LESSON ONE * PART I
THE BIG PICTURE OF WHY WE BELIEVE IN THE PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE

I Cor. 9:17; Eph. 1:10; Eph. 3:2; Col. 1:25

All right, glad to see all of you here in the studio. For those of you out in television again, we would like to invite you to sit down with your Bible and your pen and notepad and just study with us. I’m not a preacher. I’m not going to be lecturing you. We’re going to be teaching just like any other teacher would out of a textbook, which means that we’re going to use as many Scriptures as possible to not prove the point of Les Feldick, but to prove the point of God’s Word.

Now, I just announced to our studio audience that we just got back from three weeks down in Florida and had a great time. The very first church where we started down at Fort Myers, the pastor had asked before I even left Oklahoma, “I never tell a visiting speaker what to speak on, but if you feel so led, I would really appreciate it if you would address why we stand on a pre-tribulation Rapture. Because I understand that we’re under attack for that like never before.” Of course, I’m hearing it from every quarter that people are almost getting aggressively hateful about our stand on a pre-trib. Rapture.

So, I agreed wholeheartedly. We were there for the Sunday morning Sunday school hour, the morning service hour, the evening service; and then Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday night, for an hour to an hour and a half each night. And as people were leaving, that’s what gave me the idea, they would say,”Les, why don’t you make a series of programs on this?” And I said, “Well, we’ll consider it.” The more I thought about it and prayed about it, it just seems as though this was the way we’re going to go. I don’t know how many programs it’s going to take. I don’t know where we’ll end any one particular program. We’re just going to be flying free on this, and when we run out of time, we’ll stop and just start up the next time where we left off.

We’re going to start on the premise that you cannot understand the concept of the Rapture and the Tribulation and the Second Coming and the Kingdom without being a dispensationalist. Now, it’s a hated word in a lot of quarters. It’s as if it isn’t even
Scriptural. But, I have put four verses on the board. We’ll look at them briefly. They all make reference to that very term -- a dispensation.

We’ll look at them as we’ve got them up here. The first one is I Corinthians chapter 9 verse 17. While you’re looking that up, I’ll just share an experience with one of my listeners. Several years ago he approached his pastor and he said, “Pastor, why don’t you ever preach a sermon on the Rapture?” “Oh,” he said, “I wouldn’t dare do that, then I’d be a dispensationalist.” Well, what’s so bad with that? But they’re almost afraid of the term as if it’s an unbiblical concept, but I’m going to show you that it is a Scriptural term. I Corinthians chapter 9 verse 17, where Paul writes:

**I Corinthians 9:17**

“For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.” Dispensation—we’re going to explain that in more detail after we’ve looked at these four verses.

All right, the next one is Ephesians 1:10. Just keep on going to the right through Galatians to Ephesians chapter 1 verse 10, and again Paul, by Holy Spirit inspiration. Remember, Paul doesn’t write one word that isn’t inspired by the Holy Spirit, and he uses the term. Isn’t it amazing that much of Christendom detests it. A biblical term, a Scriptural term, but they detest it. And if we get a letter at all that’s less than kind, that’s what it’s over. “How can you teach this false theory of a Rapture?” Well, this is why – because it’s biblical!

**Ephesians 1:10**

“That in the dispensation of the fullness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in him:” That’s a different dispensation, but never the less the same term.

Now, the next one, I think, is chapter 3 verse 2, and this is actually the verse that we used in every service under those circumstances. I was actually asking my audience to memorize this verse. And it’s easy to memorize. And it’s a good foundation for our approach to Scripture.

**Ephesians 3:2**

“If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God (That’s the one in which we are.) which is given to me (But it doesn’t stay there, where does it go?) to you:” And who are the you that Paul is writing to? Gentiles.
So, the dispensation of grace is a set of instructions that God has given to us as Gentiles in particular. I’m going to go into that in a little bit. All right, now the next one is on much the same program or line of thinking—Colossians chapter 1 verse 25, same word. It means the same thing in every case. Colossians chapter 1 verse 25. In fact, let’s read verse 24.

**Colossians 1:24**

*“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body’s sake, which is the church:”* Which again, is a term only used in Paul’s epistles. You never see the Body of Christ mentioned anywhere else. All right, so he was afflicted bodily, with all of his imprisonments, his beatings, and what have you, *“for the sake of the church, which is his body.”*

**Colossians 1:25**

*“Whereof (The Body of Christ is connected to this apostle.) I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you, (For what purpose?) to fulfill (or to complete or bring to total fruition) the word of God;”*

So, dispensationally speaking, everything that God has done from Adam in the Garden down through the very end of the Kingdom Age and on into eternity is based on a dispensational approach to Scripture. Now, we usually define a dispensation as simply as possible. If you haven’t already put it in a flyleaf of your Bible, you might want to. A dispensation is a period of time during which God deals with the human race in a particular way.

Now, I think a few tapings back I more or less explained it like this: if you went to the doctor a few years ago or maybe a short time ago for whatever trouble you had. We’ll just say you went in for a bad cough. He gives you a prescription for your cough. You take it to the pharmacist. He fills the prescription not only with your cough medicine, but what does he put on the outside of the bottle? The directions on how often and how much to take.

All right, some months later you’ve come up with maybe an arthritis attack and your joints are hurting. So you go to the doctor and he prescribes something for your arthritis. For sake of illustration, we’ll again hope that we can use a liquid medicine rather than pills. He puts your liquid medicine for your arthritis in a bottle and you get home. Now you’ve got medicine bottles in your chest and you think, well, maybe it would work better if I mix them. So, you take the caps off of your two different kinds
of medication, and you mix them. Now, you don’t know how much of which one to take. Why? Because you’re all confused.

All right, isn’t that exactly what they’ve done with Scripture? They’ve mixed all the dispensations together and claim that we only use one Bible. That’s true. And I just use the whole Bible. What you’re doing is just mixing all the dispensations and you end up with nothing that’s going to do you any good but cause confusion.

Now, you know as a rule, I’ve always pictured it over the years as putting it in a blender—blenderizing the Scriptures. But see, this is why there are so many different denominations. There are so many groups. They just put it all together and then they pick and choose. Whereas if they would just separate these various times during which God dealt with the human race in a particular way, it clears up everything.

All right, now I always go back to the Garden of Eden as the most simple dispensation in all of human history because of the time element as well as the directions for it. Now, we don’t know how long Adam and Eve were in the Garden. I don’t even make a guess. But I do know that while they were in the Garden, God only gave them one set of directions. And it was simple—of that one tree you shall not eat. Everything else is for you, but leave that tree alone. Now, that was their directions for that dispensation. Simple, wasn’t it? That’s all they had to do—just leave that tree alone, and God would be satisfied, and He would bless them. But after a period of time, and like I said, I don’t know how long – they ate from the forbidden tree.

Well, then the wrath of God fell because they were disobedient. Judgment came in and they were cast out of the Garden. Well, that ended that period of time during which they lived day by day under that one direction – you shall not eat of it. That ended the first dispensation.

You come on up through history and we have a couple of other periods of time where God put out some distinct instructions. I haven’t got time to go into them, but I’m going to jump all the way up to the time when Israel comes out of Egypt, and they go under the dispensation of what we call “Law.” As they were gathered around Mt. Sinai, Moses goes up into the mountain and God gives to Moses the set of directions for the Nation of Israel under the Law, which included, of course, the Ten Commandments. But that wasn’t all. They were also given instructions on how to deal with sin, how to approach God through the priesthood with sacrifices. That was all part of their directions. And as long as they maintained a semblance of obedience to that, God’s wrath didn’t really fall.

But after 1,500 years, the whole reason the Law was given, their Messiah appeared in fruition of all the promises of God. Now, that brings me to the other verse I was going
to have the studio audience look at first. That brings you back to Romans 15 verse 8. After 1,500 years of just more or less practicing the religion of Law, or Judaism, now God comes in with a little extra responsibility for Israel, and that was to recognize that Jesus of Nazareth was the Promised Messiah. All right, now I used that word Promised specifically for this reason.

**Romans 15:8**

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, (Always stop and read carefully. So, who was He a minister to? Israel. The Jew. See, don’t lose that. He was a minister to Israel, for what purpose?) to confirm (or to fulfill, to bring to fruition) the promises made unto the fathers:” Well, who were the Fathers? Old Testament Israel – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and then on up to David and Solomon and the Prophets, Isaiah.

Every one of them was looking forward to the time when God would send a Redeemer, a Messiah and a King to the Nation of Israel to fulfill all the promises. Well, the promises were primarily this glorious earthly Kingdom that Israel was looking for. Solomon’s Kingdom was just a little fore view, just a little tip of the iceberg of the glory that was waiting for Israel. But they would have to become obedient and believe who their Messiah was when He came. Now, that brings me up to current events.

When Christ came should Israel have known who He was? Absolutely! The Old Testament was full of it. But did they? For the most part – no. Now, I think I can have you come back there with me to Matthew 16. This will probably appeal to the interest of present day current events for a few moments. Matthew 16, because I may just ramble kind of free today. I’m not on a set format to go verse by verse through a particular chapter. So, bear with me. I hope I don’t lose you.

In Matthew 16, now let’s refresh your memory so in 15 seconds you haven’t lost where I’ve come from. Jesus came to fulfill the promises made to the Fathers. Right? All right, I asked the question, should they have known who He was? Sure they should have. But did they? No. All right, now here’s Jesus approaching the Pharisees, and He’s really dressing them down.

**Matthew 16:1-3**

“The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven. (Now the Jews were always looking for signs, you know. Now look at His answer.) 2. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. 3. And in the morning, It will be foul weather today: for the sky is red and lowering. (Now, look what He’s
 **O ye hypocrites, (you false, whitened sepulchers) ye can discern the face of the sky; (You can foretell tomorrow’s weather.) but can ye not discern the (What?) signs of the times?”

He was talking in regard to His own presence. They should have understood that they were now in the fourth of Daniel’s empires: the Babylonian, the Mede and the Persian, the Greek, and now the Roman. They were in it. The Romans were over Jerusalem. That was the number one sign. That should have told them that this was the time that we can look for the Messiah. But did they? They didn’t have a clue.

Well, various other aspects of His appearance – they should have been able to foretell who He was and what He was doing on the basis of the Scriptures. But they couldn’t. It’s the same way today. We are living under the exact same kind of circumstances. The signs of the times, beloved, and you out in television, they’re everywhere. A few people are waking up and realizing it.

In fact, I just had a young man call the other day. He was so excited. His pastor, who had been a mainline pastor for years, never touched prophecy (and I’ll explain why a little later this afternoon). He suddenly realized that with the signs of the time maybe he’d better get into prophecy. So he’s starting to change his mind by it.

All right, I’m always asking, wherever I go if I approach this subject the signs of the times, what is the number one sign that we are in the end time and Christ’s coming is not that far off? Israel back in the land! That should just scream at everybody whether they know anything of Scripture or not. How miraculously the Jews have come back from every nation under heaven, and they’re in their own land against all odds. They should have never succeeded. But they did!

But they didn’t do it. God did it! Because the Word says, “after you’ve been scattered to every nation under heaven, you will return.” That’s in Deuteronomy written by Moses 3,500 years ago, beloved. But here it is. The number one sign of the times – Israel back in the land.

In fact, I had a young man a while ago come back, 22 years old. He said, “Les, how can I approach my own aged kids (we call them peers) without them thinking I’m just getting on a religious tangent.” I said, “Well, start with current events.” Sometime when you’re just having a…whatever the kids call it today; we used to call it a “bull session” when I was in service. But anyway, you just sort of start chewing all this stuff over and I said, “Just remind them. Why is a little nation of only around five million, now I guess they’re approaching six million people, in the news every day?” The United Nations is constantly meeting concerning that one little Nation in the world. Why? I said, “Just ask your fellow young people, do you ever think about
that?” A little country sitting on a piece of real estate smaller than half of New Jersey and in the news every day, that’s not common ordinary carryings on of the world. It’s a supernatural thing.

All right, from that, hopefully, you can show them that our Bible is true. No matter how much Israel is opposed and how much they’re hated, yet they’re there. And they’re there by God’s design. And then all the other things. My, do you ever stop to think, what is rolling over Christendom today like never before, but it has all started since about 1900? I don’t have to remind you of many of them, but number one is an understanding of end time Scriptures. That was almost unknown until after 1900. The other thing is the coming in like a tsunami of the New Age Religions. My, they’re appealing to our young people, and they’re falling for it by the millions—New Age.

And, oh, there’s another I thought of—our secular technology. Imagine the technology. Like I reminded one of my groups in Florida last week, do you ever stop to think that back in the 70’s the powers that be in the world were just wringing their hands because with population exploding we would never be able to keep up with food production? Have we? Why, more food is thrown out in garbage than what the world ever imagined producing. There’s no reason for anybody to go hungry. The only reason there are people starving is not production, it is distribution. There it sits in warehouses.

I read the other day that all the aid that poured into Indonesia over the tsunami, most of it is still setting in warehouses. They don’t know how to distribute. But nevertheless, God has provided that no matter how far humanity comes, everything comes along with it, and that’s God’s design. Otherwise, we would never have gotten this far.

That’s why I’m not at all shook up about this so-called global warming. God’s in control. He’s not going to let it destroy itself, not until He’s ready to do it Himself. So, always remember, they get all shook up about these things, but they leave God out of the picture.

Well, on and on we could go. Oil. Can you imagine how production and distribution keeps up with all these billions of automobiles and planes and everything, and yet the world keeps going. Well, that’s not an accident. That’s our God who is in control of everything. Well anyway, when Jesus said to know the signs of the times. It was just as much a warning for us today as it was for the despicable Pharisees of His day.

I could even go a little further yet, but I think that’s sufficient that we are to understand we are at the close of the age. The signs of the times are all around us. All you have to do is watch your daily news, the breakdown of morality, the apostasy of the church. My goodness, you can’t believe what people are hearing coming over their pulpits. We hear
It in our phone calls. Well, that’s all part of the end time scenario. It’s a sign of the time.

All right, I’ve only got five minutes left. And we just started back with Christ being the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God. In the five minutes we have left, we’ve got to look at the big picture before we can begin to even make sense about an end time scenario, which includes the out-calling of the Body of Christ.

Let’s go all the way back to Genesis chapter 12 for just a little bit, because unless you understand Israel’s role, you’ll never understand the Bible. Israel is the key player. They have been from day one, and they will be on into eternity. Never forget that. Now the first eleven chapters of Genesis were God dealing with one race of people. And it was a sorry scenario. There’s hardly a good point in the first eleven chapters. Because after Adam and Eve were created, the first thing they did was rebel. They’re disobedient, and they’re cast out of the Garden.

Well, then the kids come along and one kills the other. It’s just one awful thing after another. Then it just kept getting worse and worse and worse until He finally destroyed them in the flood. Then after the flood, God starts over with Noah and his three sons and their wives. It still doesn’t get any better, because 200 years later they’re gathered at the Tower of Babel. It was nothing but a great rebellion against God, and the establishing of their own human gods and goddesses, which we call mythology.

Then after another 200 years, when it seems as though everything has just continued to go moving down, down, down, God steps in once more and brings out one man. Just one man Abram. And here is the big change then in Scripture. Because from chapter 12 of Genesis, like I said, until we go into eternity, Israel becomes the focal point of all of God’s dealing with the human race. They’re at the core of everything. And of course, Satan knew that. He knows it. So he’s been attacking them ever since, trying to destroy them. Because Satan knows if he can knock Israel out of the loop, then God’s program for the human race falls apart. All right, Genesis chapter 12.

**Genesis 12:1-3**

“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee: 2. And I will make of thee a great nation, (which of course is a reference to Israel) and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: (And then here’s the promise that brings us into the picture, that in Abram--) and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” Not just Israel, but the whole human race would be blessed through the
promises that God would make to this one man, Abraham, the father of the Jewish Nation.

All right, for sake of time, in the minute or two that we have left, jump over to chapter 15 verse 7. This is the first place that shows the humanity of this man, Abram. He was just as human as we are. God has just promised him all these things and in verse 7 He said:

**Genesis 15:7**

“And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.” Now remember, they are already standing on the mountains of Israel or in the land of Canaan, and God says, I will give you this land to inherit it.

**Genesis 15:8**

“And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?” How do I know that you’re going to do it? How can I know that you mean business? Well, God says, I’ll deed it to you. So, you come on over to the end of the chapter after going through the process of transferring the title deed as the ancients did it, under the laws of Hammurabi, now verse 18.

**Genesis 15:18**

“In the same day (That God deeded the whole Middle East, from the Nile River to the Euphrates and back, to Israel) the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed I have given this land, (That’s the word of God. It’s His promise.) from the river of Egypt (That’s probably the Nile, but if not, it’s right close to it.) unto the great river, the river Euphrates:” And then all the tribes that were involved in that Middle Eastern area, God says, “I will give it to you and your children after you.”

We know, of course, that that’s exactly what all the Old Testament promises rest on. That this whole Middle East was deeded to the man Abram, and that it was to be the homeland of the Jew for all the period of time that this planet will function. And that has never been rescinded. We’ll look at some of the opposition to that as we go on through the afternoon.
LESSON ONE * PART II

THE BIG PICTURE OF WHY WE
BELIEVE IN THE PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE

I Cor. 9:17; Eph. 1:10; Eph. 3:2; Col. 1:25

Okay, good to have everybody back. You’ve had your break, and I guess you notice I don’t get one. I guess it’s the same way in my seminars, as everyone has questions and wants to talk. But anyway, we’re glad you’re here. For those of you joining us on television, again we just can never find words to thank you for your prayers and your letters. My, how we enjoy the letters and of course your financial gifts. We can’t stay on the air without them. But a lot of people can’t understand how we do it without begging for money.

Gary remembers it well. I said from day one, if I have to beg for money, I’m going home. And that’s the way we’ve always been. I will not beg. If we ever get to that place, well, then we’ll just start dropping stations, and if the Lord wants us off the air then we’ll quit. But until then, we expect the greatest fundraiser in the whole universe will take care of our every need. And He does. It’s just unbelievable. And we do—we thank you out there for your constant support and your love for us wherever we go.

All right, now we’re going to keep moving toward why we teach and admonish and absolutely firmly believe that as New Testament believers, members of the Body of Christ, we will not see the anti-Christ. We’ll have a lot of guesses, but we will never find out who he is because before he shows up, we’re gone! I guess what people can’t handle is, how’s God going to do it?

Well, I always come back to the Lord’s words Himself— with God what? “Nothing is impossible.” Don’t ever think that something is beyond Him. I don’t care what it is. Even though the Rapture does seem like an impossibility, with God it will happen.

All right, we’re going to continue on with what brings us up to the glorious dispensation of the Grace of God. But first we’re going to go back to a previous dispensation, the one just ahead of us, which was Israel under the Law. Let’s go back to Exodus chapter 19 for just a moment. They are fresh out of Egypt. They became a Nation down there according to Genesis. And now they’re gathered around the mount. Moses has gone up to meet with the Lord face to face. Here’s the account of it in Exodus 19, and I guess we’ll jump in at verse 3.
Exodus 19:3

“Moses went up unto God, (that is up into Mount Sinai) and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;” In other words, the whole Nation of the Twelve Tribes. Now God says--

Exodus 19:4

“Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bear you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself.” In other words, brought them out of Egypt and through the Red Sea miraculously, and then brought them down around Mount Sinai.

Exodus 19:5a

“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed,…” Now, does that ring a bell—what I said about Adam and Eve? What were they to do with regard to that forbidden tree? Be obedient. But what were they? Disobedient. And so things happened. All right, now it is the same way with Israel. If they maintain a semblance of obedience, God doesn’t expect perfection, but He said--

Exodus 19:5b

“…if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, (The one He’s going to give in chapter 20, the Ten Commandments and everything associated with it.) then ye shall be a peculiar treasure (or a treasure of intrinsic value) unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:”

I think I stressed this in tapings not too far back, that here’s where we see the Sovereignty of God declare Israel as the favored Nation, the Nation that is above all other nations in every category that you can imagine. The reason God can do it is because He’s Sovereign—for all the earth is Mine, I can do what I want. Now you know, once in a while man himself gets to that place where he thinks he owns so much, he’s got so much control, and he can do whatever he wants. Well, he may think he can, but he’s still limited. But God can. God is unlimited. All right, here we have it that “all the earth is mine.” Now verse 6 is the key verse.

Exodus 19:6

“And ye (Israel) shall be unto me a kingdom of priests,…” Now, like I just asked somebody yesterday. What do you have to have in order to have a valid kingdom? A king! What’s the king without a kingdom? Well, he’s a nothing. Well, what’s a
kingdom without a king? Nothing. So, you’ve got to bring the two together that here Israel is promised to be a kingdom, but latent in that promise is there will be king coming sooner or later.

All right, now then, just for sake of time—my listening audience is probably getting anxious that I jump up into the New Testament. Let’s go all the way up to Zechariah, the next to the last book in your Old Testament. There are a lot of intervening verses, but we pretty much covered them, I think, in fairly recent programs. But now in Zechariah chapter 14 it is in such plain language. How can anybody disagree with it, unless they are just flagrantly disobedient? But here we have Zechariah 14 verse 9. Now remember, Zechariah is getting up pretty close to the New Testament in Matthew already.

Zechariah 14:9a

“And the LORD (Now remember, that’s all capitalized, so that’s Jehovah, or God the Son, Israel’s Messiah.) the LORD shall be (at some future day) king over all the earth:…” Now, can you get it any plainer than that? I don’t know how you can. He hasn’t yet, but He’s going to. He’s going to be the King of Kings and Lord of Lords over planet earth.

It’ll be a totally renovated surface of the earth. Oh, it’s still going to be going in its orbit around the sun. It’s still going to be functioning as a planet, but the surface is going to be totally renovated. Now, all you have to do is just use a little 12-year-old’s imagination. With all the hundreds and hundreds of nuclear weapons that are in storehouses around the planet, once they start exploding them, how long will it take to incinerate the planet? Not long. And that’s what’s going to happen. They’re all going to be exploded one way or another in God’s own time and this old planet is literally going to be reduced to ashes. God will plow them all under and out will come that glorious 1,000 year millennial reign of Christ on a renovated, regenerated, reconstituted earth.

I can see it with no problem at all. My goodness, when you realize how nuclear energy can reduce steel to absolute nothing, and we’ve got all these hundreds upon thousands of nukes. I read in yesterday’s paper that we are going to start building a new generation of them that are even better yet. Well, it’s just all adding to the stockpile. God is smiling in His heaven, and He says, have at it, boys, you’re getting it all ready for Me. And they’re going to destroy themselves. So, that’s what’s coming whether they like to admit it or not. Now remember, the Book of Daniel gives us 75 days after the return of Christ and the end of the Tribulation until things begin to flow into everyday activity. And I think it’s in those 75 days that the earth will come back up and be like a renewed Garden of Eden. All right, so read the verse once more.
Zechariah 14:9

“And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day (that is starting with His Second Coming to the Mount of Olives) there shall be one LORD, and His name one.” Which of course fits perfectly with Revelation 19, “and his name shall be called King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”

All right, now as you come into Matthew, we see that Christ makes His appearance at His first coming. But before He appears, we have John the Baptist, the herald. He’s going to announce to the Nation of Israel that their King is in their midst. So, jump up to Matthew chapter 3. Israel has now been under the Law, Temple worship, and Judaism as we understand it for 1,500 years. Now the Messiah makes His appearance according to prophecy.

Matthew 3:1-2

“In those days, came John the Baptist, (Now remember, what goes ahead of it in chapter 1 is the birth of Christ down at Bethlehem.) preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2. And saying, Repent ye: (That’s what it says.) for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Well, there’s that word kingdom again. What’s it talking about? The earthly kingdom that Zechariah was just talking about a few pages back and over which the Son of God, Israel’s Messiah, will rule and reign. It’s finally ready to come about.

All right, now Israel here is at a crossroads. Are they going to believe it? Are they going to accept it? Or are they going to reject it? And I’m always making a parallel with Kadesh-barnea. You remember when they came to Kadesh? What did God tell them? The Promised Land, there it is. It’s all yours, with all its production and all of its farms and orchards and pastures, a land flowing with milk and honey. I always have to qualify, what does it mean, “flowing with milk and honey?”

It means everything that it would take to produce humongous amounts of dairy milk. Which would be what? Fresh water and grass and all the other things that it takes to produce milk, and what does it take to produce honey? Flowers and blooms and all the things that bees can use. Well, you put all that together and what kind of a landscape does it give you? Beautiful! Productive! So that’s what they were looking at. But, did they take it? No. In unbelief they said, thanks, but no thanks. And they went back into the desert and died like flies. What a pity.

But see, they’re confronted again. The King is in your midst, can you believe it? No, they can’t believe it, and so they turned it down again. The whole concept then of His earthly ministry was to prove to the Nation of Israel who He was. You’ve heard me sound that off now for 15 years. This is why He performed the miracles – to prove that
He was the Promised Messiah. But Israel wouldn’t buy it and they rejected it and rejected and rejected.

All right, now let’s move all the way up into the Book of Acts. I guess I almost have to stop at Acts chapter 1 and look at verse 6 for just a moment. The Lord has just been resurrected and spent 40 days in His resurrected body with the Twelve, walking up and down the byways and the roadways of ancient Israel from Galilee to Jerusalem. He was again proving that He was alive. He was the Son of God with all of His power. And He was yet able to be the King promised to Israel.

All right, after those 40 days are over, they are assembled up there on the Mount of Olives. Of course, they don’t know that He’s going to suddenly take off from their midst and go back to glory. But nevertheless, they’re in conversation here on the Mount of Olives at the end of the 40 days and verse 6:

**Acts 1:6**

“When they therefore were come together, (Jesus and the Eleven. Now Judas is gone. Matthias hasn’t yet come in, so Jesus and the Eleven were there on the Mount of Olives.) they asked of him saying, Lord, wilt thou as this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”

See, that’s the key word, Lord, are you ready to bring in the Kingdom? Well, He couldn’t as long as Israel was in unbelief. Because the whole thing is tied to Israel’s recognizing who He is. Otherwise, He can’t bring it about. All right, so then verse 7, He doesn’t ridicule their question. It was a valid question. Look at His answer.

**Acts 1:7**

“...It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.” Today we say, it’s not for you to know the here and when. But here it is.

All right, so He says--

**Acts 1:7**

“...It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.” All right, when you come a little further along in the Book of Acts, let’s go to chapter 2. The Lord is ascended back to Glory. He has established with the Eleven that He’s alive and well. He can still fulfill the promise of a Kingdom. Now in chapter 2, it was a Jewish feast day, the Feast of Pentecost; and Jews, of course, have
gathered from every nation in the then known world to come to the Temple for the Feast of Pentecost, as they did for all the feasts throughout the year. All right, so we have a conglomeration of Jews from every nation under heaven. And we have the miracle of Pentecost. All right, now let’s drop down to verse 5 in Acts chapter 2.

Acts 2:5

“**And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men,** (Now, they were devout according to the Law, remember. They’re keeping the Temple worship, the sacrifices, and the whole nine-yards.) **out of** (Now watch this carefully.) **every nation under heaven.**”

In other words, here they were probably from as far away as India and Persia, which is present day Iran, from what’s present day Arabia and over to present day Iraq, which were Babylon and Syria and Egypt and North Africa. They had gathered from every part of the then known world for this Feast of Pentecost. But they’re all Jews. All right, so they’re coming from every nation under heaven, now verse 6.

Acts 2:6

“**Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man,** (whether he was from North Africa or if he was from China or India or Timbuktu) **heard them speak in his own language.**” Now, do you have to be a seminary graduate to understand that?

In other words, if they were from Syria, they heard it in the local language of the Syrians. Because after all, Jews had been there now for generations, and the second, third, and fourth generation started speaking the local language and had forgotten their Hebrew or whatever. Or, if they came from Turkey, they were speaking the language of the Turks and so forth. Every Jew gathered there in that Pentecostal crowd was hearing the Twelve, especially Peter, James, and John, I think, speak in their own language.

Acts 2:7

“**And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these Galileans?**” Now of course the point I always make when I teach these things – are there any Gentiles involved? Not a one. There’s not a Gentile in here. This is a Jewish phenomenon, never forget that. All right, now when you come down to verse 22, it’s again obvious. Now Peter says--

Acts 2:22a
“Ye men of Israel, (That’s Jews.) hear these words;...” And then he goes through who Jesus was and what had happened and how God had raised Him up, and that He could still bring in the glorious kingdom that has been promised all the way up through the Old Testament.

All right, so all through these early chapters, in fact, let’s stop at chapter 3. I’m just showing you how we are in the transitional part of Scripture. We’re moving from Israel under the Law and Judaism, and we’re going to move to the place where the Apostle Paul comes and is sent to the Gentile world because of Israel’s rejection of everything.

All right, Acts chapter 3 and Peter again is preaching to the Nation of Israel. Verse 12, and what precipitates this is that they have just healed a lame man up there at the Temple. And the Jews are all shook up. Where did these guys get the wherewithal to heal this guy who’s been lame for 40 years?

Well, I always have to remind my listeners. How long has it been since Jesus’ earthly ministry ended? About eight weeks. No, a little more than that—fifty days, plus 10, two months. That’s all. Two months after probably performing His last miracle, the Twelve performed and they can’t figure it out. How did you do this? Well, then Peter, verse 12, when he saw the consternation, I guess is the word I’ve used before, when he saw the confusion amongst the Jews over these men healing this lame man, verse 12.

Acts 3:12-13a

“And when Peter saw it, he answered the people, Ye men of Israel, (How many Gentiles are in that statement? Well, not a one.) why marvel at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? 13. The God of Abraham,...” Did that mean anything to the average down on the road Gentile? Why no, nothing. But to a Jew? Everything.

Acts 3:13-15

“The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. 14. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; 15. And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.”

Now, watch this carefully. I’m reading it rather speedily for sake of time, but when you get home or when you’re in your own Bible study, read these verses slowly and deliberately and note that never does Peter associate the salvation of these Jews on that finished work of the cross. All Peter is showing here is the one that they demanded be
put to death is alive and still can fulfill the promises. You can’t have a dead man ruling as a king. Can you? Why, of course not. But He's not dead. The tomb is empty! He’s alive. And Peter is proving that. He can still be the King.

Now, what did Israel have to do? Well, nothing has changed so far as the Nation is concerned. Drop down to verse 19. And preachers and teachers today try to push all this into our Pauline economy and Grace. That’s why there’s so much confusion. What’s the first word?

Acts 3:19a

“Repent ye (How did John the Baptist start? Repent. Nothing has changed. Nothing.) Repent ye therefore, and be converted,...” or have a change of mind concerning whom? Jesus of Nazareth. That’s the problem. That’s the what that they’re to repent of now that they have killed and rejected the Promised Messiah.

Acts 3:19

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;” What’s the times of refreshing? The King and His Kingdom! Heaven on earth.

My, wouldn’t it be something to look forward to that. Maybe next week, all of a sudden, all of our sin problem would disappear. All of the heartache of this world would stop and all of a sudden we’d have heaven on earth! Refreshing is almost a calm word, isn’t it? But that’s what he says. They could have it all if they would just confess and repent of the sin, primarily now of having rejected their Messiah. Now, if you think I’m kidding you, look at verse 20. What would God do if Israel would repent?

Acts 3:20

“And he (God) shall send Jesus Christ, (the same one of the earthly ministry) who was before preached unto you:” To be the king, but the Holy Spirit, I think, prompts Peter to not get too exuberant, because there’s a period of time that has to be fulfilled from the Old Testament prophecies before the King can come under any circumstances. And what time is that? Tribulation. The seven years of horror have to come. You can’t skip them. And this is what the next verse says, verse 21.

Acts 3:21

“Whom (the same Jesus Christ) the heaven must receive (Or hold, just like Psalms 110 said, come sit at my right hand until--. All right, so—heaven must hold him) until the
times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” Well, what’s the time of restitution? I just gave you a graphic example. When after the seven years of the horrors of the Tribulation and all the nukes have been exploded and all the volcanoes have done all their work and all the earthquakes, this old planet is going to be completely reduced to ashes and out of it will come a glorious new planet—like the Garden of Eden from one pole to the other. All right, then he goes on to say, now remember, this is all the Old Testament promises being rehearsed before the Nation of Israel, now verse 22.

Acts 3:22

“For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, (He will be a fellow Jew, as Jesus was, of course.) like unto me; (In other words, as Moses was a deliverer, so Christ at His Second Coming will be a deliverer.) him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.” Because He’s going to be your king.”

Acts 3:23

“And it shall come to pass, that every soul, who will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed (or removed) from among the people.” Because there are no unbelievers going into the Kingdom. None, they’ll be removed. And Jesus made that so plain in His earthly ministry that they will go to their perdition and the believers will go into the Kingdom. All right, now read on, our time is just about gone already.

Acts 3:24

“Yea, and all the prophets (all the Old Testament, practically, from) Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, (all the Old Testament prophets) have likewise foretold of these days.” That’s why, you remember, that when I start teaching the prophets, like the Minor Prophets, it’s repetition. You know that’s why I kind of have a hard time taking them down the row, because people are going to say, well, Les, you just said that last month. But that’s what it is. All the prophets are rehearsing to Israel the coming of this glorious Kingdom. But before the Kingdom can come, the wrath of God must precede it.

All right, so Peter’s reminding them of the same thing. All the prophets told of these things, see? Now then verse 25.

Acts 3:25
“Ye are the children of the prophets, (Now who was he talking to? Jews. Not a Gentile in the picture here.) and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto (Whom?) Abraham, (See, that’s why I started back there this afternoon with Genesis chapter 12. This all started with Abraham and the appearance of the Nation of Israel.) which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed (That is in the offspring of Abraham.) shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.”

Now just for one little glimpse, only a part of all that is this Book. This Book came from the offspring of Abraham. That’s part of what he’s talking about. And listen, where would this world be without this Book? It’s bad enough as it is, but oh, it would be so much worse. This is where we draw all our comfort, and it all came by the prophets and the coming of the Nation of Israel, whom God used to give us the printed Word.

All right, we’ve got a half a minute left. Then, verse 26, and we’ll have to wind it up.

Acts 3:26

“Unto you first (the Nation of Israel with all of their promises, with all of their written Scriptures) God, having raised up his Son Jesus, (Now remember what the raised up meant? He was raised from the dead. He’s no longer dead. He’s alive and well.) sent him to bless you, in turning away (How many?) every one of you from his iniquities.” But did Israel turn? No.
LESSON ONE * PART III

THE BIG PICTURE OF WHY WE BELIEVE IN THE PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE

I Cor. 9:17; Eph. 1:10; Eph. 3:2; Col. 1:25

You’ve all had your break, and I’ve had mine. We’re going to go right back to where we left off. We’re going to keep going in Acts chapter 7. Again, we want to thank our television audience for everything. We just can’t thank you enough for all your prayers, your financial help, your letters, and your encouragement. We trust that one day we’ll all meet in Glory. I don’t know whether we’re going to have the wherewithal to know how all this transpired or not, but if we do, boy, it’s going to be a great reunion. It really is.

You know, even today we have folks that met some relatives they didn’t even know were around, and that’s what we like about our ministry. Iris said it on our way to Florida the other day, “You know what the best part of our ministry is? How many friends have been brought together and new friends and they continue to be friends for years to come.” And that’s all part of it that—when like-minded believers get together and meet new friends, it’s quite a thrilling experience.

Okay, we’re going to continue right heading toward why are we adamant on our Pre-Tribulation Rapture. Well, you have to get the big picture to understand what we’re talking about. You can’t just jump in and say, “Well, this is what it says.” Well, yes, so far as we’re concerned, but for the Doubting Thomas, you’ve got to show him the big picture. All right, that’s what we’re moving toward.

Acts chapter 7, and Stephen of course is addressing the high priest and some of the other religious leaders of Israel. This is Israel’s last opportunity to repent of having killed their Messiah and recognize Him for what He was. So, Stephen lays it all out on the line throughout this chapter 7. And if you have any doubt that He’s talking to Jews, why all you have to do is come down to verse 51. He’s winding up his message and again, remember, this is all Holy Spirit inspired; not a word of this is anything but God’s Word. Stephen says to these religious leaders-

Acts 7:51-52a

“Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart (Oh, they were circumcised in the flesh, don’t think they weren’t. But heart? No.) and ears, ye do always resist the Holy
Ghost; (or the Holy Spirit) as your fathers did, (going back to Israel’s history) so do ye. 52. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?…”

In other words, all the way through Israel’s history when the prophets would come warn then of chastisement to come and the blessings that could follow what would they do? They would kill the messenger—over and over. Jeremiah was found in a dungeon when the Babylonians came to Jerusalem. Stephen is reminding them of all that.

Acts 7:52

“Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain (or killed) them who showed before (that is the prophets now) of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:” Pretty strong language, isn’t it?

In fact, as a rule when I teach these early chapters of Acts, I always remind folks—is this the message that you hear me or anyone else proclaim today? You killed the Messiah. Repent of it. No. But for Israel, that was their dilemma. They had in unbelief rejected their Messiah and killed Him. That’s what they were guilty of. For you and me, it’s the other side of the coin – He loved us and died for us. That’s the big difference. All right, now verse 53, he says:

Acts 7:53-54

“Who have received the law (So you know he’s talking to Jews.) by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. 54. When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.” They were convicted. But they didn’t respond the way they should have. They should have responded in repentance and sorrow for what they’d done, but instead they rejected even Stephen and now began putting him to death.

Acts 7:55

“But he, (Stephen) being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the Glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,” Now, that throws a curve at a lot of people. I get question after question. Every other Scripture says He’s seated; He’s sitting. Why here is He standing?

Well, I think I can take you back quickly to the Book of Psalms. If I’m not mistaken, it should be Psalms 68. These old priests of Israel knew especially the Psalms, and as soon as Stephen said, I see Him standing, they were reflecting on this portion, I’m quite sure. And it infuriated them! Scared them maybe into their infuriation, but here it is.
**Psalms 68:1**

“Let God (What?) arise, (or stand) let his enemies be scattered: (And what were these priests of Israel? Enemies! They hated Him.) let them also that hate him flee before him. 2. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.” Do you think that sounded very pretty to these Jews? Not at all. So their anger was simply stirred all the more, and that caused them then to cry out.

**Acts 7:57-58**

“They cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears (They didn’t want to hear another word like that.) and ran upon him with one accord, 58. And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul.” Highlight that. That’s the name of the next character on the stage of biblical history. Peter and the Eleven are going to go down into the unknown area, and up to the front comes this new Apostle. We are introduced to him here as the young man’s name was Saul, later to be called Paul.

**Acts 7:59-60**

“And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.” Or he died physically. Now I call that, you’ve heard me say it before, the crescendo, the very end of a great symphonic piece of music to Israel’s rejection. It was just the epiphany—we will not have Jesus of Nazareth as our Messiah and King!

All right, now go right into chapter 8. And again, here’s where you see Saul’s name coming to the top.

**Acts 8:1a**

“And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church…” The Jerusalem church. The Jewish church. Not the Body of Christ church. Not a Gentile church as most of Christendom tries to make it. This was the church composed of believing Jews who had embraced Jesus as the Messiah. They formed, starting at Pentecost, the local Jerusalem Jewish church. They’re law-keeping Jews, but they are Messianic Jews. They are not Paul’s Gentiles, and keep that straight. Otherwise, you’ll get confused all the more.
All right, so this Jerusalem church was under great persecution by, of course, Saul and the rest of the Jerusalem priesthood.

Acts 8:1b

“…and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except (Whom?) the apostles.” They didn’t leave. They didn’t go out into the Gentile world. They stayed right there at Jerusalem—and then verse 3.

Acts 8:3

“As for Saul, (He just continues his mad persecution against these believing Jews.) he made havoc of this Jerusalem church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.”

All right, now to see how Paul had to live with that all the rest of his life, keep your hand here I’m going to come back, go ahead with me to Acts chapter 26. This, I think, just plagued the Apostle all the days of his life. That, of course, is one reason he was able to cope with all the hardships of his ministry. He could never forget the misery he had caused the followers of Jesus of Nazareth. Acts 26 and drop in at verse 7. Paul the Apostle, he’s already spent many years out there amongst the Gentiles, and he is before King Agrippa as he’s on his way to imprisonment in Rome. He says to King Agrippa in verse 7 just for sake of time. When you’ve got time read it all.

Acts 26:7

“Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope’s sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.” In other words, there’s still the hope of this coming King and His Kingdom.

Acts 26:8-9

“Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? (Agrippa, you should know that there’s enough knowledge of Scripture that resurrection is a part of our Jewish belief.) 9. I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.” This was what precipitated his hate and his persecution.

Acts 26:10

“Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: (Now watch this.) and many of the saints (That is the Jewish believers.) did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the
chief priests; and when they (these Jewish believers who had been imprisoned and then committed to death) and when they were put to death, I gave my voice (or my vote) against them.”

Acts 26:11-12

“And I punished them oft in every synagogue, (Where he would go in and arrest them if they were gathered together in the worship of their Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.) and compelled them to blaspheme; (Now, I feel that’s an indication of torture.) and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. 12. Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,”

And then of course he rehearses for the umpteenth time his Damascus Road experience. All right, while we’re still up there in chapter 8 in the Book of Acts, I want you to keep coming with me now if you will to chapter 10. Paul has now had his Damascus Road salvation experience back in chapter 9, and the Lord has led him out to the backside of the desert. I think to the same mountain where Moses received the Law.

But in the three years while Paul is out in the desert, God is doing something to get ready for another future event. You know, God is the God of all. And He does things way back just to have something ready way out in the future. Well in this case, I think, He’s getting Peter ready for a great conference in Jerusalem twelve years later. And I maintain, without apology, that had Peter not had this experience in Acts chapter 10, he would have never come to Paul’s defense in Acts 15 and Galatians 2, where they finally agreed that Paul would be the Apostle of the Gentiles. Peter would have never agreed to that. But here God had to, before anything really starts unfolding supernaturally, He had to bring Peter to an understanding that God was going to save Gentiles.

Now, a Jew could never understand that. That was beyond them. Now you’ve got to get a mental picture of all this. From the time that they came out of Egypt, what was their constant instruction concerning the Gentiles around them? Have nothing to do with them. Have nothing to do with them. Don’t intermarry with them. Don’t do anything, because if you do, they’re going to convince you to worship their pagan gods and you’ll go down the tube with them. So, stay away from them. Have nothing to do with them.

Well, that stayed with the Jew all the way through. Even though they rebelled and disobeyed, yet it was still God’s teaching that the Jew was to have nothing to do with the Gentile. Nothing. They were never told to go out and evangelize the Gentile; they were to stay separated and insulated from them.
All right, so now God has to show Peter that He’s changing His modus operandi. He is going to go to the Gentiles, but not through Israel. It’s going to be through one little Jew—not through the Nation, but through one man, Saul of Tarsus. All right, so while Saul is out there in the desert being confronted, I feel, by the Lord Jesus Himself, teaching him all the things pertaining to this next dispensation that’s going to follow the dispensation of the Law, here comes God dealing with Peter.

Acts chapter 10 and again for sake of time we’ll drop down to verse 7. An angel has appeared unto this Roman officer, up there in Caesarea on the sea, up there on the Mediterranean seacoast. The angel tells him to send for Peter down in Joppa. And of course the Lord works on Peter from the other end, and he brings the two together. But all right, in verse 7:

Acts 10:7-8

“When the angel which spoke unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; 8. And when he declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.”

In other words, this Roman officer is going to send a couple of his underlings down to Joppa to tell Peter that he has to come up and fulfill God’s obligation. Okay, now at the same time, you see, down at Joppa, God’s going to deal with Peter—verse 9.

Acts 10:9-10

“Oh the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: (or noon) 10. And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: (It was lunch time, but the girls weren’t ready is the way I put it. They hadn’t completely finished fixing the noon lunch.) but while they (the women of the house) made ready, (prepared a lunch) he fell into a trance,” All right, verse 11, now this is all happening in a matter of minutes during a noon hour.

Acts 10:11-13

“And he saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: 12. Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. (It was a great mix of all the unclean things that a Jew would never think of eating. And what does God say?) 13. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.” My, what an abhorrent thing for a Jew. All right, look at his response in verse 14.
Acts 10:14

“But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. (Why not? He was a law-keeping Jew. He wouldn’t eat pork or birds of prey or anything like that.) 15. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, call that not common.” This was done three times. Well, throughout the whole event, of course, Peter is now forced by an act of God to go with the emissaries from Cornelius back up to Caesarea.

And you’ve heard me say it over and over, heel prints in the sand from Joppa to Caesarea! Peter didn’t want to go! No more than Jonah did, because these are good Jews who know better than to try to have anything to do with Gentiles. But God forced the issue, and so Peter gets there.

Now, just to show you again how legalistic he is. Come all the way down to verse 28. He is now stepping over the threshold into this house of these Romans. Can you imagine how that good Jew must have felt? He must have almost felt like the demons were just crawling all over him to come into a pagan Roman household and especially the military of all things! Now, here you pick it up in verse 28 as he steps into the Roman house. He said:

Acts 10:28

“…Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man who is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation;…” Now, isn’t that plain enough? What’s he saying? Cornelius, you know enough of our Jewish customs that I can’t rightfully come to a Gentile house. It’s unlawful. And I’m not a lawbreaker.

Acts 10:28c

“…but God (See, that made the difference) hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” Since when? Since now that God is ready to go to the Gentile world with salvation. He had never done this before, except in exceptions – when He sent Jonah to Nineveh and a few other exceptions where Gentiles were brought in, but on the basis of Jewish law, no. They could have nothing to do with anything other than Jewish people.

All right, so Peter says that under the circumstances I came. So, here we have the great big change of modus operandi, one of my favorite words. How God is now going to operate with the Gentile world as over against the Jew. This just takes a few moments of time, and I have to do it. Peter comes into the house of Cornelius and, of course, all he can tell them is that this Jesus of Nazareth presented himself as Israel’s Messiah, that
Israel had rejected Him and killed Him, and how God raised Him the third day. Now verse 44:

*Acts 10:44*

“While Peter yet spake these words, (In other words, he hadn’t even wound up his point yet) the Holy Spirit fell on all them who heard the word.” Now, we don’t know how many there were. A house full? Ten, twelve, fourteen—your guess is as good as mine. But they all suddenly became believers by believing that Jesus was the Christ and that He’d been raised from the dead. All right, so the Holy Spirit fell in response to their believing, but what have they not yet done according to the Jewish plan?

Now, I’ve got to take you back to Acts chapter 2. This is what I like to do with Scripture. You compare Scripture with Scripture, and my goodness you can’t help but see the difference. Acts chapter 2 verse 36, Peter on the day of Pentecost—who’s he talking to? Jews. Not Gentiles.

*Acts 2:36*

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, (There are no Gentiles in the house of Israel.) that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. 37. Now when they heard this, they were pricked (Convicted, of course, and they said,) Men and brethren, what shall we (the Nation of Israel) do?”

Now look at the process. Repent. Be baptized. Be forgiven, and be filled with the Spirit.

*Acts 2:38*

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Mark them down on your notes. Repent, be baptized, be forgiven, and experience the Holy Spirit. That’s the Jewish process.

Now, look what happens up in a house of Gentiles. And if you know anything about math, you invert and multiply, isn’t that one of the rules. Well, here we have it—a complete inversion of the process. Now, instead of repenting and being baptized and being forgiven, it’s the other way around. The Romans suddenly believe, and they’re being forgiven. They haven’t repented. They haven’t been baptized. And Peter is just…he’s bonkers! Hey, this isn’t the way it’s supposed to work! It’s all backwards. Well, why? Because we’re dealing with Gentiles. We’re not dealing with Israel. It is a whole new ballgame, a whole new modus operandi. Here it is, the
beginning then of God’s dealing with Gentiles on a whole new plane—not with repentance and water baptism, not with a forgiveness and then that filling of the Holy Spirit.

But the moment these Romans believed, they were forgiven naturally, and the Holy Spirit evidenced Himself upon them, and Peter was just beside himself.

Okay, now come on down to chapter 11 just to show that this was such an unusual phenomenon. The Jews weren’t used to this. The Jerusalem church had never heard such a thing. Gentiles coming into a knowledge of our God? Complete unbelief of that, so you come into chapter 11 verse 1.

Acts 11:1

“And the apostles (the Twelve) and brethren that were in Judea (the Jerusalem church) heard that the Gentiles had also received the Word of God.” I imagine messengers even ran faster than Peter to tell them what had just happened up there in Caesarea.

Now, know your geography. Caesarea on the sea is only about 80 miles from Jerusalem. So a good runner could make that in fairly good time. Anyway, before Peter gets back to Jerusalem, messengers have come telling what happened.

Acts 11:2a

“And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they who were of the circumcision…” That is the Jerusalem Church—praised the Lord and just pumped Peter’s hand and said, Peter, well done? Hardly! What did they do?

Acts 11:2b-3

“…they contended with him, (They argued with him over what? Here it is next verse.) 3. Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, (What’s that? Gentiles. Romans! And then horror of horrors they also what?) and didst eat with them.”

You know, I’m always so thrilled when God gives me confirmation of something. You know, for all the years that I’ve been teaching, I’ve emphasized that I know that what really shook them up was that Peter ate ham sandwiches! And it does wake people up and make them smile. But here the other day I was reading in an archaeology magazine that they had just uncovered another pagan sacrificial temple place, and the place was littered with bones. What kind of bones? Pig bones! So, I’d been right all
along. Absolutely, pork was the mainstay of the Gentile diet. So it was just natural that if Peter went in and ate with him, he must have eaten pork.

And, oh, they were all shook up. Okay, Peter rehearsed the matter and told them all the things that took place and how that God was in it. All right, now then, I always, while I’m in Acts chapter 11 anyway, I’ve got to come down to verse 19. Because some people can’t quite believe me when I say that the Jews would have nothing to do with anybody but Jews. Here it is. A verse that opened my eyes, I guess about 30 years ago, now. And it just blew me away.

Acts 11:19

“Now they who were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen (See how plain this is?) traveled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, (north of present day Beirut) preaching the word (only Old Testament, there’s no New Testament yet) to none but unto the Jews only.” Now, don’t ever lose sight of that.

Here we are almost ten years after Pentecost, and the Jews have made no overture to approach the Gentiles, except this one time when God forced Peter to share with Cornelius, so that about twelve years later Peter could come to Paul’s defense in Acts 15 and Galatians chapter 2.
Again, for those of you in television, we’re just an informal Bible study. I never try to grind an axe with anyone. All I want people to do is just search the Scriptures. If you disagree with me on a Scriptural basis, fine. But you’d better know what you’re talking about scripturally, because I will not accept any manmade argument or denominational creed or anything like that. Search the Scriptures, because that’s the whole idea of comparing Scripture with Scripture. And as we put it on the screen here several programs back, always determine who is writing, who it is written to, what the circumstances were before and behind and whatever. That’s still the secret.

All right, we’re going to jump right back in where we cut off in our last program. I just about didn’t see the end to that program in time, but that doesn’t bother us any. We’re just going to keep going to where we left off. I can see I’m not going to get to the Rapture in this half hour, so we’ll just have to wait until our next taping.

All right, here in Acts chapter 11 the verse where we were when we ran out of time was verse 19. These Jews who had been scattered out of the Jerusalem church “went as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch preaching the word (the Old Testament) to none but unto the Jews only.”

Now, that’s what the Scripture says. That’s not what Les Feldick thinks or anybody else thinks, but that’s what the Book says. They were not attempting to go to anybody but Jews. But now remember, Acts is a transitional book. We’re coming out of Judaism and the dispensation of Law, and we’re going to be jumping over into the dispensation of Grace and the Pauline epistles. So, you’re going to have some flux, is what I call it.

You’re going to have an overlapping of Judaism with Grace. But as they go along, Judaism is going to fall through the cracks, and Peter and the eleven lose their authority with the church at Jerusalem, because now it’s moot as Israel is still rejecting everything.

Then Paul becomes the preeminent apostle until we get to the return of God dealing with Israel for the Tribulation. That, of course, is where we come in with our Rapture
teaching that we can’t be here for the Tribulation, because we are not part of God dealing with Israel. But we’ll come to that in our next taping more than likely.

All right, so in Acts chapter 11 we have the visible unfolding of the transition from Jew to Gentile. And if I don’t take these verses, somebody is going to call and say, “Why did you skip them?” Well, I’m not going to, so go right on into verse 20.

Acts 11:20

“And some of them (Some of these Jerusalem church emissaries who have been preaching the word to none but Jews only.) And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, (Now, this Antioch is up north of present day Lebanon in Syria. Ancient Antioch, of course, I think the ruins are still there at the head of the river.) spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.”

Now, I know the King James has got Grecian, but I think that’s a gross error. It should be Greeks. Because it wouldn’t be anything unusual for them to be talking to Jews, which was what the word Grecian implies, as a Grecian was a non-Palestinian Jew. But a Greek is a Gentile. I think some of your newer translations may have Greeks. Now, to these Greeks these same Jews start preaching the Lord Jesus. Now again, just take a minute to contemplate, why did the Jerusalem church react the way it did?

Now it hasn’t completely been annihilated. The vast numbers of course have run for their lives, but it’s still under the control of the Twelve. Don’t think for a minute it isn’t. All right, so:

Acts 11:21

“And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned to the Lord.” That is these Gentiles are taking an interest now in the things of Israel’s God. Now verse 22:

Acts 11:22a

“Then tidings of these things (Gentiles getting interested.) came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem:…” See, that’s why I’m always calling it the Jerusalem church. Now, when the tidings of this came to that Jerusalem church, again, did they, like I said after chapter 10, did they shout--praise the Lord, Hallelujah?! Heavens, no, we’ve got to go check this out. Look at it.

Acts 11:22
“Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go far as Antioch.” Well, now read between the lines. For what purpose? To see what in the world are these people doing? They’re not adhering to our Jewishness. They’re bringing in Gentiles.

I think I mentioned in one of my Florida Seminars, isn’t it amazing that God always has His own man for the right time and the right place? Had anybody but Barnabas gone up to Antioch, they would have blown the whole thing apart. But see, Barnabas was the man, now read on in verse 23.

Acts 11:23-24a

“Who, (speaking of Barnabas) when he came, (to the Antioch situation) and had seen the (What?) grace of God, (Saving Gentiles! He--) was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave (or hang on) unto the Lord. 24. For he (Barnabas) was a good man,…” He wasn’t so bigoted like most Jews would have been naturally. He didn’t just have that one mindset. He had the wherewithal to see God is doing something different, and I’m not going to stand in the way. I’m not going to report this to the Jerusalem church, because they’ll just scream and say, shut them down. They don’t want anything to do with this.

Acts 11:24

“For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: (He was God’s man. See?) and much people were added unto the Lord.” Now, what did that prompt Barnabas to do? Go look for Saul.

Now, just put all this together. What in the world prompted Barnabas to understand Saul was the man that was needed? Gentiles. Gentiles. And what was the purpose of God sending Saul out into the desert? To be the Apostle of the Gentiles. And Barnabas had enough Spirit-driven understanding that, hey, with Gentiles coming in, we need the Apostle of the Gentiles. So, what does the verse say?

Acts 11:25

“Then departed Barnabas (that is from Antioch) to Tarsus, for to seek (or to look for) Saul.” With the purpose that he had to have God’s man for the Gentiles. All right, now the next verse.

Acts 11:26a
“And when he had found him, (We don’t know how Barnabas looked, how long, but-) when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church,...” Now, the word church is always a called out assembly. But in this case it’s a called out assembly of predominately Gentiles, rather than a Jewish congregation. It’s now Gentile! All right, and Paul, now the Apostle of the Gentiles, is the absolute answer to their need.

Acts 11:26b

“...that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples (These followers—that’s what the word disciples means. We’re not talking about the Twelve of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. These followers--) were called Christians first in Antioch.”

Now, you know what I have to do? Ask yourself a question. See, that’s how you learn. The little kid that asks a lot of questions is usually going to be the first person in his class when he goes to school. I love kids that ask questions. But I wish adults would do the same thing.

Ask yourself a question now. Why weren’t the Jerusalem church people called Christians? They were following the same Christ. The Bible never calls them Christians, but who were? The Gentiles believers, see? That’s a point to be taken. Here at this Gentile church up in Antioch, not the Jerusalem church, but the Gentile church up in Antioch, those believers were called Christians for the first time.

Okay, now we’ve got the establishment of Paul dealing with the Gentile church. Now, let’s jump ahead and get ready for our next taping. We’re going to lay out the necessity of a pre-Tribulation Rapture because of the uniqueness of Paul’s ministry to the Gentile world.

Turn to Ephesians chapter 3, and this is the dispensation that you and I find ourselves in. So this verse becomes totally pertinent for us. Now, we certainly make it plain that Jews can be saved in this dispensation. It’s going to be rare, but they can be, and we know we have a Jewish audience. We run into it every once in a while, but that doesn’t mean that they’re necessarily believers. At least they’re having a chance at it. So, we never exclude the Jewish people, but it is predominately a Gentile thing. All right, Ephesians chapter 3 and I’m going to start with verse 1.

Ephesians 3:1

“For this cause (In other words, what he’s written especially in these first two chapters of Ephesians.) I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,” Well, now stop
and think a minute. Where is Paul when he writes the letter to the Ephesians? He’s in prison in Rome. But what got him in prison? His preaching the Gospel of Grace to the Gentiles—all the opposition of the Jews as well as the opposition from the Romans, and it got him between the vise, and he ends up in prison in Rome. And the Spirit leads him to write as a prisoner of Jesus Christ on behalf of you and me as Gentiles.

All right, now verse 2. I had my Florida audience try to memorize this. I don’t know how many did, but I certainly tried every night. Memorize this verse. It’s not hard. And it says it all so far as we are concerned in our relationship with God.

Ephesians 3:2

“If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given to me (Paul says. Not to us. Not to the Twelve. Not to the Prophets, not Israel, but--) given to me to you-ward: (us Gentiles)” See how plain that is? And yet people can’t see it. I’ve had people sit at my kitchen table and I said, now read it! They would say “I don’t get what you’re driving at.” I always say, you don’t read.

I’ve had quite a few people come up and tell me in these last seminars. Les, you’re right, I always read, but I didn’t read. Well, that’s most people’s trouble. They just read you know, and they don’t stop to think. Ask a question here and there and pick it apart. All right, look at it again.

Ephesians 3:2a

“If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God...” This time of specific directions that’s been placed on the prescription for this age of Grace. That’s what a dispensation is, remember? It is explicit directions for the period of time in which we live.

Ephesians 3:2

“If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given to me to you-ward:” Well, who are the you-wards? The Gentiles up in verse 1. See that? So, this dispensation of Grace is the set of directions that are given primarily for the Gentile world to come into a relationship with God. It’s our hope for eternity, and it’s the only way you can find it.

Okay, the “dispensation of the grace of God which is given to me to you.” All right, now for emphasis turn ahead a few pages to Colossians chapter 1 and verse 25. This is the other verse I’ve got up here on the board. Let’s read verse 24 first.
Colossians 1:24

“Who (speaking of himself, I Paul up in verse 23) now rejoice in my sufferings for you, (In other words, all the privations of his apostleship – hunger, thirst, imprisonment, beatings, stonings -- you name it. This was all--) to rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh (Physically he’d suffered for 28 years, which, of course, he has clarified in his previous epistles.) for his body’s sake, which is the church:” The Body of Christ, which is that composite of Gentile believers, I think from Paul’s own conversion on. Now, here’s the parallel for Ephesians 3 verse 2.

Colossians 1:25

“Whereof I am made a minister, (Now it’s a personal pronoun. It isn’t we. It isn’t a group of people; it’s the singular man, the Apostle Paul.) Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, (Gentiles. And the final purpose of course is--) to fulfill (or bring to completion) the word of God;” Now verse 26, this is a unique part of Paul’s revelation of this dispensation. And that is what he calls the mysteries.

Colossians 1:26a

“Even the mystery (Now, he’s just dealing with one here.) Even the mystery which hath been hid...” H-I-D—hid. And who hides it? God does! Oh, now I’ve got to turn back, don’t I? Keep your hand in Colossians. Go all the way back to Deuteronomy. Most of you probably know it by memory. You should by now. I use it often enough—Deuteronomy 29:29. If you haven’t memorized it before, do it from now on, because this is the secret to understanding the secrets. Deuteronomy 29:29 and this again shows the Sovereignty of our God. He’s absolute. He can do whatever He wants. All got it?

Deuteronomy 29:29

“The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: (Do you see that? God has the prerogative of keeping things secret.) but those things which are revealed (are no longer secret) belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.” Now that, of course, is Moses under the Law. But nevertheless, the overall rendition of that is that God is secret and He can keep things secret as long as He likes.

Now, the other one I like to use as an example, a perfect example of how God will keep things secret, and we almost think it’s impossible under these circumstances. Look at Luke 18 during His earthly ministry. He’s now ready to go up to Jerusalem and the
Passover and the Crucifixion. And I use these verses over and over when people try to tell me there’s never been more than one Gospel. The Salvation Gospel as we know it is faith in the truth that Christ died for all and was buried and rose from the dead. And they say that’s always been the only Gospel. Well, then how can you explain Luke 18 verses 31 through 34. You all got it? Luke 18, we’ll start at verse 31. And remember what I’m bringing here – how God keeps things secret. He can do it. Verse 31.

*Luke 18:31*

“Then (We’re at the end of His three years.) **he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.**” What’s He talking about? Well, the coming crucifixion. Everything pertaining to it as prophesied is going to happen. Now verse 32, He explains what they are.

*Luke 18:32-33*

“For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, (the Romans) **and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: 33. And they shall scourge him,** (or beat Him) **and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.**” He knew what was coming. It wasn’t any secret to Him. Now He shared this openly with the Twelve. All right, but now look at the next verse, verse 34.

*Luke 18:34a*

“And they (the Twelve) **understood none** (They didn’t have a clue what He was talking about.) **of these things: and this saying was** (What’s the next word?) **hid from them…**” But who hid it? God did. It wasn’t time for them to know. And all I ask people to do when I teach this is think—can you just imagine what would have taken place between now and the crucifixion if these twelve men would have known what was coming? Why, they’d have had a riot. They would have had civil war. They would have done everything to keep this from happening. So, God kept it secret even though He told them.

And I maintain that here’s another instance. Why do you suppose the Lord told the Twelve something that He wouldn’t let them understand? For our benefit. Now, we know that He was totally God. He knew exactly what was going to happen moment by moment. But on the other hand, He’s going to keep it from the Twelve. He hid it from them. Now, that’s His prerogative. See? All right, and so “**he hid it from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.**”
Now, on your way back to where we were in Colossians, stop, if you will, at John’s Gospel chapter 20, which is again proof of this statement in Luke. Even though He told them what was going to happen, they didn’t have a clue that He was going to die. And when they saw Him dying on that Roman Cross, did they just say, hey, so what? Three days and He’s going to be back alive? No! They didn’t know He was going to rise from the dead. They thought it was all over.

All right, now here’s the proof of it in John’s Gospel on resurrection morning. You all know it. Mary comes to the tomb and it’s empty. She runs and tells Peter and John. Peter and John run, now verse 4:

**John 20:4-5**

“So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, (In other words, young John outran Peter.) did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulcher. 5. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet he went not in.” He was a little bit reluctant, you know. Little, young John I think was timid. All right, then verse 6, here comes big ol’ Peter.

**John 20:6-8**

“Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, 7. And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. 8. Then went in also that other disciple, (John) who came first to the sepulcher, and he saw, (the evidence and what?) and believed.” Believed what? That Christ had supernaturally risen from the dead because the grave clothes were undisturbed. But now look at the next verse.

**John 20:9**

“For as yet (to this time) they (Peter and John and Mary) knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.” Now isn’t that plain? They didn’t know. They didn’t. As I’ve said a hundred times, they didn’t have a clue that after He was crucified He’d be raised from the dead. Yet Jesus told them, but He hid it from them.

All right, now to close out these last few moments, come back again with me to Colossians chapter 1. You want to remember that in this dispensation of Grace, Paul has a whole group of what he calls mysteries that were totally secret from everybody and everything until God revealed it to this Apostle. They come out one at a time, but they make a composite whole. All right, here we go. This dispensation of the grace of God includes:
Colossians 1:26-27a

“Even the mystery which hath been hid (by an act of God) from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: (That is to these Grace believing Gentiles who are saved now by Faith and Faith alone in that finished work of the Cross. To these believers now--) 27. To whom God would make known....”

See, you have to be a believer to understand these things. The unbeliever can’t get a handle on it whatsoever, because it’s way over their head. And it stays over their head until they become a believer, and then it becomes something that we can just feast on.

Colossians 1:27

“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; (Not among Jews. Among Gentiles. And what is this particular mystery?) which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:” Eternal glory, Beloved! And that’s why we can stand here without apology and say that when we trust this Gospel, when we believe the writings of this Apostle writing to us Gentiles, we don’t have to say I hope so or I think so. We know so, and not because of any pride on our part. It’s because we give all the credit to the One who loved us and gave Himself for us. That’s where it’s at.

All right, that is one of the secrets that are a part of Paul’s revelation which no other portion of Scripture ever even hints at—that God would come down and, in the form of the Holy Spirit, of course, indwell believing Gentiles and make us a child of God in complete relationship with the Creator, God Himself. He is in us and us in Him, and we take that by faith.

Now, I think I’ve got time. Let’s go back and see one verse that makes that so plain. I Corinthians chapter 12 verse 13. And with this we’ll probably have to close. But see, this is all unique to Paul’s revelations of this dispensation of Grace. You won’t find it in the four gospels. You won’t find it in the book of Revelation or in the Old Testament. It’s uniquely the letters of Paul.

All right, I Corinthians chapter 12 verse 13, this is how this relationship comes about that we are in Christ and Christ in us.

I Corinthians 12:13

“For by one Spirit (capitalized, the Holy Spirit) we are all (Not just a few. Not just the elite. Not just the best, but every believer from the bottom to the top of the totem pole, if you want to put it that way. For all believers are--) baptized (or placed) into one
body,” We’re placed into the whole by a work of the Holy Spirit. That’s what we have to believe as we take it by faith. You don’t feel it. You don’t all of a sudden get up and say, oh, the sky is blue, but rather we take it by faith because the Book says so.
It’s good to see everybody in this afternoon. For those of you joining us on television, we’re just a simple Bible Study. We don’t hold to any denominational line. We’re just going to teach the Book the way we feel the Spirit leads us to teach it, and evidently it is working. We’re getting response from every imaginable background you can think of, and they all tell me pretty much the same thing. “Les, it isn’t you. It’s the Word.” Especially as we put it on the screen. So, we do thank every one of you out there for your prayers and your letters and for everything that makes this ministry work.

All right, for those of you here in the studio, we’ve already turned to Ephesians chapter 3. We’re going to pick up where we left off in our last four programs. For a quick review now, remember that we’re going to be moving to the place where we can hopefully show beyond a shadow of a doubt that we can rest on a pre-tribulation out-calling of the church, which we call the Rapture.

Now, one of the big arguments that they throw at me is – “Well, the word Rapture isn’t even in the Bible.” And you know what I say? Neither is the word Trinity. Neither is the word Sovereign. But do we use them? All the time, and same way with the word Rapture. It is in the Roman Catholic Vulgate, not that that makes it any more secure, but nevertheless they translated the caught up in I Thessalonians chapter 4 as raptura from which, I guess, the English got the word Rapture. But anyhow, we’re not showing it just from one or two verses. We’re going to use however many programs it takes to show the big picture. And that’s what I’m always referring to, that we have to look at the big picture. How did all these things come about that bring us to a necessity of an out-calling of the Body of Christ before God picks up again His dealing with the Nation of Israel?

As I pointed out then in our last taping, in those first four programs, you cannot recognize this unless you look at the Scriptures dispensationally. Which, of course, a lot of these covenant people despise. They almost hate it. But that’s their problem not mine, because the only viable way to study is to “rightly divide the Scriptures,” not just between Malachi and Matthew, but we divide the Scriptures between the various dispensations when God dealt differently with the human race over different periods of time. That’s the whole idea of dispensational teaching: how did God deal with
humanity? I always start out with Adam and Eve in the Garden. It’s the simplest and
the easiest dispensation to describe.

He placed them in the Garden, and He gave them a set of directions. Just like a
pharmacist puts it on the bottle when you get your prescription, you’ve got a parallel
there. A dispensation is like a dispensing of a prescription. Well, what good is a
prescription if it doesn’t have directions? And the same way with a dispensation, when
God established a dispensation, He gave a set of directions.

Now, coming back to Adam and Eve, again, their set of directions was simple, of that
one tree you shall not eat. The rest are yours to enjoy. But of that one tree you shall
not eat. That was it. But they couldn’t even follow that! It wasn’t long until Satan
hoodwinked them, and they ate of the tree. Well, that ended that dispensation with a
judgment, which was the expulsion out of the Garden. And you start up with another
dispensational program. It was that way up through human history. God has dealt at
different times, under different circumstances with different sets of directions.

All right, now Moses and the Children of Israel came to Mount Sinai, and God put them
under the Law. Basically from the Ten Commandments and everything that was
associated with it. For 1,500 years, a much longer time than Adam and Eve in the
Garden, but for 1,500 years Israel lived and practiced under the Law. And again it was
a set of directions.

Well, when they rejected everything that God had promised under that dispensation,
which was really the coming of their Messiah to be their King. Instead of recognizing
and taking Him and trusting Him as their King, they did what? They crucified
Him. They killed Him, and of course that precipitated a judgment which ended with
the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in A.D 70, and Israel was sent out into a
dispersion that took them to every nation under heaven. None excepted.

But that was exactly what prophecy said would happen. But prophecy also said that
after they’d been scattered to every nation under heaven, what would God do? He
would bring them back, and of course we’ve seen that happen in our lifetime. That’s
all a fulfillment of biblical prophecy. But God cannot really enter into a dispensational
relationship with Israel again with the church here on earth, because that would be a
mix that just wouldn’t fly. So, we’re showing now that after Israel rejected everything,
God did something totally different by taking one man, the Apostle Paul, Saul of Tarsus,
and told him “I will send you to the Gentiles,” which was exactly opposite of what He
told the Twelve.

See, now that’s when people think Scripture contradicts itself. Well, if you don’t
understand the change of operations – yes, you could think that’s the case. But when
there is a distinct contradiction, it’s not a contradiction; it’s a change in dispensations. It’s a change in program.

So, when Jesus told the Twelve “go not to the Gentiles, but go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” and Israel rejected everything and crowned it with the stoning of Stephen, then we’re introduced to the next player on the stage of biblical history – Saul of Tarsus. And then in chapter 9, as we saw last time we were together, Saul was not only transformed and saved as we call it, but he was designated by God Himself from Glory, as the one who would go now to the Gentiles. Just opposite of what Jesus told the Twelve.

If you remember in the last couple of programs, we were following the transition through the Book of Acts where the Apostle Paul is now coming front and center and Peter and the Eleven are sort of slipping off the scene, because God is now changing His modus operandi from dealing with Israel under the Law, and He’s going to be dealing with the Gentile world, as well as some Jews of course, under Grace. It is a whole different set of directions.

All right, so to pick us up where we left off, we’re going to look at Ephesians chapter 3. We’ll start at verse 1, but I want us to zero in on verse 2. It’s one of the verses we’ve got here on the board. All four of these verses use the term “dispensation.” So, I can stand here without apology and tell the world it’s a biblical word. It’s not a coined word. It’s not an invented word. It’s right out of the original Greek. A dispensation is a period of time where God is dealing with the human race under a set of directions—all right, Ephesians 3 verse 1.

Ephesians 3:1

“For this cause (a reflection on the first two chapters) I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for (Whom?) you Gentiles,” Now, what a difference. Everything else, all the way up since Genesis chapter 12, whenever God spoke, who was He speaking primarily to? Israel.

Israel was under the promises. Israel was under the covenants. When Christ came in His earthly ministry, like we’ve already said, He told the Twelve “go not into the way of a Gentile, but go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Everything was directed to the Nation of Israel. Now this apostle directs everything the other direction. He’s always making reference to the Gentiles. And that’s what people have to realize.

You know, once in a while I’ll get a letter, usually from preachers who just totally disagree with me. I just come up with one short stock answer. The only reason you
can’t see what I’m doing is you don’t want to. That’s the only reason, because if they
wanted to, they could see it.

I’ve got pastors all around the country now that are beginning to see it. I’ve already
made mention of that. And why? Because they suddenly realized – hey- if I’m wrong,
I want to see it. But if they don’t want to, there is nothing I can do. There is nothing
anybody else can do short of God Himself, because they’re not going to see it if they
don’t want to. And you know the reason they usually don’t want to? Peer
pressure. Just like with our kids.

What’s the worst thing that our teenagers have to face everyday? Peer pressure. The
other kids. Well, what’s the worst pressure that preachers have to face? Other
preachers. I was with a couple of them down in Florida. They know exactly what I’m
talking about. All the rest of the preachers in their community just almost detest them,
won’t have anything to do with them, because they don’t like this approach to
Scripture. Well, you know, if they want to see it, they’ll see it.

**Ephesians 3:1-2a**

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, 2. If…” Again
remember, by the time Paul has written Ephesians, he’s been out there amongst the
Gentile world about 24 years, if I’ve got my chronology right.

I think he started about A.D. 40 and this is written about 64, so that’s 24 years that he
has been ministering to the Gentile world. Now you want to remember, that was a
rather small area compared to now. It was the area around the Mediterranean—Turkey
predominately, and Greece and then some in Antioch in Syria. But that was about the
extent of the then-known world, so far as the Christian message was concerned.

**Ephesians 3:2**

“If (after 24 years of his ministry - you happen to be among those who) ye have heard
of the dispensation of the grace of God (Now watch these next few words. This
dispensation of the grace of God--) which is given (I’m going to put the preposition in
only for clarity.) to me to you.” Now, what’s the process? God unveiled this whole
body of truth that we call the dispensation of Grace and He did not tell Paul to take it to
Israel, He told Paul to take it where? To the Gentile world. And that’s exactly what he
did.

Paul had to fight the Jewish element almost all the way, because they were never
convinced that the God of Israel would have anything to do with those pagan Gentiles.
We were looking at it before taping today. I can’t put my finger on the verse. I’ll have
to find it. But you see, when God brought Israel out of Egypt and was preparing them for the Promised Land, what where they to do with all those pagan Gentiles into whose midst they would be going? Now, we don’t like to say it, because it is so much against our biblical culture, now under Christendom, at least. But what were the instructions? Don’t spare a one. Clean the country of them. Don’t intermarr with them. Don’t do business with them. Have nothing to do with the Gentile world around you.

Well you see, that stayed with Israel all the way up through until we get to the Apostle Paul, because even Peter, as we showed in our last taping when God forced the issue for him to go to that Gentile house of Cornelius. Did Peter want to go? Heavens, no! Why? Because he was a good, law-keeping Jew. And you remember the last thing he said when he went across the Cornelius’ threshold? Cornelius, you know having served the Roman army here in Israel all these years, you know it’s an unlawful thing for me, a Jew, to keep company with someone of another nation. Not just Rome. Any Gentile nation. The Jews were to have nothing to do with them.

Well you see, that just carried over into all these elements of taking salvation to the Gentile world. Those Jewish people couldn’t handle the fact that God was going to share Himself with those pagan Gentiles. But, He says, this is what we’re going to do.

All right, now we have to go on into verse 3. With no association with the Twelve whatsoever, now he is being told what to take to the Gentile world so far as the salvation message was concerned. Where did he get it? Verse 3.

**Ephesians 3:3a**

“How that by revelation he made known unto me (not the Twelve but to him alone) the mystery;...” Which, we told you last time we were together, is secret things that had never been revealed before.

And you see, this is what most of Christendom can’t get through their head. They just can’t get it through their head that all of these things that are pertinent for us in this Age of Grace were totally unknown. Totally! That’s why Paul refers to it over and over as “things that were kept secret.” They were mysteries. And whenever I get a letter of opposition, I don’t get many, so don’t worry; I’m not complaining a bit. It’s very rare that I get a letter of opposition, but all I have to do is just skim through it. Not one verse, not one reference from the Apostle Paul. Well, where does that letter go? Well, in the round file. If they don’t know enough of Scripture to use nothing out of Paul, then there’s no need for me to respond.
But that’s what they do. They just utterly ignore the Apostle Paul. I’ve made this cry from this pulpit, if you want to call it that, for as long as I’ve been on television. Why in the world are 90% of your Sunday morning sermons any place but Paul? And you all know that.

I shared it with a fellow who kept track in one of the major denominations several years ago in one of my classes. From January until the first of July he kept a log of every Sunday morning sermon text. Not one was from Paul. All but one was from Matthew or John. Some of them were from Mark and Luke, I guess, mostly from Matthew. One was from the Old Testament. Well, that’s typical. That didn’t surprise me one bit, because they will not recognize that to this Apostle were given things that were never even alluded to anywhere else in Scripture. And that’s what makes it so unique, and why it is so hard for people to swallow.

Well, I woke up in the middle of the night, I do that quite often the night before taping, and a verse just hit me. And I’m going to have you look at it, because I think the Lord did it for a reason. Turn back with me to II Timothy chapter 1. This is toward the end of Paul’s prison ministry. II Timothy is written at the end of his life. It won’t be long after this and they’ll be beheading him, but look what he writes. This just says it all when I tell you what I just told you in the last five minutes. Hey, it’s nothing new, and we have to be aware of that. Paul is at the end of his ministry. He’s been out there just simply sacrificing, suffering in the physical like I don’t think any other man ever suffered outside of Christ Himself. And look what he writes.

**II Timothy 1:15a**

“This thou knowest, that all they that are in Asia…” That would be Turkey. You want to remember that Asia in our New Testament is Asia Minor or the land of Turkey.

Now stop and think a minute. Where was Turkey in Paul’s ministry? Well, almost the very heart of it. If he went north from Antioch, he’d go up to the Seleucian Straights and he could go straight west across the highlands of Turkey. Then he would hit the little cities of Derbe and Lystra and Antioch of Pisidia and all the way on over to the western coast of Turkey on the Aegean Sea where he had the city of Ephesus primarily, and then across to Philippi. But a good portion of his ministry was in what we call the land of Turkey. Now, picture that a minute before we read on. The land of Turkey was where he spent a good portion of his time.

**II Timothy 1:15**

“This thou knowest, that all they who are in Asia (or Turkey) be turned away from me; (the worst of which was) of whom Phygellus and Hermogenes.” Now stop and
think a minute. Were they turning against the man Paul or his message? The message! It wasn’t that they didn’t like Paul the man. But, oh, just like today they couldn’t stand his message.

Now, think a little deeper. That’s what I like to do if I can succeed in teaching; it is getting people to think. All the land of Turkey, after his 24 years of labor, ended up turning against him. Where did Turkey end up spiritually in the last 2,000 years? Nothing. Muslim, if anything and they’re even secular. Oh, that just tells me everything. They rejected Paul’s message. And they went back, probably, to Christ’s earthly ministry and the Twelve, which is not the message in this Age of Grace.

I was reading an article the other day by a Ph.D. Theologian, and all he was stressing was the teachings of Jesus. Now wait a minute. Who was Jesus teaching? Jews under the Law, so not much of His teaching is really that relevant for us today. Oh, there’s nothing wrong with them, but that’s not where heart of the matter is for us today. He was laboring under the Law with the Temple worship tied in with it, and it was all concerning His covenant people. But none of that really becomes pertinent for us today, because between that and now was the what? The cross. I love that old hymn. I’m sure many of you know it. The Cross Makes A Difference. It makes all the difference! And they don’t see that.

All right, so just mull this over. What happened to the land of Turkey when all of the Pauline churches turned against him? They became nothing. I read something else the other night that confirmed what I’ve been telling my classes for 30 some years. You watch Turkey. Everybody is trying to pull them into the European Community, and they’ve been part of NATO, but what has been my stand? They’re going to go with the Muslim world by the time we get to the end. So, what did I read the other night? They’re that close now to fulfilling that prophetic part of it. That they are going to hook up with the Muslim world.

A few years ago they even made a treaty with Israel that made you wonder how in the world could Turkey make a treaty like that with the Jews when the rest of the Middle East is so against them? But now they’ve just about thrown that out, already, and they’re getting more belligerent toward the little Nation of Israel every day. All of these things are coming together now right in front of our very eyes.

But don’t forget this, that the Apostle Paul at the close of his life could write to Timothy that all they in Asia, all those little congregations that he had established, had turned, not against him, I don’t think the person, but against his message – the Gospel of the Grace of God—that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day. The message we must believe in our heart for us in this Age of Grace today.
All right, now in the few minutes we have left, it’s almost gone already. Let’s go back to Ephesians chapter 3 for a little longer. Because I’m going to spend the next whatever it takes to review what we taught verse-by-verse ten years ago. That’s about when we were in Romans—about 1996-97. That’s ten years ago, already.

I don’t think it would hurt us a bit to go back and review some of these things that are pertinent to Paul’s message for the Gentile world. All right, you’re back in Ephesians chapter 3, how the dispensation of the grace of God was given to him to give it to the Gentile world. And in that process of handing out the directions for this dispensation, here’s how he got it—verse 3.

**Ephesians 3:3-4**

“How that by revelation (a revealing of things that had been kept under wraps) he (God) made known unto me the mystery; (the things kept secret) (as I wrote before in few words, (Now remember, who he’s writing to? Gentiles, not just the Ephesians, this is a circulated letter, so it’s just as relevant for us as it was for them in the day he wrote it.) 4. Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery (or the secret things) of Christ)”

Now that immediately reminds me of a verse, go back with me to Galatians. Just a few pages back to Galatians chapter 2 when we’re at that Jerusalem counsel. I use these verses over and over. I’m always afraid I’m doing it too much. I don’t like to run anything into the ground, but there is so much here that the world of Christendom totally refuses to consider. Galatians chapter 2 and they’re at that big Jerusalem counsel in about A.D. 51, which actually took place about 6 or 7 years before he wrote the letter to the Galatians, if you want to go by chronology. But look what happened.

He’s meeting with the Twelve up there at the Jerusalem church. Jump in at verse 6. I’ll be coming back to this again, so bear with me, because these things are so pertinent to our understanding of our dispensational stand on Paul’s revelation of the mysteries. All right, verse 6 of Galatians 2.

**Galatians 2:6**

“But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (He’s referring to the Twelve.) (whatsoever they were, it makes no matter to me: God accepteth no man’s person:) (Just because they can say, well, I’m one of the Twelve. Well, that didn’t cut any mustard with Paul.) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference (Now there’s a key statement. When they compared their theological notes in conference) they (the Twelve) added nothing to me:” In other words, they didn’t have anything new that they could share with this apostle. Nothing. But on the other hand, next verse, see?
“But contrariwise, when they (the Twelve) saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision (The Gentile world that we’re just looking at in Ephesians 3. When they recognized that this Gospel-- of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was committed unto Peter; 8. (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) 9. And when James, Peter, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived (or understood) the grace that was given unto me,...”

So, Paul was given grace by the ascended Lord in Glory. I was looking for another word, when he said, oh, I know where it is. I’m sorry. I had another verse in mind, and we’ve still got time. Real quickly, turn to II Peter chapter 3. It still came from the same person, but it was in a different place. I was thinking it was back there in Galatians. But look at what Peter writes. We’ve looked at these verses hundreds of times. II Peter chapter 3 verse 15, and all this to make the point that these revelations, these revealing of mysteries from the Ascended Lord to Paul, were what made the difference.

II Peter 3:15a

“And account (or understand) that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him...” What do you suppose Peter is referring to in that word wisdom? The revelation of these mysteries! An understanding of things of that had been kept totally secret. You couldn’t go back to the Old Testament and say here it is. You couldn’t go back to Christ’s earthly ministry and say here it is. No. Those were things that had been kept totally secret until revealed to this Apostle.
Okay, it’s good to have everybody back. We can get on with our second program this afternoon. For those of you joining us on television, again we just ask you to take your Bible and follow with us verse by verse and take notes. Because all we try to do is encourage people to study on their own. And my, the rewarding phone calls we get that once they get started, they have to admit it is down right fun to learn how to study your Bible. I think a lot of people are afraid of their Bible, because they’re afraid it is judgmental and it’s going to condemn them and all these other things. Well, once you get into a right relationship with the Lord, why that’s the last thing that you’ll find. Instead, it’s just a thrilling, unfolding of God’s plan of the ages. And they can scoff all they want, but the more we study, the more we see how supernaturally this Book is put together.

Okay, we’re still on the same theme, and will be for several more programs, of why we feel that the Body of Christ out of this Age of Grace will have to be taken off the planet before God can resume His finishing up the time frame with Israel. We’re going to show how this is a unique dispensation. This is a unique period of time in World History where God has turned from His covenant people, Israel, and has set them aside for a season. He has put them in a dispersion which we have sort of seen come to an end. Now there are still a lot of Jews out there, but a lot of them have already come back to the homeland.

Like I mentioned, I think a week or two ago, why in the world do you suppose that little nation of five or six million people is in the news every day. The first page I turn to in the Daily Oklahoman is the World News and there it is—something pertaining to Israel or the Palestinians. Well, there are other places in the world that have got problems. My, look at Darfur down there in Africa and the little island of what we used to call Ceylon, it is Sri Lanka now. They’ve had civil war for forty years. It’s never in the news. And there are other areas, but the little land of Israel is in the news every day. They are hated! There is more anti-Semitism coming up every day, which has been, of course, the satanic ploy to try to keep God’s program from moving forward.

This reminds me of something I just shared with one of the guys at break time. I read something yesterday that not only disturbed me, it almost made me angry. And no
wonder they say we’re no longer a Christian nation. A poll has just been taken. Now this was just in the last few weeks. Now I don’t know which party to mention first, because I don’t want this to be partisan, because one was just as bad as the other. But anyhow, I think it was the Democrats, only 30% agreed there is a literal, physical Satan. The Republican’s weren’t that much better—33%. Almost one third of both parties do not recognize Satan as anything to be dealt with. No wonder we’re in trouble. Because this Book is full of his activities. II Corinthians 4, what does it say? “The god of this world has blinded the eyes of them that believe not.”

Well, who’s the god of this world? Satan. I’m just flabbergasted to think that 66% of our politicians, Republican and Democrat alike, do not believe in anything pertaining to Satan. Well, I’ll tell you what; they’re going to get a rude awakening one day, aren’t they?

So anyway, let’s go back and pick up where we left off. We’re going to move ahead and we’re going to spend our time on a review, which we covered 8 or 9 years ago when we went through all this verse-by-verse. So, it’s about time we get some fresh production on this – how that during this dispensation of the Grace of God, not only is the plan of salvation made more simple, but the whole idea of the Christian life. What it means to be in Christ and Christ in us. We’re going to be looking at all these things over these next several programs. That will lead us up to the fact that we have to be taken off the planet in the Rapture so that God can pick up where He left off with His covenant people. All right, in Ephesians chapter 3 and we were down about in verse 4.

**Ephesians 3:4-5**

“Whereby, when ye read, (That is this letter of the Ephesians especially, but all of Paul’s epistles.) ye may understand my knowledge (Or, as I showed at the closing moments of the last half-hour, Peter called it what? His wisdom) in the mystery of Christ 5. Which in other ages (or other dispensations, or other generations) was not made known (Now look at that closely. And I hope we’ve got it on the screen—how that in other ages these things were not made known.) unto the sons of men, (That is to the human race.) as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;”

Now of course, when Paul refers to apostles, he’s not referring to the Twelve. He’s referring to the men who were part and parcel of his ministry—Barnabas and Silas and Timothy and Titus and others of the early churches who worked with him in the ministry.
All right, now let’s look at a companion passage. Drop back to Romans chapter 16. Keep your hand in Ephesians. We’re not through here yet, but come back with me to Romans chapter 16, where he says almost the same thing, and see, this is what most of Christendom totally ignores. They don’t want a thing to do with it. They don’t know what you’re talking about when you talk about the mysteries revealed to the Apostle Paul. But over and over this is the thrust that Paul has of why his apostleship is different than anything else in Scripture.

And yet, as Peter said in that same portion, where we didn’t have time to read, all of Paul’s epistles are Scripture. Now, that’s what Peter was inspired to write, that Paul’s epistles are Scripture just as much as the rest of the Bible. So, don’t ever think, well, he probably shouldn’t even be in our Bible. Don’t you kid yourselves. He is in here by the virtue of the work of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 16:25a

“Now to him that is of power…” Now there again, that is something that Israel never understood, the power of the Holy Spirit. That’s why they couldn’t keep those Ten Commandments. They were always being defeated because they had no power to overcome the flesh. But see, that’s a dispensational truth for us in the Church Age—that the moment we become a believer, the Holy Spirit comes in and He empowers us to be obedient to the commands of God. They didn’t have that before.

Romans 16:25a

Now to him that is of power to establish you (That is spiritually, biblically, theologically. However else you want to put it.) according to my gospel…” Do you see that? Paul’s gospel of salvation, not Jesus’ gospel of salvation or Peter’s or John’s.

Not the words of Jesus or Peter or John, which again Peter could just as well have said “Well, go back to John. Go back to Peter. Go back to what Jesus said.” But he didn’t! He says you go to Paul. Well, that’s the way God would have it.

Romans 16:25b

“…to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, (And of course, Paul only knows Jesus Christ and Him crucified, buried, and risen from the dead. So, that’s the Christ he’s talking about.) according to the revelation (or a revealing) of (What again?) the mystery, (Over and over we see that word in Paul’s writings.) which was kept secret since the world (or the ages) began,” And the sad part is that Paul’s salvation message and all the other truths he writes about are still a mystery to most of Christendom.
Now this is what we have to understand, otherwise I’m wasting my time. I might just as well close the Book and go home. We have to understand that the things that were revealed to this apostle were truths, biblical statements from the ascended Lord, which you can’t find anywhere else in Scripture. It’s not back there. Don’t even try to find it. It’s a waste of time. Why? Because God revealed it only to this apostle, because it’s such a uniquely insulated period of time from all the rest of Scripture. Okay, now what we’ve normally done is if you were to take this timeline all the way through and ignore Paul’s epistles, this Book would be completely different than it is now.

In other words - I had a guy in Florida, and I don’t know whether the Lord was pleased with it or not, but it sure appealed to me. He said, “Les, look what I’ve done to my Bible.” From Romans 1 through Philemon, which is just ahead of Hebrews, what do you suppose he did with it? He cut it out and stapled them all together. And he had a separate little book. Then he said, what I’ll do with people, I approach them with my Bible. I say, now look, if I take Paul out, and he says, I just pull it out. I hand them my Bible. Now you find me the plan of salvation for today. He says they can’t do it. They can’t do it. So then he says, I take my little Paul’s epistles and I slip it back and now you can.

Well, he makes a point. I won’t totally disagree with it. Because that’s exactly the way it is. If you take Paul out, or if, as most preachers do, they ignore that section of the New Testament, they’ve got nothing for today. They have just empty words. Because what God said to Israel has no dealing with us today. We’re not under that economy. We don’t have a Temple. We don’t have a flock of sheep. We don’t have a priesthood. But, oh, that’s what they’re trying to put us under—everything that Jesus said and all that. But that was all under the Law. Just remember that this portion of Scripture is strictly for us in this dispensation of the Age of Grace.

All right, so now then, if I can go back to my board, my timeline. If we could take out this portion of this timeline, I’m not going to goof it up, because whoever did this, I’m not going to goof it up with my chicken tracks. But drop Paul out and you’ll see everything moves right straight on though to the final seven years of the Tribulation and the outpouring of God’s wrath on the whole human race, but it’s particularly God dealing with Israel. That will trigger the Second Coming and the earthly Kingdom.

All right now, if all of Scripture is looking forward to that timeline, leaving Paul out of the picture, consequently, was there any reason for God to reveal these things? No. It was moot. It didn’t have anything to do with Israel. They were under their own set of circumstances. But you see, when Israel rejected everything and God set them aside for the dispersion, we had to have a new set of directions. It was imperative. You can’t go through a dispensation with no directions any more than you’d have a prescription filled with not knowing how much to take and when.
I had a computer nut, and that’s what she called herself. She said, “We computer nuts have another word. You call it blenderizing. We call it cut and paste.” That’s what you do. You take what you want over there and you paste it over here. Well, that’s what they’re doing with this precious Book. They’re just cutting and pasting. They’re blenderizing. And I won’t have a part of that. We’re going to keep segregating all of this and keep Paul’s mysteries completely separate from all the rest of Scripture.

All right, now maybe I’ve made my point. Hopefully. Let’s read Romans 16 verse 25 once more. Because some of these verses you just can’t exhaust them. It takes a long time for this to sink in. Look what he’s saying.

**Romans 16:25a**

“**Now to him that is of power to establish you** (spiritually, doctrinally) **according to my gospel,**…” And don’t ever forget, what’s Paul’s gospel? Believing in your heart that Christ the Creator, and God of the Universe, took on flesh, died the death of the cross, was in the tomb three days and three nights, and arose from the dead victorious over everything. That’s Paul’s gospel. That’s what we believe for our salvation. Why do they hate it? I can’t understand it.

Now, if I had a bunch of goo that was hard for anybody to understand, then I’d say, well, no wonder. But no, it’s so simple. That’s the problem. It’s too simple. Now it’s all been done. We don’t have to practice a “do good” religion. It’s all by Grace.

Somebody gave me the latest Roman Catholic Catechism published in 1994. I read the first chapter and I was flabbergasted. I could have written it. No kidding, I could have written it. It was all by God’s Grace through faith in what God had done. If they’d have just stopped there, but then you go on into chapter 2 and there comes a little more, a little more, a little more and pretty soon, it’s what it is. But the same way with Martin Luther. What was Martin Luther’s number one tenet when he opposed the Pope? It’s by faith and faith alone. Then what happened? Well, then they bring in all this other stuff. But it is amazing how they just cannot rest on the simple Pauline truth that the Gospel alone will save to the uttermost and all you do is believe it.

I think in one of my early programs I already used the illustration: aren’t you glad you don’t have to swim some wild mountain river in order to get to the place of salvation? Aren’t you glad you don’t have to climb some sheer cliff to get up there and have an approach to God? Aren’t you glad you don’t have to drum up a million dollars before you can approach God? But that’s almost what the world is making us do. You’ve got to do, do, do before God will have anything to do with you. No, that’s not it. It’s by faith and faith alone in what Christ has already done. All right, let’s read the verse on to the end of it now.
Romans 16:25

“Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, (which is faith in the death, burial, and resurrection) and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,” Nobody had any idea when He came on the scene and John the Baptist announced Him as the Lamb of God that would take away the sin of the world.

Did everybody say, oh, He’s going to be hung on a Roman cross. Did they know that? Well, of course not. They didn’t know what John was talking about. So, He went on through His earthly ministry. I think we looked at it the last taping in Luke chapter 18 when Jesus said we go up to Jerusalem, and everything written by the prophets will be accomplished. He will be beaten, and he will be put to death and on the third day rise from the dead. Did the Twelve understand? No. “They understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them.” God hid it from them, because it wasn’t time.

All right, let’s go quickly back to Ephesians chapter 3, again. This is all part of this revelation, a revealing placed right out in front of the human race of things that had never been mooted before. Not a word. All right, verse 6.

Ephesians 3:6

“That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ (Not by works, but by the what?) by the gospel:” The finished work of the cross is what does it, Beloved. Nothing else.

Ephesians 3:7a

“Whereof (Now here again, remember it’s the Holy Spirit who prompts him to say every individual word. Even the pronoun “I” is Holy Spirit inspired.) Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God…” Now, what does that mean? Saul of Tarsus didn’t deserve to get this role. Paul the Apostle didn’t deserve being in this role. Do you realize what he is?

I mentioned, I think again in the last taping. I’m going to repeat myself and recognize that I’m repeating myself, because I’m doing it on purpose. But a gentleman that we heard preach several, oh, many years ago—we were in a church where this gentleman was a guest speaker, and he was going to preach from Ephesians chapter 2. I’ll never forget it. “And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.”
He said, “While you’re looking that up, I’m going to make a statement. Not counting the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, there has never lived a greater man than the Apostle Paul.” Hallelujah, I agree 100%. He is by far the greatest human being in all of human history including Moses. Now remember, we’re not including Christ. But this apostle…just stop and think…for the last 1,900 and some years his gospel has been saving people across all racial lines and across all economic levels. That’s never happened before.

Do you realize how many true believers came through the Old Testament economy? Not many. Because in the first place it was limited to the Nation of Israel, and even in Israel it was only as Isaiah says, “a very small remnant” who were righteous. Where were the rest of them? Down the tube and gone. So, yes, this man has had a greater impact on more people than everything else in all of biblical history. And then he is ignored, chastised, and ridiculed.

I told someone the other day. They wrote and asked me about a good book about the Apostle Paul and I said, “It’s hard to find.” You know why? I don’t think they do it intentionally, but anytime you read a book that’s more or less biographical of the Apostle Paul, they tend to show all of his frailties and all of his weaknesses. Evidently he was bowlegged and they make a big point of that—over and over how this bowlegged little Jew—well, isn’t it sad? Man, I shouldn’t have even mentioned it, should I? But the guy is just completely downtrodden when he should be elevated above any other man that has ever lived.

Well, anyway, this is what he’s saying here in verse 7, “…I was made a minister….” Now that means he was a sent one from God Himself.

**Ephesians 3:7a**

“Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God….“ He had persecuted the Jewish believers so hard and so heavily that he should have never had this opportunity. But God’s Grace was greater than the man’s sin, and he came in to be this great apostle of the Gentile world.

**Ephesians 3:7-8a**

“Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. 8. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, (See how he looked at himself. Paul wasn’t proud. Paul wasn’t puffed up or arrogant, not at all.) is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles…” Not Israel, but the Gentiles.
Now stop and think. Who were the Gentiles? They are everybody and anybody that isn’t a Jew. Not just Rome. Not just Greece. It was the whole human race who comes under this man’s apostleship, from the Orient, the islands of the sea, the north people, the Russians, and the Europeans. This is all part of the Gentile world to whom this man’s Gospel is presented.

_Ephesians 3:8b_

“…that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;” And I would like to use the term unfathomable, which means what? Can you plumb the depths of Christ’s riches? No! Could you go out into space and ever reach the top of Christ’s goodness and righteousness? Never! This is what he’s proclaiming. “The unsearchable riches of Christ.” It’s just beyond human understanding.

_Ephesians 3:9_

“And to make all men (Not just a privileged few. Not just the rich and intellectual. Not just Israel, but the whole human race comes under the invitation of this glorious Gospel of Grace.) see what is the fellowship of the mystery, (That God would turn to the whole human race with a Gospel so simple.) to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery (or the secret. Now here it comes again.) which from the beginning of the world (From Adam nothing has ever been revealed like this before.) hath been hid in God, (the Triune God) who created all things by (Whom?) Jesus Christ.”

Now, here’s another point. Do you realize that except for one or two verses in John’s Gospel, if I’m not mistaken, there is no other portion of Scripture that gives the creation act of everything to God the Son? You all know Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God…,” and all the way up through Scripture – God. But you see, as soon as we get to this apostle—now I haven’t got time. But when we get to this apostle in Colossians chapter 1, he makes it so plain who spoke the word of creation—Jesus Christ. And only the Apostle Paul makes it so plain.

John, of course, in his gospel, John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God” and so forth. But nevertheless, this apostle makes it so plain that we have no shadow of doubt that the One who went to that cross and died the sin death that you and I deserved was the One who created everything in the first place.

Now that’s beyond human comprehension, but that’s the truth of the matter. I’ve said it as long as I’ve been teaching. He could have named the men who drove the spikes in His hands hundreds and hundreds of years before it ever happened. I’ve got someone who always stamps his envelope with—He died on a cross of wood and created the hill
on which it stood. Well, that’s exactly right. He was totally and completely the Creator of everything, and yet He was the One who paid the sin debt of the whole human race.

I’ve only got a matter of seconds left. But the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make us see the fellowship of these things that have been kept secret since the ages began. Beloved, that means what it says and it says what it means. These things had never been revealed until it came to the pen of this one man.
LESSON TWO * PART III

THE BIG PICTURE (CONTINUED ...)

PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE

I Cor. 9:17; Eph. 1:10; Eph. 3:2; Col. 1:25

It is good to have everybody back. We can get started on our third program this afternoon. For those of you joining us on television, if this is the first time you’re catching us, why, we’re just an informal Bible study. Our only goal is to get folks to study their own Bible on their own and get over the idea that you can’t understand it. Because if you know how to open it up, rightly divide it as we call it, and keep some of these areas separated one from the other, it’s really not that difficult. That’s really our approach in this series of programs. It is to show why this dispensation of the Grace of God is so uniquely different from all the rest of Scripture.

You know, I always use the word – it’s insulated. It is just literally insulated from all the rest of Scripture. No other part of the Bible has any reference to it. You can’t find it but only through the revelation given to the Apostle Paul. So, that’s what we’re honing in on for these series of programs.

Okay, my little wife is the one who always keeps things on track. She just reminded me to again remind our listening audience that the one and only book that we have produced is available for only $11. My, we’ve had a tremendous response about how people enjoy that little book. It answers 88 or so questions that most people have about the Bible. All the answers come from our previous television programs. It also makes a great gift for others.

We get so many phone calls asking if we have something that is particularly related to Paul. Well, I would have never thought of it, but she did. And that was our Aegean Cruise a couple of years ago. All of our Bible lessons were in answer to the question, “Why Paul?”

I’d like to remind even you today—Why the Apostle Paul? Jesus had Twelve. They had the Old Testament prophets, and John had already written Revelation. Why do we need the Apostle Paul? Well, we answer that in a series of eight hours on our Aegean Cruise, and it’s been well received. Otherwise, we wouldn’t even suggest to people to buy it. But it’s well worth the few bucks that we ask for that one.
All right, now we’re going to keep right on where we’ve been all afternoon on this dispensation of the Grace of God, and why it is so different from everything else in Scripture.

Come back with me to Colossians chapter 1 dropping in at verse 24. Remember that way back in the previous taping, we put on the board the four references in the New Testament that use this word *dispensation*, so that someone doesn’t come and say that’s not even a biblical word. Oh, yes it is. It’s Holy Spirit inspired and it means what it says and it says what it means.

A dispensation is a period of time during which God is dealing with the human race under its own set of directions. The dispensation of grace we’re in today is totally different from the directions under the dispensation of law. Totally different than the dispensation directions that God gave to Adam and Eve or even some of the other Old Testament economies.

But here in Colossians chapter 1 verse 24 the Apostle of the Gentiles is writing to Gentiles. I guess I should read the last part of verse 23.

*Colossians 1:23b*

“…whereof I, Paul am made a minister;” Now I just happened to think. Come back with me, keep your hand here. This is what I call Bible study. Romans chapter 15, this is a verse that we’ve used a lot of times in other circumstances, but the same word. It’s what I like people to learn to do, compare words with words. And if it means one thing in one place, it means the same thing in another place. It’s the same word. You’ll recognize it as soon as you see it. Paul says:

*Romans 15:8*

“Oh I say that Jesus Christ was (What?) a minister (a sent one) of the circumcision (Israel) for the truth of God, to confirm (or to bring to fruition, or to fulfill) the promises made unto the fathers:” Now that was the purpose of Christ’s ministry in coming to the Nation of Israel at His first advent.

All right, now back here at Colossians, Paul, too, is a sent one—not to Israel, but to the Gentile world. That’s what I want folks to see. You don’t just jumble this all up together. Christ had His ministry to Israel. This man’s ministry is to the non-Jewish world. All right, so he says in verse 23.

*Colossians 1:23b*
“...whereof I, Paul am made a minister;” By whom? By the ascended Christ. He’s the one that designated him. He’s the one who spoke to Ananias back there in Acts chapter 9, and what did He tell him? Don’t be afraid of him, Ananias, I’m going to send this man far hence to the Gentiles. So, that’s been the name of the game since it started. All right, now verse 24.

Colossians 1:24a

“Who (This minister of the Grace of God, this Apostle Paul) now rejoice in my sufferings for you,...” What’s he talking about? Well, he’s about at the end of his ministry. He’s in prison in Rome, and even though he may have had a short respite where he came out of prison for a little bit, it wasn’t long. They arrested him a second time and that went on to his martyrdom.

When you realize that his suffering—again I’m going to use these verses, even though I’ve used them many times before, come back with me to II Corinthians chapter 11. Because I know I’ve got people out there in TV-land that have no idea of what he’s talking about. They don’t have a clue how this man suffered for the sake of the Gospel the whole 24 or 25 years of his ministry without a let up. Paul was constantly under all the pressures of the persecution from the Jews and from the pagans. The beggars of weather, the tempests of sea, they were all part of his ministry. And he couldn’t just take a flight from Athens to Rome or from there; almost all of it was either on foot or by ship.

All right II Corinthians 11 and he does this by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to confront the Corinthian church for not recognizing his apostleship. They too, just like today, were putting him down. Well, who are you? Jesus we know. Peter we know. Apollos we know, but who are you? Well, he was the one that brought them out of paganism. They should have known him.

All right, so in chapter 11 he defends his apostleship. All right, verse 22, in reference to the Twelve, who, of course, were the kingpins of everything because of the three years they had spent with Jesus in His earthly ministry. Now you’ve got to remember the time factor here. That wasn’t all that long ago.

II Corinthians 11:22

“Are they (The Twelve) Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I.” I think he could have just as well said, “Are they Jews? So am I.” So, I usually use this verse to prove that all these terms used throughout Scripture all meant the same people, the Nation of Israel, the Jewish people.
All right, but that’s not the point I wanted to make, verse 23.

**II Corinthians 11:23**

“*Are they* (The Twelve, Apollos) **the ministers of Christ?** (Now, here comes the man’s humility. Even though it was inspired, he hated to do this. I know he did.) *I speak as a fool* **I am more**; (More what? The minister of Christ) **in labors more abundant,**…”

Why, he did more in one year than the Twelve did in however many years they lived until they were martyred. There’s no record of how much the Twelve accomplished after Israel rejected everything. Not that much. But here Paul has labored amongst the Gentiles with fruit like we will never understand until we get to Glory. So, he says, “**I am more.**”

**II Corinthians 11:23b**

“**...in labors more abundant, in stripes,** (That is the stripes of the scourgings, the cat of nine tails as we call them.) **in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths often.**” Now that’s plural, so it was near death, not that he died over and over, but that he was so close to death over and over.

**II Corinthians 11:24-25a**

“**Of the Jews five times I received forty stripes save one.** (That’s thirty nine. He went through that five times. Few men could survive one.) 25. **Three times I was beaten with rods,** (That was unmerciful. Again, we can’t comprehend what it was to be beaten with those rods.) **once was I stoned,**…” Up there in what is present day Turkey, in Asia Minor. Out of the town, I think it was Derbe and Lystra. They drug him out like a dead horse. They literally dragged him out of the city for dead.

**II Corinthians 11:25b**

“**... thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep.**” Now you’ve got to remember, they didn’t have helicopters and search planes. They were out there on the ocean with probably little hope of ever being found.

**II Corinthians 11:26-27**

“**In journeyings (or traveling) often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, (the Jews) in perils by the heathen, (That is the Greeks and the Romans or anybody else.) in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27. In weariness and painfulness,** in
watchings (In other words, I suppose almost in fear of his life being taken.) *in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.* Not a very pretty lifestyle, was it? How many preachers today would do it? No, if they can’t jet someplace, they’re not going to go. But, oh, how this man suffered and suffered and suffered. And then on top of all of that--

**II Corinthians 11:28**

“**Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.**” Or these little assemblies of his believers. Okay, come back to Colossians. Now I’ve reminded you of what he’s talking about when he speaks of the afflictions in his flesh,

**Colossians 1:24b-25a**

“...for the sake of the body of Christ, which is the church. 25. Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you,...” Notice that that’s almost a carbon copy of Ephesians chapter 3 verse 2. And what was the dispensation? That set of directions that make the composite Body of Christ what it is.

We are all one in Christ. We have all been saved by the same Gospel, which is faith in the death, burial, and resurrection (that finished work of the cross) plus nothing else. We are all under the same set of directions for walking the Christian walk. We’re going to look at that in a little bit. This is all part of what Paul refers to as the directions for the dispensation of the Grace of God.

**Colossians 1:26a**

“**Even the mystery** (Or this secret, see how over and over this word pops up in his writings?) *which hath been hid...*” Now you remember, oh, we’ve got to do this again. That’s the only way you learn. I don’t care if I do it over and over and over. Go back to Luke 18. We looked at it the last time we were together at taping. But you’ve got to learn how to just almost memorize these things and be ready to use them, because this is what most of Christendom, your Sunday school classes, can’t get through their head. That all these things were supernaturally kept secret until God revealed it in His own time. That’s where His Sovereignty comes in.

That’s what He said back in Exodus 19. **“All the earth is mine!”** I can do whatever I want. It’s mine. All right, now look what happened in Luke 18. For those of you out in television, in case you missed this program, why here it is, verse 31. This is at the
end of Jesus’ earthly ministry. They’re up in Northern Israel, and they’re about ready to go back south to Jerusalem to the Passover, the Crucifixion, and all that followed.

Luke 18:31

“Then he took unto him the twelve, (the original twelve disciples) and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.”

Now, do you see what He said? Everything that was written back there in the Old Testament concerning Him are about to be fulfilled. That’s what He’s telling them. But they don’t know what He’s talking about. Those things were so hidden in the Old Testament that the ordinary, everyday reader never caught it, but Jesus knew they were there. All right, so He said, “It shall be accomplished.” Now verse 32, He’s going to remind them of what the Old Testament prophesied:

Luke 18:32-33a

“For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, (That’s the Romans.) and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: 33. And they shall scourge him,…” Well, who did all that? The Romans.

Now, when we take our tours to Israel we usually, not always, but we usually try to start where they began His taunting and His beating and playing games with Him. The Romans soldiers actually had a series of circles drawn in the stone. It was almost like tic-tac-toe, and they would make games with their prisoners. And Christ was no different. They would taunt them and torture them and everything, and that was even before He came out and made His way in what the Catholics like to practice through the stations of the cross. But nevertheless, it was up there at the beginning of His walk to Calvary that these Romans accomplished all of this. They mocked Him, they mistreated Him, they spit on Him, and they scourged Him. And then verse 33:

Luke 18:33

“And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: (Now, He doesn’t say they’ll crucify Him, He just says they’ll put Him to death.) and the third day he shall rise again.” Speaking of His resurrection. Now, it’s all plain English, isn’t it? But don’t stop there. Read the next verse.

Luke 18:34
And they (The Twelve, these twelve men who’ve been with Him for three years. You’d almost think that they could interpret anything He said by now.) understood (What’s the next word?) none of these things: (Not a word of this did they understand. Why?) and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.” How do I always follow that? Who hid it? Well, God did! God supernaturally hid it even though they just heard it in plain language. They weren’t supposed to know, so He hid it from them. I think I mentioned in the last taping, why did all this happen? For our benefit as Gentile believers. Now we can see that He knew exactly what was coming, but on the other hand the Twelve didn’t.

They didn’t know the Romans were going to crucify Him. And when He was hanging on the cross, they had no idea that He would be raised from the dead. We showed that in John’s Gospel chapter 20 when they saw the evidence at the tomb. Verse 9, I think it is, in chapter 20 says “for as yet they knew not the Scripture that He must rise from the dead.” They didn’t know. Why? God kept all these things secret. Totally secret until we get to the Apostle of the Gentiles.

All right, back to Colossians chapter 1, this is what he’s talking about. Even though these things may have been in veiled language, it still wasn’t understood by anyone because God didn’t expect them to. It wasn’t time to understand it. All right, verse 26 again, this mystery, this secret, “which hath been hid (by God), from ages and from generations, but now (through this apostle) these things are made manifest to his saints.” The unbelieving world still can’t get it. But we who believe have the Holy Spirit’s unction to understand. Now we can make sense out of the whole thing. All right, now then verse 27.

Colossians 1:27

“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery (This singular one. There are many, but now we’re talking about this one.) this (singular) mystery (What is it?) among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:”

Now, if we just read that casually, we think, well, so what? But now wait a minute. Did the Gentiles have any idea of this kind of a relationship with the God of Abraham? Why they didn’t even know who He was. They didn’t know who Jehovah was. Oh, they knew who Zeus was and Apollos and all the gods and goddesses of paganism, but to know the God of Israel? No. He was totally unknown.

In fact, I knew I’d get to it sometime this afternoon. Come back with me to Ephesians chapter 2. I always have to wait for the opening, but here it comes—Ephesians chapter 2 verses 11 and 12. Now, I know people probably almost grin at me when I make some
of these statements and think, well, that’s just your idea. No, it’s what the Book says. If it’s my idea I always say so. I say, this is what I think. But these things, no, this is what the Word of God says. These Gentiles have no idea of anything concerning the God of Israel. Nothing. All right, verse 11 and he’s writing to Gentiles up at Ephesus. So it’s a Gentile letter.

_Ephesians 2:11_

“Oh therefore remember, (call to mind) that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, (That is by genealogy and by birth.) who are called Uncircumcision by those who are called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;” In other words, Jews referred to Gentiles as the uncircumcised. Now look at verse 12 and again this is plain language.

_Ephesians 2:12_

“That at that time (While Israel was still under God’s covenant relationships, they were the chosen Nation.) ye (uncircumcised Gentiles in verse 11) were without Christ, (or a Messiah) being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, (You had no part in Israel’s dealings with God.) and strangers from the covenants of promise, (You see what that means? They had no part in those covenant relationships, none.) having no hope, and without God in the world:”

That’s why they were all steeped in paganism. That’s all they knew. They’d offer those animals by the thousands and turn around with all their immoral activity and thought that they were somehow ready for whatever eternity they were looking for. And remember, even the pagans were looking for an eternal life one way or another. That was not a biblical concept alone. They all had the idea of the afterlife. All right, but they were without hope, because all they had was the gods and goddesses of mythology, “and they were without God in the world.”

Now, do you have to be a seminary graduate to understand that? That’s plain language. That was the lot of the non-Jewish world. They had no concept of the God of Scripture. They had no concept of the God of Israel. All right, now back to Colossians. And then all of a sudden to realize that the God of Israel is going to indwell you and I as a Gentile! Absolutely! That’s the promises now. Christ in us and us in Christ! That’s the relationship that we enjoy. And that’s why we don’t have to have a works religion. My goodness, we’ve got something ten thousand times better!

_Colossians 1:27b-28a_
“…which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (for all Eternity) 28. Whom we preach, (Paul says) warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom;…” He didn’t just pick and choose. He didn’t say, well now, I’d rather go to you wealthy people, because after all you’re a little easier to get along with than those poor people down there in the slums. No. Paul never differentiated—rich or poor, black or white, it made no difference.

Colossians 1:28-29a

“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; (What wisdom? The Holy Spirit’s wisdom) that we may present every man perfect (or spiritually mature) in Christ Jesus: (that relationship) 29. Whereunto I also labor,…”

How do we get into Christ Jesus? Now we’ve got three minutes left. Come back with me to I Corinthians chapter 12:12-13. This is a concept that is pretty hard to comprehend. Do I have to do something to become part of Christ? Like I said in the last program, are you going to have to swim a raging river? Are you going to have to collect a million bucks? No. It’s all free for the taking the moment we believe what Christ has done on our behalf.

I Corinthians 12:12a

“For as the body (the human body) is one, and hath many members,…” My goodness, in fact, I was just looking at something last night, and I told Iris, “How in the world can any medical professional person not be a believer? I can’t comprehend it when they see how wonderfully made this body is. How can they not believe?” But anyway, Paul is using it as an analogy. Even the miracle of our body: the fingers and the toes and the eyes and all the things that make us up,

I Corinthians 12:12

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.” All right, now we’re talking about the Body of Christ. Every one of us who are true believers are in a composite Body of Christ, and He is the Head in the heavenlies. All right, now verse 13, here’s how we got there.

I Corinthians 12:13

“For by one Spirit (A work of the Holy Spirit) we are all (every believer has been) baptized into one body, (the Body of Christ) whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; (That’s the whole scope of the economic status. Whether
you’re at the bottom or the top makes no difference.) and have been all made to drink (or partake) into one Spirit.” (the Holy Spirit.)

All right, I’ve only got a minute left, turn back quickly to Ephesians chapter 4. We come into this Body of Christ by believing Paul’s Gospel—Plus Nothing! And there is only one Body of Christ. Ephesians 4 starting at verse 4, my, this makes it so explicit. There is one body, not 1,500 like there are denominations.

Ephesians 4:4

“There is one body, and one Spirit, (only one Holy Spirit) even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;” Now look at verses 5 and 6.

Ephesians 4:5-6

“One Lord, (one and only Lord) one faith, one baptism, (The one we just read about when the Holy Spirit places us into this body of Christ.) 6. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and though all, and in you all.” That’s where we are. We’re positioned in the very Godhead of Heaven itself.
Okay, program number four and again we just want to invite our television audience to study with us. We trust you take your own Bible and make notes and go back and restudy even after the program is over, because the name of the game is to get a handle on what the Word of God says. Because it’s not all that hard once you learn to differentiate some of these things that we’re trying to show this afternoon.

All right, we’re still going to continue on in the dispensation of the Grace of God, which, of course, was given to the Apostle Paul and no one else. The Twelve didn’t have one iota of any of the doctrines that are pertinent for us. So we’ll continue on that line. We’re going to jump in at Romans chapter 3 only for the sake of showing how Paul covers all the bases for our dispensation of Grace by bringing us out of the mentality of the Law. And it is so appropriate for today, because, again, most of Christendom thinks that if I do the best I can, if I keep the commandments, surely God will accept me. That’s not it at all. It’s as far from the truth as you can get.

If you know anything about the Book of Romans, you know that the first two and a half to three chapters are God building His case against the whole human race. First He shows how guilty the immoral section of society is. Then He looks at the moral individual who seemingly lives an upright life but his conscience and his mind and all of his thinking are just as evil as the overt. And then you come to the third part, which of course dealt primarily with the Nation of Israel who was religious. With all their religion they thought that they were pleasing God. But they were just as guilty. So the Apostle comes to God’s conclusion, not his, where in chapter 3 verse 9, he says:

**Romans 3:9-10**

“What then? are we (Jews, because of their religion) better than they? (Those pagan Gentiles) No, in no wise: for we have before proved (Now watch this.) both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all (What?)under sin. (under the fall of Adam) **10. As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:**” All right, now it’s interesting that here again Paul makes it so explicit. Where did the sin problem originate? “By one man” he says in Romans 5. We won’t find that in any other portion of Scripture. Now, Ezekiel says, “the heart is desperately wicked and deceitful, who can know it?” But
it doesn’t come right out and explicitly tell us that the whole sin problem originated with Adam. But Paul does. And that’s where he becomes the Apostle that reveals so many things that were more or less in limbo even in this Jewish economy. All right, now I’m going to jump all the way up to verse 19.

**Romans 3:19a**

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, (I think the word law here is just confined to the Ten Commandments—the moral law. He’s not talking about the civil and the sacrifices and all that, but the moral law, the Ten Commandments.) Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law:...” Well, only Israel was under the Law. Only Israel was given the directions for that dispensation. The Gentile world, as we saw earlier this afternoon, had no way of knowing anything about the things of Israel’s God. But, the moral law is going to go to the whole human race. It’s God’s law for the planet earth. That is in the last half of the verse.

**Romans 3:19b**

“...that every mouth (not just Jews) may be stopped, (with no argument) and all the world (not just Israel) may become guilty before God.” Now that’s the exact opposite of what most of Christendom is preaching and teaching, isn’t it? There isn’t one iota of thought here that associates salvation with keeping the Law. It’s the opposite. And what is it? It condemns.

The Law doesn’t help people get to heaven. It condemns them and people don’t like that. I shared it with you last taping. I had a young man call, and he was upset because of what I’d said about the Law. And I said, “I didn’t say it, the Book did.” He said, “I don’t care. I still don’t like it, because that’s how I’m going to get heaven.” Sorry, it won’t fly. The Law was only given to condemn, not to help anybody. All right, now verse 20 is just frosting on the cake.

**Romans 3:20**

“Therefore by the deeds (the keeping) of the Law there shall no flesh (Not one human being is going to gain God’s heaven by keeping the Law.) be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge (or the understanding) of sin.”

Oh, people have been sold a bill of goods, haven’t they? And who’s behind it? Satan. And then they tell us that 66% of our political leaders do not believe in a literal, physical, veritable Satan? I just read that yesterday. Frightening and yet it’s maddening. How in the world can people in so called Christian America, (but we aren’t
Christian anymore, I guess) maintain there’s no such thing as a satanic power? I asked my Wisconsin Seminar a question – Why is America in the spiritual dilemma that we’re in? One word? What’s our problem? Unbelief! They no longer believe a word of this Book. And we’re going down, down, down, down. And that’s the number one problem. They can’t even believe that there is a satanic power evident in the universe, or especially on planet earth.

All right, so here we have that the Law is only given for one purpose and that was to show Israel their sin, but not just Israel, the whole human race is brought about guilty because they’re breaking God’s Law. All right, verse 21, here was one I think we used in our But God and But Now series.

Romans 3:21

“But now (What does he mean by that? On this side of the cross. Not on the front side in Christ’s earthly ministry, but on this side of the cross.) the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;” Of course, that’s all background.

I use this illustration over and over: there’s no use going into higher mathematics if you can’t add two and two and get four. You have to have the basics before you can understand the deep things. Well, it’s the same way here. The Old Testament was all just a background for our understanding now of these New Testament truths.

Romans 3:22a

“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ…” And like I said in an earlier program today, what Jesus Christ does Paul know? The crucified, buried, and risen Christ. Whenever he terms Jesus Christ, that’s what he’s talking about—the crucified, buried, and risen Christ. All right, so it’s by our faith in that Jesus Christ and the finished work of the cross that saves you.

Romans 3:22

“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that (What?) believe: (But see, most of Christendom complicates it, and they start adding. But you don’t dare do that. It’s by faith alone in that finished work of the cross. And then he says:) for there is no difference:” In other words, a Jew has to be saved the same way that we do.

Somebody just told me at break time that one of their friends heard that I said a Jew couldn’t be saved. Yes, they can. But now they must come the same way we in the
Body of Christ must come. But it’s not likely they will, because they are so blinded. I was just reading an article last night in a Jewish magazine where the Rabbi was explicitly warning his Jewish readers to have nothing to do with this Jesus of Nazareth. Well, what else can you expect? Here we have it that there is no difference as far as the means of salvation between Jew and Gentile. But the Jew is going to be hard pressed to come to a faith in this which they, for the most part, have been rejecting. All right, then verse 23, here’s the verse that begins with every salvation experience. We have to know that we’re lost before we can be saved. And here it is.

**Romans 3:23**

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;” Nobody can keep the Ten Commandments good enough to get to Heaven. It’s impossible. Only Christ Himself was able to do that. But here’s where the goodness of God comes in. Here’s the Grace of God.

**Romans 3:24a**

“Being justified freely by his grace…” Without a cost—you don’t have to raise a million dollars. I’m repeating it for the third time this afternoon. You don’t have to swim a raging river. You don’t have to climb a sheer cliff to find salvation. It’s right in front of us, and all we have to do is believe it. Oh, it’s so simple.

And yet, I think the reason most people reject it is they’re afraid they’re going to have to give up things. It’s going to change their lifestyle where life will be misery. But that’s not the way it is at all. And you and I know it. When people come out of that background and come into the joy of salvation—have you ever heard of a true believer that wanted to go back into his old lifestyle? I never have. So what are they worried about? What are they afraid of? It’s just as if, oh, I can’t do that, because then I can’t enjoy the things I’m enjoying. Listen, they don’t know the half of it. The things they think they enjoy are really a millstone around their neck.

**Romans 3:24-25a**

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:” (Not because we’ve worked for it or deserved it, but it comes through the redemption or the process of buying us out of the slave-market of sin, and how did God do it? Through the shed blood of the cross—the Christ in verse 24) 25. **Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood,…**” In other words, the moment we trust that work of the cross, including His shed blood, then Christ becomes everything that was pictured in that tabernacle in the wilderness.
Now, that may be a difficult way to explain it, because a lot of people don’t know what’s involved in the tabernacle. But we’ll be coming to it in the daily program err long as they’re coming up through Genesis and we hit Exodus. We’ll be teaching the tabernacle. Every facet of that tabernacle, everything: the materials, the silver, the gold, the brass, the cloth, the linen, they were all pictures of one aspect of Christ’s life or another.

All right, the sacrificial animals – what where they? A picture of His sacrifice. Everything pertaining to that little tabernacle out in the wilderness was a composite picture of Jesus Christ in our relationship. He was everything that we need to gain favor with God. That’s what propitiation means. He not only was the sacrifice, He was the place of sacrifice. He was not only the laver of cleaning, He was the cleansing. He not only was the table of showbread, He is the table of showbread. And all the way through that tabernacle, that’s our understanding of what Christ is to us. All right, now verse 26:

Romans 3:26

“To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: (Not ours. We aren’t what we are because we’ve done so much. We are what we are because of what He has done on our behalf. All right, so we declare His righteous.) that he (speaking of God in verse 25. God will be absolutely—) might be just, (or fair) and be the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.” Now, isn’t that plain? In other words, the moment we believe, what does God declare us? Justified—no longer are we guilty. We have been set free. We have been justified of all things. Then verse 27:

Romans 3:27-29

“Where is boasting then? It is excluded. (We have no room to boast. We haven’t done anything except believe it.) By what law? (…is it excluded?) of works? No: but by the law of faith. 28. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. (All right, now to show that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile in this Age of Grace, look at the next verse.) 29. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? (Well, he answers his own question.) Yes, of the Gentiles also:” It’s the one and the same God. But now, of course, there is that different economy by which we come into a relationship with God. It’s not by the Old Testament economy of works and law and temple worship and sacrifices, now it’s by faith and faith alone in that finished work of the cross.

All right, now in the few moments that we have left, let’s go across, still in Romans, to chapter 7. I’m just hitting some of the highlights now of Paul’s teachings concerning the directions for our living, directions for our belief system during this Dispensation
of Grace. And all these instructions are completely different from what God was instructing the Nation of Israel under the Law.

**Romans 7:4**

“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also (as a believer now) are become dead to the law (Now people don’t like that. What’d he mean dead to the Law? The Law has nothing to do with me anymore. Christ has satisfied all the demands of that Law.) by the body of Christ; (That work of the cross when He suffered and died. All right, then what’s supposed to be the result? When we become a believer--+) that ye should be married (brought into a union) to another, (Who?) even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”

In other words, our relationship with Christ as an ordinary, everyday citizen of whatever part of the world we may live. Our primary purpose is to be an influence on lost people to bring them to a knowledge of salvation.

I think I shared it with you when we first came back from our Aegean Cruise. We were in the footsteps of Paul, and we were at one of the places in Western Turkey. I think we were probably at the amphitheater of Ephesus. We had a little, young Muslim guide, about 27 or 28 years old. She spoke perfect English. She was educated. I had an opportunity for about five minutes while everybody was looking at the ruins and everything to have a one-on-one conversation with her. Come to find out, she was raised Muslim, but she wasn’t practicing it. She was what she called a secular Muslim. She had no interest in the religion or something like that.

I started showing her the plan of salvation and the hope of Glory, and tears started coming down her cheeks. She said, “Why are you so interested in me?” And I said, “Because God loves you. God doesn’t want you to go to an eternal doom. God wants you in His Heaven. God wants you there. I want you there. That’s the only thing.” And she couldn’t comprehend that. Why should you care about me? And then I told her, “Well, you see, that’s the difference between us and the Muslim religion. We aren’t going to conquer Muslims with the sword and with the guns and the warfare. We want to conquer them with the love of Christ. And that’s the difference.”

This is the whole idea that we as believers are to live our life in such a way that we have an influence on the lost world around us. Now, I’m not one that promotes grabbing people and preaching at them and trying to force it down their throat. Hey, that’s not the way God wants us to do it. God wants us to be an influence. He wants us to be ambassadors as He says in II Corinthians chapter 5. Okay, now come back to Romans 7 if you will, verse 5.
Romans 7:5a

“For when we (as believers now) were in the flesh,...” We were just like the unsaved world around us. It doesn’t make any difference. Maybe we didn’t go out and get drunk and get high and all these other things that a lot of the world does. But there are a lot of good people out in the world, too. You’ve got to recognize it. There are a lot of good people, but they’re still lost. So, when we were in that state, we may have been living a good life, but we were lost until we recognized that the Law condemned us. We were just as guilty as if we’d been doing it.

Romans 7:5a

“For when we were in the flesh, (We were still out there as lost sinners.) the motions (or the acts) of sins, which were by the law,...” What does that mean? Well, don’t steal, don’t commit adultery, don’t kill, don’t covet, and don’t gossip. Those were all things that the Law condemns every human being. And we were just as guilty as anybody else. All right, so when those things were part of our lifestyle.

Romans 7:5b

“...the law, did work in our members (That is our body of flesh, that if we were to go on to the end of our life as lawbreakers, where do we spend eternity? Lost) to bring forth fruit unto death.” Spiritual death. That’s what it says. Verse 5 again, “These things work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.” Spiritual death. Eternal separation from God. That’s where the lost person is headed, whether he’s good or bad makes no difference. All right, now verse 6, here’s the other side of the coin.

Romans 7:6

“But now (As believers, because that’s who he’s writing to.) we (as believers) are delivered from the law, (In other words, the Law has no more power over us to convict us of any of it. We’re delivered from it.) that being dead wherein we were held; (In other words, the Law had its heavy hand of condemnation on us every moment of our life until now.) that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.”

Now what’s the comparison? Now, as a believer, we’re not under the heavy demand of the Law. We are now under the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit shows us what’s wrong. The Holy Spirit shows us what we should do and shouldn’t do. And that makes all the difference in the world. We’re not under “the oldness of the letter,” which is Paul’s term for the moral law. We just have nothing to do with that whatsoever.
All right, now I’m going to come on over to one of my favorite chapters in the whole Bible—Romans chapter 8. Let’s start at verse 1, and this is all part of this dispensation of the Grace of God. You won’t see something like this back in the Old Testament, beloved. You won’t see something like this under Christ’s earthly ministry. But here on this side of the cross, yes, this is evident. Verse 1:

_Romans 8:1a_

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus,...” Now don’t forget, how do we get in Christ Jesus? By the baptism of the Holy Spirit that places us by an invisible, unfeeling act of God to become a member of the Body of Christ.

All right, now as a member of the Body of Christ, I don’t care what any other preacher says, I don’t care how famous he is; once you’re in the Body of Christ, nothing can take you out. Nothing! And, oh, they like to scare people – be careful. Iris and I have always said, “The people that preach that are seemingly the most careless in their Christian life.” Why, if I had that preached at me, I’d be scared to take a deep breath, wouldn’t you? For fear I’d be losing something. But listen, it’s not going to happen. There it is, the promise – “there is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.”

But you’ve got to remember, a lot of professing people are not in Christ. With this, I think I can turn over to—I didn’t intend to do this. You’re getting this free for nothing. I’ve got two minutes left. Go to II Corinthians chapter 5. I know I’ve used it on the program before, but it’s been a long time ago. Now remember where I came from – Romans 8:1--“There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.” Now look at II Corinthians 5:17.

_II Corinthians 5:17_

“Therefore if any man be (Where?) in Christ, (You see that? The same in Christ that Romans is talking about.) he is a new creature: (He has been created new.) old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

Now, whenever I use this verse I think of an anecdote I used years ago where a pastor of a large church in Chicago was preaching on this verse one Sunday morning. He had a large congregation. He read the verse, and then he asked his congregation, “How many of you here this morning claim to be a Christian?” Every last one stood up. No exceptions. He said, “Okay, be seated. Now, I’m going to ask you another question. How many of you this morning know that you are in Christ?” How many stood up? Just a sprinkling. What was the point? Oh, our churches are full of people who
are Christian in name only, but they’re not in Christ. And see, that’s what makes the difference. Only those who are in Christ are going to be in eternity with Him!

The rest are going to miss it. And you see, when these churches are constantly putting out a social gospel, a feel good, entertaining type gospel, they’re not bringing people to that position in Christ. And they’re going to be held responsible. I’d hate to be in their shoes. Listen, if it was so complicated, I’d feel guilty talking about it. But it isn’t. It’s so simple! All you have to do is believe it.
LESSON THREE * PART I

THE BIG PICTURE (CONTINUED ...)

PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE-

SALVATION & GOOD WORKS

My, it’s good to see everybody in today. We’ve even had to set up some bleacher seats back there. And we’re sorry about that. We’re going to have to see about more tables or something. But anyhow, we’ve got folks from, I hope I can remember, Indiana and Michigan and New York. Was that right? And then a lot of new folks from right around here in Oklahoma. We’re glad to see everybody. We trust that the Lord will bless us with a great afternoon in the Word.

Again, for those of you joining us on television, in case this is the first time you’re catching us, if you’re like everybody else, “I was just going through clicking and I saw the blackboard.” And they stop. Well, if you’re one of those today watching the program, we’re just an informal Bible study. I never attack anybody, hopefully. All I want to do is just show folks what the Book says, and then you do with it what you will. Then it’s no longer my responsibility, it’s yours. We know that the Lord has been blessing that approach, because we are getting such a response.

I could stand here for twenty-four hours just telling you of pastors and Bible teachers that are calling to tell me how they have finally seen the light. Some will say, “How did I miss this for forty years?” It’s just amazing. I’ll just briefly give you one example. He had two Ph.D.’s in theology and had pastored for forty years. He retired and somebody gave him a satellite. The first day he had the satellite, he caught my program. Got hooked, and after twelve months of studying and seeing all this, he called and said, “I had to tell you. How did I miss all this through all that education and forty years of preaching? I’d never heard it before.” And that’s just one. I could stand here, like I said, for twenty-four hours. But anyway, we want to open the Word and let people study it and see it on their own.

Okay, Iris is my promoter, you know, and she said to let people know that we have this eight-hour video of our last cruise on the Aegean Sea. The theme of all of my lectures on board ship was “Why Paul?.” And of course I start out with: the Lord had Twelve Apostles, why did He need another one? So we titled that series “Why Paul?” That’s available on an eight-hour tape. Then she wants me to keep reminding you that this one and only book we’ve published has been received fantastically. Invariably, if somebody gets a copy, they call right back and order several
more for gifts. It’s just amazing. And they get a copy into the hands of all their friends and relatives. So, it’s really a good little book that we sell for $11. It is eighty-eight questions, and the answers are taken from the program material. Okay, I think that’s enough for announcements.

We’re in the last four programs now of book 72. The whole series of this book I’ve been using to prove, at least from my mindset, why we believe in a Pre-Tribulation Rapture. Hopefully now in these next four programs I’ll be able to open a lot of minds with the Lord’s direction and get a lot of people who previously were doubtful and convince them that, yes, we can stand on a Pre-Tribulation out-calling. That we will not go into the Tribulation. So, that’s the whole theme of these twelve programs.

All right, still on that basis then, moving into the last four lessons, we’re going to start with Ephesians chapter 3. And I admit a lot of this is repetition. I just saw a little bit of the program before we left this morning and that was way back in book number 6. And I was on almost the same thing that I’m going to be touching on today. But my, that was 15 years ago. And a lot of people have missed all that, so we don’t apologize for repeating some of these things. All right, Ephesians chapter 3 and let’s start reading at verse 1.

_Ephesians 3:1-2_

“For this cause (In other words, because of what he has written in those first two chapters – we’re saved by faith plus nothing!) I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, 2. If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given to me to you-ward.” That is to Gentiles.

_Ephesians 3:3-5_

“How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote before in few words, 4. Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.) 5. Which in other ages (or past generations) was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;” In other words, Paul’s co-workers.

_Ephesians 3:6-7_

“That the Gentiles (Now I’m hitting that word extra hard for a purpose.) should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: 7. Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.”
Ephesians 3:8-9

“Unto me, whom am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 9. And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world (in other words, going all the way back to Adam) hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:”

All right, now our key verse of course goes up to verse 2. This is where we stress that the Body of Christ is something that was never revealed anywhere in your Bible. You cannot find a reference to it. You cannot find even a hint of it in any portion of Scripture except from Romans 1:1 to the last verse of Philemon. Even Hebrews, which is written by, I think, the Apostle Paul, was directed to the Jewish people and not to the Gentiles like the rest of his letters are.

All right, now within this scope of Romans through Philemon we have over and over, and we didn’t get time before to get it on the board (Sharon’s going to get it on at the next break.) the references in Paul’s epistles to this word “mystery.” It’s used in other portions of Scripture but not in the same context. When Paul uses the word mystery, he’s referring to biblical, doctrinal things that have been kept secret. That no one else ever had any idea of until it was revealed to him.

Now, I’ll make a statement. It may upset some people, but I can’t help it. It’s the truth of the matter. The only reason they cannot agree 100% with my take on all these Gentile doctrines coming from Paul is because they refuse to admit that this is the case – that none of these things were ever revealed anywhere else in your Bible. You cannot find them in the four Gospels. You can’t find it in the Old Testament. You can’t find it in the first eight chapters of Acts. You can’t find it in the Jewish law. It’s just not in there. So we have to immediately open our eyes and realize that the things I’m talking about were definitively, separately given to this one Apostle.

Now, when I introduced the tape “Why Paul?” at the beginning of the program today, I hope you heard what I said. Jesus had how many Apostles? Twelve! Well, why did He need another one? For the simple reason that the Twelve were sent to Israel as they were the Apostles of the Nation of Israel who were still under the Law. The Temple is operating. But Paul is sent the other direction, contrary to even the Lord’s own directions in Matthew chapter 10 where He told the Twelve “Go not into the way of a Gentile, but go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” And then He comes to this man and He says, “You’re going to the Gentiles.”

That’s what you have to understand. When you see that, the whole thing just lays out as clear as noonday sun. But most don’t want to see that. They want to keep hanging
on to Christ’s earthly ministry. They want to keep hanging on to Peter, James, and John. And as long as you do that, you’re never going to see it, because that’s the blinder that blinds.

All right, now I’m going to take you to one more verses of Scripture that we use quite a bit. I guess you can leave Ephesians for the time being. Come back with me to II Timothy chapter 2 verse 15, the verse that’s on all my little books. We refer to it over and over, but I haven’t referred to it a lot of times on the program. II Timothy 2:15 and again it’s a key verse if you’re going to really get a handle on Scripture. Most of you know that.

II Timothy 2:15

“Study (That’s what I emphasized in my opening remarks. I want to get people into the Book. They don’t have to listen to what I say, just get into the Book.) to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing (or separating) the word of truth.”

Now that says it all. It doesn’t mean clarify between Matthew and Malachi. What you divide are the Jewish scriptures from what Paul has given to the Gentiles. And when you separate those two - there it lays! Just as plain as plain can be. But again, most of Christendom refuses to do that. They just have to use the four gospels. They have to use the words of the Lord Jesus Himself. Not realizing that every word that comes from the pen of this other Apostle is also from the ascended Lord. My, in the Book of Acts Paul was addressing Jews when he said the Lord spoke to me and He told me to get far hence from Jerusalem. They will not hear you concerning me. I’m going to send you far hence to the Gentiles.

Well, you have to understand that every word that Paul writes is by inspiration from the ascended Lord after the death, burial, and resurrection! Now, you’ve got to let that soak in. Everything else He spoke was before the cross. Remember, the Temple is still operating, and Israel is still under the Law. Acts, just for an example, I take these things as they come to mind. Back up now to Acts chapter 3 and I know people read this and they don’t even see it. It doesn’t register. That’s why I have to, like Paul says, “I have to raise my voice,” otherwise people don’t pay any mind.

But all right, Acts chapter 3 and verse 1, just as an example. Now, this is shortly after Pentecost.

Acts 3:1
“Now Peter and John went up together into the (What?) temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.” See that? Peter and John go up to the Temple at the hour of prayer according to what? Judaism. That was part of Judaism that they had their hours of prayer, just like the Muslims do today. Why do the Muslim’s drop on their knees five times a day? Because their religion demands it. All right, Judaism wasn’t any different, as it was a legalistic religion. All right, so these men are still under it.

Well, that’s just one glaring example of how the Twelve, you see, were still under the Law. They were still under temple worship. But his other Apostle is completely separated from all that and given this whole new Dispensation of Grace, which involves what he refers to over and over as “the mysteries.” Hopefully we’ll have them on the board by the time we start our next half hour.


But over and over he’s going to refer to a different mystery. If I’m not mistaken there were 13 or 14 of them. All right, now another verse I want to refer to before we go back into my theme for this half hour is the plan of salvation for the Body of Christ. I want you to look for a moment at Romans chapter 16 verse 25. This is a verse that I use over and over, but nobody else does. You never see this verse used in a Sunday morning sermon. You’ll never see this verse used in a Sunday school quarterly. They avoid it like a plague, but look what it says.

Romans 16:25

“All right, let’s move on over one more and then we’re going to go back and look at some definitive salvation verses. Come back with me to Colossians chapter 1 and verse 24. Remember, all this is written by the Apostle Paul primarily to the Gentile world and to Gentile believers.

Colossians 1:24
“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, (In other words, he suffered for 25 or 26 years of ministry for the sake of the Gospel.) and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh (the beatings, the imprisonments) for his body’s sake, which is the church:”  The Church, which is His Body.

Colossians 1:25-26

“Whereof (or because of) I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, (Almost identical with what we started out with in Ephesians 3.) to fulfill (or to bring to completion) the word of God; 26. Even the mystery (There’s that word again.) which hath been hid from ages and generations, but now (On this side of the cross and through this Apostle) is made manifest to his saints:”

Colossians 1:27

“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this (particular) mystery (This singular one.  It’ll be on the board in the next half hour.) among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:” You won’t find language like that anywhere else!  Jesus never said something like that.  Peter never said anything like that.  The Old Testament prophets never said anything like that.  Why?  Because this is a whole new program for the human race.   And this is what we’re going to show before we get, hopefully, to the end of the afternoon.

All right, now some salvation Scriptures.  I’m going to start all the way back in Romans, but on your way, stop at I Corinthians 15.  Now, I know a lot of you say, “Oh, Les!  Again?”  Yep, again!  Because we’ve all used John 3:16 that way haven’t we?  Man, we’ve used John 3:16 until you almost thought it was the only verse in Scripture.  That’s what we’ve got to do with I Corinthians 15 instead.  Because, like I’ve been shocking people over the years – John 3:16 doesn’t mean a thing unless you bring Paul’s Gospel into it.  Then, of course, that’s why Christ came.  But you leave John 3:16 as it sets in the chapter and there’s nothing of the death, burial, and resurrection in there.  Not a word.  Not even a thought.  But now I’ll show you that when you take I Corinthians 15:1-4 and put it alongside or shove it into John 3:16, it’s a workable thing.

All right, turn to I Corinthians 15:1-4, and this is what Paul calls “my gospel.”  This is the Gospel of the Grace of God!

I Corinthians 15:1
“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;” Now remember, who’s he writing to? Corinthians—Gentiles who had come out of abject, wicked paganism, but now they’re believers.

I Corinthians 15:2a

“By which also ye are saved,…” It’s by THIS Gospel you are saved. And that’s the whole theme of Scripture, of course. Even Adam and Eve had to be saved. Israel had to have a saving faith. Christ had to certainly preach a saving message. All right, for us today, this is it!

I Corinthians 15:2-4

“…if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 3. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, (Here it comes now. This is the heart of the salvation message for us today.) how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4. And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:” That’s our Gospel of salvation, and you can’t just take part of it. You have to have all of it, or God won’t accept it.

All right, now let’s just do this for the fun of it. Go all the way back to John 3:16. Everybody has been steeped in it since, you might say, the day that the Lord said it. But when the Apostle Paul came along after the work of the cross, then John 3:16 became rather inadequate. It does not say it all. And that’s what we have to understand. All right, you got John’s Gospel chapter 3? Look at verse 16.

John 3:16a

“For God so loved the world,…” No doubt about that, is there? It was love that sent Him. Love is the epitome of our Christian faith, isn’t it? I made the statement in one of my seminars in Florida, that that is where we are totally opposite of Islam. Islam says that if he’s not a believer, kill him. We say that if he’s not a believer, show him the love of God. We don’t want him to go to a devil’s hell just because he’s a Muslim. Quite the opposite. All right, but that’s the whole idea. Our faith is based on the love of God which drove Him, of course, to the cross. Absolutely, it did. But the cross isn’t mentioned in this verse. We have to interpolate if you’re going to do it.

John 3:16

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Well, since
we know the work of the cross, since we know it’s based on the death, burial, and resurrection, we just take for granted that that’s what everybody knows. But that isn’t what John 3:16 says.

John 3:16 says that if you believe in Jesus as the only begotten Son then you will not perish but have everlasting life. Well, in Christ’s earthly ministry that was the message for Israel. If they would believe who Jesus was, that He was the Son of God and that He was the anointed coming King of the Kingdom, they had salvation, without any mention of the cross.

But, beloved, once the work of the cross was finished, then that takes preeminence so far as God is concerned, because that’s where salvation was accomplished. When Christ died, He died for you. He died for me. When His blood was shed, it paid your sin debt. It paid my sin debt. When He was buried, you and I were buried with Him—by identification. When He arose from the dead in power, we arose with Him. And we, too, are imbued with the power of the Holy Spirit. But you see, when you use John 3:16 by itself you don’t have any of that. So you’ve got to bring in some of these Pauline things, or you’re still only halfway there.

All right, now let’s come back again quickly. I’ve got a lot to cover in four minutes. Romans chapter 1 verse 16. I’m just going to show what the plan of salvation is in this dispensation of the Grace of God. Here we’ve come all the way since the Old Testament, as we’ve been stressing in the last eight programs especially, where everything was Jewish. Everything was looking forward to the coming of Israel’s Messiah. He began His three years of earthly ministry going up and down the byways of Israel with the Twelve Apostles at His side. But Israel in unbelief rejected Him and crucified Him. And after His burial, His resurrection, and His forty days with the Twelve, He ascended back to Glory.

All right, then according to all the Old Testament prophecies, after having ascended, a short time later in would come the wrath and vexation of God, which we call the Tribulation. The Old Testament is full of it. All the prophets spoke of His rejection and of His ascension, and of His bringing in the wrath and vexation. Then that would end with the Second Coming, and Jesus would establish His earthly Kingdom. That’s all the Old Testament writers knew, and that was all under Israel’s Law.

But after Pentecost, Israel keeps rejecting it and rejecting it. Then God just, you might say, gives up on the Nation of Israel. He let’s them go into their unbelief and their dispersion. He permits the Romans to destroy the Temple and the city. They are scattered into every nation of the earth, and God does something totally different. He turns to the Gentiles with this glorious dispensation of the Grace of God.
All right, now then, our dispensation of Grace has been running 1,900 and some years. Ever since the Apostle Paul was converted. You can do it with your own pen and a notepad. I feel that Saul was converted in A.D. 37. So, you just subtract 37 from 2007 and how many years has it been? I did it before I left home, but I’ve already forgotten how many would it be. But that’s how long this Gospel of the Grace of God has been going out to lost humanity—ever since Saul’s conversion or shortly after.

All right, now in Romans 1:16 he’s going to make reference to this Gospel, not John 3:16, but rather I Corinthians 15:1-4.

**Romans 1:16a**

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: (the death, burial, and resurrection) for it (Paul’s Gospel) is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;…” And is baptized? No, it doesn’t say that. To everyone who believes and joins the church? It doesn’t say that. To everyone who believes and speaks in tongues? We’re hearing that a lot lately. It doesn’t say that. To everyone who gives his tithe? It doesn’t say that. But that’s what they’re doing to people today. They’re adding to this finished work of the cross for a person’s salvation. But you must take what the Scripture says and don’t add to it. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.

Well, I guess I’m only going to have time for one more reference. Turn over, still in Romans, to chapter 3. It says basically the same thing. Romans chapter 3 dropping in quickly at verses 23 and 24.

**Romans 3:23-24**

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (Every human being is a lost sinner until they’re saved.) 24. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:” Then down to verse 26 and we’re going to run out of time.

**Romans 3:26a**

“To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him that (What?) believeth…” Plus nothing! And what do we believe for salvation? That Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again.
LESSON THREE * PART II
THE BIG PICTURE (CONTINUED ...)
PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE-
SALVATION & GOOD WORKS

My, it’s good to see everybody. We’ll go right into program number two. You can turn with me to Romans chapter 5 verse 1, and we’re going to continue for a few moments yet on this glorious Gospel of the Grace of God, and how that it’s by faith plus nothing in what Christ has done on our behalf.

Those of you joining us on television, we’re just an informal Bible study. I don’t try to grind an ax with anyone. We just want folk to see what the Book says. Look at it with an open eye. You know, I always have to be a little bit aware of clichés, like—don’t empty your brain and then not be aware of what replaces it. I don’t want you to do that, but on the other hand open your mind to carefully search the Scriptures. We’ve had I don’t know how many people write that they prayed, definitively, “Lord, just open this Book so that I can understand it.” And then along comes my teaching and there it is. It’s plain as day. I mean it’s really not that difficult.

So, those of you out in television, if you will join us, we will read a few verses here in Romans chapter 5 which will carry on that same theme.

Romans 5:1-3a

“Therefore being justified by faith, (plus nothing) we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also:…” In other words, as soon as, especially in Paul’s ministry, those pagans believed the Gospel and came out of that paganism, what did they face? Immediately it was persecution!

And I’m always so amazed that they stayed with it. Because not only were they persecuted by their fellow pagan Gentiles, they were persecuted by the Roman government, and they were persecuted by the Orthodox Jews—who, of course, hated the name of Jesus Christ. And yet they stayed with it. That’s where Paul was commending them.
All right, I want to get down to at least verse 8, and then we’ll continue our thoughts for just a moment on how this glorious work of the cross is all we need for salvation. All right then verse 4:

**Romans 5:3b-6**

“...knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4. And patience, experience; and experience, (works) hope: 5. And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God (There’s that term again. It’s the love of God.) is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who is given unto us. 6. For when we were yet without strength, (While we were yet, as we saw at the end of the last program, while we were sinners. We had fallen short of the glory of God. So--) in due time Christ died for (What kind of people?) the ungodly.” He didn’t die for the good people. He died for the worst of sinners. And then verse 7:

**Romans 5:7-9**

“For scarcely for a righteous man would one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.” All right, now that’s the kind of language that you do not find anywhere but in the writings of the Apostle Paul.

All right, let’s go to I Corinthians. And that’s going to be our subject matter for at least the first half of this program - a continuation of the Gospel of the Grace of God and that when a sinner believes it, immediately the Holy Spirit places him into the Body of Christ. And that’s the only membership that counts for eternity. Are you a member of the Body of Christ? You can be a member of umpteen other denominations and that won’t cut it unless you’re a member of the Body of Christ. That’s the only thing that counts for eternity.

All right, I Corinthians chapter 1, oh, my goodness, I guess verse 17 is a good place to start in this particular chapter, because again, we want to emphasize that work of the cross. Verse 17—now remember who Paul is writing to. He is writing to Gentile believers down there in the wicked city of Corinth. And he says:

**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 is to them that perish foolishness;...” The lost world around us, they think we’re nuts. You might as well be honest. They think we’re weird to believe that that
horrible work of the cross is all we need for eternity? But you see - that’s what the Book says.

**I Corinthians 1:18**

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God.” The same power that he referred to in Romans chapter 1 and that is given to those who believe. All right, then for the sake of time, I’ll skip a verse or two here. Come down to verse 22.

**I Corinthians 1:22a**

“For the Jews require a sign...” Now, unless you’re a Bible student that just doesn’t mean much. But if you go all the way back to Israel’s early days, God is going to bring them out of Egypt, and He’s going to do it through one man, like He does so often. But how was He going to prove to the Nation of Israel that Moses was God’s man? How? Signs and miracles. So that’s the beginning that we have in Scripture that Israel was always presented with signs and miracles to prove that this was the real thing. That it wasn’t just some slight of hand. It wasn’t something done in a corner. It was the real thing.

All right, now you remember that in Moses’ case, what did God tell him to do? *Throw your rod on the ground.* And what happened? It became a serpent. Then God had Moses pick it up. And it became a rod. Then a little later, to make further proof, he put his hand inside his tunic and pulled it out and what was it? Covered in leprosy. He put his hand back in and takes it out and it became just as clear as it could be. Well, those were signs to prove to Israel that Moses was His man.

All right, now you jump all the way up to Christ’s earthly ministry. Why all the hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of signs and wonders and miracles? To prove to Israel who He was. Israel always required a sign. What did the Pharisees tell Jesus face to face? Show us a sign. What was Jesus’ answer? “No sign will be given but the sign of Jonah, for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, so must the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” What was that? A sign. All right, so now Paul reminds us as he’s writing to Gentiles that the Jews were always requiring a sign.

**I Corinthians 1:22b**

“...and the Greeks (the Gentile world) seek after (What?) wisdom:” How many degrees do you have? How many books have you written? How much wisdom have you gained from the university? That’s all the Gentile world could think about. All
right, so Paul is using these two as a comparison. Israel always said, show us a sign. The Greeks, especially the intellectuals said, show us your education. Remember Mars Hill? That’s where that took place. All right, so this is what Paul is referring to - the Jews require a sign, but to the Greeks it’s foolishness, because they required wisdom. All right, now in verse 23 Paul said we’re not going to hang on either one of them. We’re not going to claim miracles and signs and wonders. We’re not going to claim to have four or five degrees behind my name. What does the next verse say?

I Corinthians 1:23

“But we preach Christ (What?) crucified, (That’s where it’s at.) unto the Jews (who were looking for signs and wonders, He was--) a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; 24. But unto them who are called, whether Jews or Greeks, it’s Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”

He fulfills both sides of the coin. And that’s where we’re way ahead of the game. We don’t have to look for signs and wonders. We don’t have to look for a multitude of degrees and education. We’ve got them both at salvation. God has poured out His power in the person of the Holy Spirit, and He’s also given us that peace that passeth all understanding, and it’s not foolishness because it is so, so real.

All right now let’s come on up a little bit further to the little book of Galatians chapter 5. And again we’re just stressing how that during this dispensation of the Grace of God it’s without works. You can’t do anything to merit God’s favor. The little Book of Galatians was written because some of the Jewish people from Jerusalem were coming into Paul’s little Gentile congregations and telling them that they couldn’t be saved if they didn’t practice circumcision and keep the commandments. In other words, you had to add works to their saving faith in the cross. So, Paul had to write this little letter of Galatians to refute all of that and to remind his Gentile believers up there in Galatia that it wasn’t by works; it’s by faith and faith alone.

All right, now I’m going to bring you in at chapter 4 verse 30. He had just finished using Ishmael and Isaac as the two opposites in the Old Testament. Ishmael was of the flesh. Isaac was of the promise of the Spirit. Two totally different scenarios. All right, now using those as comparisons, if you remember the story, when Ishmael started taunting little Isaac, what did Sarah demand? Kick them out! Get them out of here. I won’t have that seventeen year old taunting my little five year old. Get rid of them. So, what did God tell them to do? Take them out into the wilderness. Cast them out. All right, now that’s where we pick it up then in chapter 4 verse 29.

Galatians 4:29
“But as then (just like between Ishmael and Isaac) he that was born after the flesh (Ishmael, who was now 17 or 18) persecuted him who was born after the Spirit, (that’s Isaac, now about 5) even so (Paul says) it’s now.” We’ll never get away from the persecution of the unbelieving world. It’s impossible. All right, verse 30:

Galatians 4:30a

“Nevertheless what saith the scripture?...” And that’s one of my favorite statements. Don’t go by what I say. Don’t go by what your preacher says. Don’t go by what your denomination says. What does the Scripture say? Look at the multitudes out there that are following gimmicks. They’re following false teachers. They’re falling for it. That would never happen if they would stay in the Book. You’ve got to stay in the Book.

Galatians 4:30-31

“What saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: (Who represented legalism. Do this, do that, you’ve got to this and then God will do that. No. You cast that out. You kick it out the backdoor as far as you can kick it.) for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. (Now verse 31, here’s the answer to the allegory.) 31. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, (We’re not associated with a works religion.) but of the free.” Now then, verse 1 of chapter 5 and, oh, I love some of these verses!

Galatians 5:1a

“Stand fast therefore in the (What?) the liberty…” You don’t have a whole bunch of rules and regulations hanging on you. You’re free of all that. You’ve been set free by the Grace of God. Now, that’s not license. I always have to follow that right up. That doesn’t mean we just go out and do as we please. No. Because as soon as we became a believer who came in? The Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit becomes our gyroscope. He keeps us on a level plane. He keeps us from going out into the things of the flesh. He keeps us from listening to the false teachers. He keeps us on course.

Galatians 5:1

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” Well, in simple terms, what was the yoke of bondage? The Ten Commandments. The Law. And Peter even admitted it years later that, yes, it was a yoke of bondage that even our fathers couldn’t bear. The best of Israel couldn’t handle it because it was so severe. But, oh, under Grace, we’re set
free from all of that. We have nothing but the Spirit of God to direct us and to keep us where God would have us. All right, then verse 2, here comes the meat of the problem.

**Galatians 5:2**

“*Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised,* (to gain salvation like they were telling them. If you’re going to follow circumcision--) *Christ shall profit you* (How much?) *nothing.*” Nothing! Now listen, this is dangerous language. This affects most of Christendom because they’re adding something. It may not be circumcision. But they’re adding something. And when you add something, God says I never knew you, because I’ve done all that’s necessary.

You know, I’ve got a lot of illustrations. You can think of them. Lay awake some night and just think of a good illustration of how someone could say to you, “Have I done all that I’ve done, and that’s not enough?”

I’ve got one I dreamed up one time where I had the mother prepare a fabulous meal for all her family. She labored for two or three days to put this glorious meal on the table for the family. She bought the best of the vegetables and found the best meat, found the best of everything and was never so meticulous in all of her preparations. They sat down and they enjoyed the meal, and then after it was over, one or two of the guys says, “Well, I’ve got to go down to the hamburger joint and get a milkshake!” How do you suppose that mother would feel? After all I’ve done to prepare a meal that should have satisfied them to the end and then they’ve got to go to a greasy-spoon and get something else? Isn’t that exactly what we’re doing with the Gospel? Here God has done it all. It’s perfect! And then we go and do something just as ridiculous. But that’s Christendom tonight. All right, read on.

**Galatians 5:3**

“For I testify again to every man that is circumcised,” (As part of salvation, because that was the problem in Paul’s day.) **that he is a debtor to do** (How much?) **the whole law.**” If you’re going to keep the Law, you’ve got to keep it all! And what man can do that? Nobody. So if you do that--

**Galatians 5:4**

“*Christ has become of no effect unto you,* (His work on the cross falls into nothingness if someone tells God it’s not enough.) **whosoever of you are justified by the law;** (or by any kind of a works religion) **ye are fallen from grace.**” That doesn’t mean you’re saved and lost. It means that you have never really appropriated the Grace of God.
I’ve only got one or two more and then I want to get on another theme, if at all possible, for the next couple of programs. Ephesians chapter 2, now this is, of course, one of Paul’s prison ministry letters. While he’s in the prison in Rome he writes these glorious letters of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and so forth, under the duress of the dungeon and of the Romans all around him.

As I pointed out in my class the other night, while he was in prison in Rome was he just sitting there crying his eyes out, why can’t I be reaching somebody? You know what he was doing? He was getting salvation to his Roman guards. I know he did. Because those Roman guards in rotation ended up serving in the palace of the emperor and in the Philippian letter what does Paul say? “Greet the fellow believers in the palace.” Well, how in the world do you suppose they ended up with believers in the palace? Ol’ Paul was always witnessing to the guards that were chained to him. And when they rotated into service in the palace, they did the same thing. So Paul’s ministry expanded even from the dungeon. Are we doing that?

I told my class the other night. I am as bad as any of you. You get up against somebody and we get what? Tongue-tied. Oh, and we should just be able to let it flow. But it’s so hard. But anyway, here we are in Ephesians chapter 2 in his prison letter.

**Ephesians 2:1**

“And you (writing to another congregation of Gentiles) *hath he quickened*, (or made alive) *who were dead* (spiritually) *in trespasses and sins*: 2. *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience;*” We were no better than the rest of them.

**Ephesians 2:3-4a**

“*Among whom also we all had our conversation* (or manner of living) *in times past* (before we came into this glorious salvation) *in the lusts* (the desires) *of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4. But God,…*” God moved in. And, oh, that’s what thrills us in our letters, over and over and over, day in and day out. How they’ve been in church all of their life, caught our program and in three or four programs, sometimes in one, God opens the Scriptures, and they enter into this life. And they just can’t…they can’t express themselves of what a joy to now have the assurance of salvation without having had to do anything for it but to trust it and believe it.

**Ephesians 2:4-5**
“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5. Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us (He made us alive.) together with Christ, (Why?) (by grace ye are saved;)” We don’t deserve it. All right, now I’m going to jump down to verses 8, 9, and 10.

**Ephesians 2:8**

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves:…” Not something that you’ve thought, well, I’ve got to go and do this. You know, I think I put this on the program 15 years ago. Iris and I were reading library books when we were first married. Didn’t have television and we weren’t as steeped in the Word as we are now, so we would read a library book once in a while. We read about this one little lad, a 14-year old up here, and his experiences in the mountains of the Ozarks. But this is the one I wanted to tell you.

One day he told his little buddy, you know, Sunday morning I’m going to go up and get baptized because I know that that would make Mom and Daddy so happy. Well, isn’t that most people? Nothing of the work of the Spirit. Nothing of the power of the Gospel. As a kid, he just got the idea: I’m just going to go up and get baptized to make Mom and Daddy happy. Hey, that’s not it.

That’s not it, but it’s by Grace, the Grace of God – unmerited favor. We didn’t deserve it. But Christ suffered and died and shed His blood so that He could extend this kind of salvation.

**Ephesians 2:8**

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:” And you don’t work for a gift. You don’t lift a finger for a gift. It comes by the unmerited love of whoever is giving it. And that’s God’s salvation. “…not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”

**Ephesians 2:9**

“Not of works, (Boy, that cancels a lot of people, doesn’t it?) lest any man should boast.” Well, you’ve heard me use that in an illustration, haven’t you? Wouldn’t Heaven be awful if everybody got there by working their way? How would you like to meet them on the streets of gold, and they had to stand there and tell you all they did to get there? Once I could handle or maybe twice. But what if I happened to meet him three times in a short period of time, and I had to stand there and listen to all he did to gain Heaven’s portals? It’d be awful. But see, not a one of us is going to be able to do
that. Not a one of us is going to be able to say, you know what I did to get here? I did nothing. I just simply believed what God had done on my behalf.

All right, now this is going to get me ready for the next half-hour fortunately. So, “Not of works, lest any man should boast,” but it doesn’t stop there. That’s salvation. But we’re not saved to sit. We are saved to what? Serve! Next verse.

Ephesians 2:10

“For we are his workmanship, (As a result of salvation God has made us a new person. God has made us what we are. We’re His. We’re a child of God.) created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” It has nothing to do with salvation, but as a result of salvation, now we do things that bring honor and glory to His name. Whatever it is. Just the main routine things of life and you do it for God’s glory, I’m sure God is going to put it to your account as good works.

All right, reading on to the end of the verse, “…which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” That is your daily life of good works. Now that doesn’t mean you’re constantly trying to do something for someone else. It’s just in your daily experience of life in the home, or at work, or whatever the case may be. You are constantly pumping out that which has been put within you to do things that bring honor and glory to the Lord’s name.

All right, now that’s going to introduce me to the next half hour. We’ll look at it just briefly. I Corinthians chapter 3 and we’re going to deal with the good works in the life of the believer. We’re not saved by them, but they’re going to be a result. I Corinthians chapter 3 and this is just an introduction for the next half hour—verse 9.

I Corinthians 3:9a

“For we are (What’s the word?) laborers (We’re not sitting in a recliner. We’re busy.) together with God:…” He’s our partner in this everyday walk of the Christian life. Never forget that. We’re not alone. The Holy Spirit is empowering us, and we have the Word of God to direct us; so that everything we say, think, or do is going to be in that direction. We’re going to bring honor and glory to His name.
Okay, once again I see you’ve all got your coffee cups and you’re back, and we can go into program three this afternoon. We’re going to start right in where we left off in our last program. That was in I Corinthians chapter 3 and we’re going to be talking about the whole idea that as a believer now we work, not for salvation, but we labor for reward. A lot of people don’t like that, but it’s still a fact of Scripture, and it wasn’t just Paul’s idea. We’re going to see where it was also even part of the language of the apostles.

But for now let’s start at I Corinthians chapter 3, and again, I want to thank my television audience, as well as all of you here, for your prayers and your financial support and your letters. My, how we enjoy our mail time, we hardly ever – my, we haven’t had a bad letter in a long time. That doesn’t happen very often. Once in a great while, but it’s pretty rare. Again, we just thank you out there, every one of you, for your encouragement.

All right, we’re going to look at the whole idea of works and rewards for a little bit in this next half hour. Chapter 3 of I Corinthians and we looked at it in our closing moments to sort of whet our appetites.

*I Corinthians 3:9-10a*

“For we are laborers (And that immediately speaks of activity. You can’t be a laborer sitting in your easy chair.) together with God: (Now Paul puts the finger on us.) ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building. 10. According to the grace of God which is given unto me,…” Now Paul never takes any credit for anything other than the Grace of God. He knew he deserved nothing because of all the havoc he had caused to the Jewish believers of Christ’s earthly ministry.

*I Corinthians 3:10a*

“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, (In other words, the contractor—Paul is the one who literally set the stakes and dug the ditch for the foundation.) I have laid the foundation,…” Now, is that so hard to
understand? How in the world can people not see from just that one statement that everything that is foundational to our Age of Grace comes from this one man? They can’t see it, but here it is. He is the master builder—the one and only. And what’s the master builder? He’s the one who started the building. He didn’t come in when the first floor was finished. When people try to say that the church began back there in Acts chapter 2 under Peter and the Eleven, and then Paul comes in at some later time and continues what was begun, that doesn’t make sense, because then he’s not the master builder. Then he didn’t lay the foundation. But the Holy Spirit tells us he did.

*I Corinthians 3:10b*

“...I am the master builder, I have laid the foundation, (Just like we pour the concrete in the ditch.) and another buildeth thereon. (That’s where we come in.) But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.” We have to be careful. You know, there is no more responsible activity than when you open the Book and share it with someone. I don’t care whether it’s me or whether it’s you or anybody else. When you open this Book to share it with someone, you are taking on a tremendous responsibility.

I’ll tell you what, preachers had better wake up. They are going to stand accountable for what they have preached over the years. Like I shared earlier this afternoon, and I get them all the time, “How could I miss all this for forty years?” One of them even went so far as to say, “Les, will God forgive me for misleading people for forty years?” Well, of course He will. God is a forgiving God. But at least that man had the wherewithal to admit that he had misled people. It’s horrible.

I can remember way back when I was real young and teaching a class of high school boys. I remembered, just here a while ago it struck me, telling those kids then already, that preachers who mislead their people are going to have the hottest corner in the Lake of Fire. And I still say it. What a horrible responsibility to have misled people. I don’t care whether it’s a dime a dozen or whether it’s thousands and a mega-church. If you’re misleading people with regard to eternity, you’re going to answer for it. All right, so Paul says that you’d better be careful how you build on this foundation. All right, now what’s the foundation?

*I Corinthians 3:11*

“For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is (Who?) Jesus Christ.” Not Paul. Jesus Christ. And Paul only knows one Jesus Christ. And what is it? The crucified, shed blood, buried, risen, and ascended Lord. All right, that’s the foundation on which we build our Christian life, our works, and our outreach. If you’re young parents, then of course those coming little kids are your first mission field. And I think it’s a parent’s responsibility to be equipped to bring those kids to a knowledge
of salvation. That’s how you build on the foundation. Now of course, to be politically correct anymore, you can’t say that, can you? You’ve got to be able to say, well, this is just one way, and if you chose a different way, that’s all well and good. But, that’s not what the Book says. The Book says there’s only one way.

But, anyway, the world today doesn’t want to accept the fact that there’s only one way. Then we’re narrow, or we’re bigoted and we’re hateful. Well, that’s what the Book says. It’s not what I say. Look what it says, “**For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**” And He alone. All right, now verse 12, here comes the works part.

**I Corinthians 3:12**

“**Now if any man build upon this foundation** (Christ crucified, buried, and risen again. He’s going to build on that foundation, and he has six materials to use as he builds through his Christian life activity.) **gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay and stubble:**” Six materials. Wood, hay, and stubble—what happens if a match touches it? It’s gone. But over here are gold, silver, and precious stones. What does heat do to them? Purifies them and makes them even better. All right, so those are the materials that Paul lays out as available for every believer in his works activity as a believer.

**I Corinthians 3:13a**

“**Every man’s work shall be made manifest:**...” It’s going to be put under God’s spotlight. I always go back to the microscope. If you’ve ever used a microscope, you lay down the slide and turn the light on and up comes that powerful beam of light. It makes everything on that slide visible. All right, that’s what I call manifest in Scripture. God is going to put us under His spotlight. He’s going to see every little jot and detail of our Christian life as we have lived it as a believer.

All right, let’s stop there just a moment and go ahead to II Corinthians. Where is this going to happen? This is what a lot of people just don’t understand. When will God do this with the believer? Now the Great White Throne judgment is at the end of all time. Way out there in the future from our day, and it is strictly for the lost of all Ages. No believer will ever come before the Great White Throne. No one, because we’ve already been judged. But the Great White Throne is where God will judge the unbeliever. And he, too, will stand before the record of all of his deeds or activities as a lost human being. But we’re not associated with that. We will be at the Judgment Seat of Christ or the Bema Seat, as Paul refers to it in II Corinthians chapter 5. So, I think we’d better cover this first.

**II Corinthians 5:9**
“Wherefore we labor, (we work as believers) that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.” Not for salvation, but for His ability to say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant… (Matthew 25:21)”

II Corinthians 5:10a

“For we must all (Now he’s talking to believers.) appear before the judgment seat of Christ;…” Now that’s a confusing term. I know it is, because the first thing people think when you see that word judgment is that all of a sudden God’s going to be pointing His finger at all our sin. No! Every sin that you and I have committed, do commit, or will commit, is already under the blood of Christ. That happened the moment we believed. We were forgiven. We were covered. The shed blood of Christ has cleansed us. Even John writes that. “And the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from (how much) all sin.” We will never come before God shaking in our boots because of sin.

You know, I probably shook up a few people in my class the other night. Fortunately it was a big enough class that we didn’t end up in a discussion. I made the statement, now this is just to make people think. I had one guy tell me, “Hey, Les, don’t ever get hypothetical on spiritual things.” But once in a while I like to, just to make people think. What if five minutes before the trumpet sounds, before the Rapture takes place, a believer has just tripped into a rather serious sin? You use your own mind. I don’t care whatever it is. But it’s a flagrant sin. But before he’s even had time to have a second thought about it, bingo, the trumpet sounds, and we’re out of here.

What happens to him or her? Left behind? No way. Shaking in their boots when they come before the Lord? No way. Why? Now, I’ve got to show you Scripture, don’t I? Now keep your hands in I Corinthians 3 and II Corinthians 5. Come back to I Corinthians chapter 1. And this is the way we have to study. Now I Corinthians chapter 1, we’re still looking at the rewards when we come before the Judgment Seat of Christ. You got I Corinthians 1?

Now people don’t like this. I had one fellow who, when I read the verse, I think I’ve shared it before, I just read the verse. I didn’t make a single comment on it. He got up and left. He couldn’t handle it. Now this was a long time ago. He couldn’t handle it. He thought that if someone had sinned, they were lost, and they would have to get saved again. I knew that from his background. So, he didn’t surprise me one bit when he got up and left.

All right, but look what it says in verse 7. Paul is writing to Corinthians again, who were, you know, pretty rank. They weren’t the epitome of Christian living, yet.

I Corinthians 1:7-8
“So that you come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: (In other words, this is a reference to the Rapture. They thought it was going to happen in their lifetime.) 8. Who (speaking of Jesus Christ) shall also confirm you unto the end, (Now what does that mean? Will He let go of us? No way. He’ll never let go.) that ye may be (What’s the word?) blameless (See that? When?) in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” So, what’s the Day of Christ in Scripture? The Rapture.

So, even if someone has been unfortunate to have just sinned, and we’re going to make it a rather gross sin, nothing simple, but he’s had a gross sin and, bingo, we’re taken out. How is he going to be when he comes before the Lord Jesus Christ? What does the Book say? “Blameless.” Now, that’s the power of the blood of Christ.

You and I can’t comprehend that. We wouldn’t let somebody get off that easy, but God does. I had another verse, and I don’t remember where it was that we used the other night, where it was the same word—blameless—for the believer when they come before the Lord Jesus Christ.

All right, now come back to II Corinthians 5, again. This will be right after we’re taken up to Glory in the Rapture. Which is what we’re going to point to now before we leave this afternoon, that we’re going to be out of here before the anti-Christ appears. And it’s during the time that the seven year Tribulation is raging here on earth that this Bema Seat, or Judgment Seat, of Christ will take place.

Now the Bema Seat, which is the Judgment Seat in your King James, was the place of the judges. It was not only a political term for City Hall, but it was also the term for the judges who were at the finish line of the races in the Olympics. Now picture that, if you will, in your mind. At the finish line there was a judge or two, and as those runners came by, it was the judge who determined that he’s first, he’s second, he’s third, and so forth. That’s what the Bema Seat was really called – the place of the judges who determined winning, or second and third and so forth.

All right, so we must all appear before this Bema Seat, the place of the judge, to determine reward. Now is that plain enough? All right, and we’re all going to end up there. We’ll all have to give an account of what we have done in laboring as a believer. Not our sin. That’s not going to be in question. It’s what we have done for reward. All right, read it again.

II Corinthians 5:10

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat (the Bema Seat) of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, (as a believer in his earthly life) whether it be good or bad.” All right, now in that view,
which I feel will be while the Tribulation is raging here on earth and we’re before the Bema Seat in Glory, come back to I Corinthians chapter 3. This is what I think is the description of the Bema Seat, the place of reward.

Every believer is going to be examined on the basis of how did he use the elements or the materials that were available in his earthly walk? All right, verse 13 of I Corinthians 3:

I Corinthians 3:13-14

“Every man’s work shall be made manifest: (It’s going to be put in the spotlight.) for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed (or tested) by fire; and the fire shall try (or test) every man’s work of what sort it is. 14. If any man’s work abide (It was able to withstand the fiery eyes of the Lord Jesus Christ as He examines.) which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive (What?) a reward.”

Now, we’re not talking about salvation, we’re talking about reward. We don’t know what the rewards in Glory are going to be. These are not the crowns. That’s something totally different, but we’re going to have a reward. My own idea, and that’s all it is, I can’t prove it from Scripture. But in my own thinking, I think the rewards are going to be more or less the basis of responsibility of carrying out things that God wants us to do in eternity.

Now that’s just a guess. I don’t think that some are going to have a bigger mansion than others. I don’t think that somebody’s going to live on a more golden street than anyone else. But I think it’s going to be a matter just like the talents in Christ’s earthly ministry. When God gave ten, what did that fellow do? He went out and worked and brought ten more. And the Lord commended him for it. I think that’s a pretty good picture of our rewards. I’ll use Christ’s earthly ministry as another example. Keep your hand here in I Corinthians and go back with me to Matthew 19, just to show that this isn’t only for Paul and the Gentiles believers. It was the same way for the Old Testament believers. It’s always been a matter of saving faith, but then there was the reward process.

Matthew 19, drop in at verse 27. This is at the end of the three years of His ministry. It won’t be long and they’ll be going up to Jerusalem for the crucifixion. But, of course, the Twelve had no idea of that. Matthew 19, starting at verse 27, Jesus and the Twelve are assembled here together.

Matthew 19:27
“Then answered Peter and said unto him, (That is to Jesus.) Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?” Is he talking about salvation? No. They’ve got that. The Lord agreed to that three chapters back. In chapter 16 when Peter said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” What did God say? “Blessed art thou Peter.” So, they had their salvation, all but Judas. But now Peter says what are we going to have beyond salvation? So, what’s he talking about? Reward.

Now, why did Peter think he deserved reward? Well, what did he say? We have forsaken all. What did they forsake? I always tell people that you can’t really appreciate this unless you’ve been there, but the Sea of Galilee is beautiful. And that’s where they had been fishing. That was his vocation. And he left his fishing nets up there on beautiful Galilee to follow the Lord up and down the dusty roads of Israel. So Peter’s reminding Him. He said, now Lord, I left my beautiful fishing boat. I left the Galilee to follow you. What am I going to get? Did the Lord scold him? No. No. It was a valid question. Now read on.

Matthew 19:28a

“And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye who have followed me, (you left your vocations, whether it was fishing or whatever) in the regeneration…” Now, that’s the Kingdom, when the earth will be regenerated and made like it was in the Garden of Eden. When the curse will be lifted and everything is going to revert back to a glorious scenario. It’s going to be heaven on earth. Christ will be ruling from Jerusalem on Mount Zion.

Matthew 19:28b

“…ye who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man (speaking of Himself) shall sit in the throne of his glory, (And we know that’ll be on Mount Zion where David had his throne.) ye also (You eleven men—now Judas is out and Matthias came in Acts chapter 1.) shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging (or ruling under Christ. Who?) the twelve tribes of Israel.” Now, that was to be their reward. And that’s why I think ours will be on more or less the same basis. It’ll be given responsibility in eternity, of one sort or another.

These twelve disciples, then, are going to be ruling on twelve thrones under Christ’s throne on Mount Zion. Each one of the twelve will have one of the twelve tribes of Israel as their direct place of responsibility. Now that’s plain English. That’s not so hard to understand, is it? And that gives an answer then as to why Peter was in such a hurry to find a replacement for Judas? He was in a hurry. It was number one on the agenda. Find a replacement for Judas. Why? They thought the Lord would be coming
and they couldn’t have twelve tribes and eleven men. So, they had to fill the twelfth spot. But it’s a matter of reward not salvation.

All right, now I’ve got two minutes to go back to I Corinthians 3. Here we have the believers coming before the fiery eyes of the Lord Jesus, not for sin, only for reward. All right, read the same verse I just left, verse 14.

_I Corinthians 3:14_

“If any man’s work abide (In other words, it’s of the status of gold, silver, and precious stones. It’s something that’s going to last for all eternity.) which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.” Plain English. Now look at the slack believer. Oh, he’s still going to get to heaven. He’s still going to be in eternity with us. But what’s going to be his reward? Read on.

_I Corinthians 3:15_

“If any man’s work shall be burned, (What does that tell you? It was wood, hay, and stubble. Pffft! It was gone.) he shall suffer loss: (Of reward—never his salvation, that’s secure.) but he himself shall be (What?) saved;”

So, even though a believer has never really done much of anything, and what they did was nothing but wood, hay, and stubble and counted for nothing, he’s still not going to lose Heaven’s glory. He’s still going to be there, but he’s going to suffer loss of reward. All right, I’ve only got 20 seconds left. And I can’t let you skip verse 16, because what drives us to do the things for reward?

_I Corinthians 3:16_

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”
Okay, it’s good to see you all back. Now let’s do the last lesson for this book 72. In fact, this whole book will be more or less on this dispensational bit. In this whole series of twelve programs, we’ve been dealing with why we can look at a pre-tribulation Rapture.

So, those of you joining us on television, we would like to welcome you to an informal Bible study. Again, as I’ve said so often, we’re not underwritten by anyone. We are just totally dependent on the Lord supplying and, my, how you do it. We want to thank you from the depths of our heart for the response from our listening audience financially, prayer-wise, as well as your letters of encouragement.

Now, we’re going to hopefully bring this series to the point that I wanted to bring it. To show you without a doubt that we can believe and trust in a pre-tribulation out-calling, or what we call the Rapture, of the church. I want to make a few comments on the last half hour program that I didn’t really end up the way I think I should have. We’re going to go back and start with Romans chapter 7 verses 5 and 6, because you see, you cannot do anything in the Lord’s service except the Holy Spirit leads you and empowers you.

And we have to show the Scripture to do that. So, if you’ll bear with me and come back to Romans chapter 7, then we’ll go back into I Corinthians. Then hopefully, the rest of the hour we’re going to show how we can be expectantly looking for that out-calling, the trumpet call, the Rapture, whatever you want to call it.

All right, let’s turn to Romans chapter 7 and drop in at verse 4.

Romans 7:4-5

“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; (the work of the cross) that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. (In other words, it’s to be a works element that brings forth more believers.) 5. For when we were in the flesh, (As we saw earlier this afternoon, every one of us were at one time in the lost
estate.) the motions (or acts) of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.” That’s the Great White Throne Judgment.

**Romans 7:6**

“But now (for you and me as believers) we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, (That’s the Holy Spirit.) and not in the oldness of the letter.” That is the law.

All right, now the other verse that I’ve got to look at a minute before we go any further is I Corinthians chapter 12 verse 13. This is all tied to this same premise that the moment we believed the Holy Spirit came within us to indwell us, and He also baptized us into the Body of Christ. As I said, I think in the first program this afternoon, that’s the only baptism that counts for eternity. Are you a member of the Body of Christ? I don’t care what other churches you’re a member of. That doesn’t really count. Are you a member of this Body of Christ? Only the Holy Spirit can determine who goes into the Body.

**I Corinthians 12:13**

“For by one Spirit (There it is again, the Holy Spirit.) are we (as believers now) all (every last one of us) baptized (or placed) into (Not a denomination, but what?) one body, (We are placed into the--) one body, whether we be Jew or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into (or partake of that) one Spirit.” Then that indwelling Holy Spirit prompts us to produce fruit for eternity and to be laborers in this building that God has commissioned us to build. Never forget that we cannot perform any work for God except the Holy Spirit leads us and directs us and empowers us.

All right, now we’ve been pointing to the fact that all of these things that I’ve been talking about, everything is all tied up in this period of time that we call the dispensation of the Grace of God. That’s why I looked at Ephesians 3. I also had Sharon put up all these references and you can take them down. Hopefully you can see them. They all refer to that word mystery as Paul uses the term, which means a secret. Romans 11:25 we used earlier. No, I didn’t either. I used 16:25, “the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret.” We looked at Ephesians 1:9 and all these. Take them down in your notes if I don’t have time to address them this afternoon. These are all words and verses that have no bearing on anything of this upper timeline. This is all associated with the Dispensation of Grace.

Now remember, the Old Testament timeline came through, and they all thought it would just keep right on going past the ascension, and they’d go into the Tribulation. That
would end with the Second Coming and the establishment of the Kingdom. But, unknown to all of this, was this break in the timeline right after His ascension, when God called out the Apostle Paul and sent him to the Gentiles and opened up this Dispensation of Grace. Everything that I’ve been trying to teach for the last twelve programs is to show that that will never mix with the Jewish economy of the Tribulation. It’d be like putting gasoline and water together. They just won’t mix. And if people could just ask God to open their eyes and help them to see this—that all the things that Paul teaches between Romans and Philemon are never addressed anywhere else in Scripture. You can’t find it. You’ve heard me say it over and over.

Well, if that be the case, then how can you take something that is so totally insulated from all of this up here and then in the last minute go ahead and push it into the Tribulation? I can’t see how it can work. It would be, again like I said, like fish out of water, like mixing gas and water. It won’t work. So we have to realize that this whole out-calling of what we call the Body of Christ is a Pauline revelation of things kept secret. I emphasized that, I think, in several programs back. That God is a God who keeps secrets, like He tells us in Deuteronomy 29:29, “the secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us.”

Well, how can something belong if it’s never been revealed? Well, it can’t. And these things were never revealed until we come to Paul who was sent to the Gentile world.

So, you just keep it insulated; it is the word I use over and over. You can’t push any of the Jewish economy into it except as Paul uses some of the Old Testament characters as examples. Abraham was an example of faith plus nothing and various others. But to make anything doctrinal out of it, it just will not fly. So, I adamantly maintain that since this Dispensation of the Grace of God is our own set of directions, you can’t put it up with Israel in the Tribulation. It just won’t fly.

Okay, now let’s look at our key verses of the Rapture, where Paul teaches and Paul alone. You won’t find it anywhere else. Let’s start in I Corinthians chapter 15 verse 51. Right off the bat what’s the first word that is going to jump off the page at you? What word? Mystery! It’s one of these verses that we’ve got on the board, I Corinthians 15:51. What does it say?

*I Corinthians 15:51a*

“Behold, I show you a mystery;…” A secret that’s never been revealed before. I’ll give you a good example, and I was just as guilty as everybody else. Keep your hand in I Corinthians. Go back to John chapter 14 and verse 1. And I dare say that ninety percent of even people who believe in the Rapture will put this as Rapture ground. But
it cannot be! Why? Because, the Rapture was a secret. It had never been revealed until God gave it to Paul.

Well, what’s the time factor of John 14? Years earlier. This is Jesus in His earthly ministry. He’s not talking about the Rapture. Now look at the language that I used to teach it, so I know what I’m talking about, verse 1.

**John 14:1-3**

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” That’s not the Rapture. That’s God dealing with the Twelve. That’ll happen at His Second Coming.

And there are various other scriptures. “Two women grinding at the mill. One taken, the other left.” How many people think that’s the Rapture? No. That’s not the Rapture. That’s God dealing with a couple of Jews. And if you really study the Scripture, the one that’s taken is not the believer. It’s the un-believer, and the believer is left to go into the Kingdom. “Two shall be sleeping in the bed. One taken and the other left.” Well, which one is taken? The un-believer, because they cannot go into the Kingdom, only the believer can. But see how we can twist the Scriptures? But you just separate them like I started out in the first program and rightly divide the Word of God and everything gets just as plain as the noon-day sun.

All right, but now back to I Corinthians 15, and watch the language! That’s all you have to do. God has made sure that these things are plainly understood.

**I Corinthians 15:51**

“Behold, I show you a mystery; (A secret, something that’s never been revealed before.) We shall not all die, but we shall all be changed,” Now just stop and think a minute. That’s what I’ve got to get people to do. Stop and think. There’s coming a point in time, whether you want to believe in a pre-trib. Rapture or not, there’s coming a point in time when God is going to intervene in human history, which means that there’s going to be some believers who are still what? Living!

I don’t care when it is. There’s going to be a time where when Christ comes there will be believers who are living. They haven’t died. So, what does this verse say? They’re not going to die so they can be resurrected. God’s going to do what? He’s going to change them. Metamorphosis. Now, I know that’s not a good illustration, because it’s so slow. But you all know what metamorphosis is, don’t you? When that cocoon
finally opens up and out comes that gorgeous butterfly. What a transformation! Well, that’s the way I like to liken our being changed if the Lord should come today. We’re alive! He’s not going to kill us so He can resurrect us. He’s going to change us immediately before we hit the ceiling.

I think I shared this with one of my classes someplace lately. I had just read an article which was way over my head, but I got enough out of it to be able to correlate it. He was talking about how we live in three dimensions, but science is now aware that there are probably as many as eleven or twelve. And when you get into that eleventh or twelfth dimension, nothing can prohibit anything else from going through it. Bingo! That’s what we’re going to do, if that’s what it takes. We’re going to slip from three dimensional to twelve dimensional before we hit the ceiling, and we’re out of here. No problem.

But all right, the point I’m making is that there has to be a point in time when the trumpet sounds and Christ calls up the believers of the Church Age. Old Testament believers are going to have to wait. Daniel says they are going to have to wait until after the Second Coming. But for the Church Age believer, there is coming a day when the trumpet’s going to sound. Christ is going to leave Heaven, and we who are alive will be changed. Okay, now let’s read on, verse 52.

*1 Corinthians 15:52-53*

“*In a moment, (in a split second) in the twinkling (or the blink) of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we* (He’s repeating it now—who are alive and remain--) *shall be changed.* (We’re going to go from the ugly cocoon to the beautiful butterfly instantly!) *53. For this corruptible, (which is prone to death) must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*”

All right, now you have to understand that the Christian who was a believer when he died is going to have to be resurrected into a new body. That’s resurrection power. We can all understand that. All right, so the soul and spirit that went to glory the minute that believer died, that’s II Corinthians 5 again, that soul and spirit went into the presence of the Lord waiting for this great resurrection day. When Christ returns to the air with a trumpet (a singular trumpet, not the seven trumpets of Revelation, a singular trumpet, God’s trumpet) the dead in Christ will be resurrected from wherever they are. Whether they’re in the deepest cavern in the ocean, whether they were burned at the stake, no matter where, there’s going to be enough of that corpse left that God can resurrect it.

I don’t care if it’s only an atom, that’s all God needs. But He does have to have that, because you can’t resurrect from nothing. That’s the whole idea of resurrection: that
you’ve lived and died and been resurrected. And that has to be by an act of God, but He knows. Don’t you worry. There is not a cell of any believer that God doesn’t know where it is. All right, let’s read another verse or two. I think we have time, verse 54.

_I Corinthians 15:54a_

“So when this corruptible,…” This body that is fit for death and corruption even though we’re saved in the soul and the spirit. Now that’s another half hour, isn’t it? We know that the body will not receive the incorruption until resurrection. Let me show you the verse. I think I’ve got time. Come back with me to Romans.

Romans chapter 8, and here we have the appearance of the Kingdom, the Second Coming, the curse lifted, and everything goes back to the perfection of the Garden of Eden. I haven’t got time to read them all, but let’s go down to verse 22. Romans 8 verse 22. If you want to read this after you get home, go all the way up to verse 18. But I haven’t got time to do that, so let’s start at verse 22.

_Romans 8:22-23_

“For we know that the whole creation (Everything in it, whether it’s alive or whether it’s inanimate, everything is under the curse and--) _groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now._ 23. _And not only they_, (not only the other parts of creation) _but ourselves also_, (We as believers are part of the curse. We suffer pain. We suffer sickness and disease and what have you.) _who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, (or that great transition) to wit, the redemption of our body._”

The soul and spirit were redeemed at salvation, but our old body is still part of the old curse. It’s still prone to sickness and disease and injury and what have you. But the day is coming when we’re going to get a new body, and it’ll be reunited with the soul and the spirit.

All right, I think in the seven minutes we have left, I’m going to take you all the way over to I Thessalonians chapter 4. This is the companion passage as I call it. Again, you’ll never find language like this anywhere except Paul. Nowhere. It is insulated from all the rest of Scripture. In I Thessalonians chapter 4 starting at verse 13, Paul says:

_I Thessalonians 4:13_

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, (And there’s no need. It’s not in gobbledy gook. It’s not in some language that you can’t understand. It’s plain
English.) *brethren, concerning them who have died,* (Or if you got a King James, the word is asleep. It just simply means physical death.) *that ye sorrow not, even as others who have no hope.*"

In other words, he’s telling his believers, if you’ve lost a loved one who was a believer, don’t sorrow like those pagans. You’re going to see your loved one again. We are! We’re going to see our loved ones if they were believers. We’re going to know them. Now verse 14 and look how simply put this is.

**I Thessalonians 4:14**

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, (We’re qualified if we believe that for salvation. What is that? Well, that’s the Gospel.) even so them also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.”

They, too, we trust have believed the Gospel. So, here we have the whole complement of the believers of the Body of Christ. Whether they were alive or whether they have died and had gone on to be with the Lord, we’re all going to come in under this great resurrection day. All right, now verse 15:

**I Thessalonians 4:15a**

“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord,…” Now hold it, where’s he getting all this? From the Ascended Lord! I can just about hear Him. Paul – this is what I want you to write.

When we had our Aegean Cruise, we had a guy who was, I don’t know what you’d call him, an actor. He was a dramatist. And he acted out in various stages of our cruise the Apostle Paul. And he was good. My, I just sat back and enjoyed it. Bill, you remember that? And on one of his presentations, he went through I and II Timothy, wasn’t it? The whole books of Timothy, as if Paul was dictating to his secretary. And, oh, it was tremendous! All right, now that’s how Paul received all this. The ascended Lord from Glory gave him every word.

**I Thessalonians 4:15-16**

“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain (Now remember, I’ve stressed over the years that Paul thought he was going to live to see this great day. He didn’t think it was going to be 1,900 years away. So he says--) until the coming of the Lord shall not precede (or go ahead of them) who have died (or asleep. Why?) 16. For the Lord himself (Jesus the Christ) shall descend from
Believers who have died, beginning, I think, with Saul’s conversion. That’s where I feel the Body began. You don’t have to agree with me, but that’s where I feel it began. That when God saved Saul and opened up to him the ministry to the Gentile world, that also was the beginning of this Body of Christ who are saved, remember, by verse 14, “by believing that Jesus died and rose again.” Anybody before Paul had never heard of such a thing. All right, now verse 17.

I Thessalonians 4:17a

“Then we (After the dead had been resurrected; reunited body, soul, and spirit) who are alive (Believers, as if this should happen today.) and remain shall be caught up…” We’ll be gathered, as he says in II Thessalonians, or as we use the word coined, we’ll be raptured. Which simply means the same thing, that we’ll be snatched off the planet.

I Thessalonians 4:17b-18

“...we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, (Those who have been resurrected from the dead and have their new resurrected body. The whole body of believers now is gathering around Christ who is somewhere in the atmosphere. Remember, He doesn’t come to the planet for this occasion.) to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” And then, if you don’t believe it, go into chapter 5. Here you have those who are left behind, according to the series of the books, the title.

I Thessalonians 5:1-3a

“But of the times and the season, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 2. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord (the Tribulation, the coming in of the anti-Christ) cometh as a thief in the night. 3. For when they (Not us, not when we, but when the left behinds--) they shall say, Peace and safety;…”

Now, isn’t that exactly what the anti-Christ is going to promise when he first comes? Oh, he’s going to be a flatterer. He’s going to promise peace and prosperity. Israel will think he’s the Messiah because of what he’s accomplishing. But what happens next?

I Thessalonians 5:3b
“...then sudden destruction cometh upon them,...” Sudden destruction and the horrors of the Tribulation will unfold.

All right, now we’ve got to quickly run another page on to II Thessalonians chapter 2. And here again the language is so plain that the anti-Christ cannot appear until after we’ve experienced this being caught up, II Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 1.

**II Thessalonians 2:1**

“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,” Now at the Second Coming, He comes to the planet. Here He draws the believer off the planet. It’s a simple change in language. So we can rest assured that before the anti-Christ can make his appearance, the Body of Christ has to be taken away, and then everything can go back to the top timeline that we have on the board.

Prophecies will finally be fulfilled. But, we’re out of here. We’re with the Lord in Glory, and the more we look for it, the more excited we can get!