture is the only way. Come back with me to Romans chapter 10, and like I said in the last program, there are rare exceptions where people come to salvation with nothing but the Word of God. No help. No tutors. They find salvation alone in the Word. But that’s rare. Others may take a lot of teaching. They may take a lot of witnessing on behalf of believers before they finally come around.

Then others, as I mentioned again last program, we had a call at the end of one program, just one program, where the Lord had gloriously opened their eyes and saved them! They never go back to their other situation, and they become students of the Word. I could name several of them, but I don’t name names on my program, hopefully. But nevertheless, these are the various circumstances that take place. But for most, myself included, there had to be someone who was an instrument in God’s hand.

All right, Romans chapter 10 and let’s start at verse 13.

Romans 10:13
“For whosoever (Regardless of our station in life. Male or female, black or white, rich or poor, oriental or western, it makes no difference.) shall call upon the name of the Lord (for salvation) shall be saved.” That’s a promise. All right, now here comes the logical question.

Romans 10:14a

“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?” Or, I’m going to even express it as – that they’ve never heard of? Now, we’ve got tons of people all around us, even in the Bible belt, and they’ve never heard the Gospel of salvation. Yes, I see heads nodding. You know what I’m talking about. They’ve never heard it. But here it is. How are they going to hear it then?

Romans 10:14b

“And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? (That’s logical, isn’t it?) and how shall they hear without a preacher?” I think when I taught Romans, I said I thought a better word out of some of the Greek dictionaries that I use is proclaimer. Someone who is proclaiming the Word of God, I like even better than preaching. So, “How shall they hear without someone that’s proclaiming?”

Romans 10:15

“And how shall they preach (proclaim), except they be sent? (Now you see, when we get back to Corinthians, we’re going to put ourselves in Paul’s and Apollos’s shoes, because they’re the sent ones. How can they accomplish anything unless God is the sender?) as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them who preach (proclaim) the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” Now, isn’t it amazing that people don’t want to hear that? They just don’t want to hear it. Leave me alone. I’m comfortable.

I see heads nodding. I appreciate that. That let’s me know that you’re on the same page as I am. They don’t want to hear it, and yet it’s so simple. Why wouldn’t someone want to hear glad tidings? Why wouldn’t anybody want to hear good things? But they don’t. Well, you know why? I Corinthians 4:4 says “that the god of this world, (Who’s that? Satan!) has blinded the eyes of them who believe not.” So, even though they’re sitting in church every Sunday. Even though they’re members in good standing, and they won’t miss a service for anything, they’re eyes are still blinded by the god of this world. Consequently, they can’t handle the truth. They can’t handle it. It just bugs them. All right, but let’s read on in verse 16.

Romans 10:16a
“But they have not all obeyed the gospel.” (Well, that’s for sure. Even Isaiah back in the Old Testament economy said it.) *For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?”* Who believes what we tell them? Verse 17 is the frosting on the cake.

**Romans 10:17**

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” It’s the only way.

All right, now back to I Corinthians chapter 3, and we’re dealing with these carnal Corinthians. They’re not on fire yet for the Lord. They’ve been saved out of paganism. They’ve pulled away from their idolatry and all of their pagan worship and their immorality and all that, for the most part, but not completely. All right, so now Paul is making the argument in verse 6.

**I Corinthians 3:6a**

“I (Paul says) have planted,” Now, I always like to remind my listeners that back at the time of Israel’s history and on up into Paul’s ministry, even up until almost the turn of the century – 1900, 90 percent of the world’s population were what? Agricultural. They were agrarian. They were close to the land and their livestock. All right, now it is the same way here. Even though they were in a cosmopolitan area like Corinth, they were all perfectly aware of agricultural do’s and don’ts, and one of them was that a seed will never grow while it’s standing in the granary someplace. It has to be planted into the ground.

The Lord Himself used it. You know that. He gave you four distinct areas of seed. Some fell on stony ground, some fell amongst the thorns, some fell on soil so thin that it sprouted but had no substance to sustain the root system and it died. But some fell on what? On good ground. Well, what was that? That’s agricultural! That’s for people that have a farm background. They can understand that. The asphalt jungle may have a little problem with this, but for those of us out here in the rural areas, this all makes sense. All right, now here he used the same thing, the same concept of planting and watering. Paul says, “*I have planted.*” But you can’t just leave a seed in dry dirt. It has to have what? Well, sunshine and water.

**I Corinthians 3:6b**

“…Apollos watered;” He doesn’t refute what Paul is preaching. He doesn’t tell everybody, don’t listen to that man Paul, but what does he do? He enhances it. That’s where you and I come in.
Now, I debated half the night last night whether I should do this or not, because everybody in Minnesota is going to know who I’m talking about, because the guy is just so open with his testimony. But I’m going to share it, because he would never mind. But it was a perfect example of somebody planting and somebody watering. We hadn’t been on the Minnesota station very long and we got this glowing account of this man who had come to know the Lord and how it happened.

He was a housepainter by profession, and he had fallen off a ladder and went straight down and splintered his heel – shattered it. So, after they fixed him up and put on the cast, the doctor, in so many words, said to just go on home, put that foot up and watch television. “Well,” he said, “I had never watched any kind of religious or Christian television in my life. But, when you’re there all day long,” He said, “I couldn’t help but hit it, and your program was one of them.” And he said, “Right off the bat God opened my eyes, and I became a believer.” He just became, well, you remember, when you were at the retreat, out at the fire? You remember him giving his testimony. He just grew, like I always say, like a bad weed.

You know what I mean by a bad weed? A bad weed is something that can grow ten times faster than anything else. All right he grew, just like that! Well, a couple or three years later, I was teaching in a church about 100 miles west of Minneapolis and a young man about 25-26 years old came up and he says, “Les, do you know so and so in Minneapolis?” I said, “Yes, you know him?” He said, “Do I ever. You know he had a painting business? Well, I was a student at the University of Minnesota, and I worked for him part time in his painting business, and I witnessed to him – over and over.” “But,” He said, “I never got to first base. The minute he hears you, the first program, everything that I’ve done came to fruition!” I said to, whatever his name was, I don’t remember, I said, “That’s the way it works. That’s the way we’re supposed to be doing.”

You won’t always win somebody to the Lord when you witness to them. But listen, you’re sowing the seed. Someone else will come along and will see the results of it. And it was no different even with the Apostle Paul. He had proclaimed the Gospel to these pagans, then along comes Apollos, and he brought them on into saving faith. And so it goes. All right, now let’s continue on.

I Corinthians 3:6

“...but God gave the increase.” Now, think about that again for a minute. In spite of the greatness of the Apostle Paul, in spite of the refinement of Apollos, highly educated, an orator like no one could ever compete against. Yet, what did it take to bring these people into salvation? The power of God!
Now, I’m not a Calvinist. Don’t ever accuse me of that. On the other hand, I’m not at the other end of the spectrum. I don’t say that God had nothing to do with it. But I bring the two together. Absolutely we use the power of God and the working of the Spirit within the individual, and the two come together and salvation becomes believable, and we can trust it because it is relatively simple. But it does take the power of God.

Again, that’s why I’m always emphasizing the resurrection. You know, so many of our tracts and even so many of our good preaching, they’ll talk about Christ’s death and maybe His burial, but they just seemingly leave off His resurrection. Beloved, that’s the key! Had Christ not been raised from the dead—Now, we’re going to see that in another scripture a little while later. Not today, I don’t think, but down the road we’re going to be in I Corinthians 15. Had it not been for the power of resurrection, we’d still be as lost as a goose. But it did take God’s power to raise Him from the dead! And the moment we believe the Gospel of salvation, that same power is imputed to you and me.

It’s that resurrection power that makes us a new person in Christ. How can they leave it off? It just boggles my mind. **The Gospel is the fact that He died for our sins, His blood was shed, He was buried for three days and three nights, but He arose from the dead in power and glory and majesty and ready to give that eternal life to anyone who believes that for their salvation (I Corinthians 15:1-4).**

All right, now that’s exactly what Paul is saying here. Yes, I presented the Gospel to you. Apollos came along and enhanced it, but God brought you in. We can’t leave Him out. Now, that brings up another Scripture, you know which one I’m going to. Go back to Acts chapter 16. This is one I’ve referred to over and over, and once in a while, especially at my seminars, somebody will come up and say, “Well, Les, are you a Calvinist?” Land, no, I’m not a Calvinist. Well, then why do you use this account of Lydia? Well, that’s not Calvinism. Now, you know, when I speak of Calvinism, I’m not talking about individuals. I’m talking about their doctrine. They maintain that God determines who’s going to come to His heaven and the rest are going to go to His hell. I will never agree to that.

Never does God say you’re going to heaven, or you’re going to hell. No, that isn’t what God does. God has left salvation open to every human being, and the Holy Spirit will work just as much on one as the other. But the individual is left to that final choice. We can say yes and embrace it, or we can say thanks, but no thanks. That’s the way God leaves it.

All right, now Lydia, to me, is the prime example, and that’s in Acts chapter 16 dropping to verse 14.
Acts 16:14a

“And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, (That’s over in Turkey, but she was over here in Philippi in Greece. She was a religious lady.) which worshipped God, (but in unbelief) heard us: (Now, Luke is writing, so he’s using the plural pronoun. Now, look at the next portion.) whose heart…” That seat of understanding – who opened it? God did.

Why, because God, in His foreknowledge, knew that here was somebody that was ready to receive what He had offered free for nothing. Now, that doesn’t mean that she was isolated and picked out and the rest of her group was sent to hell by God’s design. No way. But see, when God sees the conviction of the heart. When God sees the interest, when God sees this person that is crying out as we saw in Romans 10:13, when we call upon the name of the Lord, then what does God do? He moves in, and He gives us the faith to believe. He gives us the assurance of sins forgiven. It’s a God thing! And you can’t leave Him out of it.

Acts 16:14b

“…whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended (or listened) unto the things which were spoken of Paul.” And when she heard the Gospel and believed it, again God finished the transaction and brought her into the Body of Christ. She’s a child of God forever. Never to lose it – once she is in.

All right, and here is what Paul is talking about, back again to I Corinthians chapter 3. We’ve got make a little headway today, I guess. So then, it really doesn’t matter who plants, it doesn’t matter who waters, the primary thing is God gives the increase. All right, I can’t help it. I just can’t help it! Let’s go back to John’s Gospel where we were in the last program. Back to John chapter 12 where we were just in the last half-hour, because I didn’t make any comment on what happens when that kernel of wheat is planted and watered and the sunlight hits it.

John’s Gospel chapter 12 verse 24, because this all fits. I don’t care whether God was dealing with Jews under the Kingdom economy, or whether He’s dealing with Gentiles under grace, it’s still the same God. He says in verse 24:

John 12:24

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except (or unless) a kernel of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” Now, first and foremost, what death is He talking about? His own!
Because unless He finished the work of the cross through His death, burial (the planting aspect), and His resurrection, it would have all been for nothing. But see, He finished it! He went all the way through the death, the suffering, and the shed blood. He went through the three days and three nights in the tomb. Then, in power and glory and majesty, He arose from the dead. Now, what will that death, burial, and resurrection result in? Harvest!

Now, I’ve never taken the time to count how many kernels are on one stalk of wheat. I’m just making a guess. But I imagine, with the hybridizing that they’re doing, you can probably get a hundred or a hundred and twenty kernels. Now, some wheat farmer will probably call and say, “Hey, no, Les, we can get two hundred.” I don’t know, but whatever, one kernel of wheat will easily generate a hundred new kernels when that next crop comes around. That’s what Jesus is talking about. He could not be the object of faith to the Gentile world until He Himself had died, been buried, and arisen from the dead.

That’s why He didn’t address these Greeks back here in chapter 12. He could not be the object of faith to Gentiles until the work of the cross was finished. That’s exactly why He didn’t invite them in. He didn’t go out to meet them. He just told Philip and Andrew here that after He’s finished the work of the cross, then He’ll go to the Gentile world. And we know that’s exactly what happened.

All right, now back to I Corinthians, once again. We’re just about through another half-hour. I Corinthians chapter 3 verse 8 and here’s where we all come in. You can plant the seed. Maybe you’ll never see the results, but someone else is going to come along and they’re going to. You know, I think so often of parents. I’ve known a few, myself, who pray and pray and pray for a wayward son. And they go on out into eternity never having seen their prayers answered. But you know, invariably, a short time later, it happens. We sometimes wonder, now God, why didn’t you let them have the joy of seeing it happen? Well, God’s thoughts are higher than our thoughts, because we’ve seen it happen. All right, now the same way here in verse 8.

I Corinthians 3:8a

“Now he that planteth and he then watereth are (What? They’re the same.) one:…” Doesn’t make any difference what part of the process you happen to be in. Whether you’re the first one that approaches some lost person with the Gospel and someone else comes along, or maybe it takes two, three, four others, but one day, that person comes to a knowledge of salvation, and who’s going to reap the reward? All of them! Not just the first one. Not just the last. But we all reap reward. We’re going to come on into that in the next portion. All right, so one plants and one waters, but they’re all one. Then look at verse 8, the last half.
I Corinthians 3:8b

“...and every man shall receive his own (What?) reward according to his own labour.” Reward! It has nothing to do with salvation. It’s the reward that’s going to follow. Now, I’ve got another verse. We’ve got time to look at. Come back to Romans chapter 7, where Paul is, in different language, talking about the same thing. Believers get to work!

You know, I always use this illustration: how much of a crop would a farmer get if, in the spring of the year, he’d sit down in his easy chair and turn on the TV and say, well, God, it’s time for the corn to be planted, and I expect you to do it. How much crop would he get? Well, he’d get nothing but weeds. It’s no different spiritually. You’ve got to get out and share the Gospel. That doesn’t mean you’re going to win them to the Lord on the spot. Doesn’t mean you collar them. But as you have opportunity, just say, well, have you ever considered the fact that Christ has done everything for you that needs to be done? And then maybe somebody else can come along and water.

Romans 7:4

“Wherefore, my brethren, (Again, he’s writing to believers.) ye also are become dead to the law (legalism) by the body of Christ; (In other words, by His work of the cross.) that ye should be married (or brought into union) to another, (And who’s the other?) even to him who is raised from the dead, (For what purpose?) that we should bring forth fruit unto God.” Like the kernel of wheat should bring forth a hundred kernels. So, every believer should bring forth fruit. Not just your own family. In fact, you know what? I can look back in my old home church, way back. I don’t think parents ever made any effort to win their kids to the Lord. You know why? The consensus was that’s the preacher’s job and the Sunday school teacher’s job. Horrors! Horrors! Parents should be winning their own children to the Lord.

Romans 7:5

“For when we were in the flesh, (carnal unbelievers) the acts of sins, which were by the law, (thou shalt not and thou shalt not and all those things) did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.” All it did was pile up a record that’s going to come up before the Great White Throne.

Romans 7:6

“But (But – Oh, I love these “But Now’s”. I think I even missed this one.) now (as a believer on this side of the cross) we are delivered from the law, that being dead
wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” We’re not under Law. We’re under grace!
LESSON TWO * PART III

BUT GOD! (Gave the Increase)

I Corinthians 3:7 and Other Pertinent Scriptures

Okay, again, for those of you that may be tuning in for the first time, we are a simple Bible study. I always call it a glorified Sunday School Class. All we want to do is teach the Word in such a way that anybody can understand it and read it. Again, we’re going to put our little quote from a theologian back in the 1500’s on the screen, because this is the best instruction for Bible study that I’ve ever seen in one statement. It’s really what dispensationalists are all about. We separate who’s talking to whom and what are the circumstances. Well, I guess I can read it from here.

“It shall greatly help you to understand Scripture if you mark not only what is spoken or written, but ask of whom and to whom, with what words or at what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstances, considering what goes before and what comes after.” Now, that’s the best creed for Bible study that I have ever come across. Always stop and ask, what is the circumstance, who is writing, who’s he writing to? That’ll just make all the difference in the world.

You know, I’ve done this a long time ago. Let’s see, how do you put it? Pilots will say they “fly by the seat of their pants,” that is without any particular, prescribed plan. Well, that’s the way I teach. Now, I didn’t intend to do this, but I’m going to give you a good example of what this is talking about. Come back with me to Leviticus. We did this years and years ago. Back to the book of Leviticus, the book of Law, and if people would consider the statement we just put on the screen, they would understand that a portion like Leviticus chapter 5 is certainly not for us to practice.

Yet every once in a while, I’ll get a letter or a phone caller who says, “Les, you’re always emphasizing Paul. I don’t just stay with Paul. I use the whole Bible.” “Oh, you do?” I’ll ask. They’ll say, “Well, absolutely. If the Bible says it, then that’s what I do.” Then you’re in trouble already, because you just can’t do that. And this is a good example. This is what I use, Leviticus chapter 5. If someone pulls it on you – says, well, I don’t just go by what Paul says, I go by what the whole Bible says. Then say, oh, you do, well, let’s just go back and see if you can do this. Leviticus 5 starting at verse 1.

*Leviticus 5:1-2*
“And if a soul sin, (That, of course, is obvious. We all do, and they did, and remember, this is to Israel.) and hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it; if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity. (He’s sinned, and he’d better recognize it.)

2. Or if a soul touch any unclean thing, (Now, that wasn’t too hard back in Israel’s economy, because only seven species were clean animals, the rest were unclean.) whether it be a carcass of an unclean beast, or a carcass of unclean cattle, or the carcass of unclean creeping things, and if it be hidden from him; he also shall be unclean, and guilty.” He’s guilty of a sin. Oh, not a moral sin, he hasn’t committed adultery. He hasn’t done anything that gross. But he’s touched something that’s unclean. So, he’s got a sin that has to be dealt with. All right, now let’s jump on down and see what this man has to do.

Leviticus 5:5-6

“And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, (Either he’s said something blasphemous, or he’s touched a dead carcass.) that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing: (Can he stop there? No, go on to the next verse.) 6. And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the LORD for his sin which he hath sinned, (Here’s what he has to do.) a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin.”

Goodness sakes, can anybody do that today? Can you? Well, in the first place, most of you couldn’t find a lamb or a goat if you tried. Secondly, if you were fortunate enough to have a herd in your community, you still couldn’t find a priest. If you found somebody who was willing to say, well, I can be a priest, he hasn’t got a Temple. So, how in the world can people say, “Well, I do everything that the Bible says.” You can’t.

It is the same way in Christ’s earthly ministry. He demanded things that you and I could not fulfill today, because we’re not under those set of circumstances. So, this becomes the common sense approach to Scripture. Is it written to us? Is it for us to practice? If it’s to Israel, then the answer is no. But, when Paul comes on the scene and says, “I am the Apostle of the Gentiles,” then you’d better listen to what that Apostle said, because that’s who we are.

All right, now that’s our approach to Scripture. So, I Corinthians 3 is the Apostle Paul. He’s writing to Gentile believers, and he could just as well be writing to us right here in the studio. All right, now we left off in I Corinthians 3 verse 8. Paul says it doesn’t matter whether it’s Apollos or whether it’s himself. Then, later on in Corinthians, he even brings in Jesus and Peter. It doesn’t make any difference who has been the messenger. What’s important is to bring that person to a knowledge of salvation. And when we do--
I Corinthians 3:8a

“Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one:” (In other words, they’re equal in God’s eyes. One isn’t more important than the other.) and every man (whether we planted or whether we saw the fruition) shall receive his own (What?) reward…” Now, we’re not talking about salvation. We’re talking about reward. Big difference. Salvation is without works. It’s a free gift. We get it by nothing by faith alone.

But now, let’s jump to Ephesians. Keep your hand in Corinthians. I always have to stop and think, is this the most appropriate time to use something like this? But, I think this is okay. Ephesians chapter 2, jump in at verse 8. Everybody got it?

Ephesians 2:8

“For by grace are ye saved (Not because of anything we deserve - we’re saved by God’s unmerited favor on our behalf.) through faith; (Faith plus nothing) and that not of yourselves: (Not because of something you’ve done) it is the gift of God.” Isn’t that miraculous that God has given it? And all we have to do is take it – by faith. All right, verse 9.

Ephesians 2:9

“Not of works, (Not because of what you’ve done) lest any man should boast.” And even Abraham didn’t dare boast, Romans 4 tells us that. Now, verse 10, we move into what Paul is talking about in I Corinthians 3 – rewards.

Ephesians 2:10a

“For we are his workmanship,…” Now, that Greek word is the same Greek word from which we get symphony. What’s a symphony? It’s a composite of all these instruments playing that makes beautiful music. It’s not a jumbled up mass. It’s not one guy playing one note and some another. It is a formulated piece of music, and that’s what we are! By God’s design we are something unique. We are intrinsic in His service, because we have been created in Christ Jesus. That’s all part of our salvation experience. We have been made a new person. We have been empowered in a way like we never knew before, and that’s what we use when we witness to other people. It’s the empowering of the Holy Spirit who gives us the words to speak.

Ephesians 2:10a
“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus” (For what purpose?) unto good works,” And what are the good works that we primarily emphasize? Telling lost people how to gain salvation. That’s the first good work you can do. My, you can spare somebody eternal doom by just simply opening your mouth and sharing Paul’s Gospel. Now, you don’t have to bring them into salvation. I’m always showing you that. Somebody else may get the privilege. If you can, fine! But if not, don’t worry about it. Sow the seed. Plant the seed. And that becomes works, then, on your behalf.

Okay, now let’s go back to I Corinthians chapter 3. We’re moving on from what God did - He gave the increase. The result is going to be fruit from the believer. All right, verse 9.

I Corinthians 3:9a

“For we are laborers together with God:…” Now, I hadn’t originally planned to do this. I was going to start back there, stop at verse 8 and move on. But, as I was looking at this in preparation through the past week, I was reminded again of a dear old saint. He was a retired pastor out of Chicago, and he was in one of my classes here in Oklahoma. I taught this one night quite a few years ago, and he came up afterward and said, “Les, teach it. Teach it. Teach it, because people don’t hear it any more. Teach that believers are to work for reward.” Every time I get to these verses, I see that dear old gentleman, retired pastor of a huge church in Chicago. That’s why I decided I’ll hit it again. Now, we had it back in the Corinthians study, but we’re going to hit it again.

I Corinthians 3:9-10a

“For we are laborers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building. (We’re something that God is doing something with here on planet earth.) 10. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, (Now, Paul is writing in the first person, so he’s speaking of himself.) as a wise master builder, (The chief contractor) I have laid the foundation…” Now, that’s where I came when I told you a couple of programs back, how a dear old saint here in Oklahoma said, “I can’t find anything of the church in the early chapters of Acts where most of Christendom puts the birth of the Church.” So, I came back a few nights later and I said, “You know, you’re right.” So, he said, “When did it start?” I told him I was still looking.

Well, it wasn’t long until this was the portion that jumped off the page. Who laid the foundation? Paul did. He didn’t say he’s the foundation – he laid the foundation. Big difference. Now, just think, in your own experience, if you’ve ever built anything at all, even if you build just a room onto your home. Or, if you’ve built a mansion, it doesn’t make any difference. Who lays the foundation? Well, the chief contractor. He’s not going to come in when the first floor is finished. He’s not going
to come in and finish someone else’s work. He’s going to set the stakes on your lot. He’s going to dig the ditches. He’s going to lay the concrete. That’s Paul! And that’s where I became adamant. There is no room for the birth of the church anyplace except this Apostle. Because he is the main contractor, and he laid the foundation!

Now, this isn’t an egotistical man speaking. This is the inspired Word of God. You know, I mentioned on the program a while back, and I don’t have any intention of retracting it, so far as I’m concerned, Paul’s epistles could all be in red. You know why? Because every word he wrote was from the ascended Lord! Every word! When he takes credit for things, it’s because that’s what the ascended Lord wanted him to do. So, he laid the foundation. Now, go on, what’s the foundation of Paul’s ministry? Jesus Christ crucified, buried, and raised from the dead!

**I Corinthians 3:11**

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” And then we saw a few weeks ago, back in chapter 1, it’s “Christ crucified, risen from the dead.” That’s all Paul knows. So, don’t ever, ever accuse me of putting Paul as our Savior or our point of salvation. No. He’s merely the proclaimer of it. All right, now then, here we go in verse 12. Now, if we have been brought into the building that is on this foundation of Jesus Christ crucified, buried, and raised from the dead, we’re left with a task at hand. What is it? Work. Work. Now, I think anybody that has ever known me can never accuse me of being afraid to work. I’ve always had energy enough to work. That’s why I admonish others – work. I’ve got no time for people who want to just live off of nothing. That’s why I can’t be in favor of gambling, because what is gambling? It’s the desire to get something for nothing. That’s not the biblical approach. Paul says that if you don’t work you don’t what? You don’t eat! Boy, there are a lot of people that should be really starving. And it would be the biblical approach to it.

Okay, as soon as we come in on this building of God, on the foundation of Christ crucified and risen from the dead, in other words, faith in Paul’s Gospel, we’re to work. We’re not to just sit down and let the world go by. We’re to work. All right, here we go, verse 12.

**I Corinthians 3:12a**

“Now if any man (Now, that’s an all inclusive term.) build upon this foundation…” As a worker, and, again, I think maybe when I taught Corinthians, I used the beehive as a good example. You’ve got your working bees, and then you’ve
got the sloughs, and they kick them out and so forth. Isn’t that right? But the workers, they’re constantly building that hive. All right, so we are to build upon this foundation.

**I Corinthians 3:12b**

“...gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;” Now, you’ve got six materials. Six materials. Three of them are extremely rare, and three you can find as soon as you come out of the parking lot. So, what’s being suggested here? You won’t get reward unless you hustle.

Because, if you’re going to go out and find gold, silver, and precious stones, you’re going to have to hustle, because they aren’t just everywhere. They’re hard to find. A lot of times, they’re deep under a mountain. They have to be mined. They have to be gone after. All right, now that’s why I think God has given these two examples. Then there is wood, hay, and stubble. They are everywhere, but they count for nothing. Absolutely nothing. Yet, that’s most of Christendom. They’re going to come before the judgment seat of Christ with nothing but a bunch of trash that they were able to pick up stepping outside the door. But, oh, listen, when you put forth the energy and you put forth the effort, and you go out and you mine the mountain, and you find the gold and the silver and the precious stone, oh, listen! God’s going to reward you.

**I Corinthians 3:13a**

“*Every man’s work* (Now again, the word *man* includes everybody: boys, girls, men, and women.) *shall be made manifest:*...” And how have I always used that word *manifest*? Put it in the spotlight, like in the microscope. All of your work is going to come under that microscopic light, and all of your smallest details are going to be evident. God isn’t going to miss a one of them. And He’s going to reward you on the basis of what He sees in that spotlight. It’s all going to be manifest.

**I Corinthians 3:13b**

“...*for the day* (The day of reward and we’re going to look at it in just a minute,) *shall declare it,* (Why?) *because it shall be revealed* (or tested) *by fire;...” Now, this is beautiful. What does fire do to gold and silver, especially, and I imagine most of your gemstones? Purifies it! The more you heat it, the prettier it gets.

But how about wood, hay, and stubble. My, we’ve seen it all over Oklahoma. Our grassfires have just made everything black. The wood, hay, and stubble have just gone up in a puff of smoke. It’s ugly. All right, that’s what’s going to happen to many believers’ rewards. They’re going to come before the Lord Jesus individually. Every
one of us is going to have our time before the Judge of Glory. This is not the Great White Throne, which is only for the lost.

All right, now let’s go back and look at it. That’d be in II Corinthians chapter 5. II Corinthians chapter 5 and I’m taking the time because I know not very many people have this thrown at them any more. Here Paul is really speaking of the life hereafter. I think we’ve got time enough to start right up there at verse 1.

**II Corinthians 5:1**

“For we know (If you’re a believer, this is well understood.) that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, (Now, he’s speaking of this physical body. When this physical body is gone back to the dust or is transformed in the Rapture.) we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” We come back to that same concept of the foundation in I Corinthians 3. We’re in a building process. We’re on the foundation that the Apostle Paul laid, which was the Gospel - Christ crucified, buried, and risen again. All right, so now— “we become a building of God (as a result of resurrection, again) an house not made with hands.” In other words, it’s in the heavenlies. Now, verse 2:

**II Corinthians 5:2**

“For in this (this old body of flesh) we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:” In other words, for the new body. See that? Oh, we can’t be comfortable in this old body of flesh when we realize we’ve got a glorious body waiting for us. I think that’s what keeps our daughter going, the hope of a new body someday.

**II Corinthians 5:3-4a**

“If so be that being clothed (That is with immortality, now, as he spoke of in I Corinthians 15. We’ll be looking at that, probably, in the next taping.) we shall not be found naked. (In other words, found in a bad situation.) 4. For we that are in this tabernacle (We’re still in the flesh.) do groan,…” Now, I’ve got to make a point here. What’s a tabernacle in Scripture? It’s a tent. Now, so far as abode goes, is a tent temporary or permanent? Well, very temporary. All right, so what’s this body? It’s temporary. It’s a temporary abode for soul and spirit, but the immortal will be the permanent.

**II Corinthians 5:4-5**
“For we that are in this tabernacle (or body) do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality (that coming of death) might be swallowed up of life (eternal life). 5. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, (Now, here again, you could put, “but God!” He makes the difference.) who also hath given unto us the earnest (down payment) of the Spirit.” My, I could go another hour right there, couldn’t I?

My goodness, what does Ephesians say? That after we heard the Gospel of salvation and we believed it, what were we given? The Holy Spirit! The next verse says that the Holy Spirit is the what? He’s God’s down-payment that we’re His!” Then you go back to Romans chapter 8 and what does that down payment become? A literal, eternal, immortal body. That’s what’s ahead of us. But, I won’t take time for that. Let’s come back here to verse 6.

II Corinthians 5:6-7

“Therefore we are always confident, (See how we pick up such confidence from the Apostle. We don’t have to doubt.) knowing that, while we are at home in the body, (or this temporary tabernacle) we are absent from the Lord: (The Lord’s in glory, and we’re here on the planet.) 7. (For we walk by faith, not by sight)” We don’t see the Lord. We don’t see Him walking with us day by day, and so we walk by faith. Now verse 8.

II Corinthians 5-8

“We are confident, I say, and willing rather (Oh, this is the hope of every believer, without being suicidal of course. We don’t want to bring that into the picture. But, oh, we have that constant hope that we would--) rather to be absent from the (old) body, (of flesh) and to be (Where?) present with the Lord (in glory).” Now then, verse 9, with that in mind, that we’ve got an eternity waiting for us in which we’re going to be active, in which we’re going to receive reward done for what we’ve done in this life.

II Corinthians 5:9

“Wherefore we labour, (That’s what we were talking about in I Corinthians 3.) that, whether present or absent, (Whether we’re still here on the planet, or whether we’re in the situation that we’re going to move on.) we may be accepted of Him.” Not for salvation! Never do we bring salvation into this kind of language. This is reward for what the believer has accomplished with his life. Now verse 10, here it comes.

II Corinthians 5:10a
“For we must (Whether you’ve got wood, hay, or stubble; or whether you’ve got gold, silver, or precious stones. It doesn’t make a bit of difference. Every believer is going to have his moment before the Lord.) all appear before the judgment seat of Christ;…” The Bema Seat is a better word. I don’t know why the King James translators used this word judgment, because it throws fear into people. It’s not a place of judgment as we think of judgment like the Great White Throne. It’s the Bema Seat.

Now, we were in Corinth a couple or three months ago. For those of you that were with us, it was quite an experience. Corinth was simply the seat of the judges who determined this event or that event and then the Olympics brought it in, and they declared the winner, second place, and third place. That’s what the Bema Seat was all about. It was the seat of the judges. Not a seat for judgment or punishment like the Great White Throne. So, this judgment seat or Bema Seat is going to be for all believers.

II Corinthians 5:10

“For we must all (every single believer) appear before the Bema seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, (while here on the planet) according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” It had nothing to do with salvation. Nothing! It’s all according to reward.

All right, now then, we’ve got a minute left. Let’s go back to I Corinthians 3. So, as we come before the Lord with whatever we have accomplished or done as a believer in this life, God is going to reckon it as gold, silver, and precious stones; or wood, hay, and stubble. And remember, that a good portion of this is going to be on motive. Why do we do what we do?

If I just came up here with the idea of impressing people, or how much money can I make out of this ministry, I’ve got nothing but wood, hay, and stubble, and it goes up in a puff of smoke. But if I come in here motivated by the Spirit of God to open the Scriptures to people, then I trust there’ll be some gold and silver involved. This is what we have to look at it. What’s your motive? Why do you put money in your local church? Why do you give money even to Les Feldick Ministry? If it’s only for earthly gain, then forget it. You get nothing back. It’s a waste of everything. So, always determine the motive to everything you do, so that it’ll be gold, silver, or precious stones.
LESSON TWO * PART IV

BUT GOD! (Gave the Increase)

I Corinthians 3:7 – I Corinthians 10:13

Okay, here we go. Again, we want to welcome everyone out in television for another Bible study. We are on a series of “But God’s.” I think most of you understand by now that I use the term the “flipside.” So, pretty much even on these you go up and then all of a sudden you get to the flipside. I think it’s an interesting study. I hope everybody out there does. But anyway, we trust that you’ll enjoy it. Again, I want to thank everyone out there in television for your letters, your prayer support, your phone calls, and everything! With the Lord’s help, it’s what makes our ministry what it is.

Okay, already in the studio they have found I Corinthians chapter 10 which will be our next “But God.” It’ll be in verse 13, and then we’re going to go back—oh, wait a while. We were going to put our note on the screen again. I’m doing it every program this time, because I want everybody to just about know this from memory. It’s such a help in Bible study. And remember, this goes clear back to the 1500’s. This isn’t something that Les Feldick dreamed up. This goes clear back, and it’s the whole basis of the dispensational approach to Scripture.

“It shall greatly help you to understand Scripture if you mark (or take note) not only what is spoken or written, but ask of whom and to whom, with what words, at what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstances, considering what goes before and what follows after.”

Now, that just says it all, doesn’t it, Luther? Luther’s been on this one every time I use it I can see that he says, hey, that’s it. This is where it’s all at. So, we put it on all these four programs today. We trust that you have gotten at least most of it in your mind and understand that when you read your Bible, that’s what you do. You ask yourself, now who is writing? Who’s it written to? What are the circumstances? What’s gone before? What comes after?

For example, I can take you to Christ’s earthy ministry. Everything that Jesus said in His earthly ministry was spoken to the Jew. Under what circumstances? The Law. He never said a word except that it was under the Law. And that’s the way you separate it. Then, here comes this next apostle, who always emphasizes that his apostleship is to the Gentiles. So, who’s writing? Paul. Who’s he writing to? Gentiles. What are the circumstances? Under grace, not Law. And so we go.
All right, we’re going to start right up at verse 1. I won’t have you turn to it, but in Romans chapter 15 verse 4, Paul says:

**Romans 15:4a**

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning,...” Not for doctrine specifically but to help us understand. It’s a learning process. All right, now here he comes. He’s going to dip back into those Old Testament Scriptures to help us understand what he’s really talking about when we get to verse 13.

**I Corinthians 10:1a**

“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant...” (Again, who’s he writing to? Gentile believers or he wouldn’t call them brethren.) I would not that ye should be ignorant (or untaught),...” Now, you’ve heard me define that word a hundred times over the years. To be ignorant isn’t a lack of brainpower. When I say somebody’s ignorant, it’s not putting them down. It’s not making fun of their ability. They haven’t been taught! And that’s most people with Scripture. You guys know that. They’re ignorant because nobody’s taught them. We hear it all the time.

I’ll never forget, several years ago a lady called one morning from Northern Indiana. She said, “Les, I’ve been in a parochial school. I’ve been in a parochial university. I’ve been in church all my life and I’ve never heard any of this before!” Sad, isn’t it? Well, hey, that’s legion. That’s most church people. Over and over we hear it - why haven’t we heard this? Well, I haven’t got the answer for it, but hopefully we’re filling up some of the gaps. But why don’t they teach it? Well, I think basically they don’t want to hear the truth of the matter. And consequently, as many have experienced, they get a little upset. But here we go now.

**I Corinthians 10:1a**

“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers (Now, Paul always keeps reminding us that he’s a Jew. So, he’s speaking of the fathers back in the Old Testament account.) were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; (The Red Sea, coming out of Egypt) 2. And were all baptized unto Moses...” Now, I could have a lot of fun with that, couldn’t I? You mean to tell me Moses stopped and had a big baptismal service? Well, how could he? The Red Sea is all parted. They’ve got nothing but dry dirt! So, what kind of a baptism was it? It was a baptism that placed Israel under God’s authority and protection, which was emphasized with the cloud, and they were placed into the sea even though it was dry. It was dry dirt. There wasn’t any water there. But they experienced a baptism. Far different than what most people think of baptism. There’s no water here. This is strictly
a God thing, where He placed Israel under His authority, His control, and His protection. They were baptized. Now verse 3:

**I Corinthians 10:3**

“And they did all eat the same spiritual food;” Which was what? The manna! They all had manna. They learned how to fix it differently. I suppose one Jewish family was frying it and the other one was boiling it and another one was baking it, but it was all the same stuff. It was all manna. Now verse 4:

**I Corinthians 10:4**

“And they did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock (capitalized) that followed them:” Now, do you all remember that story? Back in the Exodus, they’re coming out on the desert, and the animals are bellowing with thirst and the Jews are thirsty, and they’re complaining. We need water!

Moses comes into God’s presence all frustrated and said, “Lord, what am I going to do? These people need water.” What did God tell him? “Strike the rock with your rod.” And he did. What happened? Out came rivers of water, enough to water all their livestock. Now remember, we’re talking about millions of people, not a few ragtag like the movie showed it. We’re dealing with millions of people and all their needs and livestock, and here comes the water – out of the Rock. But who was the Rock? Christ - the Creator of everything!

Now, that should tell people something. Back when Jesus told Peter in Matthew 16 “You’re Peter (You’re Cephas, you’re the little stone.) but upon this rock” – well, who’s He referring to? Himself! Himself! **He’s always the Rock of Scripture.**

Always. I can take you to Daniel. Come back with me so that you’ll get what I’m driving at. Daniel chapter 2, drop in at verse 34. All the way through Scripture, when we have a reference to a stone or a rock, it’s referring to Christ. Now, in the Psalms it speaks of the “stone that was rejected.” Well, we draw the analogy that as they were building the Temple, the quarries had sent in a rock that didn’t fit. The builders didn’t know where it went, so what did they do with it? They laid it aside because they didn’t know, and it became a stone of stumbling.

Well, what was the picture? That’s what happened when Christ came. They didn’t know how to handle Him. They didn’t know what to do with Him. So, what’d they do? They cast Him aside. They crucified Him. So, all through Scripture He’s the Rock. He’s the Stone. Now, here in Daniel we’re speaking of Him at His Second Coming. The LORD is speaking to Daniel.
Daniel 2:34

“Thou sawest (That is in his vision.) until a stone was cut out without hands, (Now, wait a minute? What does that language imply? This is a God thing again. This isn’t something men have done. This is a stone that wasn’t cut with human hands, miraculously.) which smote the image (this great statue that Nebuchadnezzar had seen) upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.” He knocked it over and rolled it like a steam roller until there was nothing left but a pile of dust, and that blew away.

Well, this is all prophecy, of course, concerning Christ’s Second Coming. But the stone, here, smites the image, which was a symbol of all the great Gentile empires which will be evident in the end time scenario. We can see it already. I hope I can remember. I didn’t really intend to do this, but you’ve got Rome involved. And what was Rome? They instigated our courts of law. The whole idea of innocent until proven guilty began in the Roman Empire.

Well, the next one was the Medes and the Persians. They were mostly known for their marketing of goods and so forth. And to this day….my, when we were in Turkey, they pushed their carpets at us every chance they got. They love their handiwork. Well, the next one was Greece. What was Greece known for? Their architecture and their culture. And the last one was the Babylonians - going in reverse order. What were the Babylonians known for? Banking. Banking! That’s where interest and usury had its beginning. It was in the Babylonian Empire. Is it all in the world today? Oh, multiplied many times over.

So, all of these Gentile Empires that are now coming together for this end-time scenario are symbolic of all these things that were in those first four empires. And at His Second Coming, Christ is going to destroy them so that they disappear from view. All right, Daniel saw it prophetically in symbolism. I didn’t intend to do all that, but here we have Christ as the “Stone” who will destroy the Gentile empires at His Second Coming. Well, I could go into various other places of Scripture where He’s always referred to as the rock or the stone.

Okay, back to Corinthians chapter 10, I Corinthians chapter 10 and the rock that was smitten by Moses and brought water for all the people and their flocks was Jesus Christ. Now then verse 5.

I Corinthians 10:5

“But with many of them (of these several million Israelites coming out of Egypt, who were now being given everything that they needed – the manna for their food and the
water from the rock for all their water needs) *God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.*” Out on the desert. All right, now we’ve got to re-think. Why are they being dealt with out in the desert, when God wanted nothing but His best? Well, they rejected the Promised Land. Remember?

They came up to Kadesh-barnea, and God told them to go in and take the land. It’s all ready for them. He’d drive the Canaanites out with hornets. You know, I’ve rehearsed this over and over. The land was in front of them with tremendous production and tremendous technology, no doubt, the Canaanites were living in beautiful homes and had orchards and farms and flocks and herds, and the Israelites could have had it free for nothing! But what did they do with it? They rejected it because of what? **Unbelief!**

Now, you’ve been hearing the book of Hebrews lately on the daily program, haven’t you? Unbelief! What a horrible, horrible sin. It’s the worst in all of human experience – Unbelief. All right, this is what Paul is referring to. Here these people had every opportunity of the Promised Land flowing with milk and honey. But because of their unbelief, they were overthrown in the wilderness. To what extent? That every Jew who was in the generation that rejected died out in the wilderness over a period of 38 years. All right, now verse 6, here’s where Bible study comes in.

*I Corinthians 10:6*

**“Now these things** (What things? Well, whatever Paul refers to as having happened in Israel’s past, whatever it may have been.) **were our examples,**…” That’s how God teaches us. What happened to them was just a living example that we can profit from. Sodom and Gomorrah. My, what an example. God utterly destroyed it in His wrath and vexation. Why? Because of their immoral lifestyle. And Scripture (II Peter 2:6) reminds us not to be like Sodom and Gomorrah.

There are various other times in Israel’s experience. Ai -- just after they crossed the Jordan River after they’d defeated Jericho. Now, the next little village, or town, was evidently a fairly well-to-do community. It was Ai. And what were they to do? Destroy everything. They were to keep nothing for themselves. But who was it? Achan, he says, **“God will never know if I keep some of this for myself.”** So, he kept some. Buried it, if I remember right? God had to literally chastise the whole nation because of the deeds of one man, one family. All these things happened to them for us to learn by. Okay, reading on.

*I Corinthians 10:6b*
“...were our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.” Now, the word lust doesn’t always mean sex. It could be desire for anything, especially if it’s not good for us.

Now, I’m glad I used Ai. What did Achan do? He lusted. For the women? No, for the material things. He put himself in jeopardy by trying to secret it away and bury it and probably come back for it another day. It didn’t work. It doesn’t pay to lust after things that we are not to have. We’re to learn from it. That’s the whole idea. Now verse 7:

**I Corinthians 10:7**

“Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them: (Now, you have to have the rest of the verse to know exactly what we’re talking about.) as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.” What are we talking about? What did they use for an idol? Come on? The Golden Calf down there at Sinai.

You know, the thing that always amazes me the most in that account is that Aaron the High Priest went along with it? That’s one thing I can never comprehend. When they came to Aaron and said, “Make us an idol,” he didn’t chastise them. He didn’t dress them down. He didn’t say, don’t think such a thing. He just said, bring me your gold and silver and we’ll get with it. And when they brought in the idolatrous worship of that thing which, of course, introduced everything that went along with it – the sexual immorality and everything, God had to come down and chastise the nation with the deaths of twenty some thousand?

But anyway, what was the purpose? To show you and I that we’d better be careful before we start lusting after evil things or make something an idol. Now, I have taught it for years. Don’t think an idol is just something of wood and stone that you can set on your mantel. An idol can be anything that is not Scriptural according to God’s plan for our life. Your home - your beautiful house - it could become your idol. Your automobile can become your idol. Your kids can become your idols. Anything that we simply put in first place in our life that is not according to God’s direction becomes an idol. And we all have to guard against it.

You know I love my cattle. You’d be surprised how many people call and say, “Les, don’t let those cows become your idols.” No, they’re not that much to me, but that’s the way it could be. Anything that is of this material world that takes first place is an idol. It’ll lead to your spiritual destruction. Okay, verse 8:

**I Corinthians 10:8**
“Neither let us commit fornication (sexual immorality), as some of them committed, (not just a few, quite a few) and fell in one day twenty-three thousand.” Just in one day that many got involved with the lewd and nude dancing around the golden calf. That’s what precipitated it, you know, that idol, the calf.

I Corinthians 10:9a

“Neither let us tempt Christ, (Now, I prefer to use the word test here, because I don’t think we can tempt God. You’re not going to get God to do something, but we can test His reaction. How’s He going to react to this?) as some of them also tested, and were destroyed of serpents.” Okay, now we come to yet another Old Testament account. Because of their gross sinfulness, what did God send into their midst? The fiery serpents.

My, they were dying like flies from the serpent bites. So Moses comes crying to God to do something. Save your people. What did God tell him? “Make a brazen serpent out of brass. Put it up on a high pole and anytime a Jew gets bitten, if he will look upon that serpent, he won’t be smitten with snakebite.” And that’s what they did.

Well again, symbolically, what was the picture? Well, brass in the Old Testament was a picture of judgment. The brazen altar is where sin was judged in the tabernacle or the Temple worship. The serpent, of course, was, I think, indicative of our mortal enemy. Satan is always depicted as a serpent. But in this case, it’s a brazen serpent. It’s going to be a place of judgment, which also takes us all the way to the cross where Christ was lifted up. And now, by simply looking at Him through faith in that finished work of the cross, we, too, are healed of our lost estate. So, all these things were constantly symbolized in these Old Testament accounts. All right, now in verse 10 we come to yet another shortfall of Israel.

I Corinthians 10:10

“Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.” In other words, God permitted Satan to come in and take the lives of multitudes of these Israelites because of their unbelief and their murmuring. They murmured against God, and the warning is even for us in this Age of Grace. We are to be aware of how we respond to our circumstances because of God’s mercy and grace.

I Corinthians 10:11a

“Now all these things (And Paul could have used many, many more instances.) happened unto them for examples (to be examples for us):…”
Now, I think I made the comment in my class in Muskogee the other night. Have you ever stopped to think that for the last 6,000 years everything that has happened is exactly according to God’s design? Now, that seems a little bit far-fetched, I know. But look, here we are 6,000 years after it all began, and we are right on schedule. Let’s back up 2,000 years. Galatians tells us that after 4,000 years of human history, on the exact right day, month, and year, what happened? Christ was born! Christ was born! Not a day late.

Now, we’ve come another 2,000 years and nothing is a day late. Nothing! Everything that’s happening around the planet is according to His permissive design. So, I don’t get all shook up at the Republicans or the Democrats or the United Nations or Europe or the Muslims or anything else. It’s all in God’s design and purpose. Now, that doesn’t mean we just become fatalists and say, oh well, what will be, will be. But on the other hand, we have to understand that in His Sovereignty, He is in control of everything. So, this Scripture tells me that even the bad things that happened to Israel were by His design, for our benefit. It’s amazing isn’t it? It’s amazing. But that’s our God. That’s the God of this Book!

_I Corinthians 10:11b_

“...for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” Now, that’s another half-hour right there. Why did Paul use that language at his time? Well, you remember when we introduced you to the Book of James, how I rehearsed the timeline coming out of the Old Testament. Remember that? How everybody in that century thought the Lord would be returning and setting up the Kingdom in their lifetime, in a matter of 10-12 years after the cross, because all the Old Testament spoke of it in that light. And even Paul.

Now, let me go to a verse, I think we’ve got time, in Hebrews. This makes it so clear that of all these writers of Scripture, not a one of them had a concept of a 2,000 year parenthetical period of time. They thought everything was going to be fulfilled in their short lifetime. All the writers of Scripture write in that view. And it is the same way here. Paul says that the ends of the world are come upon the people to whom he’s writing. All right, Hebrews chapter 1 starting at verse 1.

_Hebrews 1:1-2a_

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past unto the fathers by the prophets (That’s your Old Testament.), 2. Hath in these last days (What are they referring to as the last days? Christ’s earthly ministry!) spoken unto us by his Son,...”  Well, if God had not opened up the timeline, everything would have come right down the pike. But because of Israel’s rejection and their failure to believe who Jesus was,
He now turns to the Gentile world for these last 1,900 and some years. But again, was it in His Divine purpose? Sure! It wasn’t a surprise to God when Israel rejected everything. It wasn’t a surprise to God when He had to open up the Gentile world through the apostle. It’s all in His Divine plan. And that’s the miracle of Scripture.

Well anyway, that’s about as far as we’re going to get on this one. Come back to verse 13 in the few seconds that we have left. All of these things were just to show us that, regardless of what our circumstances are, God is faithful!

**I Corinthians 10:13**

“There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer (or permit) you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” Why? Because we’ve got all the instructions from the Old Testament to bear us up.
LESSON THREE * PART I

BUT NOW! (Christ is risen!)

I Corinthians 15:20

Again, we want to thank every one of you out there for your prayers and your letters. As I’ve said over and over on this program, our mail time is just an afternoon of one thrill after another. We want to also thank everyone for their financial help.

Okay, we’re still on the “But God’s and the But Now’s.” Let’s turn to I Corinthians chapter 15 verse 20, and its “But now.” I guess the main reason I’m doing this the way I am is because I hope this will give you an inkling of how you can study on your own. Just go through the Scriptures and find one of these. Find a But now or a But then or a But God, and you can just open up a Bible study all your own.

All right, I Corinthians 15, it’s the great resurrection chapter. There’s probably more taught on resurrection in this one chapter than all the rest of the Bible put together. Now, we came through the earlier verses in this chapter that we always use for the Gospel of Salvation, “How that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day.” Then, the chapter continues on more or less proving the resurrection of Christ. Now, for those of you under my teaching, the resurrection is so commonplace that you don’t think anything different. That just as sure as He died, He rose from the dead. But that’s not true even across Christendom and certainly not across the rest of the world.

Even in Israel - you want to remember that there was only a small portion of Jews who believed in the resurrection. You go back in the Old Testament and there’s very little mention of resurrection. Job speaks of it, definitely. But where it really comes to the surface is when Paul got in trouble, you remember, with the Jewish multitude, and he had to find a quick way out of his dilemma. So, he said, “I’m a Pharisee of the Pharisees and hope for the resurrection!” And wow! He had a religious fight, not between them and him, but between them and them!

Why? Because you see, the Sadducees did not believe in resurrection. The Pharisees did. So Paul was pretty cool on that one, as we’d say today. It just sort of gave him an escape. So you see, when we say the resurrection has to be emphasized, don’t think that everybody believes in the resurrection. No, they don’t. A lot of even modern theologians don’t believe in a visible, physical resurrection. They just believe that Christ resurrected spiritually. But you see, our Bible makes it so plain that He was raised from the dead bodily. Bodily! And that becomes our hope for life after death.
All right, now as he comes through the 15th chapter of Corinthians, I’m going to work toward verse 20. Now, remember what we’ve been talking about the last several tapings. We’re going to look at who wrote it. To whom was it written? What are the circumstances? What went before? What goes after? Remember? All right, now it is obvious Paul wrote it. And who’s he writing to? The Gentile believers at Corinth.

Consequently, it becomes appropriate for us today. He is again making a point, as I’ve already said, that Christ indeed arose from the dead.

All right, now again, to this group of Corinthians, Paul is going to make sure that they understand that Christ literally, physically, and visibly arose from the dead. All right, we’re at verse 5.

*I Corinthians 15:5*

“And that he was seen of Cephas, (That’s the other name for Peter.) *then of the twelve:*” In other words, after He came back from his ascent, you remember, He appeared unto all of them. Even ol’ doubting Thomas put his hand in the wounds in Christ’s hands and said, “*I believe.*”

*I Corinthians 15:6*

“*After that,* (after the Twelve had witnessed) *he was seen of over five hundred brethren at once;* (Now, that means it was believing Jews who had witnessed His resurrection body.) *of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some have fallen asleep.*”

Lately, in my Oklahoma classes, I’ve been stressing the literal time of Scripture. Too often, I think people read the Bible without realizing, well…when was this all written?

Well, you see, Paul began his ministry to the Gentiles in about 40 AD. Then from 40 AD to 58 AD, his work had to be progressed by fellow gifted men. There were no printed letters from the Apostle until about 58 AD. For eighteen years he was establishing churches throughout the Gentile world, which was for them was predominately Turkey and Greece and so forth, but without the benefit of anything written.

That’s why I Corinthians 12 and 14 emphasize the gift of prophesying. It didn’t mean the gift of telling the future like Isaiah and Daniel did, but it was speaking forth the Word of God, because they had no written letters of Paul. So, always get the setting. Here, now, in about 58 or 59 AD, Paul’s letters are beginning to circulate throughout his churches. But forever so long, they didn’t have that privilege. So here
again, the timing is exact as he said. They are still close enough to Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection that many of those witnesses were still living, naturally. We’re only about 30 years after the fact, so younger people in their 20’s and 30’s could very well still be alive at the time that Paul is writing.

_I Corinthians 15:6b-8a_

“…some have fallen asleep. (Naturally. A lot of the 500 people that witnessed the resurrection had already gone through physical death. All right, now verse 7, after the 500 have witnessed His resurrection--) 7. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. 8. And last of all he was seen of me also,…” Now, that should raise a question. Shouldn’t it?

Because after all, we’re quite sure that Paul had nothing to do with Jesus of Nazareth in His earthly ministry. He was probably on the perimeter. I’m sure that he was frothing at the mouth, because he hated everything that Jesus of Nazareth said and did. But he certainly was not around for the appearance of Christ after His resurrection.

But at the onset of Paul’s ministry, you see, the Lord appeared to him – first, outside the gate of Damascus and then those three years in Arabia. Now, it isn’t often I read things that are almost identical to what I teach. But I got a short, whatever you want to call it, article or whatever, from a gentleman who is certainly in accord with me on everything as far as I know, and he sends out a monthly newsletter. One of the last ones he sent out he specifically made this statement, and I’m going to put it in my next newsletter if I get permission, and if it isn’t copyrighted. He’s still living. He put it this way, that when “Paul had eye-to-eye contact (or whatever) with Christ for three years on Mt. Sinai.”

Well, you know that’s exactly the way I’ve always taught it. That Paul went down into Sinai and the next chapter in Galatians says “Sinai was in Arabia.” So, from that I gathered that, yes, Paul had three years with the Lord - eyeball to eyeball, face to face, and then went back and began his ministry. Okay, so now we have the record here that he was seen of Paul as well as Peter and the rest.

_I Corinthians 15:8b_

“…as of one born out of due time.” In other words, Paul’s conversion was a picture of the nation’s conversion, now coming close we think, at Christ’s return. But it was like one that was born preemie. All right, now verse 9. I’m going to take these all the way until we get to “But Now.”

_I Corinthians 15:9a_
“For I am the least of the apostles,…” Now, that’s where Paul’s humility comes in, and that’s why the hair stands up on the back of my neck when people accuse Paul of having been proud and arrogant and puffed up. No, he was not! He understood his authority. Absolutely he did. But he was never proud. Because whenever the Spirit prompted him to say something that he thought would indicate pride, he’d put in a little parenthesis, “I say this humbly” or “I say this as a man.” But here again, he wasn’t the least of the apostles. He was the greatest! But in his own humility he claims to be the least.

_I Corinthians 15:9b_

“…and I am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church (or the assembly) of God. (Going back to his days before his conversion) 10. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”

Now that always reminds me of his account to the Corinthians of how much he suffered for the sake of the Gospel. Again, I’m going to use it. I just never apologize for repeating these things. Turn with me to II Corinthians chapter 11 verse 22. This is what he’s alluding to up here in I Corinthians that “he labored more abundantly than the Twelve.” Yet it wasn’t Paul, it was God’s grace.

II Corinthians chapter 11 verse 22. Remember what I just said, the Corinthians were always downplaying his authority. Way back in I Corinthians, about chapter 1, I think, it says, some say, we follow Apollos. In another place it says we follow Peter. Another place it says we follow Jesus, but who are you? All right, now to confront that then, this is what he is writing in II Corinthians, probably just a year or two later.

_II Corinthians 11:22-23a_

“Are they (the Twelve, Apollos, and some of these others) Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. 23. Are they ministers of Christ? (Now, look at the parenthesis.) (I speak as a fool) (He was afraid they would catch him in what they thought was bragging. So he says…) (I speak as a fool) I am (What’s the word?) more;…”

Now, that’s what the Holy Spirit inspired the man to write. He was more than all the rest of them put together. And stop and think. After Pentecost, Peter and the Eleven hold forth for a few years, and then they just about disappear from the pages of this Book. Don’t they? Hardly anything more is spoken of the Twelve. All we know of them really, is from secular or ancient church history. So, they didn’t really have much
of a ministry once the first six or seven years have passed. This man goes for 25 years non-stop! Twenty-five years. All right, over that 25 year period of time then, look what he went through for the sake of the Gospel of the Grace of God.

**II Corinthians 11:23b**

“...in labors more abundant, (Now remember what he’s comparing to, the other apostles.) in stripes (beatings) above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Now, that’s a plural, so it must mean near-deaths. When he was at the very precipice of leaving the scene, but God would always permit him to come back.

**II Corinthians 11:24**

“Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.” That’s 39 whacks with a cat of nine tails. That was enough to kill a good man, and he went through five of them.

**II Corinthians 11:25a**

“Three times I was beaten with rods, (Now you know, you almost have to think he hadn’t even healed from the scourging, and then they would beat him with rods. Imagine! And yet he never slowed down.) once was I stoned,...” You know the account in the Book of Acts. They dragged him out of the city like, I always say, like a dead horse. They just literally tied a rope to his feet and dragged him out of the city and left him for dead.

**II Corinthians 11:25b-26a**

“...thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep. (And then, of course, the rest is routine.) 26. In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers,...” and so on and so forth. Well, all of that was what the Apostle Paul suffered for the sake of the Gospel of Salvation, whereas the other Twelve pretty much passed off the scene. All right, back to I Corinthians chapter 15 and verse 11.

**I Corinthians 15:11**

“Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye (Now, remember who’s he writing to? Gentiles here at Corinth) and so ye believed. 12. Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?” See, even in Paul’s ministry there would be people saying, “Well, I can believe that He died on that cross. I can believe that He died for the sins of the world, but I can’t believe that He was raised from the dead.” Now again, there’s enough in Scripture to tell us that this whole idea of being raised from the dead was
only for a few capable to believe. I’m going to take you back with Paul to Mars Hill, in Athens, when he was confronted by the intellectual elite of the day. What was it that caused their scorn of Paul’s preaching? Resurrection from the dead! They’d never heard that before! So, they accused him of almost being a nut. They said what else has this “babbler” got to talk about? But resurrection from the dead? That was an unknown thing amongst the ancients and even among the Gentiles. But here he comes now just hammering away at the fact that Christ was raised from the dead.

I Corinthians 15:13-14

“But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: 14. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching (What?) vain, and your faith is also vain.” He might as well have stayed home! He went through all the beatings and the sufferings for nothing, because at the core of our Gospel of salvation is the whole basis of our hope for eternity - it is resurrection power. Granted, He had to die for the sins of the world. He had to shed His blood. But that would have all been for nothing had He not capped it with the resurrection from the dead. At which time, as I’ve said so often, there was probably more power exerted overcoming the satanic forces, overcoming death and sin itself, than it took to create the universe. I really believe that. We never want to put down the power that is associated with the resurrection.

A verse is coming to mind. I didn’t intend to use it, but I think maybe we should. Go back to Romans chapter 1. We’ll start at verse 1.

Romans 1:1-4

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, 2. (Which he had promised before by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) 3. Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; (In other words, how that Christ was born of Mary and in the lineage of King David. Now verse 4 - This is the verse I want you to see.) 4. And declared (that is Jesus the Christ) to be the Son of God with (What?) power, (And what established that power?) according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:” Unheard of! Yet He did it! Never lose sight of the power of our Christian experience. Starting with our salvation and on through our whole Christian walk, it would be utterly impossible without this resurrection power. All right, back to chapter 15 and verse 15.

I Corinthians 15:15

“Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; (If there is no resurrection from the dead.) because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not
up, if so be that the dead rise not.” Now, that’s a little complicated way of saying that if there is no such thing as a resurrection, then Paul couldn’t preach that Christ rose from the dead. But, there IS resurrection power.

I Corinthians 15:16

“For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:” In other words, we’re just hammering it home – with God nothing is impossible! Nothing! And especially raising Christ from the dead. That was all part of the eternal purposes beginning with Genesis chapter 3, when there had to be a remedy for man’s sin. All right, next verse--

I Corinthians 15:17

“And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.” Now stop and think. Since you do believe in the resurrection of Christ, and you do believe in the finished work of the cross, do you sit here feeling like you’re hell bound sinners? No, you don’t! You know you’re not. You know you’ve got eternal bliss out in front of you. Why? Because Christ arose from the dead and we can believe it with all our heart.

In fact, driving up I got to thinking that once in a while, not often, but once in a while someone will accuse me of teaching an “easy-believism.” Just believe and you’re all right. No, that’s never the intent. When I say – believe – faith plus nothing, I’m talking about such a concerted trust that when you lay your head on the pillow at night, and if you should happen to have a heart attack before morning, you know where you’re going. It’s not just that you’ve assented and agreed – yes, historically, I guess He died and rose. No. If you’re a true believer today, you know without a shadow of a doubt that this is what makes your salvation possible. And you are trusting in it. And when you trusted it, you expected a change in lifestyle.

See, that’s too much the case with easy believism. Yes, they believe that Christ died, but they go right on and live the same way they lived last week and the week before? No, that’s not salvation. Salvation is going to bring about a change in attitude, a change in lifestyle. We’re going to love, as we’re going to see later this afternoon, if I get that far, we’re going to love the things we thought we hated. We’re going to hate the things we thought we loved. You’d better expect it if you’re going to become a believer.

I Corinthians 15:18

“Then they also who are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.” Those believers who have died, physically, believing in Christ - our loved ones who we are sure left this life
as believers - if Christ didn’t rise from the dead, they’re lost. They’re doomed. No matter what we think. But we don’t have to feel that way. Why? **Because we know that Christ arose from the dead!**

*I Corinthians 15:19*

“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most (What?) miserable.” Because we’re hanging onto something that has no substance if Christ didn’t rise from the dead. You know, that brings me right back to my tree and the shadow. Instead of grasping the tree, you’re trying to hold the shadow. But, oh, beloved, He **HAS** risen from the dead!

All right, one more verse before our time runs out. I want you to go ahead to Galatians with me. Galatians, chapter 2, verse 20. I think this should be the testimony of every true believer. Now, this is Paul’s personal testimony as he writes to the Gentiles up in Galatia.

**Galatians 2:20a**

“I am crucified with Christ:…” How have I always put it? When He died, I died. When He was buried, I was buried. When He arose in power, I arose and you and every believer with us.

**Galatians 2:20a**

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; (You don’t die physically when you become a believer.) *yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:*…” Now see, you won’t find language like that anywhere else in your Bible except Paul. Even the Lord Jesus didn’t put that kind of language in the mouth of His followers. This took the work of the cross and resurrection.

**Galatians 2:20b**

“…and the life which I now live in the flesh (day to day) *I live by the faith* (Or I like to say by the faithfulness.) of the Son of God, who loved me, and (What?) **gave himself for me.”**
Again, we’d like to welcome you to an informal - I call it a simple - Bible study. Again, we like to show our appreciation for everything that you do to help the ministry.

Now, we just got a new shipment of the one and only book we’ve ever published. It’s eighty-eight questions and answers from all the previous programs. If you’re interested in one of them, you can call the girls at the office. Eleven dollars and we send them out postage paid without any packaging or anything like that. We’ll send it out with an invoice. You pay for it when you get it.

Okay, now we’ve got a lot of ground to cover, so we’re going to get right back in where we left off in I Corinthians chapter 15. This is the verse we were heading for. We’re going to read it, and then we’re going to go on and go according to our rules of instruction. We’re not only going to look what went before, we’re going to look at what comes after. Okay, I Corinthians chapter 15 verse 20

I Corinthians 15:20

“But now (after all of this substantiation of the resurrection) Christ is risen from the dead, (Now, I’m moving the verb from the King James for emphasis. We’re not taking away. We’re not adding. I’m merely moving it. Instead of “now is Christ,” I like it for emphasis) but now Christ IS risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.” Now, I’m going to move on and then we’ll come back.

I Corinthians 15:21

“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.” Now, I’m going to comment on that one in a minute, because we may not get back to it right away. But you see, when Adam fell, sin and death entered, and Paul makes that so plain in Romans 5 “that by one man sin entered and death by sin.” But what might throw a curve at people that are untaught is the next statement that “by man came also the resurrection.” Well, what man are we talking about? The man Christ Jesus.

All right, so as Adam plunged the human race into sin and death, the man Christ Jesus raises us up out of sin and death. All right verse 22:
I Corinthians 15:22

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Now again, that needs some comment. “All” are going to be made alive? Well, we’ve got to look at it in two different perspectives. Believers, on the one hand, are going to be made alive for an eternity in God’s presence. But the lost of all the ages are also going to be resurrected for a life of separation from God.

Now, maybe I’d better back that up with Scripture, because again, I’m quite sure that there are multitudes of people out there, even good church people, who do not know that this is in their Bible. Turn to John’s Gospel chapter 5, dropping down to verse 28. If you’ve got a red-letter edition, it’s in red, so it’s the Lord Himself speaking. And He says:

John 5:28

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, (And don’t you doubt for a minute that it’s coming.) in the which (That is in that final hour.) all that are in the graves shall hear his voice.” How many? All! Lost and saved - there will be no one escaping this resurrection. All right, but let’s be careful now.

John 5:29a

“And shall come forth; they who have done good, (Now, I’ve always stopped and analyzed this. How do you do “good” so far as God is concerned? One word. Faith! So, people of faith will come forth.) unto the resurrection of life; (To eternal life) and they who have done evil,...” Now, those, of course, are the other side of the coin. And they’re what? No Faith!

You know, I always like to show the examples, all the way up through the Old Testament, of men who had no faith. Who was the first one? Cain. What was his problem? He was probably a nicer guy than Abel. But, he was destitute of faith, and as such he could not do what God told him to do. So, he was rejected. All right, the next one is Esau. You know old Isaac loved Esau. So, he wasn’t all that bad a guy. But yet, he was rejected. Why? He had no faith! What God said didn’t mean a thing to him. So, all the way up through Scripture you see these examples of people who were rejected by God because they had no faith. God’s Word didn’t mean a thing to them!

Well, it’s the same way today. What’s happening to the fabric of our society? It’s rotting right in front of our eyes. Why? Because our American people have lost faith in the Word of God. All right, so here we have the two categories of people – the lost
of all the ages who were destitute of faith. But we also have the saved of all the ages who had faith. All right, those who are lost will go…

*John 5:29b*

“…unto the resurrection of condemnation.” Okay, now I guess I have to go back to Revelation to explain that. Let’s go back to Revelation chapter 20. Now, John the Revelator, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, tells us something that Jesus didn’t. And that is that between the resurrection of the just and the resurrection of the lost will be a thousand years. A thousand years. The resurrection of the believers will all take place before the Kingdom is set up, because, after all, everybody’s going to have to be part and parcel of the eternalness of the Kingdom. But, the lost will not come on the scene again until after the Kingdom has run its course at the Great White Throne. So, there’s a thousand year interval between the resurrection of the just and the resurrection of the lost.

All right, here we’ve got it in Revelation chapter 20, and we have to start at verse 4, where John writes:

*Revelation 20:4a*

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus,…” Which, I think, speaks of the Tribulation period. And that should ring a bell, I think, as we see more and more of the Muslim world and their penchant for beheading. It tells us that we’re getting close to this Tribulation time.

*Revelation 20:4b-5a*

“…and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, (So, these are Tribulation people.) *neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.* 5. *But, the rest of the dead* (See, even these Tribulation saints will be brought back to a resurrection experience in time for the Kingdom, but the rest of the dead – the lost of all the ages--) *lived not again until the thousand years were finished.*” See that? There will be no resurrection of lost people out of Hell to the Great White Throne until after the thousand year Kingdom reign. So, that’s a thousand year period of time between the resurrection of the just and the resurrection of the lost. All right, now, it’s kind of confusing - the last part of verse 5.

*Revelation 20:5b*
“This is the first resurrection.” This speaking of that which is in verse 4 and before that. So, for clarification, again, the resurrection of the just takes place before the millennium. The resurrection of the lost, headed for their eternal doom, will take place after the thousand year reign.

Okay, now let’s come back to I Corinthians chapter 15 and finish reading before we go back to the “but now.”

I Corinthians 15:23

“But every man in his own order:…” Now, I’m taking this slowly on purpose. “Every man in his own order.” Now, every commentary I’ve ever read, that word order is a military term in the Greek. And, if you know anything of military, you have your organizational chain of command. You start from the very smallest, which is the platoon and the company, and then you’ll have a battalion and a regiment and a division and an army. Those are all segments of military organization. Now, if any of you have been writing to young men in service, that’s exactly how their address reads. They will be such and such a person, in such and such a battalion, in such and such an area. It’s all by military organization.

All right, now the resurrections are going to be likened to that. Every segment of these people to be resurrected: first, the saved, the believers; and then the lost, they’re going to come in their own organizational area. They’re not going to be all mixed up. It’s going to be precisely according to God’s program. Okay, now I think I’m set to go back up to verse 20 where it says, “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.” Or have died.

All right, now one of the rules of thumb for Bible study is to always go back to the place of first mention. Now, where do you first see the word firstfruits? Well, back when Israel came out of Egypt. They’re going to go into the Promised Land, and God is beginning to give them instructions. So, let’s go all the way back to Leviticus chapter 23. This is probably the first place that it’s mentioned time-wise. Now, it’s also used in Exodus, but it’s more plainly used here in Leviticus chapter 23 verse 10. Got it? Leviticus 23 verse 10 and this is part of the seven feasts of Jehovah that Israel still celebrates, for the most part, even today. Let’s start with verse 9.

Leviticus 23:9-10

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 10. Speak to the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give unto you, (the Promised Land, the Land of Canaan) and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a
sheaf of the (What?) firstfruits (Plural) of your harvest unto the priest:” All right, now what were they to do?

Well, I’m going to draw a little 40 acre patch on the board. As I was mulling this over last night or this morning, you know we just came back from over there in Greece and Turkey last fall. We happened to be in an area with tremendous amounts of cotton. But, as we were going through that area, and I pointed it out to Iris, I said, “Look, cotton, cotton, cotton, but it’s all little 15-20 acre patches. A big, old, American machine wouldn’t even be able to turn around from one end to the other.” So, I’m very aware that when I talk about ancient Israel, they probably didn’t have big 40-acre plots of ground. But we in America know what I’m talking about. When you get out into our wheat country, you can probably see sections without a ditch or anything going through it. We’re going to talk in terms of language that most of us understand. We’ll just say, for example, that we’ve got a 40-acre field of wheat in ancient Israel. And we’ll keep it square just for sake of clarity, because I know that most of theirs were all kinds of shapes.

All right, now, as the crop was ripening, and, you know, I mentioned, I think it was in the last taping, that at the time our Bible was put together, probably 99 percent of the people were what? Farmers! Shepherders. Goat herders. Cattle herders. It was farming of one sort or another; and so, so much of Scripture is written in a farmer’s language, because that’s something that everybody understood.

Now, I always come back to old Tyndale, when he was trying to get the Bible into England. I’ve said it over and over on this program. What was his final prayer? Oh, that every plowboy in England could get a copy of the Word of God. What’s a plowboy? Well, he’s a farmer. How much education did he have? Not much. Just enough to read. But that’s all you need, because this Book is written in plain language.

All right, so then, in language that anybody can understand, the Scripture says that Israel was to go into that field of ripening wheat and, again, like I said, if you know anything of farming at all, when a field of small grain begins to ripen, whether it’s wheat or rye or some of these other small grains, what happens? Here and there you get a stem that ripens first. You’ve all seen it. You go up through Kansas early in the spring, and it’s beautiful. Most of it is still kind golden yellow, but in the middle there are bright yellow stems of ripened grain. All right, Israel would go in and pluck those until they had a sheaf, and they would take it to the priest for a wave offering. It was called, then, the offering of firstfruits. So, what was it really describing? The crop that’s coming! You got the picture? That was a sample of the crop that is soon coming for harvest!
All right, now we have the example of that since Christ is the first of the firstfruits. No one...now, I can’t emphasize this enough, no one was ever resurrected from the dead before Jesus. He had to be the first!

Matthew 27 and, you know, every time I teach this I have to think of a dear old saint who’s gone on to be with the Lord. I hadn’t been in Oklahoma but, I guess, a few weeks, and I was already teaching someplace, and a dear old guy came up and said, “Les, who are these people that came out of the grave while Christ was on the cross?” I said, “What?” “Oh,” he says, “A bunch of them did.” I said, “Impossible!” “Well,” he said, “That’s what it says.” I said, “Now, wait a minute, that can’t be. Let’s go find it.” So, we went and got my Bible and opened up to Matthew 27 and I said, “Hey, Brother, you’re just like everybody else, you read, but you don’t read!” And this is what we read. Have you all got it? Now, this is exactly what I’m talking about. People read and they don’t read. This is at the crucifixion.

**Matthew 27:51-53a**

“And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; (Here’s the verse that he had misread, and he was an elderly gentleman.) **52. And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who slept arose,** (Well, where did he connect that? While He was on the cross. Just like the veil rent while He was on the cross. I said, “Hey, you didn’t read the next verse!” Well, what does the next verse say?) **53. And came out of the graves after his resurrection,**…”

You see the difference? They couldn’t come out while He was on the cross. They had to come out after His resurrection, because Jesus had to be the first! Now then, I maintain that since Paul writes in Romans 15 that “all these things were written aforetime (In other words, before he came on the scene, which would include the Gospels, not for our doctrine, but--) for our (What?) learning.”

All right, now then, you start putting some of these things together. If Christ alone is the firstfruit, in order to make a sheaf there had to be what? Many. All right, so here they are. After Christ arose, many of these believing Jews--

**Matthew 27:53b**

“…and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.” Again, proof of the resurrection. But, they were really fulfilling the idea of firstfruits, which meant what? There’s a big harvest coming! You got the picture? Okay, as this field of grain is now ripening, they’ve gone in and they’ve taken out just the individual heads of
ripening grain. They take it out, make a sheaf, and take it to the Temple as a wave offering. It’s the firstfruits.

All right, we’ve covered that part of the order of the resurrections. First the firstfruits. All right, I Corinthians 15 verse 23:

**I Corinthians 15:23**

*But every man in his own order:* (Company or battalion or division - whatever military term you’d like to use.) **Christ the firstfruits;** (That’s the first company.) **afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.** Well, now I’m glad I did the way I did. We went to John and saw the resurrection. Which resurrection comes first? The believers!

Okay, now that’s what Paul is referring to. After the firstfruits were taken out, even though now it’s been almost 2,000 years, yet in God’s mind how long is 2,000 years? Two days, yes, or a snap of the finger. So, it’s still a valid prophecy that all the believers are going to be called forth in resurrection. But, as we’re also going to see, there’s going to be believers who are still alive. Well, God’s not going to kill them and then resurrect them; He’s simply going to change them.

All right, now let’s look at the very concept. Afterward, they that are Christ’s, every true believer, will come forth at Christ’s beckoning call. Now, of course, we have to go back and look at one other concept from Leviticus. I think I want Leviticus 19 verse 9. All got it?

**Leviticus 19:9**

*And when ye reap the harvest of your land,* (We’re coming right back to our 40 acres up here on the board.) **thou shalt not wholly** (or completely) **reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest.**

Now then, it tells us in another place, what was the purpose of that? For the poor. So that there would be something left for the poor. All right, let’s continue with our diagram, if I may. As they would harvest this field, they had to leave the corners and they had to have gleanings. You pick that up again in the Book of Ruth, as well. Ruth went to the field of Boaz to glean. For the sake of the poor.

All right, now in my analogy, we’re going to come back to I Corinthians 15, again. We’re going to look at the two aspects, or the two groups, of believers that are going to be called forth: first in resurrection from the dead and then those who go through a change to prepare them for eternity. But, let’s not lose our concept here that
we’re dealing with a harvest of people. We’re going to center on the believers now. The unbelievers are going to have to wait a thousand years after all this. In this harvest of believers, there’s going to be one segment that is the main part of the field. I feel this is the Body of Christ, because it is by far the largest single group of believers.

Now, let’s look at all the various groups that we’re talking about. You’ve got the Old Testament first, from Adam until Abraham. Not many. But there were a few. All right, then you’ve got the rest of the Old Testament believers all the way from Abraham through Christ’s earthly ministry. I’m going to even bring them all the way on up to the conversion of Saul of Tarsus and the beginning of the Body of Christ.

All right, numbers-wise…now, you’ve got to do some thinking here. Numbers-wise that will be nothing compared to the number in the Body of Christ. Now, you’ve got to do a little thinking. All through your Old Testament economy, you really had only one group of people that even had a possibility of salvation, and who was it? Israel. The Jew. And they were never more than ten million people. And most of them were not believers. So, how many have you got over a period of years? Not many! Even at the time of Christ, and I’ve read this more than once, there were probably not more than 500 million people on the whole planet. Half a billion.

All right, but since the time of Christ, you see, we’ve been doubling every so often. The last time we doubled, I think, was someplace in the 1940’s or 50’s. We went from three to six billion people. Well, we’re already close to seven billion, and the numbers are just coming up tremendously. All right, now just based on numbers alone, can you see how many more people will be involved in the Body of Christ - called out during this Age of Grace from all the world and not just the little nation of Israel - compared to the Old Testament and so forth. So, just based on logic then, the Body of Christ, of which you and I are a part, will comprise the main harvest.
Okay, once again it’s good to have you all back from your coffee break. We’re going to go right back in where we left off and continue our “But Now” up there in I Corinthians 15 verse 20. Then we’ll pick up where we left off on the resurrections. You remember, we showed in the last half-hour how Jesus spoke of the resurrection of everybody that’s ever become a human being, but we’re going to divide them into two sections - the lost and the saved. The saved are going to be resurrected first, and then a thousand years afterwards the lost will be resurrected to come up before the Great White Throne Judgment.

All right, we were in I Corinthians chapter 15 verse 23. This is a crucial verse, and as we’re already showing, it’s a verse that you can just pick apart and pick apart. Remember, we’re talking about the resurrection.

“I Corinthians 15:23a

“But every man” (Now, we’re talking about believers when Paul writes. He hardly ever makes mention of the unbelieving world. But every believer--) in his own order: (A military term speaking of organization. So, every man in his own company, or in his own battalion, whatever the case you want to use.) Christ the firstfruits;…” We’ve already covered that, that when He was resurrected back there in Jerusalem, shortly after, many of the believing saints who had died were also resurrected and went into the city and were seen of many, and then, evidently, they went on up into Glory. But they fulfilled the Old Testament type of “firstfruits,” which was a sampling of the harvest that’s just about ready.

Then we pointed out in our last half-hour that if they had a field of wheat, and they harvested the main field, under Law they were instructed to purposely leave the four corners and the gleanings for the poor, so they could come in and, without paying anything, pick up what they could. But don’t forget, we’ve got the main harvest that has been taken out. All right, now the question came up at break: in the resurrections then, where am I putting the corners and the gleanings? Well, like I ended the half-hour, when you base it on numbers, all the Old Testament believers put together, as well as the Tribulation believers, I put in the corners and the gleanings, because they’re not part of the Body of Christ. They cannot be.
Then the question came up: who’s in the Body of Christ? It is only those who have been saved by believing for their salvation in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ plus nothing. And I’m emphasizing the *plus nothing*. Because, if I understand Scripture, if people think that they have gained salvation by believing that Christ died, but they also have to do something else to complete it, then I’m afraid they’re missing it. Now, I don’t want to seem too narrow, but this is a narrow Book. And that’s the way it puts it.

All right, now then, I’m going to specifically show you where I think the Body of Christ began, and consequently, from that point up until the Rapture, which we’ll probably look at either this half-hour or the next, that is the Body of Christ. Whether we’re Asian, or African, or American, or Russian, it makes no difference. Whether we’re Protestant or this or that it, makes no difference. If we are genuinely saved by Paul’s Gospel, we are a member of the Body of Christ.

All right, let me show you why I feel that way. Turn ahead with me to Timothy. First Timothy and to me the language is so plain and so simple. I guess that’s why a lot of theologians can’t see it. It’s too simple. You know, I was reading an interesting article, maybe I referred to it in my last taping. I don’t like to repeat things too much, but this just hit the nail on the head.

I was reading an article by a very highly educated scholarly seminary professor. He was being critical of a book written by one of his peers, who was also a highly educated scholarly professor. But the guy I’m reading said, “The problem with my dear brother is he can only write in high scholarly language that nobody but a scholar like himself can understand.” And I said, “Hallelujah! There’s a guy who knows what he’s talking about.” Because that’s exactly what they do, they get so high up in their language and their words that I can’t understand them. And most people can’t. You’ve got to be a scholar to understand them.

Well, I’m going to keep this simple and here it is, I Timothy chapter 1 starting at verses 15 and 16. Now, you’ve got to remember, and we’ve stressed this so much over the years, that coming out of the Old Testament everything was Jewish. There was an occasional Gentile, but I always call that the exceptions. Christ began His earthly ministry by telling the Twelve “Go NOT to the Gentiles, or the Samaritans, go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Now, that’s plain English, isn’t it?

All right, so they maintained that all the way through Christ’s earthly ministry. All the way through the early Acts Peter never addresses Gentiles. It’s all the Nation of Israel. And Israel is rejecting and rejecting and rejecting, and I always call the stoning of Stephen the crescendo, just like a symphony. It’s the crescendo of their
unbelief. Then we’re introduced to the next player on the stage of biblical history. Who was it? Saul of Tarsus. The Apostle Paul.

All right, then in chapter 9 God tells Ananias up there in Damascus, I’m going to send this man far hence to what people? The Gentiles. Now, that was a stark, stark turn in the road. Everything has been Jew, Jew, Jew! And now all of a sudden God says, I’m going to take this man to the Gentiles. All right, now based on that Damascus road experience, when the Apostle Paul then became the Apostle of the Gentiles, now we want you to see how he explains it here in his letter to Timothy.

*I Timothy 1:15*

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” Now, you’ve all heard sermons on this verse. I know you have. And you’ve all heard it preached that since He could save the worst man that ever lived, God could save anybody. But that’s not what it means. They have twisted it all out of shape. Just like Peter says they do (II Peter 3:16) - that these people, when they read Paul’s epistles, “they twist them, to their own destruction.” The word *chief* has never meant worst. It is always the *first* or the headman.

Now, I’ll give you a couple of references to prove my point. Go all the way up to Luke 22 verse 26. Now, if you want to check me out, you get home this evening and you go grab your Strong’s concordance, and you look up the word *chief* in Timothy and find out the Greek word out of which it’s translated. All right, now you do the same thing with each one of these references. You go find the word *chief* as it’s used in Luke and you’ll find it’s the very same identical Greek word that is used in Timothy. So, these all mean the same thing. All right, now I’m going to put you to the test.

*Luke 22:26*

“But you shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.” Now, Jesus is speaking, and He’s drawing a picture that let him who is the older actually behave as if he were the younger. And let the person who is actually the chief person, let him act like he’s the one who is serving. You got the picture? And he that is “*chief*” be like the one who is serving.

Now, goodness sake, is Jesus using the word here as someone who is wicked and a sinner above all sinners? No! It’s a status symbol. Let the person who is chief be humble enough to act as though he is just the opposite. But he is the headman in this particular setting. All right, let’s move on up to the next one in Acts chapter 14 verse
12. Now, this is Bible study! This is comparing Scripture with Scripture. I hope you realize that. This isn’t just what I think; this is what the Book says.

Now, here Paul and Barnabas are up in Asia Minor ministering amongst these Gentile pagan cities. Now remember, they’re pagan. They’re all wrapped up in gods and goddesses. All right, so let’s look at verse 11 as well.

**Acts 14:11-12**

“And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, (in other words, in their particular language) The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. (See, that’s pagan mentality.) 12. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and they called Paul, Mercury, because he (Paul) was the chief speaker.” Because he was the worst? Because he was a drunken murderer? Because he was all these other bad things that preachers like to put on that word chief? No. He was what? The most authoritative. They could tell that Paul had more authority than Barnabas. Simple enough.

All right, next one, go to Acts chapter 28 verse 7. In every one of these it is the same Greek word. All got it? Acts 28 verse 7, this is when they were shipwrecked on the little island of Melita.

**Acts 28:7**

“In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.” A wicked murderer? A drunk? Or any horrible sinner that you could think of? No! He was a good man, but he was the what? The governor of the island. He was the chief man.

Am I making my point? All right, I’ve got one more, Romans chapter 3 verses 1 and 2. Because this is imperative that you understand the true meaning of the word chief in I Timothy, otherwise what I’m saying next won’t mean a thing.

**Romans 3:1-2**

“What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? 2. Much every way: (Oh, they had all these good things going for them. They had the blessings of God. They were His covenant people. They had the Temple, and they just had all these.) chiefly, because unto them (the Nation of Israel) were committed the (What?) the oracles (word) of God.” Now, does that mean they were the worst people on earth? No, they were the most favored! And the chief reason that they were favored is that they were given the Word of God. So, what does the
word chief mean? The best! The highest. The first. The most authority. Whatever you want to put on it, never does it mean the worst. All right, now come back to I Timothy.

I Timothy 1:15

“This is a faithful saying, worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save (What?) sinners; of whom I am chief.” The worst? No! He’s the head of the line! He’s the first one in! Now, look at the next verse.

I Timothy 1:16a

“Howbeit for this cause…” Now, you’ve got to do this carefully, or you lose it – for what cause? Because he’s the first! He’s the headman. He’s the leader. He’s the captain. No, I don’t want to put captain, because Hebrews calls Jesus the captain. Jesus is the captain of our salvation, and here comes the Apostle Paul following Jesus, and we follow Paul. That’s the way it is in Scripture.

I Timothy 1:16b

“…for this cause I obtained mercy, (Where? On the road to Damascus when he was breathing out threats and murderers to those believing Jews, and the Lord intervened and saved him right there on the road.) that in me first. (Got it? That in me first!) Jesus Christ might show forth (through this man - Apostle Paul) all longsuffering, for a pattern…” Now again, analyze the word. What’s a pattern? Well, it’s that which comes first.

You don’t make a dress without the pattern. You don’t build a building without the blueprint. That’s the pattern. All right, so Paul now becomes the pattern, the likes of which, every other believer is going to be. A sinner saved by grace! Okay?

I Timothy 1:16c

“…for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.” Now again, analyze it. A pattern, or the first prototype, or whatever you want to call it, to “them which should hereafter believe.” What does the hereafter mean? From the time of Paul’s conversion on, every believer falls into that same Body of Christ of which this Apostle is now announcing.

Now, I always remind people in my phone calls and if I answer in a letter, remember you will never see anything concerning the Body of Christ anywhere else in your Bible. Nowhere – except in Paul’s epistles. Now, what does that tell us? Just what
these verses are telling us, that the only people who become members of the Body of Christ are those who have come in behind the salvation of the head of the line. The pattern – which would be the Apostle Paul.

All right, now you can underline that word “hereafter,” because who does that push out of the Body of Christ? All the Old Testament believers, Christ’s earthy ministry believers, those who became believers after Pentecost and before Saul’s conversion. They can’t be in the Body of Christ because they’re not “hereafter.” Now, I’m a stickler for language, and that’s where I get my ideas. This means what it says. That believers who come in after Saul’s conversion and are saved by trusting Paul’s Gospel, “that Christ died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose from the dead,” automatically become members then of the Body of Christ. There’s no other way.

And once you’re a member of the Body of Christ, you can never be taken out. That’s just as concrete. Let me take you back to Romans chapter 8 verse 35 to the end. As you’re looking at that, I think you’re all aware of how Jesus put it back there in John’s Gospel. That once the believer was His, no one could pluck them out of His hand. Isn’t that the way He put it? No one can pluck them out of my hand. Now, that’s how Jesus spoke of those believers under His economy. Paul puts it in a little different language, and it means the same thing.

*Romans 8:35*

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” Can any of that take a believer out? No. Next verse.

*Romans 8:36-39*

“As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37. Nay, in all these things (Paul says) we (as Grace Age believers now, as members of the Body of Christ) are more than conquerors (Not through our efforts, but how?) through him who loved us. 38. For I am persuaded, (he writes) that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Almost identical with what Jesus said, “Nothing can take them out of my hand.” You see that comparison?

Once we are truly saved and are members of the Body of Christ, we can never be jerked out of it.
All right, now I’ve got five minutes left. I wasn’t going to use this one, but I’ve got time and I’m going to. Now, back up to I Corinthians chapter 3; and I have another portion of Scripture that shows beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Apostle Paul was the first member of the Body of Christ. Every one of us have now come in behind him and taken our place in the Body. I Corinthians chapter 3 and we’re going to start at verse 9. I Corinthians chapter 3 verse 9 and for goodness sake don’t forget what you just read in I Timothy, because this is almost going to say the same thing, only a little different description, a little different setting.

_I Corinthians 3:9_

“For we are laborers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.” Now before, we were talking about Paul being the first and the chief and we fall in behind. Now, he’s talking about a building situation. And the first thing you’re going to do, if you’re going to have a building that’s going to last over a period of time, as Jesus spoke it in the Gospels, you don’t build on sand, you build on what? Foundation. That’s the key! All right, here we come.

_I Corinthians 3:10_

“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, (Now, he’s not being called the chief here, he’s being called the master builder. And as a wise master builder--) I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereupon. (We’re all part of it, of building on that foundation.) But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.” Now, here’s where we have to be careful. Does Paul claim to be the foundation? No! He’s the contractor. He lays the foundation.

You know, and I always try to make the point, goodness sakes, everybody says that the church began back in Acts chapter 2 and Peter began the church. Then this is a lie! Because Peter is not the one who laid the foundation, Paul did. That’s what the Book says. See?

_I Corinthians 3:11_

“For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus.” He’s the foundation. That finished work of the cross is the only message that Paul knows. All right, jump back up to verse 10, the key word is “master builder.” What does that mean? Just like chief. He was the one to whom God gave instructions on how to build the Body of Christ. And he didn’t wait until it was half finished and then come in and finish the job. He began it.
Now again, some people like to give Jesus credit for beginning the church. No, Jesus didn’t begin the church. He did everything that needed to be done, but He Himself didn’t organize or start the church, He left that for the Apostle Paul. So, he becomes the master builder, the chief contractor; following him comes every other believer of the Church Age.

All right, then he shows, in the next few verses that we’ve taught previously, that since we’re in a building picture here, once our salvation is based on the foundation of Christ Jesus which Paul laid, now we begin a work of what? Service. Good works, for reward. Not for salvation whatsoever. Our works must be for reward.

All right, now I’m going to have to fudge a little bit. I don’t want to go beyond the end of this program to go into the next part, but just get the picture now. The Apostle Paul is the Apostle of the main harvest – the Body of Christ. During which time you’ve got the great increase in population. The Gospel of Salvation has not been confined to one group of people. It has gone out to the whole world. So, we can be confident that the greatest number of believers of any of these groups has to be the Body of Christ, because there weren’t that many in Israel. There certainly weren’t that many in the Book of Acts. And there won’t be that many during the Tribulation, even though we know there will be a great harvest of souls in the seven years of Tribulation.
Okay, we’re going to jump right back in where we left off. And remember, we’ve been talking about the harvest in Israel. First, they were to go in and take a sampling of the newly ripening grain, called the first fruit. That was fulfilled with Christ at His resurrection and those that came out of the graves and went into Jerusalem and evidently went on up into glory.

Next, Israel was to come in and harvest the main part of the field. After they had harvested the main part, they left the four corners and gleanings. You remember in the Book of Ruth how she went in and gleaned in the field of Boaz. Well, that was the system of harvest - the main field and then leaving the corners and the gleanings.

Now, as we’ve been showing in the last couple of programs, I feel the main harvest is the Body of Christ, the Grace Age believers who have come into God’s program of salvation following the Apostle Paul.

Now, I’m again going to review the big picture. Everything from especially the call of Abraham all the way through to the very end, if you drop Paul’s epistles out, just take Paul’s church letters out of the picture for the time being, and you will have God dealing with Israel in view of the King and the Kingdom. By the way, it won’t be long and we’ll be finishing Hebrews in the daily program. That’s especially for you here in the audience. We’ll be finishing Hebrews, and for goodness sakes be sure you catch my introduction to James and Peter and John. We used four programs, I think, just for introduction. What I’m showing is just that. That all the way through Scripture everything is God dealing with Israel in view of the King and the Kingdom.

Now, they rejected it at His first coming. Peter and the Eleven pick it up in the early Book of Acts, and it’s still the same premise that if they would repent of their sin of crucifying their Messiah, God would send Jesus Christ. Well, for what purpose? To bring in the Kingdom. But, Peter says, the Tribulation has to come first. See, they’re not going to drop anything out of prophecy. Then when the King and the Kingdom would come, that would take us to eternity.

But, God opened that timeline and let Israel go into the dispersion and saved the Apostle Paul in Acts chapter 9. Then we have other references that show that He’s going to call out a group of Gentiles for His name’s sake and prepare them to be God’s people for
eternity **without** Israel. Israel is gone on into dispersion, and the Gospel of Grace is now gone to the whole human race, calling out this main harvest, which I feel is the Body of Christ.

All right, now since the Body of Christ is an interlude, if you want to call it that, completely isolated from the Old Testament programs, you can’t push it back up in there. It won’t fit. You can’t take the Body of Christ and bring it on up with Israel in the Tribulation, like a lot of people are trying to do. It won’t fit. We are a people of grace! In the Tribulation, it’s going to be Israel under the Law. They’re going to have a Temple and all the rest of it, so the Church just will not fit in that timeline for Israel. So, what has to happen? God has to take it out of the way. And then He will finish the prophecies made to Israel.

All right, the taking out of the Body of Christ then, we pick up in this same chapter of I Corinthians chapter 15 and drop down to verse 51. Now again, I can’t emphasize it enough. Nowhere in Scripture, outside of Paul’s epistles, will you find any kind of a reference to the Rapture. Now, I know some people like to try John’s Gospel chapter 14 verses 1 through 4 where it says, *“Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions, I would have showed you…”* and so on and so forth. *“And if I go, I will come again unto you that where I am there ye may be also.”* That was Jesus talking to Israel. He was talking to the Twelve. That has nothing to do with, as I see it, the Body of Christ.

So, the only place you can find any reference to this glorious work of God saving non-Jews particularly, by faith and faith alone in that finished work of the cross, and we’re brought into the Body of Christ following in the steps of the Apostle Paul. You won’t find it anywhere else. Nowhere! There’s not even a hint of it in the Old Testament. Jesus never alluded to it, as we were just talking at break time. Well, isn’t the church what He was talking about when He said, *“Upon this rock I will build my church.”* No. The word ecclesia is always translated either church or assembly, and it’s not always the same group. So, when Jesus was speaking, *“...I will build my church,”* He was not talking about the Body of Christ. He was talking about Israel. Israel is God’s called out ecclesia. So, I’ll repeat it again. You cannot find anything concerning the Body of Christ; you cannot find anything concerning what we call the Rapture, anyplace but Paul. And that’s why most people miss it.

You know, some of my listening audience has taken my little illustration of the blender and they have come up with a new English word - blenderize. All the time now we’re getting letters where they say, all I hear is what’s blenderized. Well, you know what I’m talking about. They take the Scriptures and they mix it all up and parcel it out. And I don’t. You’re going to get it bit by bit, and it’s all going to keep separated in its own
place. All right, here we have the Rapture. It is totally insulated from anything else in Scripture.

_I Corinthians 15:51a_

“**Behold, I show you a (What?) mystery;...**” Now, that’s a Pauline term. He uses it throughout his letters, speaking of things that had been kept secret from all the rest of the writers of Scripture. Isaiah knew nothing of it. David knew nothing of it. Peter certainly knew nothing of it. This was a Pauline revelation. And all of his doctrines, he refers to them the same way. As a mystery – let me show you what I’m talking about.

Back up to Romans chapter 16, so that you know what I’m talking about - verse 25. You know, I’ve asked my seminars around the country, “Have you ever heard this preached on a Sunday morning?” Never. “Have you ever seen it in a Sunday School class quarterly?” Never. Why? Because they don’t want it. They don’t want truth. It flies in the face of everything that they think they’ve believed over in the four Gospels, which were under Law. But it’s what the Book says! That’s my favorite cliché. This is what the Book says.

_Romans 16:25a_

“**Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel,**...” And who’s writing? Paul. To whom? Gentiles. All right, so what’s Paul’s Gospel? Believing in your heart for your salvation “**That Christ died for you, He was buried, and He arose from the dead the third day.**”

_Romans 16:25_

“**Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept (What?) secret (How long?) since the ages began.**” Those secrets were revealed by this apostle. Now, is that so hard to comprehend? All of these Pauline truths, and especially the ones he refers to as “**mystery,**” were kept secret in the mind of God from the time of Adam all the way until He revealed it to this Apostle, probably in those three years out in the desert.

Secret. And don’t lose that! Nobody else knew what he was talking about. In fact, let me take you back to Peter. I use it all the time. Most of you should know it from memory by now. II Peter chapter 3, and drop down to verses 15 and 16. Now this is Peter, the beloved apostle, but at the end of his life, not up there at the beginning. He doesn’t say something like this in Acts chapter 2, 3 and 4. But at the end of his life,
probably around 68 AD, the Temple will be gone in a couple more years. Probably at the same time, that Paul is about to be martyred down there at Rome. I think Peter was in Babylon. But, look what he writes.

**II Peter 3:15a**

“And account (understand) that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul according to the wisdom given unto him…” (From where? From Heaven! From the ascended Lord. Not from Jerusalem. Not from the Twelve. But from the ascended Lord. Now remember, we’re at the end of all the writings of Scripture.

**II Peter 3:15b-16a**

“…has written unto you; (probably a reference to the Book of Hebrews) 16. As also in all his epistles, (all of them – Romans through Philemon plus the Book of Hebrews. All from the pen of the Apostle Paul) speaking in them of these things; (Salvation. How to become a believer and fit for eternity.) in which (Paul’s epistles) are some things hard to be understood,…” That’s Peter! Peter can’t comprehend some of these things that Paul writes. That’s what it says! And I don’t know what he’s referring to. I’ve got an idea, but yours is just as good as mine. But Peter says Paul’s got things that I can’t understand. So, he can’t even comment on them.

**II Peter 3:16b**

“…which they that are unlearned (In other words, multitudes of theologians and preachers fall into this category. They’re--) unlearned and unstable (Consequently, what do they do? They--) twist (what Paul writes) as they do also the other scriptures,…” Now, you know what I like about that statement? That term “other Scriptures” What does that tell you? Every word that Paul writes is Scripture! Don’t ever let anybody tell you that the Apostle Paul doesn’t belong in this Bible. Oh, they’ll try. I hear it all the time. “Paul doesn’t even belong in here. We don’t have a thing to do with him.” But Peter confirms it, that everything that Paul writes is Scripture. It’s the Word of God. It’s just as much Spirit-inspired as any of the other writers.

Okay, so now then, we come back to I Corinthians chapter 15. Paul is revealing something that you will never find in any of the other writers of Scripture. Nowhere, because everything else is referring to His Second Coming when He will come to the planet. And as I’ve been pointing out wherever I go, look at the two scenarios and it becomes as plain as the noonday sun. At the Second Coming, it’s nothing but death and destruction. I can read to you from Jeremiah 25 and it’s enough to keep you awake all night. What does it say? From one end of this planet to the other there’s going to
be nothing left. The carcasses of human beings are going to be laying so thick on the ground that they won’t be able to do even a burial. That’s what’s coming. That’s the Second Coming.

Paul never speaks of things like that associated with the Rapture. Paul never says there’s going to be great earthquakes and volcanoes and atomic energy and all that, and then the trumpet will sound. No. Paul says that even right now this afternoon it could happen. We could hear the trumpet call, and we could be out of here. It’s imminent. It can be at any time. There is nothing catastrophic associated with the Rapture. And yet the Second Coming is nothing but catastrophic. All right, so he says:

*I Corinthians 15:51a*

“Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep (will not all die),…” Well, now stop and think a minute. Isn’t that logical? It has to be that way, because otherwise God would have to put every believer to death so that they could be resurrected. Right?

But He’s not going to. He’s not going to kill all of us believers so that He can resurrect us. So, this is for those that are living when we get to the end of the Church Age and the Body of Christ is complete. I always, you’ve heard me do this more than once, liken it to the baby in the womb. That mother is putting cells into that baby by the jillions over a nine-month period of time. When the last cell is in place, under a normal birth, and everything is perfect; the eyeballs are finished, the fingernails are there, the hair is there, everything is finished, then what? Delivery! The body is complete and it’s delivered. All right, the Body of Christ is going to be the same way.

When the last believer, out of all these millions that have been coming into their own particular place in the Body, when the last one is brought in - (snap) delivery! We’re out of here. It’s the only way it will work, because we’re not going to be left for the death and destruction that is coming. All right, we’ve got to move on. So, we’re going to be changed. We’re not all going to die.

*I Corinthians 15:51b-52a*

“…We shall not all die, but we shall all be changed, 52. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,…” Now, the Greek word here is the shortest period of time. A nanosecond. Or a quark? What’s another one? Instant! And never forget what Jesus told us. “With God nothing is impossible!” We can’t think of something that God couldn’t do. So, when he says that in a split second we’re all going to be changed from this body to an eternal body. Hey, believe it! God can do it! I’ve got no problems with it.
“In a moment, in the twinkling (or the blink) of an eye, at the last trump:…” Now, that’s singular. I always point that out, because so many anti-rapturists try to put us at the Tribulation’s seven trumpets. No. This is singular. This isn’t the seventh of seven trumpets. This isn’t an angel’s trumpet. This is God’s trumpet, and it’s singular.

“I Corinthians 15:52b

“For the trumpet (singular) shall sound, and the dead (The believing dead now. We’re not talking about those that are without faith. They’re going to wait a thousand years, remember. We’ll pick them up in our next taping.) and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we (Now that’s an interesting pronoun. When Paul writes and says—) we shall be changed.” The indication is what? He expected it in his lifetime. And that would be in perfect accord, again, with the Old Testament timeline.

There was nothing in all of prophecy to indicate a 2,000 year Church Age. So, Paul could readily feel that by the time his 25 years of ministry had been accomplished, the then known world had now heard the Gospel of Salvation. Now, you’ve got to put all of this in historical perspective. At the time that our Scripture was being written, the only world that was known was that area around the Mediterranean and maybe out into the Orient. That’s all. They didn’t know anything about the Western Hemisphere. They didn’t know anything about the South Sea Islands and Australia and so forth. So, they had pretty much covered the then known world. So he was, I think, perfectly right in thinking all this could happen in his lifetime. So he uses the first person. “And we shall be changed.” All right, now verse 53, it has to be.

“I Corinthians 15:53

“For this corruptible (This body of flesh can’t go into eternity. That would never work, would it? So, it’s got to be changed.) this corruptible (prone to die) must put on incorruption, and this mortal (which is prone to die) must put on immortality.” Now that’s logical, isn’t it?

All right, now let’s go on over to the companion passage in I Thessalonians. You know, I was so thrilled, and I don’t name names on this program, I’d like to and I would have no compunction, but I just don’t like to do it. But in one of the magazines that I get, have for years and years, since Iris and I were first married, there was an article by one of our most famous Greek scholars in America today. And, oh, my goodness, it just thrilled me to tears. I could have almost sworn he plagiarized my material. But he didn’t. He’s too much of a scholar to even know who I am. I read part of a diary. Just exactly the same language that I use, teaching the imminency of the Rapture and using
the same Greek connotations that I’ve used over the years, and it just gives me all the more confirmation that I don’t have to back down to anybody. This IS what the Book says.

I Thessalonians 4:13

“But” (Paul writes) I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, (Well, ignorant of what? The mystery! He could have just as well have had it in here that he would not have you to be ignorant of the mystery that he wrote about in I Corinthians.) concerning them who are asleep, (Same people that he talks about in I Corinthians, or who have died.) that you sorrow not, even as others who have no hope.” Now, what’s he talking about? Well, the Thessalonians had already seen some of their loved ones and family members who were believers die. They were beginning to think that they were in the Tribulation, and so they’d missed it. And their loved ones were on in glory. Paul is writing to comfort them. He says, no, you don’t have to sorrow because you have hope.

Now verse 14, now here again, line this up with people who try to put everybody into one resurrection. This verse disqualifies a certain number. Look at it carefully. Here are the qualifications for being caught up in the Rapture of the Body of Christ.

I Thessalonians 4:14a

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again,...” Now think. That’s what I try to get people to do. Think! Did the Old Testament believers believe that? No. They hadn’t heard of a death, burial, and resurrection. Did the Jewish believers in Christ’s earthly ministry believe that? No. Jesus didn’t preach death, burial, and resurrection. It hadn’t happened yet. So, all the way through Scripture you can find that there are believers, they’re going to be in eternity with us, but they’re not members of the Body of Christ, because only those who have believed for salvation that Jesus died and rose from the dead, which is Paul’s Gospel that he preached, will be in this great out-calling, what we call the Rapture.

I Thessalonians 4:14

“For if we believe (verse 14 again) that Jesus died and rose again, even so them who are dead in Christ (They were believers of this same Gospel.) will God bring with him.” In other words, when he leaves Heaven to come to the air, He will bring the soul and the spirit of our departed loved ones, and they’re going to be reunited with that resurrected body. All right, verse 15:

I Thessalonians 4:15
“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain (See again, Paul is including himself.) until the coming of the Lord (for the Body) shall not precede (or go ahead of) them who have died.” Why? Because there has to be that split second to resurrect the bodies of the believers who have died to be reunited with the soul and spirit. Because Thessalonians tells us we’re going to go into eternity once again, like Adam was created in the beginning, with a perfect body, soul, and spirit.

All right, so the soul and spirit, which is in the presence of the Lord, will be brought and reunited with their resurrected body. I don’t care if there’s only one-half of an atom, that’s all God needs for resurrection. But there has to be that much, because you can’t have resurrection of something that has not lived and died.

I Thessalonians 4:16

“For the Lord himself (Jesus the Christ) shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: (Not an angel’s trumpet, God’s trumpet.) and the dead in Christ shall rise first;” And immediately they’re reunited with their soul and spirit, and they are complete now and ready for eternity. Then in verse 17, the next split second.

I Thessalonians 4:17-18

“Then we who are alive and remain (We’re still living as believers.) shall be caught up together with them (Our loved ones and all the members of the Body of Christ going back to Paul’s ministry) 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.” All right, now with the few seconds we’ve got left, drop down into chapter 5 and what do you see? The left-behinds! The pronouns all change from we and us to they and them. Verse 3

I Thessalonians 5:3-4a

“For when they (See, that’s not including us.) shall say, Peace and safety; (When the anti-Christ makes all of his promises.) then sudden destruction cometh upon them, (The Tribulation will set in.) as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 4. But (he says) ye, brethren, are not in (that kind of) darkness,” So, here we have the main harvest of the resurrection. Now in our next taping, we’ll pick up the rest of them - the Old Testament, the Tribulation, and so forth.