It's good to see everybody in again this afternoon as we begin Book 76. For those of you out in television, we thank you for joining us and studying with us. My, our letters just keep encouraging us more and more, that for the first time in people's lives they're enjoying their Bible. They're studying it, and they're reading it. And that just thrills us that we're getting people to finally do what God really expects. Because this Book, as I've said a hundred times on this program, was made in such a way that plowboys in England could understand it. And if a plowboy in England in 1500 had enough wherewithal to understand this Book, then there is not a person in America that can say, well, I can't understand it. It's just a matter of knowing how to read it and how to separate some of these things.

So anyway, we're going to come right back to where we left off with Connecting the Dots of Scripture. We started this series with Book 74 when we started in Genesis. It's just sort of an overview instead of verse-by-verse like we've done for the last 16 or 17 years. We're just doing a fast overview. We're following the timeline as we come up through the Old Testament.

We've now come through the four gospels and the Book of Acts. We have just come past Saul's conversion, which means it's the beginning of Saul's (Paul’s) ministry to the Gentiles. That's where we're going to pick up, now, in the Book of Acts, if you will join me. Come back to chapter 13 where Paul and Barnabas have just begun their ministry to the Gentile world. Having left Antioch they stop on the island of Cyprus, and they go to the far western end where the largest city was, Paphos.

Acts 13:5-7

“And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John (John Mark) to their minister. 6. And when they had gone through the island unto Paphos, (the city at the far western end) they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus: 7. Who was with the deputy (or the governor) of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.”
Now, do you get the picture? Here we have a Gentile that is open to the Scriptures, and Paul and Barnabas are attempting to get to him so that they can lay it out in front of him. But this fellow servant, who was a false teaching Jew, a sorcerer, did everything he could to keep Paul and Barnabas from him in order for this deputy or this governor not to hear the Word. Continue reading with me and see what happens.

**Acts 13:8**

“But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, (See? Held them at bay and wouldn't let them see the deputy, or the governor.) seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. 9. Then Saul, (who also is called Paul) filled with the Holy Spirit, set his eyes on him,” Now, this is not just a response of an angry Jew against another Jew. This is God's chosen apostle to the Gentiles filled with the Holy Spirit. Now look what he does. He sets his eyes on him, and he says to this false teaching Jew--

**Acts 13:10-11**

“And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? 11. And now, behold, (Paul puts it on him.) the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.”

If you'll just turn the pages while we're in this part of Acts to chapter 17, and now we get the big picture. Elymas the sorcerer was just a symbol, or a picture or a type, of the nation of Israel in general as a whole. Now, when we were teaching this years and years ago, I made the point, I know I did, that God always dealt with Israel back then on two levels—national and individual.

Nationally these things happened, but that still left the individual Jew with the opportunity for gaining salvation. So it isn't that it shut the Jew out completely, but nationally they are no longer responding as the nation that they were under Moses and so forth.

Now then, Paul and Barnabas come into their ministry among the Gentiles. We pick them up again over in chapter 17, where they have now begun their second missionary journey. They started up there at Philippi, and they're coming down the Aegean coast in Greece. Let's drop in at verse 5. I think they're still at Thessalonica.

**Acts 17:5**
“But the Jews who believed not, (That rejected Paul's message now of Grace.) moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city in an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.” In other words, they were just adamant in their opposition to anything that Paul was trying to do. And then verse 8.

Acts 17:8-9
“And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. 9. And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.” All right, now as you follow on down, you see that as Paul and Barnabas continue their ministry, it is constant opposition from the unbelieving Jew. Now, when I say unbelieving, it is that they could not recognize that Jesus was the Christ. They were still orthodox. They were still in their Judaism, but they could not accept that Jesus was the Christ.

Here we have the fore view, then, that this Jew on the island of Cyprus was merely an indication of how God would deal with the nation as a whole later on. Now in order to follow that up, go with me up to Romans chapter 11 and verse 7. And again, it's the same setting. Every place that Paul went, he would always go first to the synagogue of the Jew. And when they would reject him and his message, then he'd go out into the Gentile community and have his converts.

Here again, this is what God finally did with the nation. Now remember, I'm emphasizing that individuals can still be saved, but nationally the majority are rejecting everything.

Romans 11:6
“And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.” In other words, you can't have both ways. It's either works or it's Grace.

Now under Judaism, of course, it was primarily works. We're going to look at that later. But under Grace, it's without works—now verse 7.

Romans 11:7a
“What then? Israel (the nation) hath not obtained that which he seeketh for;...” Well, my goodness, all the way up through the Old Testament what was being promised to the nation of Israel, and what were they looking for? The Messiah and His Kingdom.
Just get rid of all these Gentiles and their oppression, and they could have what we call Shangri-La or whatever, or utopia; if they could just get rid of all these Gentile armies. So they had that in their mind that that's what they were looking for. But they didn't want to do it God's way. They wanted to do it their way, just like people today. And that was their problem.

You know, I've shared this I think more than once on the program. One of the first times that Iris and I were in the Holy Land, we were in Jerusalem. That goes back quite a few years. It might have been the very first time—in 1975 or 1976. We were coming out of the dining room in one of the hotels in Jerusalem, and a nice, well-dressed gentleman came up to us and said, “You're Americans, aren't you?” “Yes.” “What do you think of our little country?” I said, “It's amazing what God has done.” And he bristled. He said, “God didn't have a thing to do with it. We did it.” Well, you see, that's their mentality. They think they don't need God. They can do it on their own.

That's exactly what Paul is talking about clear back in his day. They couldn't accept the fact that God still wanted to do all these things God's way. No, they wanted to do it their way.

**Romans 11:7**

“What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.” Just the small percentage of Jews that did become believers is called the remnant. So the election hath obtained it, and the rest, the vast majority, were what? Blinded. Not physically, but to spiritual things. Just exactly like the type that was set with Elymas. He was blinded physically, but it was a symbol of Israel's national spiritual blindness.

All right. Now Israel is going to be blinded, but it's not forever. It's not till the end of time; it's only for a season. So jump ahead with me to Romans chapter 11 verse 25. We'll be coming back to this same verse a little bit later, because you can't help but repeat some of these things. Romans chapter 11 and we'll find the national blindness is going to end, just like Elymas's would end sometime after Paul put that thing on him. He would receive his sight back before he died. Now here in 11:25 we have the same kind of a picture nationally. Verse 25, where Paul writes primarily to you and me now as Gentiles.

**Romans 11:25a**
“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery,”...” And I'm going to be coming back to it. It's one of the mysteries that I'm going to touch on in the next few programs.

Romans 11:25b
“...lest ye should be wise in your own conceits;” (Now here is this mystery. No other portion of Scripture ever explained it to the point where people could believe it until we get to this apostle.) *that blindness in part* (a spiritual blindness) *has happened to Israel*, (But what's the next word?) *until* (That's a time word. So there is coming a day when Israel’s blindness will be removed. And when will that happen?) *when the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.*”

Well, what's the fullness of the Gentiles that Paul is talking about? The Body of Christ. When the Body of Christ, the out-calling of Gentiles that we're going to pursue now in a little bit—when the out-calling of Gentiles is complete and we're out of here in the Rapture, then what can God do? He can open the eyes of Israel and go back and finish His dealings with them.

God's not through with Israel. Their future is still glorious. And I don't care what people say about God being all through with the Jew. He is not. If He were, then all the promises of the Old Testament fall apart, and that means that our promises wouldn't mean anything either. But God will yet come back and fulfill those Old Testament covenant promises with the nation of Israel after the Body of Christ has become complete.

Now that word *after* just reminded me of another portion that we're going to look at. Come back with me to Acts chapter 15. And for sake of time, because we've looked at it several times, Acts chapter 15 is a parallel with Galatians chapter 2. It's the Jerusalem council of A.D. 51—when Paul and Barnabas had to go up from Antioch to Jerusalem to deal with the Jewish church, believing Jews, but they were not Grace believers. They were Kingdom believers. That's why I'm glad I was able to put the Lewis Sperry Chafer statement on the board in our last taping. I hope everybody got a chance to read it.

But anyway, here we are in the Acts account of that Jerusalem council. The whole purpose was for Paul and Barnabas to convince James and Peter and John and the rest of the 12 that God was saving Gentiles by faith and faith alone without the ramifications of Judaism. No circumcision. No law keeping. They've been saved by Grace. This was the big controversy. Finally Paul gets through and more or less
wins the day. And now James, the half brother of Jesus who is moderating this particular meeting, comes in at verse 12.

**Acts 15:12-13**

“Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience (or listened) to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. 13. And after they had held their peace, (Everything quiets down. The arguing stops with Peter, James, and John—who we're dealing with especially in Galatians chapter 2.) James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:” In other words, he's addressing his Jewish congregation up there in Jerusalem.

**Acts 15:14**

“Simeon (or Peter) hath declared (What took place in the house of Cornelius back in Acts 10.) how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, (Now watch the language.) to take out of them (Who are the them? Gentiles. See, you've got to watch your pronouns. God is going to take out of the Gentile world not everybody, but a small percentage.) a people for his name.”

Of course no one but Paul ever uses the term the Body of Christ, but here it is. Even though Peter, James, and John didn't understand that that's what it would be called. All they realize is that there are going to be Gentiles called out of their paganism, or whatever, to become part of God's own modus operandi. Which when we get to Paul will be called the Body of Christ.

So at the first, in Acts chapter 10, when Peter went to the house of Cornelius, he witnessed that God would save Gentiles by faith right on the spot—without repentance, without water baptism, without anything else. Now verse 15—James is still speaking.

**Acts 15:15-16a**

“And to this agree the words of the prophets: as it is written, 16. After this…” See, that's what made me think of it. After what? After God has called out a people for His name as we saw in verse 14. Or we could say, after the Rapture and the Body of Christ is removed from the earth to Heaven. See how it all fits?

**Acts 15:14b**

“...to take out of them a people for his name.” That’s when the fullness of the Gentiles is brought in. So the question is—when will that happen? “After this”—as we see in verse 16. So after this, the prophet says:
Acts 15:16

"After this I will return, (At His Second Coming! And, of course, he's merely the spokesman for God Himself. So God says, I will return--) and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:" That is when God shall set up His 1,000 year earthly Kingdom after the Tribulation. And the other word for tabernacle was temple, remember? He’ll rebuild again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down and has been now for almost 2,000 years.

He goes on to say in verse 16, “and I will build again the ruins thereof.” Now, what does that mean? God is still going to finish His Old Testament promises with the nation of Israel. Let's go back and look at it. It's in the Book of Amos. And you've got to read it with your own eyes. Amos chapter 9—because this is the very verse that James was prompted to quote. Now here in Amos chapter 9—just like all the prophets of Israel, the major as well as the minor—they were always talking about the bad things that would happen to Israel, their chastisement. But the end result would be God’s blessings.

To rehearse their chastisement: well, first is the Babylonian, remember. Then came the Roman invasion of A.D. 70. Now the one that is left is the seven years of Tribulation and the Second Coming. Now Amos has brought all three of these around. You can just jump in at verse 8 so you get the flow, as I call it. Amos chapter 9 verse 8:

Amos 9:8

“Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it (See what I talked about? The bad things happen before the good things?) from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the LORD.” See, He's not going to totally annihilate them. There's going to be a nation of Israel left for the end time. Verse 9:

Amos 9:9-10

“For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, (That's why they've been out in dispersion.) like as corn (or grain) is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. 10. All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, who say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us.”
In other words, they rebel against all of God's overtures. But now verse 11—after all the chastisements, after the horrors of the tribulation are past, here comes the promise. And this is what James quoted.

*Amos 9:11-12a*

“In that day (When God is ready to come back and finish His work with Israel.) will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: 12. That they may possess…”

And then you come down to the verses at the end of the chapter. We might as well read them, because this is Israel's future. Don't you ever let somebody tell you that God is through with Israel. No, He is not. Their blessings are coming—the greatest they've ever had. But it won't be until the Church is complete and we're out of the way. And then after that, yes, here it comes. Now, let's just read them for the thrill of it.

*Amos 9:13-14*

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth the seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. (That is with blessings.) 14. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them.”

Do you see what that is? That's just fantastic production. That’s the milk and honey that Israel was promised when they were offered the land of Canaan the first time. Here it's going to be. It's just going to be glorious. And then verse 15:

*Amos 9:15*

“And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God.” Well, when will it happen? After the Church has been completed and taken out of the way. Now, that brings me back to what I call the third reason that we can open up the timeline scripturally. We have to do it scripturally; otherwise, we're just pulling it out of the woodwork, as I said. But here we're going to have the third reason.

The first one was that Elymas was a type of Israel being spiritually blinded but receiving her sight at some time in the future. Then the second one was, as we went back into Romans 11 where the Body of Christ, the true Church has to be called out
and completed with the Rapture. And in that period of time, Israel is under a spiritual blindness.

I want to come back to that one now for the last few minutes of this half hour. Come back to Romans chapter 11 to, again, show that we have to have a break in the Old Testament timeline. We've already got it up here, so I better use it. Here we come. We've come all the way out of the Old Testament and up through the prophets since the Babylonian captivity in 606 B.C. Then Israel comes back into the land seventy years later. They were there. They had temple worship and everything going. Then the Messiah appeared. He has His three years of earthly ministry. They rejected Him. He was crucified, buried, and risen from the dead. He ascended back to glory.

After He ascended back to glory, Peter and the Eleven thought that they'd go right on through into the seven years of Tribulation and then the Second Coming and the Kingdom Age would appear. Well, you see, that's where most of replacement theology is even today. They totally ignore this second line that has the Body of Christ here. They think everything just keeps on going up here on the top line.

Well, years ago now, we taught those little epistles at the back—Peter, James, John and Jude. And I know I shocked a lot of people. All those little epistles were written to believing Jews in this point in time here between the ascension and the Tribulation. The Tribulation certainly hadn't started, but they thought it would at anytime. Here they are. So, all those little Jewish epistles were written to believing Jews to prepare them for the horrors of the Tribulation. They knew that if they could get through it, they would have the glories of the Kingdom. It’s so plain.

But what nobody understood, and a lot of Christendom today can't understand, is that God stopped the timeline right there, and now we drop down to this one (Body of Christ). And we open up to what Paul refers to. We're going to look at that all afternoon and maybe the next taping. But we open up this parenthetical period of time that we call the Dispensation of Grace, where God is calling out the Gentile Body of Christ. And when it's full and out of the way, yes, then He's still going to finish this program up here on the top line with the nation of Israel. To me, it's so plain; a five year old should understand it. But, you know, most of Christendom can't get it.

They just ignore Paul. It's just unbelievable the mail that we get. I had one come—maybe I referred to it before. I know I did to a couple of my classes. I had a lady in a far part of the country write me. And across the top of her newspaper she wrote
“Now I see what you mean when you say that people hate Paul.” Well, there was a letter to the editor in there, and it was the most venomous language you could ever imagine and still be printable—all against the Apostle Paul. Some of the language was—they kicked him out of Greece, they kicked him out of Turkey, and what an idiot. That's the kind of language they use about the Apostle Paul. Well, if you're going to use that kind of language about Paul, you're not going to be studying him, so you're going to miss the boat. And that's most of Christendom. They just totally ignore him, or they dislike him.

Now, if you've got Romans 11:25, let's look at it again.

**Romans 11:25a**

“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery,…” This secret that was never mooted or hinted at anywhere else in Scripture except for what we read in Amos. But what could you take out of that if you didn't know it after the fact? Nothing. And the same way with other little statements. It didn't mean a thing until after it was fulfilled.

It was a secret that was kept in the mind of God. And what was the secret? That Israel would go through a time of spiritual blindness beginning in Paul's day, and it's going to continue right up until the Church is gone in the Rapture and the Tribulation begins. Then Israel will begin to have an awakening. Now, I say begin, because it's not going to happen to the whole nation all at once. But as you open up the Tribulation, you've got the 144,000 young Jewish witnesses. Well, those are just the beginning. Then the 144,000 circumvent the globe. By the time we get to the end, yes, there'll be a remnant that will suddenly realize who Jesus Christ really is. So, finishing verse 25.

**Romans 11:25**

“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness (a spiritual blindness) in part has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.” In other words, Israel will not respond in great numbers to the Gospel until the Church is gone. Now, we always rejoice about every one that we get, naturally.

But we're not going to make a big issue of it that you have to see every Jew saved before anything can happen, because God has His own timetable for the nation of Israel. But never lose sight of the fact that He has not walked away from Israel and their promises. They're still going to enjoy it. But until that day comes, He's still working through the Body of Christ. He's still out there with the
Gospel of the Grace of God, and it's our responsibility to simply tell it to whomever we can—*that Christ died for the sins of the world, that he was buried, and that he rose again*. That's the Gospel. That's plain and simple. Now, how in the world can they accuse me of anything so false if that's what I primarily proclaim? That's salvation. That's it in a nutshell. And, oh, my goodness, I wish you could see our letters and hear our phone calls. Over and over and over, it's the same thing. How that God opened my eyes, and for the first time I'm believing the Gospel, and I know I have salvation.
For those of you joining us on television, in case this is your first time catching us, we're an informal Bible study. And hopefully, I don't preach at anybody. We just simply let them see what the Book says. To me that is paramount to everything—just understanding what the Word of God itself says.

Well, we've only offered one book over the years, and we've still got it. It's a series of 88 questions and answers from our previous programs. If anyone out there is interested, you just give us a call, and the girls will get it out to you. We send it out with an invoice, so you don't have to pay for it until you get it. It’s the best $11 you will ever spend.

We're going to pick right up where we left off in our last program. Now remember, we're connecting the dots of Scripture by going from Genesis, and hopefully we'll go all the way through to Revelation if the Lord tarries. But in the last half hour, we merely showed our proof that there would be an opening up of the timeline. Because those three references we used make it so plain that for a period of time Israel will be set aside and be dispersed while God goes to the Gentiles.

Now naturally, when you have two such totally different groups of people as Jews and Gentiles, you can't go with the same thing. It just wouldn't ring true. So when God saves Paul, He doesn't just have him go back and check with the twelve disciples, as we saw in previous programs. Instead, He separated him purposely, kept him from the twelve, so that he would not get mixed up with the Kingdom economy. Because He's going to begin something totally different with Paul, which we call the **Dispensation of the Grace of God** as seen in Ephesians 3:2.

Now, I'm well aware that there are a lot of people out there that detest the term dispensation. In fact, I had one fellow in my class one time who just suggested to his pastor, why don't you ever preach a sermon on the Rapture? He looked at him in shock, and he said, “I wouldn't dare do that.” He said, “Why not?” He said, “Well, then they'd call me a dispensationalist.” As if that's the worst thing that can happen. I am aware of that.

And those of you who have been with me over the years—I never used the word for the first eight or nine years, because I knew it would turn a good number of people off. So I would just speak of it in general terms. Don't you realize that when Adam...
and Eve came out of the garden, everything was different? When Noah and the family came off the ark, everything was different? After God called Abraham, everything was different? After God brought Israel out of Egypt and gave them the Law, again, everything was different? Well, what makes it different? A different dispensation, a different administration, a different set of rules and regulations.

So, after realizing that God was going to open the timeline and make a parenthetical period of time, we don't know how long, we call it the Dispensation of the Grace of God. And it came about through God's appointed Apostle of the Gentiles, Saul of Tarsus. I'm going to bring you now, just as an introduction to the dispensational view, to Ephesians chapter 3. We'll start at verse 1. Now remember, Saul of Tarsus—the rabid, orthodox, rabbi, Jew—whatever you want to call him, remember that God saved him on the road to Damascus and then immediately instructed him that He was going to go to the Gentiles, which God had never before done.

**Ephesians 3:1**

“For this cause (Because of what he's written in the first two chapters.) I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles.” Now you've got to remember. Where is Paul when he's writing? Well, he's in prison in Rome. These are one of the prison epistles. And whether he had a short release or not, it ends up with his martyrdom at the hands of the Romans. So when he speaks of being a prisoner, it was literal. He was in prison there at Rome. And for what cause? For the cause of the Gospel.

**Ephesians 3:2**

“If ye have heard (And no doubt they had, because after all, Paul's been out there now for 20 something years.) of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward.” See, that's where we get the title for this period of time. It's the Dispensation of the Grace of God. Now again, I've got to qualify. A dispensation is simply a period of time. It can be short or long or whatever. That doesn't matter.

**But a dispensation is a period of time during which God lays on a segment of people that He's dealing with a set of rules and directions.** Now for the simplest one, of course, I always go back to the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve were in the garden, God gave them instructions. He said that every tree in the garden is for your enjoyment except those two over there. The one was the Tree of Life, and the other one was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Of that tree, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat. Just simple directions! Everything else is yours to enjoy. And that's all there was to it. And that's why we call it the simplest dispensation.
Now, we don't know how long they were in the garden. There are all kinds of guesses and so forth. Well, for however long they were in the garden, that was all they had to do. Just simply refrain from eating of that one tree. It was that simple. But they just couldn't cut it, and so they ate. Well, when they disobeyed, they ended that Dispensation of Innocence. God came in with a judgment, a punishment, which required them to get out of the garden.

Then a new dispensation began. So now, when Paul speaks of the Dispensation of the Grace of God, he's speaking of this period of time following the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ when He is turning away from Israel and their whole system of Law and temple worship, and He's going to give to this apostle what we call the Gospel of the Grace of God, which is I Corinthians 15:1-4. Now let's go back and look at it, even though you all know it from memory. We keep using it, and I'm finally getting some response. I had several write that their pastors are actually using these verses in their preaching. Well, praise the Lord, because here is the Gospel of the Grace of God.

Now, again, it's not total. But there's enough of it here that you can branch out and find the rest of it without any trouble. I Corinthians chapter 15 verses 1 through 4. So if somebody comes to you and says, well, what's this Gospel that Les Feldick is talking about? You just tell them, well, it's as simple as A, B, C. It's just simply believing in your heart for your salvation that Jesus Christ, the Creator, God of the universe, went to that cross and died and shed his blood, was buried three days and three nights and arose from the dead.

That's it. Believe it in your heart and God moves in and then everything else falls into place. But here's where we have to begin. I Corinthians chapter 15. We might as well read the whole four verses. We've got time today.

**I Corinthians 15:1a**

"Moreover, brethren, (So Paul is talking to Gentile believers over there at Corinth, a few miles west of Athens.) I declare unto you the gospel..." I asked my class the other night—does anybody have a Bible that says "a" gospel? Sure there were. Well see, that's what these new translations do. You see what a difference one little article can do to the thought? If you say that Paul is “a” or “an” apostle, what does that mean? He's one of many. But see, Paul never includes himself with others. It's always the singular—I or me. And the same way here—it is “the” gospel. It's not “a” gospel. It's singular.
And when he speaks of himself, it is I am “the” apostle of the Gentiles, not “an” apostle. That makes all the difference in the world. And that's what we have to recognize. Because to this man and this man alone were these directions for this Dispensation of Grace given. Let's continue on and get back to our dispensational thought.

I Corinthians 15:1-2a
“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel (the one and only) which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; (As a believer you are positioned.) 2. By which also ye are saved,...” It's by this gospel you are saved. Now, isn't that plain? It doesn't say this gospel plus something else. No. It's by believing this gospel that we're saved. And that's the all-inclusive word of Scripture. Salvation—to be saved, to be born from above—and all these things are tied up with our faith in this gospel.

I Corinthians 15:2
“By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.” In other words, you have to know what you believe. You have to understand it, otherwise it's for nothing. Now here it is. This is the gospel!

I Corinthians 15:3-4
“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, (Well, where did he get it? From the Twelve? No. But rather from the ascended Lord. The Twelve never fully understood it.) how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4. And that he was buried and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:”

Now, there it is. Christ died for my sins and that, of course, includes His shed blood. He was buried three days and three nights, and then He arose from the dead in power and victory and glory, and that settled it. That makes our debt paid in full when we believe it for salvation and trust it plus nothing.

I don't know if I should take time this afternoon or not. Maybe this is as good a time as any. I've been doing research, just in between when I can, to find the history of the 1611 King James Version and how it came about. But not just the King James Version, along with that I was studying in my spare time -- now, I'm not one of these guys who just sits there by the hour and the hour and the hour. I don't have patience for that. But I can get a couple, three hours in an evening once in a while and maybe a little time on a rainy day and so forth. But I'm not a nut at this.
But in between times, now, for the last several weeks, I've been looking at the history of the King James as over these other translations, and also the history of Christendom. Now, you'll hear me use that word quite often—Christendom with a D-O-M—speaking of all aspects of so-called Christianity. And, you know, it was a shocking revelation—because we've all heard of the early church fathers: Justin Martyr and Chrysostom and Origen, and then we jump up to Augustine and so forth.

Well, you know, those church fathers didn't have it all right either, especially Origen. He was a rascal. And he had a lot of corrupt ideas. In fact, Origen -- now I don't know if I'm pronouncing it right. I've looked and looked and tried to find a dictionary that gives me the pronunciation and I can't find it. So if somebody will let me know. But it's O-R-I-G-E-N. I can give you the spelling of it. But anyhow, he's in the first century. He's within a hundred years of the Apostle Paul. And he was the first of the church fathers to come up with the idea that God was all through with the nation of Israel because they had killed the Christ, so all the Jewish promises and covenants and everything were transferred to the church. That started with Origen.

Now, you've got to realize that between the loss of Paul and Peter, probably around A.D. 68, just before the Temple is destroyed in A.D. 70, these little groups of believers keep expanding. They're out there, not in any great numbers, but they're out there. They're maintaining their faith and so forth. And you've got to remember, there weren't Bibles for those people. Some of them may have had a scroll of the Old Testament, but there wasn't all that much. So they had to depend on gifted men to kind of hold things together.

But anyway, if you go back and look at it, these little groups of people, like humans are prone to do, would say, well, let's just get together once a month and we can fellowship in a larger group. Well, that's all well and good. But as time went by, there were too many of them to all go, so what would they do? Oh, they'd form a committee. And boy, you know what a horrible thing a committee is. Then these committees would meet, and after a time they said, well, now you know, there's a group of our committees over there in North Africa, and we're over here in Greece. Maybe we should meet someplace.

And that's the way the thing started growing. And so it was. It was growing rather slowly. But then you get to A.D. 315, one of the high marks in human history, and what happened? Constantine, the Roman emperor, became a quote, unquote Christian. And what did Constantine do? He opened the doors of Christianity to the
masses. It was no longer going to be persecuted. It was no longer going to be suppressed. It was a status symbol to be called a Christian. So what did that do? That just brought in the numbers, but how little faith—almost none.

But outside of this big conglomeration, there were always these little, small groups of true believers; and they were always hated, persecuted, and driven from one valley to the next. Okay. Now you come on up to A.D. 400, about 75 or 80 years after Constantine opened the church to the masses, and we come to a guy by the name of Augustine. Now, over all my growing up years, I always heard almost nothing but good things about Augustine. Well, he did say some good things, but he had a lot of other stuff. And he, too, embraced Origen's teaching of replacement theology.

Just look at how long we've had this idea that we teach suppressed. The masses embraced the replacement theology, and replacement theology rests primarily—not exclusively, of course—but primarily on the four gospels. And as one writer of history put it—and I'd never seen it in that way before—they rested only on the Sermon on the Mount. Well, now, you just watch even today your news reports. How they'll refer to the fact that Jesus and the Sermon on the Mount is what transformed the world. Did it? Not really. Now, it's got high, lofty premises, no doubt about it. But see, that's not what transformed lives.

So anyway, Augustine picked up on Origen's replacement theology and, with the mass increase of the organized church, it led up to? Roman Catholicism, of course, is going to come out of that. So replacement theology became the number one tenet for Christendom. What did that do with the Jew? Hated them. Persecuted them. And they were just running from one place to the other. Okay. So Augustine was really the father of Roman Catholicism. And out of that came, of course, the appearance of the popes and the hierarchy and all the rest.

And now, if you know anything from secular history, A.D. 500 to A.D. 1500 is called what in history? The dark ages. Well, what did that mean? The sun never shone? No. Where was it dark? Spiritually. Because you see, the organized church now had proclaimed that the average believer could not read the Scriptures himself. So they confiscated the Scriptures, really, and kept them locked up in the monasteries. The average man didn't have the Scriptures of any sort—except, again, these little fringe groups maintained it.

Now you've come all the way up through the dark ages. In A.D. 1500, or a little after, who was the great awakener? Martin Luther. So Martin Luther comes out with
what we call The Reformation—the idea that all this religion was totally wrong—
*the just will live by faith; they're saved by faith.* Which on the surface sounds so
good, doesn't it? But is that where Martin Luther stopped? No. Martin Luther came
right on and embraced all the other stuff that he had been so-called hating. He
brought it out with him and made it part of basic Lutheran theology, and that
incorporated, of course, infant baptism and the hierarchy and replacement theology.

Now then, you just keep rolling. Out of Luther's reformation, here came the next
big reformer—John Calvin. Now John Calvin sets up his headquarters
in Geneva, Switzerland. But after time goes by, John Calvin isn't one whit different
than Martin Luther, and he's no different than Augustine. They are all still on this
same premise of the Sermon on the Mount, replacement theology, and a works
religion. Amazing! And it just comes all the way up through the last 2,000 years.

Now then, it jumps across the pond and we come over here to the early colonies and
especially the likes of the Puritans and so forth. Oh, they were so thrilled to escape
that heavy hand of persecution in Europe. They were now free. But what did they
do with their freedom? They became just as legalistic as their European
forefathers. I told one of my classes the other night—if a young lady of 17 would
show a bare ankle, what would the Puritans do to her? Whip her almost to
death. Well, what was that? Legalism!

Well, anyway, you bring it all the way up to our present time. The vast majority of
Christian preaching and teaching is the four gospels, the Sermon on the Mount, with
a little bit of Old Testament thrown in, and that's where it's been. I mean, you can't
argue it. It's in secular history just as plain as day. So now then, these fringe groups
believed like I do. So what am I? Yes, we're out on the fringes. The vast majority
of people aren't going to listen to my message. They don't like it. They hate Paul,
as I've already emphasized. *But, you see, if you're going to ignore Paul, you're ignoring the basic message for this Dispensation of Grace, because it was given to him to give to us in the Body of Christ.*

Okay. Now there it is, all in a nutshell. And don't take my word for it. I've got to
give you another one. I'm free. Here awhile back I had a gentleman call. I think
from South Carolina, if I remember correctly. He called me about midday, either
just before noon or just after. And he said, “Les, I'm in a such and such
denominational church.” I don't remember what it was. But he said, “Why do we
practice Lent?” And I said, “Well, I'll tell you what. I'm not going to answer it for
you except to tell you to go to your library, and you find the Encyclopedia Britannica,
and you just look up the word *Lent,* and you'll get your answer.” “Really?” I said,
“Yeah. At least it was there the last time I looked at one. Now, when you see what Britannica says about Lent, it's going to blow you out of the saddle.”

Well, you see, I forget about the internet. Before the afternoon was over, he called back—about 4 in the afternoon, and he said, “Les, you did.” I said, “I did what?” He said, “You blew me out of the saddle.” I said, “Oh, are you the guy that called about Lent?” And he said, “Yeah.” I said, “What did you find out?” He said, “Just that I couldn't believe my eyes. There were several pages.” I said, “Do you mean you've already been down at the library?” He said, “No, I got it off the internet.” Well, dumb me, you know, I don't think of that. So anyhow, I said, “What are you going to do with it?” He said, “I'm downloading it. I'm going to lay it on my pastor's desk and let him read it.”

Well now, I know many of you know what Britannica says about Lent. But I'm not going to tell you. I might get thrown off the air. You go and find it yourself. You just look up the word Lent—L-E-N-T—in a good encyclopedia and it'll tell you exactly what it's all about. But, you see, it's not in Paul's epistles. It's not in Scripture.

Now come back to Ephesians chapter 3. I didn't intend to give you that history.

**Ephesians 3:2**

“If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given to me to you-ward:” Now, I've done this before. This is all review. So, how did we get all of these doctrines of this dispensation? From Paul.

Now, if that shakes people up, then just go back to Exodus. How did Israel receive the Law? God gave it to Moses. And what did Moses do with it? Took it down the mountain and gave it to Israel. So this isn't something all that out of the way. This is the way God operates. This is what he's claiming. Like Moses received the law, Paul received these dispensational truths for the Body of Christ. Now verse 3:

**Ephesians 3:3a**

“How that by revelation,…” A revealing—a supernatural outpouring from God in Heaven of these new directions for mankind—mostly for Gentiles, but it's also applicable to Israel.

Now, in this period of time, just like the period of time in the Garden, however long it was, that doesn't matter. But in this period of time that covers the Dispensation of the Grace of God, we have our own set of directions; just like Adam and Eve had—
you can have everything but that tree. Okay. Our set of directions is just about that simple. And what are they? Recognize that you're a sinner and you're lost. And when you do, recognize that Jesus Christ, the Creator, the Son of God, went to that Roman cross and shed His blood and died, was buried three days and three nights, and God miraculously raised Him from the dead.

And that finished our plan of salvation. That's our directions. Now, is that so hard to follow? Now then, after you get the basic directions, then naturally when we're a believer and the Holy Spirit comes in, we begin to see all these other aspects of Scripture. Then everything starts falling into place. In fact, let me show you what the Scripture says about that very thing. Come back with me to I Corinthians. I think we touched on this recently. I Corinthians chapter 2 verses 13 and 14. Now, this is all part of our instructions after we've become a believer.

I Corinthians 2:13-14

“Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (We compare Scripture with Scripture, not Scripture with some secular book.) 14. But the natural man (the unsaved person) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: (The Holy Spirit can't deal with the unbeliever so far as his daily experience is concerned.) for they (these things of the Spirit) are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” He can't understand these spiritual things. Now, isn't that obvious? But we have to start with the basics, and that is we have to believe the Gospel. And once we believe the Gospel for salvation, then everything else falls into place.
Okay, it is good to see everybody back again. We’re going to keep right on going. We’ve got so much to cover, and of course it’d be great if the Lord came before we finished today. I’m ready, so I wouldn’t mind a bit.

We’ll pick up where we left off on Paul’s revelation of what we call the Dispensation of the Grace of God. It is something totally different from what God was doing with Israel. That is that He would now offer salvation to the whole human race without a Temple, without a set of rules and regulations. Grace is simply a matter of believing the work of the cross as the basis of our salvation—placing your faith in His death, burial, and resurrection.

And it’s working, because the girls in the office hear it everyday. How many people are finally seeing it for the first time, and it just thrills us beyond your imagination. All right, chapter 3 of Ephesians, we’ll pick up where we left off, but we’ll go back to verse 1 as a refresher.

**Ephesians 3:1**
“For this cause (because of the first two chapters) I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles.” Paul is in prison in Rome, remember, and he’s there because of the gospel of Jesus Christ that he’s been taking out to the Gentiles.

**Ephesians 3:2**
“If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to youward:” Well, we covered that in the last half hour. It’s obvious that we pick up all of these doctrines of Paul in his epistles. You can find them nowhere else, and we’re going be looking at them this half hour. One of our brothers has been kind enough to put them on the board for me.

**Ephesians 3:3a**
“How that by revelation (from the ascended Lord in Heaven) he made known unto me the mystery;...” Now there the word is singular, so it envelopes all the mysteries that become part of this Dispensation of the Grace of God. All right, we’ll just run over them quickly.

Here we start with eight distinct mysteries that Paul reveals in various places throughout his letters. We’re going to look at them one by one, but let’s just go over
them quickly. Number one, right back there in Ephesians chapter 1, we have the **Mystery of His will.** In other words, the will of God concerning mankind.

We’re going see the **Mystery of Christ** in our next verse in Ephesians 3. We’re going to see the **Mystery of the Body of Christ** in Colossians 1. We’re going to see the **Mystery of God** in Colossians 2 and the **Mystery of Godliness** in I Timothy. The **Mystery of Israel’s Blinding**, which we talked about in the first half hour this afternoon—it was a mystery, a secret. We’re going to talk about the **Mystery of the Rapture.**

And that’s exactly what Paul calls it in the very first verse that he begins in I Corinthians 15 verse 51, where he says: **“Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all die, but we all shall be changed.”** Well, it’s a mystery.

And then the final one, the eighth one is the **Mystery of Iniquity** that he speaks of in II Thessalonians—when he makes the only reference in all his epistles to Old Testament prophecy and that concerns the **Mystery of Iniquity.**

So, we’re going be looking at all these mysteries. If you put them all together in a circle, then you could call them singularly **The Mystery**—how all of this composite work of God was poured out to this apostle, and by whom we have received it. They become, then, our dispensational directions or instructions or however you want call it. All right, verse 4:

**Ephesians 3:4**

*“Whereby, when ye read, (In other words, we read his letters of Romans through Philemon.) ye may understand my knowledge in (What?) the mystery of Christ.”* Now, I hope I can do this right. What word triggers knowledge? Wisdom!! If you’ve got wisdom, you’re going to practice what? Knowledge!

Now go with me to a verse that we look at so often. I use it when people accuse me of making too much of the Apostle Paul. Keep your hand in Ephesians. Now remember what words I’m talking about—*wisdom and knowledge*—how that it is all part of this revelation of these truths that were totally kept secret until it was given to this apostle. All right II Peter chapter 3 verses 15 and 16.

**II Peter 3:15-16**

*“And account (or know) that the longsuffering (patience) of our Lord is salvation;...”*
God is not willing that any should be lost, you know that. Now reading on.

**II Peter 3:15**

“*And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even* (Now watch this carefully.) *as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom* (and knowledge) *given unto him hath written unto you;*” Well, where did he get it? From the ascended Lord. And who is recognizing the fact? Peter.

Peter is telling his Jewish readers of that epistle that since Judaism is now going through the cracks—God knows, as he inspired Peter to write, that the Temple will be gone in just another 2, 3, or 4 years. The priests will be gone. So, what’s left for the Jew? Paul’s Gospel and that’s why he’s telling them this—in view of what’s out in front now. It isn’t going to be the Tribulation and the Second Coming and the Kingdom that was just out in front of these Jewish believers. But now it’s going to be a period of time called the Dispensation of the Grace of God. And if you’re going to cash in on that, Peter says, you’ll go back to Paul’s writings; because that’s the only place you’ll find it.

When I talk to people on the phone, you know what I always ask them? Why didn’t Peter say go back to John’s gospel? That’s what most people tell you today. Well, if you're looking for salvation, go read John’s gospel. Huh uh, Peter didn’t do it. And I won't either. I never tell anybody go read John. I tell everybody, you go read Romans through Philemon, because that’s where it’s at. I want you to see that that’s what the Scripture says. That’s not just my idea. Peter says, *you go to Paul because of the wisdom that’s been given unto him and he has written it unto you.* And then verse 16:

**II Peter 3:16a**

“*As also in all his epistles,…*” I think he’s referring to Hebrews. Lot of people won’t agree with that and that’s fine. I don’t mind.

But I think when he says up here that he has already written unto you, he was referring to the Book of Hebrews. Because that’s where Paul is appealing to the Jew who is contemplating his message, but they still have one foot over the fence in Judaism. And the word that Paul uses all through Hebrews is better. Yes, Judaism was good in its day and time, but this is so much better. Yes, the Law was good, but Grace is better. And all the way through the Book of Hebrews—just look for it. You got that word better, better, better. All right, so Peter understands that, and he says, you go to Paul but not just Hebrews. Verse 16:

**II Peter 3:16a**
“As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; (pertaining to salvation) in which are some things hard to (in his epistles) be understood,…” You’ve all heard this one before, and it’s hard to comprehend. But I can get an idea why Peter said this, because he was so steeped in legalism himself, and God didn’t really expect him to embrace all this.

I think Peter was kept separate providentially. But then Peter includes all these other false teachers that are unlearned and unstable down in this verse, and what do they do with Paul’s epistles? They twist them all out of shape, so that they lose all their meaning. And they do it with the other Scriptures, and what’s their end result? Their destruction! Now that’s tough language.

Okay, back to Ephesians we continue on with what Paul calls the Dispensation of the Grace of God—which is really the revelation of all these mysteries. And when you put them in a composite, it’s The Mystery, something that has never been revealed. Now again, just look at them. They are all from Paul’s epistles, and not one of these premises can you find anywhere else in Scripture. Try it. You won't find it. And that’s why it’s called a mystery. It was kept secret since the age began and revealed only to this apostle.

In fact, if I remember right, the last moment of our last taping, come back with me. I’m pretty sure we were in Romans chapter 16. Jerry, maybe you remember. Was it? Yeah. Romans 16, lets go back there a minute. Now I’ve got to keep hammering away and hammering away and hammering away, because little-by-little you’re going see it. Some of you may see it a lot faster than others. But I’ve got to remember that I’ve got that TV audience out there, and fortunately I forget about them. Do you know that?

**Romans 16:25a**  
“Now to him (Remember, this is all Holy Spirit inspired. Paul didn’t sit there in some conclave all by himself debating, how can I put this? What words should I use? No, it just flowed like a river. And he says,) now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, (And what’s Paul’s gospel? Faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.) and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery,…”

The Mystery—Paul’s Gospel is going to fit hand-in-glove with every one of these. All except the very last one, which is the mystery of iniquity. Which, of course, is the other side of the coin. But all of this is part of Paul’s revelations.
Romans 16:25b
“…which was kept secret (How long?) since the ages began.” Where does that begin? With Adam? See, it has never been revealed before. Oh, maybe in a latent form. Yes, all the ground work was being laid all the way up through the Old Testament for the work of the cross. But to reveal it to mankind as a means of justification and redemption and forgiveness and all these good things—no, it is not it back there. The only places you’ll find it are in Paul’s epistles.

All right so now come back to Ephesians chapter 3, again, to this mystery. Paul’s knowledge of the mystery of Christ, which—like he says here in verse 5, just like in Romans 16:

Ephesians 3:5
“Which in other ages (Or dispensations, or periods of time, however you want to put it.) was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;” Now be careful, it wasn’t revealed to the Twelve. So he’s not talking about the prophets and the apostles of Israel. He’s talking about the men who became apostles with him—Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, Titus, and some of these other men who had the gifted ability to proclaim the message.

You’ve got to remember, how many years has this Gospel of Grace been going to the Gentile world without benefit of one page of Paul’s epistles? How long? Well, about 15 years. He began his ministry about A.D. 40. I don’t think he wrote Thessalonians until about A.D. 54. That’s 14 years. So for about 14 years these early little congregations had no benefit of anything written. So, what did they depend on? Gifted men. And that was the gift of prophecy.

Now, let me show you that—I Corinthians chapter 14 verse 1. Paul is writing to the Corinthian church and he says:

I Corinthians 14:1
“Follow after charity, (love) and desire spiritual gifts, but rather (or the most important) that ye may prophesy.” Now the word prophesy here in the Greek does not mean to tell the future like Isaiah did, but it meant to speak forth.

Well, if it hadn’t been for gifted men, Christianity would have died almost immediately, because Paul couldn’t do it all alone. After he established a little congregation of believers up there, somebody had to carry it on. Well, who did it? Gifted men. Now once the Scriptures became a completed thing, and Paul’s epistles are now available for all, then that gift died away. It was no longer necessary
to that extent. Always understand that. That’s why I love history. I mean, you’ve got to understand how these things came about before it makes sense. Now back to Ephesians chapter 3, again. That it was revealed to not only Paul, but his fellow apostles and prophets by, again, the Holy Spirit. Now verse 6:

_Ephesians 3:6a_

“That the Gentiles (See, a totally different approach than when He was dealing with Israel.) _should be fellowheirs,…_” WOW! Did you see that? Was Israel ever promised anything like that? No.

Back up with me to Romans. I don’t know how many of you folks in here watch the daily program, but I think we’ve been in Romans lately. Romans chapter 8, because you see, too many times we read these words and it doesn’t mean anything. Gentiles coming in as fellow heirs with the God of Israel? Unbelievable! But that’s where they are, and that’s where we are. This is what made the Jews so envious. And, of course, that’s what God intended it to do. He said in Romans 11 “that He might make them jealous.” Here we were as Gentiles reaping blessings that they could have had, but they rejected.

_Romans 8:14-15a_

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, (the Holy Spirit) _they are the sons_ (I think a better word is children.) of God. 15. _For ye have not received the spirit of bondage_ (That’s a small “s,” so it’s that spirit of our nature.) _again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit_ (The Holy Spirit) _of adoption,…_” Of placing us, like the Father with a business would bring his 14 year old son. Remember, I’ve explained that over and over. That’s adoption. It’s to be brought in beside the Father with full responsibility.

And the Middle East is good at that. They know how to train those kids. I’ve given the illustration more than once how Iris found that out first-hand. She would deal with this little 14 year old and the old man was sitting over there in the corner just letting him have at it. Then I asked him “You can let that kid do that?” And he says, “He’s never lost a dime yet.” Why? Because he had him well-tutored before he came into that position.

Well, that’s where we are in the Body of Christ. You see, it’s not heaven or hell, it’s a position. All right, read on.

_Romans 8:15b-17a_
“...but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. (Respect to our position.) 16. The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: (Not gods, but we are children of God. Now verse 17, here it comes.) 17. And if children, then (What?) heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;...” That one verse, I don’t think many people believe that. I just don’t think that most Christians believe that.

A joint-heir with Jesus Christ the Creator of the universe. Well, what’s a joint-heir? Come on, tell me. What’s a joint-heir? What’s His is mine! What’s mine is His! That’s it. What a position. No wonder the Jews were jealous. All they’re going to get is an earthly kingdom. We’re gonna be joint-heirs with Christ Himself. Not gods. Don’t ever get that idea. We never become gods. But my goodness, we’ve become joint-heirs with Christ. All right? Read on.

Romans 8:17b
“...joint heirs with Christ; if so be we suffer with him, we may be also glorified together.” By virtue of that position. And we gain that position not with works, but by our faith in that finished work of the cross. My, I don’t see how you can get it any better than that. All right, come back to Ephesians chapter 3. Our time is going fast again. Start at verse 6, just to read into verse 7.

Ephesians 3:6-7
“That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, (Of which, remember, Christ is the head.) and partakers of his promise in Christ by (faith in) the gospel. 7. Whereof (This gospel and what it can do for lost humanity. Paul said--) I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.”

Now, to show you the impact of that word minister, come back again to Romans chapter 15. So you see what an important word it really is when Paul says, that I am a minister of this Gospel of the Grace of God. In Romans 15 verse 8—a verse that I used several months back every time I had a class. Haven’t used it lately.

Romans 15:8
“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a (What?) minister (same word) of the circumcision (the nation of Israel) for the truth of God, (But as a minister to Israel, what was His roll?) to confirm (fulfill) the promises made unto the fathers:” In other words, all the covenant promises were His to fulfill by Him, but Israel didn’t buy it.
All right, now the Apostle Paul has that same kind of authority. Not like Christ over Israel, but he is still given that place of preeminence as the Apostle of the Gentiles by virtue of being the minister of this Age of Grace. Now back to Ephesians 3 and verse 8.

**Ephesians 3:8a**

“Unto me, (unto this one man) who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given,…” That unmerited favor. Paul didn’t deserve it, and neither do we. Paul didn’t work for it. He didn’t go to school for eight years so he could get a sheepskin that would now make him available. Huh uh, it was all by God’s Grace.

**Ephesians 3:8b**

“…that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;” What does that mean? My, what this man has been permitted to feed to us is beyond human understanding. We just take what little we grasp by faith. But it is so unsearchable, beloved. We’ll never understand it until we get there.

In fact, that’s getting to be one of my favorite answers anymore. You know, they call me with these questions, and for a lot of people it’s a point of controversy. You know what I say? Listen, if it doesn’t affect our eternal destiny, if it doesn’t affect our Christian walk, then forget it.

We’ll find out when we get there. I think that’s a good answer. A lot of these things we can't answer. Why argue about them? They’re not going to affect your eternal destiny. They have nothing to do with the plan of salvation. If it doesn’t tell you to go out and live like the world or something like that, if it still maintains our Christian walk; hey, what difference does it make?

Now, I can give you one example. Genesis chapter 6 is a big chapter of controversy—where it says “there were giants in the earth in those days.” Now, you know, there are two lines of theological thought. I’ve got a chart at home with great men, famous men, on each side of the coin. Over here are men who say that these were fallen angels who had actually had relationships with female women and they had giant children.

Over on the other side are those that teach like I always have, and I’m beginning to rethink it. Maybe I’m wrong. That it was a breakdown between the godly line of Seth and the ungodly line of Cain. That’s always been my take. But listen, what difference does it make? If I win the argument, so what? It’s not going to make any difference.
So with a lot of these things now, that’s the way I’m starting to answer people. I say, look, if it doesn’t affect your salvation, if it doesn’t affect your Christian testimony; hey, we’ll find out when we get there. Then we’ll get full knowledge, and if the Lord wants us to know. I think it’s a good way to look at a lot of these things. All right, let’s go on a little bit yet in Ephesians, and then the half hour is gone again. Now verse 9. After contemplating the unsearchable riches of Christ—unfathomable, we will never plum the depths. We will never reach the height of them, but now verse 9. This was Paul’s goal as a human being, as an instrument in God’s hands.

_Ephesians 3:9a_
“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery,…” What do these seven premises do for you and me as believers in our fellowship with one another? Why it just brings us together like family. We are one in Christ. All right, the fellowship of the mystery and, again, where did it come from?

_Ephesians 3:9b_
“...which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God,...” Now listen, that’s not there just to fill the page. That’s what it means. These truths were hid in the mind of God!

Remember, I always go back to _Deuteronomy 29:29_: “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those that are revealed belong to us and our children.” All right, that’s the concept all through Scripture. God can keep things secret as long as He wants to, and He’ll reveal it in His own good time.

All right, all the rest of Scripture never makes one mention of these mysteries, not one except the iniquity. So, they are all Pauline revelations, and you and I can just embrace them. And if you’re the only one in the whole family that believes it, hey, you are blessed. You are the blessed one, because you can see it, but most of Christendom does not buy it. They just can not believe it.
Okay, we’re ready for the last program this afternoon, and then we’ll be heading out for home. For those of you joining us on television, again we want to thank you for your prayers more than anything, but also for your letters and your financial help. Naturally, we can’t do this without it.

You know, when we first came up here—I’ve got to tell things like this! This is what makes our program. When we first came up here to talk to these station people—they’re the ones that called. They wanted us to make a program. So we came up and had a breakfast meeting with them and found out it was going to cost us like $2,000 a month for one program a week and the production end. Iris hadn’t said anything about the meeting until we got to the car and she said, “Les, I thought they’d pay us!”

Well you know, I imagine a lot of people think that. Because where do people get all their funds? Well, from what they do. So it was a logical response. We didn’t know anything about TV. You know, as I always tell people, we were the takers of a clod of dirt when it came to television. But anyhow, here we are, and we have to pay for TV time. The television people don’t pay us a dime.

Okay, we’re going to keep on the dispensational view. We’re going to come back to these mysteries that we started in our last lesson. For this next half hour, at least the first part of it, we’re going to start at I Corinthians chapter 4. This is a little different approach. Paul is writing to the believers at Corinth who were not exactly the most spiritual of all the people. And he says:

*I Corinthians 4:1*

“Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers (See, there’s that word again.) of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.” What’s a steward? Well, let’s look at Scripture. Go back to Genesis chapter 15 – Abraham.

Genesis chapter 15, but first let’s stop at chapter 12 and the Abrahamic Covenant. Just for a second so that you’ll know what Abram, as his name was still, what he was up against.

*Genesis 12:2*
“And I will make of thee a great nation,...” Now, that’s as far as we’ve got to go to make my point. What would Abraham have to have if a nation is going to come from him? Children! How many did he have? None!

All right, so here he’s getting almost befuddled with the idea—how could people come from me and even my own wife Sarai when we don’t have a child? All right, now you come over to chapter 15 in Genesis and still no child. Still the promises keep ringing in his ears.

**Genesis 15:1**

*After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.*

Now verse 2, don’t forget the fact that Abram is 90 and Sarai is 80, and they still won’t have a child until he is 100 and she’s 90. But nevertheless, they’re already past childbearing age.

**Genesis 15:2**

*And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?*” What’d he mean? What’s a steward? A manager, an overseer, an administrator.

And we know that Abram had tremendous wealth. He had men servants and women servants. He had cattle and sheep and goats, and he couldn’t run it all himself. So he had this steward, this overseer, this manager, Eliezer of Damascus. All right, now come back to I Corinthians 4 and maybe this verse will mean a little bit more to you.

**I Corinthians 4:1**

*Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards* (Or managers, overseers, promoters, all the things that make an operation go. That’s what we are to be. Not of a business, nor of a farm and ranch operation, but of what?) *of the mysteries of God.*

So every one of us as believers are stewards of this body of truth. It’s up to us to get it out in front of people every opportunity that we get, in one place or another. You don’t have to use all of them at once. But let people know – hey, this is where it’s at! You won’t find this back in the four Gospels. You won’t find this back in the Old Testament. You won’t find it in the Book of Revelation. You find it only between Romans and Philemon.
That’s why I’m constantly stressing—study Paul’s epistles. Now, you don’t throw the rest of your Bible away. You know I don’t teach that, because I just used it. Man, I love to use Genesis. I love to use the prophets. But I’m not going to take people back there to show them how to be saved. I’m not going to take them back there to show them how to live the Christian life in 2,000—wherever we are. But we are to be stewards of these basic premises that we are calling now the mysteries of Christ and God and so forth. All right, let’s read on here a little bit—verse 2.

_I Corinthians 4:2_

“Moreover it is required in stewards, (overseers, managers) _that a man be found_ (What?) faithful.” Now I imagine everyone in this room has known of someone who has been a victim of embezzlement or of a floor manager. I’ve known several in my lifetime who just simply got taken to the cleaners by an embezzler. I think of another fellow who had managers of his operation, and they stole him blind until he almost went broke. Well, you see, it’s the same thing in the spiritual.

If we are going to keep all this to ourselves and never pass it on, are we going to enhance the Body of Christ? No. We’ve got to share it. Like I said, you don’t know all seven of these and pass them out at one time, but be ready. Be ready to share these things that most of Christendom knows nothing of. They won’t hear it. Most of Christendom don’t have a clue about these things, because they’ve never been taught it. But this is where we ought to understand that as believers in this Age of Grace, we are stewards. We are household managers of this body of truth that we call the Dispensation of the Grace of God.

All right, I hardly know where to go first, because there is so much to cover, and I don’t want to get it all mixed up. But let me just continue on here in I Corinthians 4. Some of these verses disturb people. Well, I can’t help it, because it’s what the Book says. Come on over with me now in this same chapter, I Corinthians 4, and go to verse 16. Remember, what’s the basic instruction in the beginning of the chapter? _Be stewards and ministers of Christ of these mysteries of God._

Now how are we going to be a good steward? Well, we have to be taught. You don’t just automatically come in and run somebody’s business without some training. So, where do we get our training? I Corinthians 4 verse 16, and as I said, most won’t like this.

_I Corinthians 4:16_

“Wherefore (Paul says by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Not by Paul’s own ideas. But he says--) I beseech you, be ye followers of me.” Most people say it
should say Jesus. But it doesn’t. It says, “Be ye followers of me.” Paul. Now don’t worry, I’m coming to the right point. Here’s I Corinthians chapter 11. Now verse 1, and now this will set your mind at ease.

**I Corinthians 11:1**

“Be ye followers of me, (But don’t leave the rest of the verse out.) even as I also am of Christ.” Do you see that? Now see, this Apostle had direct communions with the Christ in Glory. He had direct fellowship in more than one area. In fact, let me give you an example. I’ve got to back everything up with Scripture. I can’t help it.

Come back with me to the Book of Acts chapter 22. This is even besides his experience on the road to Damascus. This is years later. So I know that the man was in fellowship with the ascended Lord. Now he’s been out amongst the Gentiles and has been establishing these little congregations. Now he’s back in Jerusalem. Because he always had a heart for his fellow Jews, and he would bring back offerings to take care of the poor Jews in Jerusalem. Here’s one of his instances where he has come back to Jerusalem from his Gentile travels.

**Acts 22:17-18**

“And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, (See, this wasn’t the first time.) even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; (in a vision) 18. And saw him (the Lord Jesus Himself) saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they (the Jews) will not receive thy testimony concerning me.”

All right, then he actually argues with the Lord.

**Acts 22:19**

“And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: 20. And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept (or I held) the raiment of them that killed him.

**Acts 22:21**

“And he, (the Lord Jesus) said unto me, Depart: (Depart what? Jerusalem. Get out, see?) for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.” That’s where Paul’s ministry was. Not in Jerusalem. But on into the Gentile world. So we know that he had constant communion with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.
All right, let’s go over a little further to Philippians chapter 3 and verse 17. Now here are three distinct instructions of who we are to follow. And most of Christendom gets all bent of shape, and says, “I’m not going to follow some man. I’m going to follow Jesus.” Well, listen, God gave to this man this place of Apostleship. Christ Himself designated Paul as “The Apostle of the Gentiles.” And as this man follows Christ, we are to follow him. And here’s the third one now in just these few references, and there several more like them.

**Philippians 3:17**

“Brethren, be ye followers together of me, and mark them who walk so as ye have us for an example.” Now, how did Paul walk? Above reproach.

You cannot find one word of Scripture that anybody ever had anything to malign the Apostle’s Christian walk, if you want to call it that. Never! He was above reproach. And he suffered for it for twenty some years. So when I maintain that as our Apostle this is where we are to spend our time—in his letters—it is because they are God’s letters to us as Gentiles. And it’s through his letters that we not only find Salvation, but the Christian walk.

In fact, let’s just go to Titus chapter 2 for a minute. Now who in the world can argue against these kinds of admonitions? Titus chapter 2 verse 11.

**Titus 2:11a**

“For the grace of God…” See, Paul is always on that grace thing. We’re saved by grace, we’re kept by grace, and we look forward to whatever eternity is coming by grace. We don’t deserve any of it.

**Titus 2:11**

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” No one is going to be able to say, “I never had a chance.”

I just told my class the other night here in Oklahoma. Don’t ask me to explain that. I can’t. But there are three Scripture references that maintain that every human being has had an opportunity. Now I’m getting looks of consternation, so I have to stop right there. Come back with me to John’s Gospel, because I don’t like to say things like that and then leave it hanging by a cotton thread. Go back to John’s Gospel chapter 1. I might as well, in order to make it clear as clear can make it, start at verse 6. Here we’re dealing with John the Baptist.

**John 1:6-7**
“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, (Now the word Light is capitalized, so it’s a reference to Jesus Christ of Nazareth.) that all men through him might believe.” How many? All!

**John 1:8**

“He was not that Light, (speaking of John) but was sent to bear witness of that Light.” Now verse 9—my, this blows me away. I can’t explain it. I have to just leave it where it sits, and you can do the same thing.

**John 1:9**

“That was the true Light, (Jesus of Nazareth in His earthly ministry) which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” How many? Every last one!

The Aborigines in the middle of Australia? Yeah. The pagans wherever they may be in the world? Yes. Nobody is going to come before the Throne and say, “But God, I never had a chance.” You know why? Scripture! Now come over with me to Romans and then we’ll go back to Titus. I’m not through in Titus, yet. Romans chapter 1 and we’ll start at verse 18.

**Romans 1:18-19a**

“For the wrath of God (Notice it doesn’t say the love of God, but rather the wrath.) is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19. Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them;…” In other words, God put them in the spotlight. And there it is. No argument.

**Romans 1:19b-20**

“...for God hath showed it unto them. (Shown what? Their unrighteousness. Their wickedness.) 20. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; (In other words, who He is.) so that they (the unsaved multitude) are (What?) without excuse.” Now just let that soak in.

Every human being is somehow or another enlightened enough where they could cash in and have salvation, but they refuse to. So when they come before the Great White Throne, they’re not going to have one word of argument, because they’re going to know they are there without any excuse. Now that’s one of the quirks of Scripture. Like I said, I can’t answer it. So we’ll just wait until we get there. But it’s a fact that Christ died for every human being that’s ever lived.
You know, I get a lot of things in the mail. And I had an interesting one. If the lady is watching me, so be it, because I wrote back the very fact I’m going to say now. A good friend of hers had given her the previous Sunday’s service bulletin in which the pastor had an article that I could agree with. I had no problem. But this lady was all shook up, and she wrote across the bottom. She said, “Les, I don’t think I can agree with it.”

What the pastor was pointing out was how Christ suffered so horrendously for the sins of the world. And she didn’t think she’d agree with it. So this is what I wrote back. By the time this program reaches her, she will already have read my letter. I said, “My dear lady. Now you’re talking like these Jesus Seminar Liberals, who, the last comment I read from one was, ‘how in the world could any Father cause his son to go through what Jesus went through?’” And that’s how they ridicule it. How would anybody with any common sense make their son suffer like that?

So I said you sound like some of these Jesus Seminars Liberals. I said, listen, the whole idea of His suffering was that He was taking the sin debt for the whole human race. Not just a few, but for the whole human race.

I gave her an example that we had experienced in Israel one day that goes back quite a few years, and we were still able to go into the Dome of the Rock. The Muslims don’t like to call it the mosque, it’s a Shrine. But in those days, we could still take off our shoes, and we could go in. Inside the Dome of the Rock there’s this huge rock where supposedly Abraham offered Isaac. And it’s got a retaining fence around it.

But anyhow, the guy had our small group right there at the high point of the rock. He was explaining how that some of the Jews feel that that was the exact place of the ark at which they slaughtered all the animals. And the unique thing was that the animal blood would go right down into a cavern and it would go out into the River Kidron. So our little Jewish guide was expressing the same kind of thought. He said, you know folks, I just cannot believe that God would require people to kill those innocent lambs. And he said many times that lamb would be the household pet.

I stopped him right there. I said, now, wait a minute. Don’t you understand the reason God set up that sacrificial system? And there would be more of an impact if it was the household pet. But it was that Jew’s sin that caused that animal to die. He had to see the horribleness of his own sin.
Well, the same way with the cross. We’ve got to understand that when Christ suffered and died, He did that because of our sin! And sin in the eyes of God is awful! We’ve lost it. All right, so this is what we have to understand. That God wasn’t being unfair to His Son. He wasn’t being morbid. He was doing what had to be done. Someone had to suffer and die for the sins of mankind, and who could do it but God Himself? He had to be God.

All right, that was all free for nothing. Come back to where we were in Titus, and then we’ll close. Titus chapter 2—this is what we mean by following the writings of Paul. It’s so logical. It’s so appropriate. Verse eleven again.

**Titus 2:11**

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” But for us who believe, now the next verse kicks in. The Grace of God teaches you and me as a believer, as a Child of God, and as a Joint Heir with Christ. We’re taught.

**Titus 2:12**

“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, (Now that doesn’t mean that you can’t ever laugh or smile or have a good time.) righteously, and godly, in this present world;”

Now, where did the word Christian come from? Christ-like. That’s right. To the pagan world it was actually a slur term. When it first originated, the pagan’s put it on these believers who they thought were Christ-like. They called them Christians. All right, that’s what they’ve got here. We are to live Christ-like.

Now there you go with the teachings of Jesus, and I have no problem with that. When he said that we are to be salt of the earth, absolutely, we ought to be. Are we to be the light? Sure, we’re to be light. And so many other things that He taught are certainly appropriate.

But, by-and-large, we come back to how did the Apostle Paul put it? We deny ungodliness. We deny worldly lusts and desires. And instead we live soberly, we live righteously, we live godly in this present world. Even in our daily life, this is how we are to live. And at the same moment, while we are living the Christian life—that doesn’t mean that you can’t pursue happiness. It doesn’t mean that you can’t pursue enough to leave for your kids. In fact, Scripture admonishes us to. Parents are there for children and not children for parents.
So, there is not anything wrong with working and, as we say in America, trying to get ahead. There’s nothing wrong with that, as long as it doesn’t become first place on your agenda. But while we’re working, while we’re doing whatever we’re doing, what should we be doing?

*Titus 2:13*

“Looking for that blessed hope, (And what’s the blessed hope for us as believers?) and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” And then see the next verse.

*Titus 2:14*

“Who gave Himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar (or a set apart) people, zealous of good works.” Of course we’re going to do all we can to help our fellow man. Nothing’s better than to help someone who is destitute, and that’s all part of our being stewards of the mystery.
Okay, it’s good to see everybody in again this afternoon. We’ve got quite a few new folks that have never been here before. So those of you out in television, if you look over the audience, you’re going to see a few new faces this afternoon. For all the rest of you who’ve come in routinely, again we thank you for helping us out and being so supportive.

We always like to let it be known, every once in a while anyway, that we’ve still got the Questions and Answers book for $11. I don’t like to peddle them, but on the other hand we want to make people aware that they are still available and very useful and informative and make wonderful gifts.

Again, I always have to thank my audience, all of you here and those of you out in television, for your prayer support, for your letters, your comments…my, what an encouragement it is to know that the Lord is using us to open the Scriptures to so many. And we thank you for your financial help. After all, television is not free. And we do thank you for all of that.

All right, now for those of you in the audience here in the studio, you can see on the board that we are going to start with the mysteries today. These mysteries are scattered throughout Paul’s epistles. I had the studio audience turn to Ephesians 1 verse 9, but I just happened to think I’d better go back to Deuteronomy 29:29 once again for the sake of new listeners. Most of you regular listeners know this by memory, just from rote repetition. But it’s one of the most descriptive verses for understanding what Paul calls the mysteries that were revealed to him and him alone.

Deuteronomy 29:29—I always have to give credit for finding this verse to a dear gentleman who was in one of my Oklahoma classes. He was not only a retired Army General, but he was a retired College President. He came up one night and he said, “Les, I’ve found a verse that just fits the way you teach.” And I said, “What is it?” Deuteronomy 29:29. And I’d never seen it before. Now, of course, I use it hundreds and hundreds of times, because it just says it all.

Deuteronomy 29:29a
“The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: (Now stop and think a minute. What does that mean? Well, exactly what it says. God is Sovereign. God is in total control; and He can do whatever He wants, however He wants, whenever
He wants. Now that’s what it means. He can keep things secret if He wants to. But, see, the flip side is—) **but those things which are revealed** (and are no longer secret) **belong unto us and to our children forever,**…”

Of course Moses is writing, so he’s speaking of the children of Israel. But nevertheless, it’s still appropriate for us in this Age of Grace to understand. Now come back with me to Paul’s epistles in Ephesians chapter 1 verse 9. We’re going to be looking at mysteries all afternoon. And the first thing I have to qualify is that the word *mystery* is also the same identical word for *secret*. That’s why I took you to Deuteronomy 29:29.

Now in Ephesians chapter 1 verse 9, we have an instance—it’s not the only one, not even the first as far as that goes—but in Ephesians 1 verse 9 he says:

**Ephesians 1:9**

> “**Having made known unto us the mystery of his will,** (or the secret of His will) **according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:**” Now see how I’ve already explained that with my opening remark? Why is it according to His good pleasure? Because He’s Sovereign, and He can keep things secret until He’s ready to reveal it.

Now here’s one of the revealed secrets that you will find only in the letters and the epistles of Paul. It’s referred to here as “the mystery of His will.” Now, if you just read that casually, you don’t think anything of it. But hopefully I’m getting people to understand that you’ve got to stop and analyze these things without just running by them. So what in the world is he talking about that God’s will has been kept secret?

Now maybe I’d better qualify that. Oh, I’ll make it easy for you. Just turn over in this same Book of Ephesians. There’s another one in Romans 16, but let’s use the one in Ephesians chapter 3 verse 9. We’ll be coming to it probably later this afternoon. If we don’t get it here today, we’ll get it at our next taping. But here is exactly what we have to understand—that these things that Paul refers to as the mysteries are doctrines and tenets of our faith that were never known anywhere else in Scripture.

This is what makes Paul’s apostleship so set apart from all the rest of our Bible. It is that all these things were kept secret until revealed to this Apostle. That’s what most of Christendom can’t understand. And, of course, the first reason they can’t understand it is because they won’t read Paul.
In fact, I don’t know if I mentioned it in my last taping or not. But one of my listeners, I won’t even name the state. But in one of the far off states, she sent me a clipping from her newspaper. And across the top of the newspaper she wrote, “Les, now I understand what you mean when you say that people hate Paul.” And then she had underlined one of the letters to the editor. It was in response to a letter that a pastor in their community had written being critical of another liberal pastor, and he had evidently used some of the quotes from Paul to make his point.

Well now, this letter that she had outlined for me to read, I’ve got it in my Bible here, but I won’t take time to read it. But you cannot imagine the venom that can spew out of people’s mouths when they start attacking the Apostle Paul. And that’s what she was doing. Just with venom, no Christian love whatsoever. She just ridiculed the man. How he was kicked out of Greece, he was kicked out of Turkey, and he was stupid, and he was this and that. Well, she’s not alone. Now, she might be on the worst end of it, but that’s multitudes of people today. They’ve got no time for this Apostle. At most they’ll just use a verse here and there. But to understand his mysteries—they don’t want any part of it.

All right, have you got Ephesians 3 verse 9, then I’ll get back to the one I intended to start with. In verse 9 he says:

_Ephesians 3:9a_  
“And (I want) to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery,...” Now when he speaks of the mystery, he’s speaking of this whole body of truth of these things that were revealed to this Apostle, not counting the eighth one, because that’s back in the Book of Revelation chapter 2. But these first seven mysteries are our basic doctrine—that you will not find anywhere else in Scripture. You just can’t find it. No use even wasting your time to look. All right, so back to my verse in Ephesians.

_Ephesians 3:9_  
“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, (or this huge compilation of secrets) which from the beginning of the world (Now that takes us at least back to Adam,) hath been hid (Where?) in God, (That’s why He could keep it secret. It was within His makeup. So they have been hid in God, the same God--) who created all things by Jesus Christ:” All right, so that’s the whole concept that I want to have you see this afternoon. It is that all these Pauline doctrines that he calls the mystery had never been revealed before. You can’t find them in the four
gospels. You can’t find them in the Old Testament. You can’t find them in the little epistles at the end. They are uniquely within the epistles of this Apostle.

All right, so now let’s come back to our list of the mysteries. The first one we have on the board.

**Ephesians 1:9a**

*“Having made known unto us the mystery (or the secret) of his will,…”* Now I’m going to stop right there. Now goodness sakes, we all know that beginning with the human experience back with Adam and Eve, God’s will was certainly exercised and made known. Wasn’t it? In other words, so far as Adam and Eve were concerned in the Garden, what was God’s will concerning what they could or could not do? Well, everything in the Garden is for you to enjoy except that tree. So the will of God was expressed.

When He dealt with Moses and He dealt with some of the other patriarchs and David and the prophets, we know that God expressed His will. Now what’s the point I’m trying to make? Yet when it comes to you and me as members of the Body of Christ, understanding the will of God is something so totally different and superior than anything that ever went before. And that’s what the average believer does not comprehend. That we are in such a unique position in God’s dealing with the whole human race. That as members of the Body of Christ, we have an understanding of the will of God that even Adam didn’t have. We have an understanding that Moses did not have. We have an understanding that Abraham and the rest of them didn’t have.

All right, now let’s just see what the Scripture says about it. Continue on in Ephesians chapter 1 to see what I’m driving at. Jump across, at least in mine, to the other page. Go over to verse 15 and see if we can get just a little better comprehension of what Paul is talking about. This whole secret of a revealed will of God to you and me as believers today compared to the rest of biblical history. All right, verse 15, now this is a prayer of the Apostle on behalf of the Ephesian believers. He says:

**Ephesians 1:15-17**

*“Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and (your) love unto all the saints, 16. I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; (Now here is the Apostle’s prayer.) 17.That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:”*
Ephesians 1:18-19a
“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and (Let me repeat…and you may know--) what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19. And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe,…”

Not the rest of the world. They know nothing of these things. But this is imparted only to you and me now as, what we call, Grace Age believers. Now let’s just flip over a few pages to Colossians chapter 1. Here again we have much the same thing, but to a different group of Gentiles over in Colossi. Here again we’re going to look at a prayer of the Apostle on behalf of this congregation. So we can just take the two of them together, and they’re for us. Absolutely they are! Verse 9:

Colossians 1:9
“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, (That is, of their professing faith in this preaching of the cross. That we--) do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with (Now here it comes.) the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual (And who’s that for? For you and every individual believer as God has a will for that particular life. What’s the next word?) understanding.”

How many church people have that today? Not many. And I’m not being judgmental. I’m just taking the general attitude of people. I hear it all the time. They invite them to a Bible Study. Not interested. They’re not the least bit interested in finding out a little more about what this Book says. Why not? They’re not in the will of God, because God’s will is that we grow in the knowledge of His Word.

And when you grow in the knowledge of His Word, you’re going to experience—like I had a lady call, I guess I can name the state. She called from Maryland. And she said, “Les, yesterday I had the most exciting day of my whole life.” I said, “Tell me about it.” She said, “I’d been to the mall and I’d finished shopping and I was on my way out to the car. And here as I went by one of these outside cafes, (you know, you see them in every mall) there this young man was sitting by one of those tables reading intently. and I walked over and got close enough and noticed he was reading the Bible.” And so she said, “I stopped and noticed that he was in Proverbs, and he had everything all highlighted and underlined. I was brazen enough and said, ‘Young man are you reading Proverbs?’” And he says, “Yes.” I said, “Why?” “Well,” he says, “It’s the only book in this whole Bible that agrees with Plato.” “I said, Plato! Who’s that?” And he said, “Well, he lived in 300
B.C.” “What’s that got to do with you?” “Well,” he said, “According to Proverbs a lot of the things said….”

I said, “Can I just sit down and share the Scriptures with you?” And he said, “Yes, please do.” Now he was just a young guy, about 30. So she sat down. Then she said, “Now, Les, you talk about the work of the Holy Spirit.” “Of course,” I said. She said, “I’ve been listening to the program every morning in Romans and so all of that was fresh in my mind. I took his Bible and went from verse to verse to verse and it was just the most exciting thing I’ve ever had happen.”

And she said the guy was attentive. He was taking it all in. She said she was hoping that she could share phone numbers with him, but that he wouldn’t do. But she said, “When I got ready to leave he did say this.” “Lady, you are the first person I’ve ever met that can make sense out of this Book.” Well, wouldn’t you go back to your car on cloud nine? Yes, you would. This is what we have to wait for. When you get that opportunity, don’t think, well, I don’t think I….yes, the Spirit will take over.

I had another lady some time ago in one of my classes here in Oklahoma one evening on cloud nine. She had just shared the Scriptures with a couple or three teenagers. She said every verse that came to mind she could find it. And I said that’s the way the Spirit works.

All right, this is what it means to be under the control of the will of God, because that will in its turn brings in wisdom and spiritual understanding. All right, now to qualify you as a believer, to have this kind of an understanding, come back with me to I Corinthians chapter 2. I’m hoping that I can make all these things come together and make you realize that you and I as believers have a relationship with God and an understanding of His Word that Israel never had. Not even the best of them. Not even the prophets, because they didn’t have this special revelation that we do.

I Corinthians chapter 2 starting at verse 10—we’re just going to do a lot of Scripture reading today. After all, it’s the Word of God that’s powerful, not what Les Feldick says. The Word of God is powerful.

I Corinthians 2:10

“But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” Not just the fluff. That’s where most of Christendom is. They’re up there just scratching the surface. But the Spirit wants us to get down into the deep things. Now verse 11:
I Corinthians 2:11
“For what man knoweth the things of a man, save (or except) the spirit of man which is in him? (In other words, you send your kid to college and what do you expect him to learn? Well, the things of the world and the subject matter and everything that he can probably use in a career or whatever. But they’re still nothing more than the things of men. On the same basis then--) even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.”

In other words, if you are going to send a young man to medical school, you don’t expect some accountant to teach him anatomy, do you? What do you expect? Well, you want somebody who is skilled in the discipline of anatomy to teach your kid the part of medical school that that applies to. Well, it’s the same way with Scripture. You don’t go to the outside world to understand Scripture. We go to that blessed Holy Spirit, which, as he says in verse 12, “is freely given.”

I Corinthians 2:12
“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, (We’re not concerned about earthly things when we get into the Book.) but the Spirit who is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” It’s not something you have to work and strive for, just ask God to pour it out and He will. And now verse 13:

I Corinthians 2:13
“Which things (These things that come from God Himself by way of the Holy Spirit.) also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”

Now does that tell you something? Why do I use Scripture verse after Scripture verse after Scripture verse? Comparing Scripture with Scripture. Line upon line. Precept upon precept. That’s the only way to do it. Now then verse 14; this is really the verse I was heading for.

I Corinthians 2:14
“But the natural man (the unsaved person) receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: (He’s got no time for these things.) neither can he know them, (Why?) because they are spiritually discerned.” Now that’s what it means to know the will of God. It is to understand that only by the working of that indwelling Holy Spirit can we come to a knowledge of these spiritual truths. Come back a little further now to Romans chapter 8.
That’s been on the air not too long ago, so this should almost be like a little quick review. And you remember when I was teaching Romans, I emphasized in the first seven chapters that there was almost no mention of the Holy Spirit. Almost none. But all of a sudden you break into chapter 8 and it just explodes. And I don’t remember how many times, I think it’s something like 19 or 20 times in this one chapter, we have reference to the Holy Spirit. And here it comes—dropping down to verse 5. And this is all because of the revealed will of God in our lives which was kept secret until it was given to this Apostle.

Romans 8:5-7
“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but (Here it comes.) they who are after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit. 6. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life (that’s eternal life) and peace. (Peace with God—and here’s the reason.) 7. Because the carnal (the unsaved) mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”

Romans 8:8-9
“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. (But here we come) 9. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, (We’re not in the flesh. We’re in the Spirit. We’re a whole new person as a result of our faith in that preaching of Paul’s Gospel—which is that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again. So, we’re not in the flesh, we’re in the Spirit.) if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

No matter how many times he’s walked the aisle. No matter how many times he’s been baptized, one way or another. If he doesn’t have the Holy Spirit, he’s still as lost as a goose, is my favorite expression. He doesn’t know where he’s going. But if you have the Spirit of God, then that is God’s mark that you are indeed a child of His, which we’re going to see in the next minute or so. All right, verse 11:

Romans 8:11
“But if the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, (In other words, the very Spirit of the God of Creation, the God who consummated the work of the Cross.) he that raised up Christ from the dead (if the Spirit of God dwells in you) shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

All right, now I’m going to bring you down to verse 14. When we experience true salvation, and you have truly trusted and believed the Gospel plus nothing and
believed that the work of the cross was complete, then the Spirit of God dwells in you. I just emphasized again last night with a caller. I said, “Listen, when Jesus said, ‘It’s finished,’ was He kidding? He was dead serious. And He meant what He said and He said what He meant. The work of Salvation was finished. He did it all.”

Now of course, we’ve got to jump ahead three days and include the resurrection. But nevertheless, what has mankind done with the Gospel ever since the Apostle Paul was given this revelation? Well, they’ve thrown everything at it but the kitchen sink. My, they’re adding baptism to it. They’re adding church membership. They add tongues. They add tithing. They add healing. They add this and that. Then what does that mean? When you add anything to faith in Paul’s Gospel, then you’re telling God that Christ didn’t finish it and you’ve got to add something to it. Isn’t it ridiculous?

Well see, this is what I mean when I say you can place your trust totally in that finished work of the cross, and nothing else is necessary. And then the Christian life follows. Of course it does. I’m not saying anything about that. But I’m talking about the means of salvation. If we have trusted the Gospel of the cross of Christ, and the Holy Spirit comes in, then verse 14 kicks in and this is where we are.

**Romans 8:14-15a**

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, (the Holy Spirit) they are the sons (Or the children, or the born ones—I think it comes out of the Greek.) of God. 15. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear;...” We don’t shake in our boots before a Holy and Awesome God. Do we? I hope not. My goodness, we’re in a relationship with Him. We’re His. He’s ours. So you haven’t received the spirit of bondage to fear.

**Romans 8:15b**

“...but ye have received the Spirit of adoption,...” which means you have been placed as a full son. Not a babe, but a full son. Now again, I always have to emphasize. We start on two levels as a believer, don’t we? The moment we’re saved, yes, we’re a babe in Christ. But on the other hand, we are placed in the Body of Christ as a full heir. Read the next verse.

**Romans 8:16**

“The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” Oh, I love that! Not something that you hope to be. Not something that you’re going to try to be. You know, that’s most of Christendom—well, I’m doing the best I can. I’m trying. I’m working at it. That won’t do you a nickel’s worth of
good, because that’s not what God is looking for. He’s looking for faith and trust in what He has done. But, hey, it gets better. We’re not just children, we’re what?

Romans 8:17a

“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him,...“ Now fortunately, we in America so far haven’t had to do it. We may. But we know that down through the years a lot of believers did. They suffered. They died as martyrs for their faith. It’s not a prerequisite, but it certainly is a distinct possibility that when we take a stand for Christ, we may yet have to suffer for Him.
For those of you joining us on television again, we just thank you for everything. We appreciate the fact that many of you are learning how to study on your own. Nothing thrills us more than when you tell us that you’re sharing it with others.

I’ve always said, you know why most believers do not share their faith? They’re unsure of their wisdom. So rather than get caught and embarrassed, they say nothing. But once we get people grounded in the Word—hey, when these cults come to your door, are they ever lacking for words? Never! Boy, they’ve got their verses down pat. Well, once you get an understanding of the Word, and—like I said in the last half hour—you get an opportunity to share it, then you’re ready. That’s basically why we keep teaching. It is to prepare people to share their faith with those that they have opportunity.

Okay, back to Ephesians chapter 3. We’re still going to deal with the mysteries all afternoon as we’ve got them here on the board. Now we’re going to hit number 2—the Mystery of Christ. Christ a secret? Well, you’d be surprised. We’ll just take a good in-depth look at it. Ephesians chapter 3, now of course the verses we really want are verses 3 and 4. But let’s start at verse 1.

**Ephesians 3:1**

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for (Whom?) you Gentiles,…” Gentiles! See, now didn’t I rehearse that again the last few programs? We’ve got to constantly remember—how did Paul end up being the Apostle of the Gentiles? Well, you remember back in Matthew chapter 10, the Lord had just chosen the Twelve, and He gave them marching orders. And what were they?

“Go not into the way of a Gentile, and into the city of Samaritans, enter ye not.” Why? “Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

So, the Twelve were later on called the Apostles of Israel. Now, when Israel kept rejecting and rejecting and rejecting, and they epitomized it when they killed Stephen, who are we introduced to? The next player – Saul of Tarsus! Remember, he held the clothes of those that stoned Stephen. Now when you get into Chapter 9
remember, God is dealing with Ananias who’s going to be the go-between. And what does he tell Ananias?

“I’m going to send this man (Saul of Tarsus) far hence unto the Gentiles.”

Now, did you see the difference in the language? Jesus told the Twelve go NOT to the Gentiles, go to Israel. To this Apostle He says you’re going TO the Gentiles, and of course Israel as well. See the big difference. I mean a big difference.

And again, most of Christendom can’t get it. That’s one of the number one arguments, if I get any, in the mail, “Where do you get this business of a Gospel for the Jew and a Gospel for Gentiles?” Well, right there. How in the world, if Jesus sent the Twelve out into the Tribes of Israel, could they preach faith in His death, burial, and resurrection? It hadn’t happened yet. Nobody had any idea He was going to die. So they certainly had a different message.

But now to the Gentile world, this man becomes the one and only true Apostle of the Gentiles. Now, of course, we know that following him came Barnabas and Silas, Timothy, Titus, and some of those who were naturally called apostles as well, but are never called The Apostle of the Gentiles as this one is. Now verse 2:

Ephesians 3:2
“\textit{If} \textit{(What kind of a word is that? Well, there’s a possibility you may not have. But-) If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given to me to you-ward:}” Now those of you who have been with me for years and years, you know what that means.

Just like God gave Moses the Dispensation of Law, and Moses took it down from the mountain to Israel; to this Apostle, and I think on the same mountain, He now gives the Dispensation of the Grace of God—and He doesn’t qualify just one group over the another, but He says to take it to the Gentile world and Israel as well.

Two totally different programs. The Twelve Apostles were to Israel. This Apostle is to the Gentiles. Now verse 3, here comes our word.

Ephesians 3:3-4
“\textit{How that by revelation he (God) made known unto me the mystery; (The secret. That’s why I’ve got it up here with all the others.) (as I wrote before in few words, 4. \textit{Whereby, when ye read,} (That is his epistles.) ye may understand my knowledge} (And knowledge brings what? Wisdom. So you can just about put it all
together. Those words all fit—that you can have knowledge and wisdom and understanding—\(\textit{in the mystery of Christ.}\)"

The secret things of Christ that were never understood until revealed to this Apostle—in plain language. Now of course, a lot of things were in veiled language back here in the Old Testament and the four gospels, but did they understand it? No, they didn’t know what it was all about. In fact, I guess this is a good time to do it. Let’s go to I Peter before we go any further. I Peter chapter 1 starting at verse 1, so that you’ll know who Peter is addressing. You know that’s our first rule of thumb. Always determine who’s writing and who is he writing to? Well, Peter an Apostle of Israel was one of the Twelve. And he’s writing to Jews.

\textit{I Peter 1:1}

“\textit{Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,} (And put in the word \textit{writing} without doing any violence to the Scripture, because that’s what he’s doing. He’s writing--) to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,” Well, who are the strangers scattered? They were Jews who had been chased out of Israel and out of Jerusalem by Saul’s persecution and other things as well. They were scattered throughout that end of the Roman Empire. Now, just to see who he’s addressing. He’s writing to Jews. Now look down at verse 9, these Jews were:

\textit{I Peter 1:9-10a}

“Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. 10. Of which salvation the prophets (Who? The Old Testament writers--) have inquired and searched diligently,…” What’s the other word for inquired? They were asking, if not others, then for themselves. They were searching the Scriptures diligently. And these same prophets--

\textit{I Peter 1:10b-11a}

“…who prophesied (or foretold—things in the future) \textit{of the grace that should come unto you:} (out in the future sometime) 11. \textit{Searching what,} (the Scriptures, the Old Testament as much as they had) \textit{or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ who was in them did signify,…}”

Now remember, the Holy Spirit has always been the same Spirit. God the Son has always been the same person of the Godhead, only now in the New Testament we refer to Him as Jesus and Jesus Christ. But He was the same person of the Godhead that the prophets were dealing with.
I Peter 1:11

“Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ who was in them (That is that Holy Spirit.) did signify, when it testified beforehand (before it ever happened) the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”

Now you see what that said? What were the prophets talking about? The suffering. There had to be a sacrifice for sin beyond the animal sacrifices. But it was in such veiled language that God didn’t expect them to figure it out, and they didn’t. But for our benefit, now we can go back to Isaiah 53. Let’s go back there. I haven’t done it in a long time. I’ve got a lot of Jewish listeners, so maybe this is just for their benefit. I didn’t intend to do this. This was not in my thinking at all when I left home this morning. But this is what we have to do.

These Old Testament prophets looked at these verses. They knew there was something here, but they couldn’t figure it out. So, they just kept searching and searching. But it wasn’t time for them to understand. So God didn’t reveal it. All right, look at it now, verse 1.

Isaiah 53:1-2a

“Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? 2. For he (Now here we come. We’re talking about the Messiah now, the Son of God, the Christ.) shall grow up before him as a tender planet, as a root out of a dry ground:…”

Now, what’s that a reference to? Bethlehem. Who would ever expect a coming King to be born in a stable situation down in the little, lowly town of Bethlehem? So it’s just like a little piece of grass coming up out on the desert, insignificant and almost unknown.

Isaiah 53:2b

“…as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; (In other words, He wasn’t born there with a great halo over His head and all the aspects of a King. No. He was in a lowly manger.) and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.” He wasn’t a great, fantastic, handsome individual that they were drawn to because of His physical attributes. No. Now verse 3, here comes the cross.

Isaiah 53:3

“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; for he was despised, and we esteemed
him not.” What does that mean? They didn’t know who He was. Well, they should have. He gave them three years of proof, but they couldn’t believe it. Now verse 4.

Isaiah 53:4
“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: (What does that mean? He was the sacrifice—not only for the whole Nation of Israel, but for the whole human race.) yet we did esteem him stricken, (beaten and misused by the Romans) smitten of God, and afflicted.” Of course, that was the work of the cross—where all the sin of the world was laid on that sinless One.

Isaiah 53:5
“But he was wounded for our transgressions, (Sin. He became the Supreme Sacrifice.) he was bruised for our iniquities: (He went through it all for the sins first of Israel, of course, but then for the whole human race.) the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes (That is the stripes of the Roman whips.) we are healed.”

Now that’s not talking about physical healing. That’s talking about the spiritual. We’re dealing with the salvation aspect of that work of the cross. Now verse 6—this is Israel.

Isaiah 53:6a
“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way;…” In other words, they just couldn’t come together and recognize who this Messiah, born in Bethlehem, growing up in Nazareth, and now performing miracles for the last three years. They just couldn’t figure out who He was. So, now reading verse 6 to the end.

Isaiah 53:6b-7
“…and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7. He was oppressed, (This is all a reference to that work of the cross.) and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb (or quiet), so he openeth not his mouth.” Now as we read this, of course we can understand. It’s after the fact.

But can you see how much the Jews of antiquity could get out of this? There was no putting two and two together here. But yet after the fact they should be able to see it. And that’s usually the vehicle that does bring a Jew to faith. They can then see that, yes, this all took place. Absolutely it did! But for those back there at that time, no, they could not figure it out.
Isaiah 53:8
“He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off (He was put to death.) out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.” Now remember, in Old Testament economy who were God’s ‘My people’? Israel. Who is Isaiah writing to? Israel.

But on the other hand, God didn’t expect them to understand who this was before the fact. And that’s why even the followers of Jesus, as it was nearing the time for the cross, didn’t understand that He was going to be going the way of the cross.

All right, now then, back to I Peter. I’m not through there yet and verse 11 again.

I Peter 1:11a
“Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ,…” Back there in Isaiah 53 the Holy Spirit was already laying the seeds of this coming work of the cross. But God didn’t expect the Jews of that time to understand it, even though they tried. Now verse 12 and then we’ll move on.

I Peter 1:12
“Unto whom it was revealed, (That is unto these writers of the Old Testament prophecies.) that not unto themselves, but unto us (Peter is now writing from his point in time. Now, after the cross had been accomplished and everyone should understand who He was and why He died the death that He did.) but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them who have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.”

Well, now that was a reference, of course, to Pentecost. All right, now while we’re back here at Peter, anyway; we’re going to jump over to chapter 3. I always use this when my accusers say I’m making too much of Paul. And all I say is, “Well, haven’t you ever read II Peter 3:15 and 16?” Well, then that shuts them up, because here is the very answer to that accusation. II Peter chapter 3:15 and 16 come to my defense.

If someone says, “I won’t listen to that guy, he makes too much of Paul.” Well, you be ready. If you think he makes too much of Paul, then Peter did worse. They will never take anything like that and blame Peter, if that’s the one they think they’re
following. But look what Peter says, now, at the end of his life, just shortly before he is martyred.

_II Peter 3:15a_

“Account that the longsuffering (the patience) of our Lord is salvation; (God is not willing that any should perish. Now look at it.) even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given him…” What wisdom is he talking about? These secrets that have been revealed. This whole body of truth that was never understood before, that comes from the pen of this hated Apostle. So Peter has to even tell his Jewish people that, look, you go to Paul’s epistles, because our program is falling away.

And indeed it was. The Jewish program was falling through the cracks. And by the time Peter meets his martyr’s death, nothing is left. The Temple would be gone in a couple of years. The priesthood would be gone. No more sacrifices. No more Temple worship. So, what have they got left? Paul’s Gospel. So you go to Paul.

_II Peter 3:15b-16a_

“…according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 16. As also in all his epistles, (Romans through Philemon) speaking in them of these things; (pertaining to Salvation) in which (that is Paul’s epistles) are some things hard to be understood,…”

Now most of you have heard this a hundred times. But for some of you out there this is the first time. Paul’s epistles, in Peter’s thinking at the end of his life, were still hard for Peter to understand. Now you’ve got to remember, what was Peter? A religious Jew under the Law.

And I always point that out when I teach Acts chapter 10. My, when that sheet came down with all those unclean animals and God said, “Rise, Peter, kill and eat.” Even into the face of God, what did Peter say? “No way! I have never eaten anything common or unclean.” Well, why did he say that? He was a law-keeping Jew.

And against all good Jewish sense he goes. There were heel prints in the sand from Joppa to Caesarea. And when he gets to the door, what does he tell Cornelius? “Cornelius, even you as a pagan Gentile know this much; it’s an unlawful thing for me a Jew to keep company with a person of another nation.”
You see that? That was contrary to the Jewish makeup. They didn’t have any marching orders to go the Gentile world. That was Paul’s prerogative. But yet Peter says here that all of Paul’s epistles are for even the Jewish people, not just the Gentiles now—such as a pagan Gentile can be saved without becoming a proselyte of Judaism. That was unheard of and hard for a Jew to comprehend.

Even when God saved those Gentiles in the house of Cornelius before Peter even finished preaching and the evidence of it was made known? Those six Jews who went up to Cornelius’ house with Peter—what was their reaction? What’s the word? Astonished! They were astonished. Gentiles saved without becoming a proselyte? You get that? And that just shows the vast distinction from the time of Christ’s earthly ministry until the Apostle Paul starts going to the Gentile world.

**II Peter 3:16b**

“...in all of his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they who are unlearned (I’m afraid that’s most of Christendom.) and unstable wrest (Or twist, and they twist and they twist.) as they do also the other scriptures, (Now that statement right there maintains that if all the rest of the Bible is Scripture, so are Paul’s epistles. And then they ridicule it, and they hate it?) unto their own (What?) destruction.” The Book says it, I didn’t.

All right, now let’s go back to Ephesians chapter 3 verse 4.

**Ephesians 3:4**

“Whereby, when ye read, (That is these Pauline Epistles.) ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery (or the secret things) of Christ.” Oh, wait a minute, Paul. After all the Old Testament and after His three years of earthly ministry, there are things that were kept secret? How could it? Well, let me just give you one example that I think is the most graphic.

Turn over to Colossians chapter 1, another portion many of you have heard me teach more than once. But, oh, if this isn’t a revelation of this Jesus of Nazareth like no other portion in Scripture, I don’t know what is. Colossians chapter 1 and we have to start at verse 12 so that we establish who we are talking about. And as we read this and as I comment on it, just keep asking yourself—is this revealed anyplace else in Scripture? Does Genesis 1:1 say anything like this? Now you all know what Genesis 1:1 says. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Period. But now look how the details are laid out in front of us.

**Colossians 1:12-13**
“Giving thanks (the end of His prayer) unto the Father, who hath made us meet (and prepared us) to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: (See, we’ve covered that in the last half hour.) 13. Who (speaking of God the Father) hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:” Now that goes back to what we taught a year or two ago—that the Body of Christ is in the Kingdom of God.

Colossians 1:14-15a

“In whom (The Son in the verse ahead. So, in the Son--) we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: (Past, present and future. Now here it comes. Here is what I call a revelation of a mystery that only comes from the pen of this Apostle.) 15. Who (God the Son) is the image (or the visible appearance) of (What God?) the invisible God,…”

Now you’ve got to remember that when you go back into the Old Testament, God was the invisible three-person God. Even though Israel only recognized one God, yet we know that the three were already mentioned and so forth. For example, the Spirit moved upon the face of the deep in Genesis 1. But to understand that one person of that Godhead did what Paul now gives Christ credit for doing? Huh uh, you can’t find it anywhere.

Jesus Himself never made any descriptive account of how He created everything. He certainly let it be known that He was in control of the elements. He could get up on the Sea of Galilee in the midst of a raging storm and how much did He have to do? Spoke the Words “peace be still.” The wind died down, the sea got calm, and the Twelve said what? “What manner of man is this that even the wind obeys His voice?” Well, why did the wind obey Him? We’ll come back to this in the next half hour. Because He’s the God of creation, that’s why.
Okay, here we go. Let’s just jump right in where we left off. That would be in Colossians chapter 1. We’re looking at the second one up there. The Mystery of Christ—the very secret of who He really is.

Now again, as I said in the last program, you go back to Genesis chapter 1 verse 1 and it is God who in the beginning created Heaven and earth. But how much of God do you get out of that? And Christ in His earthly ministry, I guess that’s where I closed wasn’t it? How that the God-Man, the Incarnate, could speak the Word and the winds would obey His voice. He could raise the dead and all those other things, and yet it wasn’t the complete picture of who He really is. And that’s what I want to unveil under this secret, or the Mystery of Christ as Paul reveals it.

All right, so we almost have to go back like we did last time and start over, at least over in verse 13, because I’ve got to establish who we’re talking about. So, God the Father, up in verse 13:

**Colossians 1:13-14**

“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: (Now we know definitely who we’re talking about.) 14. In whom (That is in the Son.) we have redemption through his blood, (So there’s no doubt that we’re talking about Jesus of Nazareth—the crucified, resurrected, ascended Lord—who also gave us then--) even the forgiveness of sin:”

Now here’s the part I want to reveal. A revelation of Christ like you’ve never seen anywhere else in Scripture. This Jesus of Nazareth, who has finished the work of the cross, has ascended back to Glory and revealed these things to this Apostle.

**Colossians 1:15a**

“When is the image of the invisible God,…” Now think about that for a minute. The invisible God? Well, of course, God was Spirit. When the Scripture says “no man has looked on God at any time and lived,” what was it talking about? Not Jesus in His body of flesh. It was talking about that invisible Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. But they were invisible. They were Spirit. No man has ever looked in on that invisible Godhead and lived. They wouldn’t have.
All right, so now we’re bringing it down to the fact that this Jesus, God the Son, the One who suffered and died, is the visible manifestation of that invisible God. Do you see that? Now, it’s never been this plain anywhere else in Scripture.

In fact, you know I’ve said it before. People to whom I have taught these things to for the first time would look at me aghast. You mean Jesus of Nazareth was the Creator God of Genesis 1? Well, of course He was! People just can’t fathom that, but He was! He spoke the Word and the universe came about. Jesus of Nazareth? Jesus of Nazareth. That’s what we’re talking about. Now with that in mind, let’s read on.

Colossians 1:15-16a
“Who (the Son) is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature: (In other words, He was before anything that was ever created, and here’s why.) 16. For by him (As the Creator of everything, as God the Son, as Jesus of Nazareth—I’ve got to keep coming back, so we don’t lose what we’re talking about.) were all things created, (Everything!) that are in heaven,…”

What’s in Heaven? The angelic hosts and all the beauty of it. The Sea of Glass as it’s pictured in one place and all the other ramifications. He’s the Creator of it all. He was before anything.

Colossians 1:16b
“...and things that are in the earth, (Everything! Every living creature, every bug, every fish, everything was created by Jesus of Nazareth.) visible (Well, that’s a little easier to understand, but the next part?) and invisible,…” Even things that we can’t see. Yet we know from scientific experiments and other ways, we know they are there. If no other way, we know it from Scripture. And we take it by faith.

Colossians 1:16c
“...whether they be thrones, (Wow! Now what are we talking about? Governments. Empires. Kings. How do they get there? By God the Son. Oh, listen, this is something exciting.) or dominions, or principalities, (Now some Bible scholars will bring that into the satanic realm of the demons and Satan himself, which of course is true. Satan is a created being.) principalities, and powers: (And now it’s repeated, so there’s no doubt.) all things (Everything that you can imagine was created by God the Son.) were created by him, and for him:”
Now granted, the other two persons were there. We’re not going to leave God the Father and God the Spirit out of creation. But it’s by virtue of the spoken word from God the Son that everything appeared, whatever it is.

**Colossians 1:16d-17a**

“…*all things were created by him, and for him:* (Now look at the next verse.) 17. *And he is before all things,…*” See, that goes back to His pre-eternal existence. He’s always been.

I think I mentioned at the last taping. Have you ever tried to lay awake a few moments at night and look at the ceiling and stop and figure out where God came from? Have you? Yes, I think we all have. How in the world—how did God ever come to be? We don’t know, but we know He’s always been. And that’s beyond us. Eternity is beyond us. We cannot comprehend eternity. It’s utterly impossible, so we take it by faith.

Now read on. The last half is what I really want to hit home on.

**Colossians 1:17b**

“…*and by him* (by Jesus the Christ) *all things consist.*” What does that mean? Are held together! The universe and all its orbits and all the stars.

The sun never burns out. That always gets to me. How does that sun keep generating without ever losing its energy? Mind-boggling. How did it get there? By the spoken word of this person of the Godhead, God the Son. And not only would He create it, but He’s keeping it all running smoothly. And if He should ever give the word to destroy it, puff, it’ll go. But He is the controlling element of everything.

**Colossians 1:18a**

“*And he is the head of the body, the church:*…” Now there again, you hardly ever hear that. Christendom in general never refers to the Body of Christ. They like to talk about the Kingdom. “Oh, we’ve got to work for the Kingdom,” is their cry. Well, that’s okay as far as it goes, but that’s not what we’re involved in. We’re involved in the Body of Christ! And that’s why there’s so much confusion. Christendom cannot get it through its corporate head that the Body of Christ is something intrinsically revealed from, again, this Apostle. It is nowhere else.

I’ve put it out there for 30 years. If you can find any direct reference to the Body of Christ any place but Paul’s epistles, show me. Nobody has done it yet. It’s not in
there. It is a Pauline revelation of things kept secret—that this compilation of born from above believers becomes a part of an intrinsic living organism that we call the Body of Christ, of which Christ is the Head. And just like the human body, everything starts with the thinking mechanism up here. That’s why Christ is the Head. All right, so let the Scripture say it for itself.

**Colossians 1:18a-19**

“And he (This same Jesus the Christ, the Son of God—the Jesus of Nazareth who walked the dusty roads of Israel.) is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, (He comes from eternity past.) the firstborn from the dead; (There again, He’s the first to have ever been dead and resurrected back to life never to die again.) that in all things (in everything) he might have the preeminence. 19. For it pleased the Father (See, now we bring Him in.) that in him (God the Son) should all fullness dwell;”

Now that’s the Christ that has never been revealed anywhere else in Scripture like Paul does. But just to make sure that Paul isn’t out in left field, let’s go back to John’s Gospel a moment. John says just enough to confirm what we’re doing here in Colossians, yet he doesn’t give the details. You can’t construct that much out of what John writes. Chapter 1 verse 1. Most of you know the verse. Then we’ll drop down to verse 14 for further consummation.

**John 1:1-3**

“In the beginning was the Word, (Whenever that was. The Word is capitalized which means a member of the Deity.) and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2. The same was in the beginning with God. 3. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.” Now that’s just confirmation. Now, just to make sure that we understand who we’re talking about, you take verse 14.

**John 1:14**

“And the Word (God the Son again) was made flesh, (Is incarnate, became the God-Man.) and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of the grace and truth.” So we know definitely who we’re talking about.

All right, now I’ve got one more that I usually like to add. This is Hebrews chapter 1 and verse 1.

**Hebrews 1:1-2a**
“God, (That’s the Triune God—God the Son, God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit.) who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2. (The same God) Hath in these last days (In other words, Christ’s First Advent is the last days of Scripture. This same God--) spoken unto us by his Son,…” Plain as English can make it.

Hebrews 1:2

“Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, (Like we just saw back up here in Colossians.) by whom also he (God’s Son) (What?) made the worlds;” That’s creation.

Here we have a revelation of Christ in a way that we’ve never seen before until Paul reveals Him as the Creator of everything. Of course, with the other two Persons of the Godhead in consort with Him. But you see, to God the Son is given the credit for all of Creation. Never lose that.

Now, why do I make such a big deal of that? If Christ was anything less than what I have just pictured Him, could He have taken the sin of the whole world? No. This is what we have to realize—that when He became sin, and all the wrath and chastisement of God was laid upon Him, had He been one iota less than what we have just shown Him to be, He couldn’t have handled it. He couldn’t have done it. But He did. So we can rest assured that our salvation is not by virtue of some myth or some story, but that the Creator, God Himself, took upon Himself my sin and yours. And we take it by faith. And we’re going to spend all eternity in His presence.

You know, I used the illustration, I think, quite a few years ago now. It was probably after the Pope had been to several places. Not the present one, but the one before. He traveled a lot. And he had been some place in the Middle East, if I remember right. I think it was Syria. They estimated that a million people were out there in the perimeter just to get a glimpse of the Pope.

Well, goodness sakes, if that man is worthy of that much adoration, how much more should this One have? And we’re going to be in His presence for all eternity. The One who could speak the Word and a universe would come into play. And He’s going to know you and me by name. We’re going to be like we’ve been in His presence all our lives, and don’t lose that. This is what the Scripture is trying to show us – who He really is.
And then, of course, not only did God’s wrath fall there at the cross of Calvary, but the other side of God, His mercy. All the mercy of Heaven was poured out there for us to appropriate. Well, I could go on and on, on just this one mystery alone, but we’ve got several others. I’m not going to get them done today. I’m not even going to try. Let’s drop down to number three on the board—the Mystery of the Body of Christ.

I think you can stay right here in Colossians chapter 1 verse 25. Let’s start at verse 24. This, again, is something that has never ever been hinted at in all of Scripture except in Paul’s epistles. This is why people are so mixed up today.

I mentioned it in our last taping and in the last program or so that was produced before this one. Most of Christendom totally ignores all of this. They put all their attention on Christ’s earthly ministry and His Sermon on the Mount. Well, that’s all well and good. We’re not taking anything from His Deity and all of His Holiness and everything in His earthly ministry. But listen, beloved, that’s not where God really showed His mercy and Grace and provision. But rather, it was the cross! It was that shed blood that paid the price of our redemption. It was the power of His resurrection that made God able to impute eternal life. And most of Christendom totally ignores that.

The Sermon on the Mount may be a high, moral standard, but you know what? How many of us can keep it? It’s impossible. It’s utterly impossible. And it won’t become a reality until Christ returns and sets up His Kingdom. Yes, then the Sermon on the Mount will become an everyday experience. But see, Christendom is missing the point. And here it is. These revelations of this Body of Truth that Paul calls the Revelation of the Mystery, but it’s mysteries—seven or eight of them.

All right, my time is on double time today, isn’t it? I no more than get started than that clock is run down. Colossians, once again, chapter 1 verse 24, speaking of himself up in verse 23.

*Colossians 1:23b-24a*

“...I Paul am made a minister; 24. Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh...” Now he’s not talking about Christ’s suffering here. He’s talking about his own. Now again, for a quick review for the benefit of new listeners, turn back to II Corinthians chapter 11. Again, how could anybody shun this man’s service for God? How could anybody take anything away from his apostolic authority when he has suffered as an ordinary human?
Not as the God-Man Jesus did, and we know He suffered. But this man suffers in the flesh just like you and me. He was not in some super-human body. All right, II Corinthiansians chapter 11, many of you have seen me do this before, verse 22. The whole purpose was the Corinthians had a hard time giving him his due. Oh, they would look up to Apollos, or they would look up to Peter. They could look up to others, but this man? Who are you? Now he defends it with this Holy Spirit inspired—I’ve got to keep repeating.

Now I read again last night. Some great theologian made the—I’ve got to be careful how I use this, don’t I? Iris says I use too strong a language once in a while. But here this guy with all of his degrees and education was wondering how Luke kept track of all of these details in his Gospel and in the Book of Acts. And he made some statement like this, “He must have been a great record keeper or diarist—,” I think is the word he used. “He must have been a great diarist to keep track of all these statements that people had made in order to write his Gospel.” Wait a minute, how could he do it? He didn’t have to go back and say, well, now wait a minute, what happened here, and then write. What does the Scripture say? How? “By the Holy Spirit.”

Oh, I know what the other one was. It came to mind. He couldn’t figure out how in the world Moses could talk about his own death in Genesis. You got a problem with that? Where’s your inspiration? Did God know the details of Moses’ death before he died? Well, I reckon. He knew it from eternity past. Again, Moses didn’t have to stop and say, “Well, I wonder how I’m going to die? I wonder who I can delegate to write about this after I’m gone.” No. Moses wrote and wrote and wrote and wrote and out came the record of his death and his burial, everything, by inspiration. Don’t ever forget that. Every word of this Book is Holy Spirit inspired.

And when Paul writes something like this—that’s why I’m doing it. Paul writes not to elevate his own ego, he is writing as the Holy Spirit moved him to write. All right, now look what he says in verse 22.

*II Corinthians 11:22-23a*

“Are they (comparing the Twelve in Jerusalem with Paul) Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. 23. Are they ministers of Christ? (Now see, he even realizes that this is a strong statement. So he puts in an apology, still Holy Spirit inspired, but yet from the human.) (I speak as a fool) I am more;…”
Yes, but now look at the reason. He’s more the minister of Christ than James and Peter and John and the rest of them, and here’s why.

II Corinthians 12:23b
“...in labors more abundant, (He labored day and night for about twenty five or six years.) in stripes (beatings) above measure, in prisons (Plural. In more than one place he was cast into prison for one length of time or another.) more frequent, in deaths often.” Plural. What does that mean? He was next door to leaving planet earth more than once. But God always kept on bringing him back.

II Corinthians 12:24
“Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes less one.” Or the thirty-nine—so they’d make sure they didn’t go over forty. Can you imagine what that man’s torso looked like? It must have been solid scar tissue. Five times over that period of 20-some years receiving 39 lashes.

II Corinthians 12:25a
“Thrice was I beaten with rods, (Now, you know what the rods were like—a bamboo cane.) once was I stoned,...” And of course that was up there in central Turkey, in Derby and Lystra. They dragged him out of the city like a dead horse literally. Dragged him out by the feet thinking he was dead.

II Corinthians 11:25b-26a
“...Thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day (24 hours) I have been in the deep; 26. In journeyings often, (He never spent any time at home. He didn’t have a home that I know of.) in perils of waters, in perils of robbers,...” As he would be walking those dusty roads, especially across central Turkey and down the Aegean Sea coast of Greece.

II Corinthians 11:26b
“...in perils by mine own countrymen, (The Jews) in perils by the heathen, (That’d be the Romans.) in perils in the city, (Antioch, Athens, some of the other cities of the Middle-East) in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren.” That’s almost the worst, you know. When those that claimed to be followers, but they would stab him in the back.

II Corinthians 11:27-28
“In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. 28. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.” Okay, back to our
text. Oh my goodness, we’ve only got 40 seconds left. We’ll start here the next program. Okay, back to Colossians for just a few seconds. Verse 24 again, that’s why we were looking at his sufferings. This is what he’s talking about.

*Colossians 1:24a*

“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you,...” And Colossi was what? Gentile. And so this Apostle of the Gentiles suffered for 20-some years so that you and I could sit here and be the recipients of this glorious Gospel of Grace. So that you and I have everything we need for our daily walk.
Okay, now we’re all back for program number four this afternoon. Again, for those of you on television, we want to thank you and praise you for your letters. We couldn’t do it without your financial help and your prayers.

Okay, we’d better get right back into the Book where we left off in the last program. We were in Colossians chapter 1 and verse 24. We had to digress and remind people of what Paul was talking about when he spoke of being afflicted for the Body’s sake, which is the Church.

Again I’m going to repeat it, repeat it, and repeat it. Only Paul uses the term “The Body of Christ.” You’ll never find it anywhere else in Scripture. And consequently, the Body of Christ is a result of these mysteries that were revealed to this Apostle after the Lord commissioned him on the Damascus Road experience.

Always be aware of this when people start arguing about things that are in the four Gospels compared to what Paul says. That only Paul deals with things that pertain to us. Now, I’ll just give you an example. You cannot find anywhere else in Scripture that we’re saved by faith and faith alone in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Only Paul shares that with us!

You cannot find it until you get to Paul. And a lot of other things like we’ve just been talking about, how that Christ was the very Creator of everything. Well, you won’t find that anywhere else in Scripture, as we saw here in Colossians in our last program. All right, so let’s come back, if you will, to Paul’s revelation of this mystery concerning the Body of Christ. Verse 24 again:

Colossians 1:24-25a

“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, (Now remember who he’s talking to. Gentile believers in Western Turkey in the little city of Colossi just to the northeast of Ephesus.) and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh (That’s why we went back to II Corinthians in our last program, to show how he suffered throughout his whole 20-some years of ministry over and over and over.) for his body’s sake, which is the church: 25 Whereof I am made a minister,...”
Now again, I like to qualify and define words. What does he mean by a minister? Well, he was the sent one. That’s basically what an apostle meant. He was a divinely sent individual that God was going to use for His own distinct purposes and in this case amongst the Gentiles.

Now let me by sake of comparison, Scripture with Scripture, come back with me to Romans chapter 15. We find the same word used in relation with Christ Himself, but a totally different ministry. Romans chapter 15 verse 8—here’s another verse that most of Christendom doesn’t want to touch with a ten-foot pole because of what it says.

**Romans 15:8a**
“*Now I say that Jesus Christ was (past tense) a minister* (See, there’s the word, a sent one.) *of the circumcision…*” Who’s the Circumcision? Israel. So Jesus Christ was a sent one. A minister not for the whole human race, per se; but He came unto His own and His own received Him not. Now Paul is just rehearsing the very same fact that Jesus Christ was a minister of the Circumcision and the Circumcision plus no one else.

**Romans 15:8b**
“…Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God,…” It wasn’t something that Paul dreamed up. This is the way God ordained it. That coming out of the Old Testament promises and prophecies concerning Israel, they were to have a Messiah, a Redeemer, a King, and a Kingdom. He was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. Now continuing on:

**Romans 15:8c**
“…for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:” Well basically, what where those promises? I’ve already mentioned them—a coming Messiah, a Redeemer, a King, and a Kingdom. But Israel rejected it. They crucified Him. And, of course, as Romans 11 teaches so explicitly, through their rejection they brought the plan of salvation to us of the Gentile world.

All right, but now come back to Colossians. We see that Paul is a minister of a whole different sort and with different criteria. He is not a minister of Israel. He is a minister of the Gentiles in particular. Of course we’re not going to leave the Jewish people out of this. Now verse 25.

**Colossians 1:25a**
“Wherefore I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God (Which in other places is called the Dispensation of Grace, remember, so it’s the same dispensation.) which is given to me for you,…”

All right, now I know we just did this a couple of programs back. But keep your hand in Colossians, and turn back to Ephesians 3. We’ve got to keep comparing Scripture with Scripture so that we know what he’s talking about. Now back to Ephesians 3 verse 2 and compare that with what he just says in Colossians. In Colossians he calls it “the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you Gentiles.” Here he says:

Ephesians 3:2
“If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God (The same thing, but two different terminologies.) which is given to me to you-ward.” And then Christendom keeps turning their back on this man when he alone was given the marching orders for this Age of Grace. They can’t get it. They just can’t get it.

That’s why I put the statement from Louis Sperry Chafer on the program a while back. He said the same thing. That what a difference between what Christ and the Twelve and John the Baptist preached for Israel compared to what Paul preaches to the Gentile world. The Twelve knew nothing of Paul’s Gospel of the Grace of God. All they understood was who He was and that He had come to fulfill the Old Testament promises. Paul doesn’t refer to the Old Testament promises. He’s talking about a whole new ballgame for us. We’re not looking for an earthly kingdom. We’re looking for what? Heavenly! What a difference.

But you see, God is still going to have to pick up again with Israel after He’s finished with this Body of Christ and takes it out of the way. We’ll look at that in the next taping session. But today in the Body of Christ we’re not looking for an earthly kingdom and a king like Israel was and still is. We’re looking for that which pertains to the heavenlies—something totally different.

Now let’s get back to Colossians chapter 1 verse 25, finishing the verse. This “dispensation of God which is given to me for you.” That is for you Gentiles. Remember now, he’s writing to Colossian believers, but it was for the whole Gentile Body of Christ. And what’s the end result?

Colossians 1:25b
“…to fulfill (or bring to fruition, or bring to completion, to bring to a finish) the Word of God.” In other words, the New Testament would finally be complete.
Now that brings up another thought, and people don’t stop to think about it. For how many years did these early believers of the Apostle Paul go with no Pauline instructions in the printed page? A long time. He probably began his ministry about 40. I say about because I can’t be real dogmatic. But he began his ministry up in Tarsus and then down to Antioch about A.D. 40. Well, my heavens, when did he write his first epistle? In the 50’s. So you’ve got at least 15 or more years that those early believers did not have these kinds of instructions. So, how do you suppose they got it? Verbally!

All right, come back to I Corinthians chapter 14. Most people, I don’t think, even get an inkling of what he’s talking about. I Corinthians 14 verse 1:

I Corinthians 14:1
“Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, (plural) but rather that ye may prophesy.” Now think a minute. Out of all the spiritual gifts that the Corinthians were concerned about, which one was to be paramount above everything else? Well, the gift of prophesying.

But now here’s the kicker. When you think of prophesying, what does the normal individual think of? Telling the future like Isaiah and Old Testament Prophets. No, this word prophesying means speaking forth. Just simply speaking forth the Word of God. So, what’s Paul implying here? The most important gift that a believer could have in those days before they had the written Scripture was the God-given gift to preach the Word. That’s all they had, gifted men, until the Scripture came in.

I guess I should have stayed and gone back to I Corinthians 13. It’s been a long time since we taught Corinthians, except I guess the daily programs will be getting it pretty soon. But in chapter 13 (between 12 and 14, the chapters on gifts) verse 8—now maybe this will give you a little free information to go home with today, and for those of you on television to share with your neighbors. Now maybe this verse will make sense.

I Corinthians 13:8
“Charity (or love) never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, (Speaking forth. Not telling the future. But where there be men gifted in speaking forth the Word--) they shall fail; (They’re going to disappear.) and whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.” Why? Because it would be coming in the written page. Now they’ll no
longer need gifted men coming in from time to time, they’ll have the Scriptures in their hands. And that’s what we’re talking about.

That’s what Paul means back here in Colossians 1:25. Come back with me to where he said this dispensation of God was given to him to fulfill, or finish, the Word of God. After Paul’s epistles, that completed everything. Now we still haven’t gotten to the crux of the mystery, have we? Now verse 26:

*Colossians 1:26a*

“*Even the mystery…*” That is all wrapped up in this dispensation of the Grace of God. This whole series of things that had never been revealed before, all these mysteries now compose the doctrines of the Grace Age believer.

Now, all the rest of Scripture is certainly the Word of God. Don’t ever take that away. Don’t ever accuse me of saying that only Paul is the Word of God. No. But you do not get doctrine for Christian living back in the Old Testament. You do not get the plan of salvation in the Old Testament and really not in the four gospels. All of it is background. It’s all showing us how God has unfolded the plan of the ages and showing us His sovereignty. But when it comes to the nitty-gritty of our everyday belief system, you stay between Romans and Philemon and you won’t go astray. Now, that’s all as clear as I can make it. Now verse 26:

*Colossians 1:26a*

“*Even the mystery which hath been* (What’s the next word?) *hid from ages and from generations,…*” Now think a minute. How did we start this afternoon?

*Deuteronomy 29:29a*

“The secret things (the hidden things) *belong to the Lord our God…”* And they stay there until He is ready to reveal them. And then here it comes.

Now let me show you a good example. We haven’t done this one for a long time. Go back to Luke chapter 18. A beautiful illustration of how God can keep things to Himself even though He spoke it. Luke 18:31 and we’re at the very end of His three years of ministry. They’re up in northern Israel, and they’re going to be heading down south, up to Jerusalem for the Passover and the Crucifixion.

*Luke 18:31*

“*Then 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.”* All the prophecies concerning His death, burial,
and resurrection that we looked at earlier in Isaiah 53. We could have looked at Psalms 22 and some others. They’re all going to be fulfilled. Now verse 32 and don’t forget—who’s He speaking to? The Twelve. They’re right out there in front of Him.

**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 (the Romans) shall scourge him, and put him to death (the crucifixion): and the third day he shall rise again.”

Did it happen? Every last bit of it! How did He know all that? He was God! But now look at the next verse. Here are these twelve, ordinary, healthy men, with no hearing problems that we know of.

**Luke 18:34**

“And they (the Twelve) understood none of these things: and this saying (What I just read from the lips of the Lord Jesus. Was what?) was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.” In other words, they didn’t head down to Jerusalem talking between themselves, “Now look, the Lord is going to be arrested by the Romans. The Lord is going to be put to death by the Romans, but on the third day He’s going to rise.” Did that happen? No. They didn’t have a clue that anything was going to happen to Him. Why? God blinded them from it. He stopped their ears. He kept it hidden.

Now, if you don’t believe me, just stop and think. If they would have known what He said, and if they would have heard it, where would they have been early that Sunday morning? Outside the tomb waiting for things to happen. Were they? Oh, they were long gone. It was all over. They’d forgotten all about a promise of a King and a Kingdom already. He’s dead. He’s gone. But see what the Scripture says? That’s what it means when God hides things from mankind. And that’s His prerogative.

Now come back again to Colossians. This whole concept of this Body of Christ called out of the predominately Gentile world—people saved by nothing more than believing that Christ died for them, shed His blood, was buried, and rose from the dead was kept secret. And they have become members of the Body and Christ. He’s the Head! And the Body of Christ is a living organism. We are in a union with Christ. We are part of a living organism.
But this whole concept had been totally hidden until it was revealed to this person and no one else. That’s why Peter, back there that we read early this afternoon, told his readers to go to Paul because of the wisdom given unto him. Peter didn’t understand all this. He couldn’t. God didn’t expect him to. Don’t ever lose sight of this. I almost get tired of repeating it, but I have to, because people can’t get it. They just can’t get it that this Body of Christ is something so insulated from all the prophecies and promises given to Israel that nothing can penetrate it out of the Old Testament promises.

Now the reason I get so exercised is because people can’t see the difference. I don’t get any hate mail, per say. I haven’t had over two or three letters in fifteen years that I would call a hateful letter. But I do get letters questioning my “whatever,” mostly because they cannot see the difference between Christ’s earthly ministry and Paul. It’s all one jumbled-up mess for most people. And then I get exercised. Why can’t you see it when the Scripture so clearly separates it all? Why do you want to keep mixing it?

I told Iris that I thought of a good illustration. She’ll probably think I’m nuts for sharing it with the whole crowd. But I was thinking about a good illustration. Now I know I’m dated. Some of you probably don’t even know what I’m going to talk about. But do you remember when the old quart milk bottle was delivered to the door? Before they dreamed up pasteurizing and homogenizing, we bought raw milk. After twelve hours in that bottle, what happened to that milk? The cream came to the top. And I told Iris that must have been why they formed the bottle the way they did, because the neck would be cream and down below was that pale blue skimmed milk. All right, the only reason I’m using that for an illustration is you have a dividing line between the skim milk below and the cream on top. Now, what do you have to do to mix it? Just tip it upside down.

Now, am I making my point? This is what they’re doing between the Gospel of the Kingdom for Israel—which was mainly faith in His name, and the Gospel of Grace for us today—which is faith in that finished work of the cross! Here it is so clearly separated. For us today our direction is UP!! Heavenly!! Which direction is the rest of it? Israel’s promises and the Gospel of the Kingdom promises have always been Earthly.

I thought it was a good illustration. I don’t think Iris thought so. But all you have to do to mix it is just turn it upside down a time or two and it loses its identity and once again it’s back. And that’s where Christendom is. They just constantly keep it
all amalgamated, when God has so perfectly separated it. Have I made my point? I hope so. All right, come back to Colossians.

Colossians 1:26-27

“Even the mystery (this secret) which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: (Or put into the spotlight where there is no doubt about what we are talking about.) 27. To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; (And what is the secret?) which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:” That’s something that is never alluded to anywhere else in Scripture. The Creator Himself indwelling you and me? Are you getting the point? What a revelation!

And again, most of Christendom just ignores it. They don’t bring this out. You don’t see this in Sunday school. You don’t hear this on Sunday morning. But what a revelation that here we have the Creator God, not only purchasing our salvation, not only doing everything that needed to be done on our behalf, then He comes in and above everything else He becomes part of us and we’re part of Him. Oh, what a glorious Salvation! “Christ in you, the hope of Glory!”

It’s not just for this world, as down here we’re just passing through. The Glory is awaiting us! And we can’t even begin to describe it. That’s why I think the Scripture is silent. There is not one word in here telling us what Heaven’s going to be like. All the descriptions of Heaven are the earthly Kingdom to Israel. They’re not ours. That’s why Paul was not permitted to share what he had seen in II Corinthians 12:1-9. We couldn’t handle it. But the Glory that’s awaiting us, beloved, is beyond human understanding. So don’t ever feel that you’re selling yourself short by coming apart from the world and living a life that is pleasing in God’s sight, because our Glory is ahead of us. It’s still coming!

Colossians 1:28a

“Whom we (Paul) preach, (See, Paul doesn’t preach Paul. Paul only knows one Gospel, and that is Christ crucified, buried, and risen from the dead!) warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom;…” Now, like we talked early this afternoon, not the wisdom of the intellectual community, but the wisdom of God, the knowledge of God.

Colossians 1:28b-29
“...that we may present every man perfect (mature) in Christ Jesus. 29. Whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.”

All of this had been kept secret all the way up through the Old Testament, the four Gospels, and Christ’s earthly ministry. Not a word about going to the Gentile world. Remember, Jesus only dealt with two Gentiles, and they were special dispensations of His compassion. One was the Roman Centurion and the other was the Canaanite woman. Otherwise, it was all Jewish, because all of the Old Testament promises were to Israel, not to us. **But, oh, after His death, burial, and resurrection, out comes this Body of Truth we call the Dispensation of the Grace of God—our hope of Glory!**
Now let’s get started on these next four lessons which will complete book 76. For those of you out in television, we just want to welcome you to an informal Bible study. I guess you’ve heard that often enough. I’m going to address a few things that keep coming over the phone, and that is **do not** – please – **do not apologize**, you folks out in television, for not being able to give a large offering. We appreciate your prayers as much as any cash that you could possibly give. So don’t apologize if you’re not in a position to give a lot, and always remember, it’s the widow’s mite that the Lord recognized. So that’s the first thing.

I had to write a few of these things down, because I’ve been forgetting them. Again, we want to thank you for your letters. They continue to be such an encouragement to us. My, when we realize what the Lord is doing. In fact, we’ve got folks visiting us from Indiana. Where are you? And Brenda said last night as we were sharing some of these letters, “This is what we like to hear, as this tells us that our money we give to the ministry is accomplishing things.” You bet it is.

In fact, I had a conversation yesterday with a couple of Jehovah Witnesses. The lady has already come out of that cult and her husband’s on the fence. I had a nice conversation with him, and he’s studying the situation. So we’re reaching a lot of people from various backgrounds that are beginning to see the truth of these “Pauline Mysteries.”

Now the other one is our prison ministry. We haven’t mentioned that as often as I suppose we should. For you fellows that are watching the program in prison. If you would like our transcribed books, we send them out free to any prison inmate that asks for them. We send them out three at a time starting with number 1. So we’ve got a lot of these older fellows in prison who are already up to books 40, 50, and 60. If any of you out there are interested, just drop us a note and we’ll get that in the mail to you.

Another one is the newsletter. We have a quarterly newsletter that we send out free. If you’re not getting it and would like to, just call the girls and give them your name and address and our newsletter will come. And I always emphasize there’s no begging for money in our newsletter. I won’t ask for money on the program. I won’t ask for it in the newsletter. It’ll be strictly some tidbits of Scripture and our itinerary and so forth.
The other question that comes in so often is: Can I copy your material? Absolutely! Anybody can copy anything they want—off the Internet, from the books, or from the tapes. Because again, we’re not in this for the money. We want to get the Word out. So, if some of you out there want to make copies, you go right ahead and copy. All we ask is that you don’t sell it for a profit. That’s the purpose for it being copywrited. We have to be protected on that. But other than that, if it’s for the Lord’s service, then you go ahead and copy all you want.

I think that’s enough of that. Let’s get back into our mysteries as we see them listed on the board. We’ve covered the Mystery of God’s Will, the Mystery of Christ, and the Mystery of the Body of Christ. We’re having a question here in the studio of whether we’ve actually done the Mystery of God in Colossians. I think we did, but if not, we may have to get it later. But for right now, I’m going to jump in at the Mystery of Godliness. That is in I Timothy chapter 3 verse 16.

Now, while you’re looking that up, I’m going to remind you again of our rule of thumb for Bible study. And what is it? Who wrote it? Well, it’s the Apostle Paul. Who was he writing to? His young son in the faith, Timothy. It’s a letter that is preparing Timothy for picking up the mantle, as it were, if Paul leaves before the Lord comes. And I’m of the impression that all of these early men of God connected to Paul and the Body of Christ were of the impression that the out-calling or Rapture of the church, which we think is getting close, would come in their lifetime. Now, not everybody is going to agree with that. But they certainly didn’t think it was going to be 2,000 years. That I know for sure.

So anyway, Paul is writing to Timothy in preparation of his taking over his roll as the Apostle of the Gentiles, or whatever. So what he writes here, I think, makes all difference in the world if you understand those circumstances. But let’s come in at verse 14 of I Timothy chapter 3.

*I Timothy 3:14-15a*

“These things I write unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: 15. But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God,....” Well, let’s just stop and show you what I’m talking about. Come back to Ephesians a moment, because we have to find these things out from Scripture. Otherwise, it’s just the words of another human being. Come back to Ephesians chapter 1. And again, let’s jump in a few verses ahead of what I want, verse 20.
Ephesians 1:20-21
“Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenlies, 21. Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:” In other words, to establish again who Christ really is. Now verse 22:

Ephesians 1:22-23a
“And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head (not the King, but the head) over all things to the church, 23. Which is his body,…"

But listen, there are all kinds of churches listed in Scripture. And in my experience last week, that’s what I tried to do – the word church comes from the Greek word ecclesia. Always. Well, good heavens, when Stephen writes in Acts chapter 7 about the church in the wilderness, he wasn’t talking about a New Testament church. He was talking about Israel having been called out of Egypt and assembled around Mount Sinai. But it was called an ecclesia by the translators.

Well, you have several of those things. But you always have to differentiate which church Scripture is talking about. And most can’t handle that. No, no, no, no, no, no. I can still hear it. But this is what we’re talking about.

Ephesians 1:23
“...(the church) Which is his body, (and it’s) the fullness (or the complement) of him that filleth all in all.” I’m going to make the point later today, and I’ll make it again next taping and maybe the next one, and that is that this “Body of Christ Church” is never ever alluded to or hinted at or spoken of anywhere else in your Bible except Paul’s epistles. You cannot find it. It’s not addressed anywhere. These things make all the difference in the world. Now if you’d come back to I Timothy with me a minute to chapter 3 verse 16.

I Timothy 3:16
“And without controversy great is the mystery (There’s that word—great is the secret--) of godliness: (And here it is. This is the secret.) God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, (Beginning
with Paul’s apostleship) **believed on in the world,** (As a result of the preaching of the Gospel.) **received up into glory.**” Of course, He’s at the Father’s right hand.

But, you see, all of these things were still in an untold mode until it comes out in this Apostle’s epistles. That’s why he’s always referring to these things as mysteries or secrets. And again, you know the verse in Deuteronomy 29:29. I hope most of my television audience already knows it. “**The secret things belong unto the Lord our God.**” Why? He’s Sovereign. He can do what He wants. And if He doesn’t want the human race to know something, He doesn’t have to tell us. But the verse goes on to say, “**the things that are revealed belong to us…**”

Well, it’s the same situation that I use in Romans chapter 10, that “**faith cometh by hearing, and hearing cometh by the Word of God.**” And I’m always asking the question. Can you believe something that God hasn’t said? No way! So we have to wait until God says it as a revelation from the ascended Lord of Glory before we can believe it. And that, again, is what people can’t comprehend. And that’s why Paul is constantly referring to all these mysteries. These were all doctrinal truths that were never addressed anywhere else in Scripture. God kept them secret for His own purposes. And that’s why there’s so much confusion. That’s why there is “blenderizing” all the time. So, let’s look back at verse 16 again.

**I Timothy 3:16a**

“**And without controversy** (without any room for argument) **great is the mystery** (this revealed secret now) **of godliness:**…” Not according to Israel’s law. Not according to being forced to do things in response to their religion. But under this whole system of Grace, it becomes an automatic. And this Lord Jesus who has made all this possible:

**I Timothy 3:16b**

“…**God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels,** (Of course He was) **preached unto the Gentiles,**…” Now, let me just make a point here again. Come back to Ephesians again to chapter 3 verse 1. Just for an example, so that you know where we’re coming from.

**Ephesians 3:1a**

“**For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ** (Now again, you’ve got to ask yourself, well, where is he writing? Well, in prison in Rome. And he’s writing to Gentiles. This is why he can say by the inspiration of the Spirit--)** I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles.” See how specific this is. Now come back again to I Timothy chapter 3
I Timothy 3:16c
“…received up into glory.” Well, what’s that a reference to? His ascension. But before He ascended, He was seen of not only the Twelve, but of 500 others. And then Paul says, last of all He was seen of me also. Then, of course, He went on up into Glory to take that position at the right hand of the Father.

All right, now I think there’s another Scripture that we can refer to in this same light. That would be in Titus chapter 2, and drop down to verse 11. Here it’s still from the pen of the Apostle Paul writing, again, to one of his other associates who I think he refers to in one of his passages as “fellow apostles and prophets.”

Titus 2:11-12a
“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath (past tense) appeared unto all men. (In other words, it wasn’t just confined to the few. And here it is in the next verse. This is what the Grace of God coming through the Word of God is now doing for you and me as Gentiles. It’s--) 12. Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, (or desires) we should live soberly, (in other words not frivolous) righteously, (In other words, we are always attaining to do that which is right before God as well as before men.) and godly,…”

Now that’s a small “g.” That means the very opposite of living according to the god of this world. We live according to the dictates and the teachings of the Word of God.

Titus 2:12b
“…in this present world;” See, as we live from day to day—Monday through Saturday—not just on Sunday morning. For most people, that’s the only hour they practice their faith. But it’s a seven day a week responsibility. And then at the same time, while we’re living and walking the Christian life, what are we also to be doing?

Titus 2:13
“Looking for that blessed hope, (As we’re going to see later this afternoon, which so many in the world today are scornfully ridiculing. But for you and I who believe, it’s the blessed hope. Don’t you ever forget it.) and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;” That’s the Rapture and not the Second Coming at the end of the Tribulation. This is the appearing for the Body of Christ before the Tribulation starts. Paul is constantly associated with. “The glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.”
Now all of that, I think, is what Paul made reference to when he wrote in I Timothy about the Mystery of Godliness. It is the fact that believers can live a godly lifestyle. It’s not impossible. Now for Israel under the Law, it was just about an impossibility. But now again, let me just use Scripture as an example of how believers are to walk in this Age of Grace. I think it fits perfectly with what he just said in Titus. Go back with me to Galatians chapter 5. I use this several times a week in my phone calls or letters to the listening audience. Galatians chapter 5, let’s start at verse 16.

**Galatians 5:16**

“This I say then, (Now remember, Paul is writing to Gentile believers, not the Nation of Israel. He’s writing to us Gentile believers.) Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill (or give in to) the lust (or the desires) of the flesh.” See that?

**Galatians 5:17a**

“For the flesh (the Old Adam, the old nature, the lost world around us) lusteth (or warreth) against the Spirit (life), and the Spirit against the flesh:…” That is in the life of a believer. We have these two entities within us, the Old Adam and the new Spirit life; and they’re in a constant warfare.

**Galatians 5:17b**

“…and these are contrary the one to the other: (absolutely, as opposite as daylight from dark) so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”

Now, you’ve heard me use this before. That’s sort of like floating in a canoe on a swift flowing river. If you’re going to just float, which way do you go? Well, back. In order to make headway, you’re going to have to constantly put effort into the paddle to take that canoe upstream. That’s the Christian life. You can’t just sit back in your easy chair and say, well, I’m living the Christian life. No, you’re not! You’re being lazy. You’re inept, and you’re accomplishing nothing. We have to be out there going against the stream. Now verse 18:

**Galatians 5:18**

“But if ye be led of the Spirit, then ye are not under the law.” This is the mystery of godliness. You’ve got to remember, Israel didn’t have this, did they? Israel didn’t have the indwelling Holy Spirit to help them keep the Law. All they had was that heavy “thou shalt. Thou shalt not.” But see, we don’t have any of that. That’s been set aside, and in it’s place we have the indwelling Holy Spirit. So here it is. If you’re a believer and the indwelling Holy Spirit is now
leading you, you don’t need the Law. You don’t have to have the Law to tell you what’s right and what’s wrong.

Now then, in order to define it clearly so that there’s no doubt as to what you and I as believers should be avoiding, here they are. The works of the flesh. And it’s not pretty. You’ve heard me do this before. As we go through these things, ask yourself: would I like to live in a community that is based on this lifestyle? Is this where I would like to live? Well, let’s look at it.

**Galatians 5:19a**

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery,…” What brings in more pain and more heartache and more upheaval in the home than adultery? It never brings joy and happiness. We see it in the world all the time. Would you like to live in the midst of that? No way.

**Galatians 5:19c**

“…fornication,…” Well, that’s just the next step down from adultery. In fact, I had a lady write just the other day. She was shocked at Webster’s definition of fornication. She thought that that was just vile, vile, vile sexual acts. No, fornication, according to Webster is sexual relationships between any two people who are not husband and wife. That covers the whole gambit. Look at the world today. They’re wallowing in it.

**Galatians 5:19d-20a**

“…uncleanness, lasciviousness, (Now, that’s just another fancy word for constantly living in the gutter level.) 20. Idolatry,…” Now you go back into Israel’s history. Idolatry was actually compared to what? Adultery. Why? Because idolatry is spiritual adultery. I’ve got you thinking. I can tell by looking at you. How do I come to that conclusion?

Well you see, Israel had the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, right? Under the Law with all of its stipulations. Now then, when an Israelite would go and bow down to an idol, he was now entering into a spiritual relationship with somebody other than who he belonged to. And when you do that, what have you got? Adultery. So spiritual adultery is just as much an anathema to God as physical adultery. Always remember that. Idolatry is spiritual adultery. Boy, I taught you something today, didn’t I?

**Galatians 5:20b**
“…witchcraft,…” Now, we like to think in America we’re not plagued with that. Are you kidding? It’s popping up all over the country. On the east coast they tell me it’s just unbelievably the amount of young people that are getting involved in witchcraft.

In fact, Iris and I had a first-hand experience. We were taken into a women’s prison. Before we got there, one of the ladies that was going to take us in said, “Now remember, Les, we were talking about witchcraft last night out here, and you’re going to bump right into it when we get into this group of ladies.” Well, I know Iris and I both thought she was kind of stretching the envelope. But you know what? We hadn’t been in there five minutes (they had about twenty young ladies) and up came witchcraft. Unbelievable. And so there it is. And it’s one of the things of the flesh.

Galatians 5:20c
“…hatred,…” Hatred. What’s the opposite of hatred? Love. Would you like to live in a community where there’s no love ever expressed. That your neighbors hated you and you hated your neighbors. That would be a horrible lifestyle. But that’s the world. Next word:

Galatians 5:20d
“…emulations, variance, wrath, strife, (Never, never a calm minute—it’s always a community in uproar.) seditions, (Which is really a rebellion against governmental authority.) heresies,” Can’t believe a thing you hear.

Galatians 5:21
“Envyings, murders, (My, we’re seeing that, aren’t we?) drunkenness, (Which a lot of time leads to murder.) revellings, (Which leads to drunkenness.) and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” These people are not going to be there. And it may be good church members. They may think they’re okay. But if this is their lifestyle, then there’s no evidence that God has ever entered into their life. None whatsoever.

But now you go into verse 22. I guess we can finish the half hour. This is the other side of the coin. This is the life of the Spirit-indwelt believer. And he may not necessarily be the most spiritual, because that’s a process, you know. We don’t all get spiritual overnight. But for the believer, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, this is the result. The first word is what?
Galatians 5:22a
“But the fruit of the Spirit is love,...” Love—which is the very benchmark of all of true Christianity. It was the love of God that put Christ on the cross. It was the love of God that caused ol’ Saul of Tarsus to suffer for twenty-some years to get this glorious message of salvation into the Gentile world. Love is the key. You’ve heard that before. The next one is joy.

Galatians 5:22b
“...joy,...” My, what a difference between “joy” and “happiness.” Joy is that which Paul had in the dungeon. Miserable. His back probably still healing from beatings. Cold and wet. And yet what could Paul exclaim? “Rejoice.” They could sing hymns in the midst of it all.

Now happiness—that’s a shallow thing. Happiness is something when everything is going your way. The stock market is going up. Your health is good. Your bills are paid. You’re secure in your job. You’ve got a good wife. Got good kids. That all builds what? Happiness! But what does it take to dump it? Any little accident and happiness just goes out the window. But joy? Joy is eternal, beloved!

You know, that’s why I love mountains. I just love mountains, because they are so eternal. Well, that’s joy. That is an eternal result of our faith. Let’s get a couple more.

Galatians 5:22c
“...peace,...” Now when Paul speaks of peace, he speaks of two kinds of peace. The peace with God, which we experience the moment we are saved. And then we have the peace of God, which carries us in our daily life. That come what may, we have the peace of God that is carrying us through. All right, got to go a little quickly.

Galatians 5:22d-23a
“...longsuffering, (That gives us patience.) gentleness, (Sometimes I get prone to be tempted to lose that gentleness. But I pray constantly, Lord, keep me gentle, keep me kind.) goodness, faith, 23. Meekness, temperance:...” Now there’s a word that too many people confine merely to being temperate with your alcohol intake.

No, temperance is something that carries into every facet of life. How you raise your children — under a heavy hand of the whip, under the loose hand of permissiveness. Neither one are going to work. But when you are temperate, you
re what? You’re in a balance. In everything we are to be temperate. We maintain a balance, and we don’t go head over heels one way or the other.

*Galatians 5:23b*

“...against all these things (Paul says) there is no law.” There is nothing that would forbid any of these fruits of the Spirit to be functional in the life of the believer. All it takes is being submissive to the leading and the guiding of our precious Holy Spirit. And we do that, of course, through an attitude of prayer. Lord, give me wisdom, lead me, and direct me, day by day.
Okay, good to have you all back from your coffee break. For those of you joining us on television, I always have to remind folks that we are just an informal Bible study. Hopefully we teach the Word in a way that you can study it on your own and enjoy your Bible. Don’t just read it because you think you have to. Let it be a joyful experience.

Okay, we only have one book that we always continue to let people know is available. It’s our Question and Answer book. It covers a lot of things, and it’s had a lot of good response. A lot of people use them. People say it’s the best $11 they ever spent. They make wonderful gifts.

Okay, in our teaching of the mysteries, the studio audience has let me know that I not only skipped number 5, which we did in the last half hour, but I also skipped number 4! Somehow or other that didn’t come out in my bookkeeping. So, we’re going to pick up number 4 now. It doesn’t make any difference in the order they are taught. Turn with me to Colossians chapter 2, and we’ll spend a few moments, probably not as much as I would have had my thoughts been all in order, but Colossians chapter 2 verse 2. We’re going to start with verse 1.

**Colossians 2:1**

“For (Paul says) I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, (Which, of course, were two little cities, sister cities almost, right out there east of Ephesus in Turkey as we know it.) and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;”

In other words, Paul was not instrumental in starting these two little congregations. Colossi and Laodicea were evidently begun by converts from maybe Ephesus or some of his other churches. He had never been there to see them face-to-face. Now verse 2:

**Colossians 2:2-3**

“That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, (We’ve been stressing that.) and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement (or ready to accept the fact of this mystery) of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; 3. In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”
Now, I think all the apostle is doing here is reminding us again of the Triune God. In fact, you can just go a little further in this same chapter, go on down to verses 8 and 9. Because you see, these are things, as I said in the last taping, you do not find anywhere else in Scripture. It was left for this apostle to reveal these things that God had providentially kept secret.

And that’s why I just told a gentleman yesterday, a Jehovah’s Witness. The wife was only in it about nine years, so she had a better chance. But the husband had been in it since birth. After watching my program for not all that long, she saw the truth of all this and was genuinely saved and came out of it. But she wanted me to talk to her husband. She said he’s starting to look at it, but he’s been in it all his life. He is having such a hard time. Would you talk to him? Yes, gladly.

And he was a real nice gentleman. You know, a lot of times these people are abrasive, and they’re against you. But he was real open. So we talked a good long while—over half an hour. Finally, I left the conversation with him this way. I said, “Look, if for the next three or four weeks you will just read nothing in your Bible but the Book of Romans. And then for another week or two read the rest of Paul’s epistles on through Philemon. Then call me back, and we’ll just pick it up on the phone.” Well, fortunately, they’re in an area in Wisconsin where I’m going to be in August and September, so they promised that they would be coming to one of my seminars up there.

Now here’s where prayer comes in. You just pray that these people will get this full understanding of who God is.

Those of you who have been approached by Jehovah Witnesses at your door, or wherever, I think you’re all aware that they cannot accept the fact that Jesus Christ is God. He was something less than God. He was through an act of reproduction, somewhere along the line. But they can’t accept that He was part of the Godhead, and that’s what made me think of them. What Paul is talking about here as being the mystery of God is His Triune-ness, if I can put it that way. That He’s One God according to Deuteronomy. Absolutely, He’s One God. But He is still in Three Persons.

Now there’s no way we humans can understand that, because it’s into the realm of the Spirit. So, how do we take it? By faith. God says it. That settles it! Why question it? Like I tell more and more people when they come up with these things that are not definitely answered in Scripture, “Hey, if it doesn’t affect your salvation,
your eternal destiny, your Christian walk, your hope for the end here on this planet, wait until we get there! And then we’ll have all understanding.”

And I’m satisfied with that answer. Don’t try to find something that the Scripture doesn’t address. Wait until we get there, and we’re going to have full knowledge. But here is an item that Scripture does address—God is a God of Three Persons. Now down to verse 8, Paul writes to these Gentiles in Colossi and Laodicea.

**Colossians 2:8a**

“Beware (or be careful) lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit,...” Oh, now listen. If the Colossians needed this, we need it today a million times more; because the false stuff is coming in like a tsunami.

Listen, when a tsunami is coming, you’ve only got one way to go. And what is it? High ground! You’ve got to hightail it for high ground or you’re never going to make it. Well, that’s where we are with false teaching today. It’s just coming in like a tsunami, and all we can do is race for a place of safety. And what’s our place of safety? The Word of God. This is it.

**Colossians 2:8a**

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit (false teachings) after the tradition of men,...” Now, in all of this tsunami of false teaching that’s coming up lately, especially in the term the emergent church, I tell everybody to run from it like a tsunami.

Because even though it sounds good, it sounds valid, and reputable men are embracing it, that doesn’t change it. You run from it. Because what they’re trying to do is take us back to the early church fathers. That’s one of their premises. We’ve got to get back to the teachings of Origin and Justin Martyr and Chrysostom and Athanasius and some of the others. Listen, every one of them are heretics. Every one of them. And yet everybody has been resting on the church fathers for ever so long, and now they’re trying to kick us back to them.

I think I mentioned it one day last week. All it’s really amounting to is getting the world ready for the Tribulation One World Church where anything and everything is going to fit together. But Paul says, hey, you stand alone. Run from all this stuff.

**Colossians 2:8b**
“...after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” Now again, we have to remember as we saw in our last taping. You go back over here to chapter 1 and I could repeat it every week because it is so earthshaking. Come back with me right now to chapter 1 verse 15.

The pronoun “who” is referring to the “Redeemer” up in verse 14, who is the “Son” of verse 13, who is connected to the “Father” up in verse 12. But now into verse 15, here is “God the Son.” We covered it in detail in our last taping.

Colossians 1:15

“Who is the image (The visible manifestation of what kind of a God?) of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:” Why is He invisible? He’s Spirit. And no man has seen God at any time.

Now that throws a curve at people. Why not? Because until Christ became flesh, God was an invisible Spirit. Again, when the Scripture says, “no man hath seen God at any time and lived,” what were they talking about? That Triune Spirit Godhead. No one has ever seen that and lived. But once God the Son became visible, of course, that’s no longer an instruction, because we do see God in the person of God the Son. All right, that’s what Paul is addressing here.

Colossians 1:15

“Who (the Son) is the image (the visible manifestation) of the invisible God, (or the Spirit God.) the firstborn (Or, He comes before everything else that was ever created.) of every creature: 16. For by him (By God the Son, Jesus of Nazareth, what happened?) were all things created,...”

That’s why He could go to that cross and take the sin of the whole world—from Adam to the end. How else could it happen had He not been the Creator of everything Himself? Nobody else could do that. And that’s what we have to emphasize. When we believe in a work of the cross that took not only my sin but everybody else’s, how could He? He was the Creator. That’s what we have to understand, and that’s what Paul is revealing for the first time.

Now you ask the average Sunday school person. You ask the average church goers. I don’t care whether they are liberals or conservatives. “Who created the universe?” What’s their answer? God. Well, yes, that’s true. But what person of the Godhead? They don’t have a clue, because they’ve never read Paul.
I’m going to say some more about that before the afternoon is over. Well, I don’t know. I’m already in the second program, so I know I won’t get there. But anyway, they ignore this apostle’s letters. I’m always using the expression: they treat him like an unwanted stepchild. He’s there, but we don’t want anything to do with him. I can tell it in the articles I read and in the sermons I listen to. They just avoid this apostle, and he’s the one with all the answers.

I read, I think I referred to it in the last taping. You go back into church history starting with these early church fathers. Did they put any emphasis on Paul’s apostleship? Not a one of them. Where was all their emphasis? Christ’s earthly ministry. The Sermon on the Mount. And that’s as far as they ever get. Oh, it’s sad how the millions upon millions down through history have been totally deceived and mislead.

All right, now back to my text in Colossians chapter 2—the Mystery of God—how that we are not to be deceived by the rudiments of the world and not after Christ. He is the key of everything. And here’s why in verse 9. I love this verse.

Colossians 2:9
“For in him (not the Father, not the Spirit, but the Son) dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” Well, what’s the Godhead referring to? The Trinity. The Triune-ness.

Now, I am beginning to shy away from the word Trinity, because it’s not in Scripture. Did you know that? The word Trinity is not in our Bible, as such. But the Triune—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—that’s the Godhead. And Jesus Christ is the manifestation of that Triune God bodily. We’re going to see Him someday. He’s in a body, and He will be for all eternity.

I always put it this way. He condescended to limit Himself to that body for the sake of the salvation of the human race. Otherwise, He wouldn’t have had to. He could have just as well stayed an invisible Spirit. He went eons and eons and eons of time that way as far as we know. But for the benefit of saving the human race, He confined Himself to that body in which He will dwell for all the rest of eternity, if I understand Scripture. Now verse 10:

Colossians 2:10-11a
“And ye (as a believer, you and I as believers) are complete in him, (In other words, when we place our faith in that work of the cross plus nothing, do we need anything more? No! That’s all we need. It’s complete.) and he is the head of all
principality and power: 11. In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands,…” Not a physical circumcision, a spiritual.

Well, you all know by now, you’ve been studying with me long enough. Circumcision is a cutting off of that which was superfluous. So, in the Spirit realm, what’s superfluous? The Old Adam. We don’t need him. He’s superfluous. He’s worthless. So he’s been cut off by an act of God, not by an act of a human being. That’s the “circumcision made without hands.”

Colossians 2:11b-12a
“…in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: (the Old Adam) 12. Buried with him in baptism,…” Not water, but Holy Spirit.

Now we’ve got to chase another verse, don’t we? I Corinthians chapter 12, we’ve got to cover everything with Scripture. I Corinthians chapter 12 verse 13, now this is the baptism that Paul refers to. Romans chapter 6 and here in Colossians chapter 2 and in other Scriptures, whenever he speaks of baptism, this is what he’s talking about.

I Corinthians 12:13a
“For by one Spirit (the Holy Spirit) we are all (Every last believer has experienced this baptism. There’s no denominational connection whatsoever. This is a thing between the believer and God Himself.) we are all baptized (or placed or positioned) into one (What?) body,…” The Body of Christ.

No church can do that. No denomination can do that. Only God can do that. Every believer becomes a member of this Body of Christ by virtue of the Holy Spirit placing us into that Body. Now back to Colossians chapter 2 once again.

Colossians 2:12
“Buried with him in baptism, (that Holy Spirit baptism) wherein also ye are risen with him (It’s the power of the Holy Spirit that brings us out of deadness into life.) through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” See, there are certain elements of Paul’s epistles that just keep popping up and popping up. Three of them are faith, hope, and charity. They just keep popping up all through Scripture. The other one is the death, burial, and resurrection. It just keeps coming to the top over and over. Why? Because they are paramount to our position in Christ. Now verse 13.

Colossians 2:13
“And you, being dead (in our pre-salvation existence) in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, (We hadn’t been cut off from Old Adam, he still controlled us. That’s all in our past.) hath he (God, up in verse 12) quickened (or made you alive) together with him, (That is with Christ, who also now has been raised from the dead. But here’s the best part of all.) having forgiven you (already) all trespasses.”

And that’s not license by any stretch. It’s something that should sober our thinking. That Christ has done that much on our behalf without our lifting a finger. Yes, the moment we believe it, He considers our whole sin problem forgiven and in the past. It’s done and never to be brought before us again. Now then, you come on into the next verse. I wasn’t planning to do this. Can’t help it. You’ve just got to keep going.

Colossians 2:14a
“Blotting out…” Why? Because we’ve placed our faith in that finished work of the cross. We’ve been forgiven. We’ve been given the power of the Holy Spirit. Now these are things we have to understand. Don’t be plagued by these things from the past. Don’t let somebody try to teach you something that was taught to Israel in the four Gospels and say, “Well, you’ve got to do this.” Oh, no I don’t, because I’m under a whole new program. And what is it?

Colossians 2:14b
“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us,…” Now I like to think of the 613 rules and regulations that came out of the Ten Commandments and Judaism. Six hundred and thirteen rules! And it was all nailed to His cross!

Colossians 2:14c
“…which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;” What does it do when you crucify? You put it to death. So, all these rules and regulations were put to death. Now verse 15:

Colossians 2:15
“And having spoiled (or defeated) principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” When we speak of principalities and powers in Scriptures, whose power are we usually referring to? The satanic. All the satanic principalities and powers are utterly destroyed so far as we are concerned. They are defeated. Now reading on in verse 16.

Colossians 2:16
“Let no man therefore judge you” (Or point an accusing finger at you because you aren’t keeping such and such a rule, or because you aren’t keeping such and such a law. Hey, that’s all been crucified to me. I’m set free from it. So don’t let anybody judge you.) in food, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days.” Do you see how plain this is? Why? That was all nailed to His cross! We’re free from it.

And look at the millions of people that are still laboring under a Saturday Sabbath. That if they don’t keep it, they’re going to Hell. Well, they are, whether they keep it or not, because they’re not putting their faith in this finished work of the cross. Oh, it’s so sad that they’re under that legalism. They’re afraid to break out from it. And if they don’t, then they are doomed. They’re not going to make it.

So, don’t let anybody judge you as a believer in what you eat or what you drink or in respect of holy days. Going back to Judaism, or the new moon; which, again, was part of Judaism—when the first little sliver of the New Moon showed, that set the next month in motion. And the same way with the Sabbath Day, they’re all a thing of the past. We have no Sabbath Day, per se. Now verse 17, what did it all amount to?

Colossians 2:17
“Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.” It was a shadow of things to come. Now, I come back to one of my favorite illustrations. You already know what it is, don’t you? The big, old, beautiful tree.

The tree with the sunlight shining behind it. What lays out on the ground? The shadow. And you remember the old fellow came along and wanted to buy that beautiful tree to make furniture and the guy says, no, I won’t sell you the tree, but I will sell you the shadow. How much furniture can you make with a shadow? Well, none. How much salvation can you get keeping the Law of Moses which was a shadow? None. Get the picture? Oh, it’s all so obvious. That was all part of the “looking forward.” But it has no validity for us today. All these things were a shadow of things to come.

Well, let’s see. I wanted to make one more comment yet before we go away from this mystery. Come back with me to Ephesians chapter 5. Remember our subject for this half hour is the Mystery of God. Who is He? What is He? Well, He’s a Three Person Godhead operating as One. And here we have two of them in Ephesians chapter 5 verse 20. It’s also an instruction for prayer. How do we pray? Well, here it is.
Ephesians 5:20
“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” There’s the formula for prayer. You approach God the Father however you want to do it. If you want to start out like the Lord’s Prayer, Our Father which is in Heaven, that’s absolutely legitimate. But somehow or other, you address the Father. You’re going to ask and pray everything in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, in the minute we have left, let’s go back to Romans chapter 8. This is where we pick up so explicitly the Third Person of this Triune God, the Holy Spirit. You remember when we were teaching Romans, we pointed out that in those first seven chapters the Holy Spirit was hardly ever alluded to. That’s why Paul had the problems that he had in chapter 7. But then you get into chapter 8 and the Holy Spirit just breaks out all over the place, just like blossoms in the springtime. Every place you look in Romans chapter 8 you’ve got a reference to the Holy Spirit. All right, start right out in verse 1.

Romans 8:1
“There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the (What?) Spirit.” The Holy Spirit. All right, now just come on down. We’ll do this quickly—verse 11.

Romans 8:11
“But if the Spirit (the Holy Spirit) of him that raised up Jesus from the dead (resurrection again—and if that Spirit--) dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken (or make alive) your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” And then you come over to verses 14 down through 17. Again, it’s the operation of that Third Person of the Trinity.

Romans 8:14
“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, (See that?) they are the children of God.”

Romans 8:16
“The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are (What?) the children of God.” See the world of the Holy Spirit? It’s everywhere. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
LESSON THREE * PART III
BOOK 3 of CONNECTING THE DOTS
Genesis – Revelation (The Mysteries Continued)

My, we’re glad to see everybody back from your coffee break. We’ll go into the third program this afternoon. We are in book 76, for those of you out in television. We’re in the final four programs of that book. Right, Jerry? And hopefully we can get through the next two mysteries in these next two programs. That will put everything concerning these mysteries in book 76. That would work well, wouldn’t it?

Okay, those of you in television, we’re asking you to turn with us to Romans chapter 11. The studio audience is already waiting. We’re going to drop down into verse 25. We’re looking at the sixth mystery up here on the board, which is “the Blinding of the Nation of Israel to Spiritual Truth.” Now these things are hard to comprehend. I know they are. I’ll comment on it in a little bit. Romans chapter 11 verse 25.

Romans 11:25
“For I would not, brethren, (So, he’s writing to believers, as I’m always emphasizing. Paul never writes to the unbelieving world.) that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (or secret) lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; (Now here’s the mystery.) that blindness (spiritual blindness) in part (For a period of time. Not from here until eternity, but for a period of time blindness--) has happened to Israel, (And it’s going to remain--) until (That’s the time word.) the fullness (or the completion) of the Gentiles be come in.”

Now when Paul speaks of the “fullness of the Gentiles,” I have to feel he’s talking about one thing and one thing alone, and that is the Body of Christ. So, as we get closer and closer to the end of the Church Age, and the Body of Christ is nearly full, we have Israel back in the land where she has to be. Maybe a lot more will have to come yet, but whatever.

Israel has to be a sovereign entity, which they are. They’ve already come back from many, many of the nations of the world, but, they’re still in spiritual blindness. But, you know, that’s been Israel’s problem from day one. The people have been so prone to unbelief. It’s always been that small remnant that remains true to a faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
Now, just to show you how all of this comes about from way back in the Old Testament, I’ve got to go back to I Kings. Way back in the books of history. I Kings chapter 19 and, of course, God is speaking here. He says:

*I Kings 19:18*

“Yet I have left me (Or, I have kept to Myself.) seven thousand in Israel, all the knees who have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.” You think it would be the other way around. Maybe 7,000 fell into idolatry. But it wasn’t. Out of the whole 7 or 8 million that I usually put on the number of Israel’s population down through their antiquity, only 7,000 were faithful to Abraham’s God.

Today the Jewish population is somewhere around 15 million. But only 7,000 at the time of Elijah were faithful? You’ve heard me refer to this one over and over. That boiled down to about 1/10 of 1% of Israel who were remaining loyal to the God of Abraham. The rest had succumbed to idolatry. Of all people!

Now here’s where I think I’d better make my comment before I go any further. You’ve heard me say it with regard to the beginning of the human experience when God set the whole system of humanity on planet earth in motion back there in Genesis. He gave mankind a free will. Right? God did not use them like puppets on a string.

Yet here we are 6,000 years later. Is God’s schedule still on time? Absolutely! To the last jot and tittle after 6,000 years of human history of men’s free will—to declare war, sign peace, and do all of these horrible things. Yet everything is exactly where God programmed it. Which tells you what? He’s in control of everything! Which makes you ask the next question. Then why all the misery? Well, that’s hard to answer, isn’t it? Why, if God is in such total control, has He let the human race bring in so much misery and discomfort and heartache if He could have programmed it differently?

Well, I can’t answer that. You can’t answer that. It’s just one of the unique things of Scripture that God in His Sovereignty has permitted all of these things. I don’t think He directed it, per se, but He’s permitted it. Look at the suffering in the world today in this enlightened age with all of our technology. There’s more death and murder and sorrow than any other time in history. Well, why? Because it’s the way God programmed it.
All right, now with the Nation of Israel, it’s the same way. God miraculously brought Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees and miraculously brought him into faith. Miraculously gave him all the promises, following it up with the others, Isaac and Jacob and then those that followed. And in spite of all the promises and all the evidences that Israel’s God was the Eternal Creator God, yet what happened to the Nation spiritually for the most part? They departed by going into idolatry and rebellion.

God would discipline them, and they’d go out, like into the Babylonian Captivity for 70 years. How many of them came back to the homeland when Cyrus came up and said, all right, Israel, you can go back to Jerusalem. How many took the offer? Again, out of 7 or 8 million people, forty-four thousand or something like that. That’s all. Just a little handful comparatively.

Was that according to God’s design? Yes. Absolutely! That’s the way He designed it. These things just boggle the mind. That’s why we’ve got to come away from all of this thinking and trying to figure it out. Just take it by faith, what we can understand. Like I said in the last half hour. If the Bible doesn’t definitively give you your answers, wait until we get there! We’re going to be able to ask a lot of questions, if we have to. I don’t think we’ll have to. I think we’re going to have full understanding and knowledge.

But anyway, isn’t it amazing that this chosen Nation, this favored Nation, would, all the way through its history, only give a small remnant of obedient Jews or Israelites, whatever you want to call them, to God’s service.

All right, let’s move to the next one in Isaiah chapter 1 verse 9. This is a verse that we’ve used over and over through the years. And again, it just says the same thing. It’s just so hard to believe. Why, when these people were so favored. And because of their unbelief, they became almost what we would think the unfavorable. Do you remember ever watching Fiddler on the Roof? What did the old boy, the main character, what did he say? “Well, if we’re the favored nation, I wish He’d choose someone else for a while.” Well, I can understand why they would. Why would God treat us the way He treats us? Well, because of their disobedience and their unbelief!

Isaiah 1:9

“All except (or unless) the LORD of hosts (There again Paul would define that. Who is it? Well, it’s God the Son in His Old Testament operation.) had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like
unto Gomorrah.” And that would mean what? Destroyed. But what kept God from destroying the Nation? That small percentage of faithful He has always had. The rest turned their back on Jehovah and went into abject idolatry.

We can take the next ones now from Ezra and Nehemiah. Go back a few pages, back into the history again. Ezra and Nehemiah, these are the two that led that small contingent of Israelites back from their Babylonian captivity. Go to Ezra first, chapter 3 and drop down to verse 64. All got it? Ezra chapter 2 verse 64. Now, you’ve got to remember that up there in chapter 1—maybe we’d better look at that first. Keep your hand in chapter 3. Let’s go back to chapter 1 first—Ezra chapter 1 verse 1. They’ve been out in captivity for 70 years. According to today’s news, you should know where that is. That’s in the area of present day Baghdad.

**Ezra 1:1-3**

“Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia (Iran), that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, (Now this is what his proclamation said.) 2. Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; (Cyrus was the absolute monarch.) and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem.” Fair enough?

They were all free to go. He wasn’t holding a one of them back. All right, now come back where we were looking in chapter 2. How many bought into it? It’s in chapter 2 and verse 64. Out of those several million Jews (Israelites) who had been taken captive, and Cyrus had given them full permission to go back to Jerusalem and reestablish everything. How many buy into it? Here it is.

**Ezra 2:64**

“The whole congregation together was 42,360.” Isn’t that something? Why? What was the matter with the rest of them? They had no interest in what God had for them. They had no interest in rebuilding a Temple. They had no interest in seeing Jerusalem become once again the capital of the Nation. Why? Because they had become so materialistic.

What had they been doing? Oh, they’ve become bankers. They’ve become businessmen. They’ve been migrating throughout the then-known world. That’s
why wherever Paul went years later, every place he went, what did he find? Synagogues of the Jews. But they had no real spiritual life or interest.

Now you can come into Nehemiah. He’s the next one some years later. Come down to Nehemiah chapter 8. He’s coming back to rebuild the city walls and the housing in order to make Jerusalem once again. All right, just to give you a little inkling, Ezra chapter 8 verse 35.

**Ezra 8:35a**

“Also the children of those that had been carried away, which were come out of the captivity, offered burnt-offerings unto the God of Israel, twelve bullocks for all Israel,…” Now, some of you may be wondering why I am emphasizing this. Well, most of Christendom has bought into this false idea that the ten tribes of Israel to the North disappeared into the captivities of the Syrians and so forth, and that really the only people of Israel that were left after all this were the two tribes in the South—Judah and Benjamin. That’s one of the biggest lies ever perpetrated on the Christian church.

Those ten tribes weren’t lost. Most of them had already migrated down into Judah before they were taken captive by the Syrians. And now here is the scriptural proof of it. That these **twelve bullocks**—in other words, one for each one of the twelve tribes. Now this is at the end of the seven years captivity and the beginning of the reestablishment of the Nation of Israel in its homeland.

**Ezra 8:35b**

“…twelve bullocks for all Israel, ninety and six rams, seventy and seven lambs,…” All I want to make out of that is the proof that Israel was not just two tribes, but all twelve are now represented.

All right, let’s take a quick jump, because I’d kind of like to wind this up in this half hour and it’s going so fast. So jump all the way up to chapter 13. And again, we’ve touched on this before, but it doesn’t hurt to repeat. We’ve got Paul and Barnabas starting their first missionary journey. After they left Antioch, they sailed those few miles west and stopped on the island of Cyprus. And as they went to the western end of Cyprus, they came to the city of Paphos, which is still there. Now come to verse 6, we’ll do this quickly.

**Acts 13:6-7**

“And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus: 7. Who was with
the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, who was a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.” Now, what have you got? You’ve got a Gentile who is calling for the Apostle of the Gentiles (Romans 11:13). He wants to hear the Word of God from this Apostle. All right, but this Jew is going to intervene now in verse 8.

Acts 13:8-10
“But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, (In other words, held them back from approaching Sergius Paulus.) seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. 9. Then Saul, (who is also called Paul,) filled with the Holy Spirit, set his eyes on him, 10. And said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, (Boy, that’s strong language, isn’t it?) thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease (or stop) to pervert the right ways of the Lord?”

In other words, preventing this Gentile from hearing the Gentile plan of salvation from the Apostle of the Gentiles. Now verse 11:

Acts 13:11
“And now, behold, (Paul says to this sorcerer, this Jew) the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, (Physically. The rest of your life? No.) not seeing the sun for a season….” What’s the picture? That’s Israel’s role. They have been the opposing force against God’s dealing with the Gentile world from day one.

In fact, come back with me to chapter 17. This is the Apostle’s second journey. He’s up there along the Aegean Coast of Greece, north of Athens. Look at the opposition that he’s getting from proclaiming the Gospel to Gentiles. Verse 5:

Acts 17:5
“But the Jews (See?) who believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city in an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.” They had to escape for their lives practically from Thessalonica. Now come on down to verse 12. This is while they’re in Berea now, just south of Thessalonica.

Acts 17:12-13
“Therefore many of them believed; also of honorable women who were Greeks, and of men, not a few. 13. But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that
the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, (That is
down to Berea.) and stirred up the people.” To do what? To reject Paul’s
message. They have been spiritually blinded in order to make opposition to the
promulgation of the Gospel through the Apostle Paul to the Gentiles.

Well, now we can move back to Luke. Luke chapter 2 and, again, this is some 400
years after they had come back from the Babylonian Captivity. That’s a long
time. The Nation of Israel has now been pretty well established again—under
the Roman Empire, of course. The city of Jerusalem is thriving. The Temple has
been renovated by King Herod. It’s time for the Messiah to arrive in His first advent.

Now, is the whole nation waiting and ready for this event? No, just a little
smattering. I’m just going to point out a few of them. Luke chapter 2 verse 8 and
down into those next few verses you have the response of the shepherds to the
announcement of the birth of Christ. They knew what they were looking for.

Luke 2:8-11
“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch
over their flock by night. 9. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and
the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.
10. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings
of great joy, which shall be to all people. 11. For unto you is born this day in the
city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” All right, now the shepherds
responded. They didn’t reject that announcement. Now come on down to verse 25.

Luke 2:25a
“And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; the same
man was just and devout,…” So, we have that little remnant of believers even at the
time of Christ’s first advent—but only a remnant. And you can just go through and
pick out. Go down to verse 36. We have another one. This time it’s Anna.

Luke 2:36a
“And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of
Aser: she was of great age, and had lived with her husband seven years…” Verse
38.

Luke 2:38
“And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of
him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.” So, it’s just a smattering
of these Jews who were still aware of the promises of the Old Testament. And then,
of course, we come to the ones that are most well known—Joseph and Mary, Zacharias and Elizabeth—the parents of John the Baptist.

All right, let’s jump all the way up again to the Book of Acts, if you will. Acts chapter 1 and, again, we’ve touched on all these things before. This is just good review. The response of the Jews of Jesus’ earthly ministry—was there a great percentage? No. Just a few, comparatively.

Now, don’t let all those crowds that gathered around when He performed the miracles of the loaves and the fishes and all that confuse you. You’ve heard me say what that was. That was the free lunch. They had no interest in spiritual things but to fill their belly? Oh, absolutely. It’s no different today.

All right, in Acts chapter 1 verse 15 and this is a shocking number. After three years of signs and wonders and miracles, how many did even the Lord Jesus Himself gather, at least in the area of Jerusalem? Well, here it is in verse 15 of Acts 1.

**Acts 1:15**

“And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, (That is these believers who had become followers of Jesus of Nazareth.) and said, (the number of the names together were about (How many?) an hundred and twenty.)” That’s nothing. That’s nothing compared to the whole. But that’s been Israel’s response all the way through.

Now we’re going to come all the way up to Acts 28:28. Coming all the way up to the end of Paul’s ministry. He is now being taken prisoner to Rome. He has met with the Jewish leaders of Rome, and they’ve rejected him out of hand. And as they leave, verse 21:

**Acts 28:21-22**

“And they said unto him, (As they leave, they said unto Paul--) We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came showed or spake any harm of thee. 22. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against.” Then verse 24.

**Acts 28:24**

“And some believed the things that were spoken, and some believed not.” Now come on down to verse 28.
Acts 28:28
“Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it.” What has happened to Israel? They are losing their opportunity.

Now, when you get into Romans chapter 11, we have the concluding answer to Israel’s dilemma until the Church is gone. Then, of course, God will come back and still deal with them. But here it is—verse 7 of Romans 11.

Romans 11:7
“What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it and the rest were (What?) blinded.”

And it’s so true. My, it is so hard to get a Jew to see these things. Some do, but it’s always been that small, small percentage.
Okay, good to see you all back for program number four this afternoon. For those of you joining us on television, we trust you understand that—I think I’d better explain really quickly that these once-a-week programs as you see them on the air are current. Of course, you all realize that. Then you watch me on Monday through Friday and all of a sudden I’m fifteen years younger! Well, it’s just because those are reruns. But a year from now I’m going to be pretty close, so I’ll look just as old on those reruns as I do on the weekend. That’s the format. The weekend programs are weekly, and the daily programs are reruns.

All right, we’re going to go to the next mystery. And I wish I had two half hour programs. But since this is going to end Book 76, some of it may have to go on into Book 77. But I’m going to try and sandwich it in as quickly as I can. Okay, I Corinthians chapter 15 verse 51. This is another one of the mysteries that was revealed to the Apostle Paul that had never ever been hinted at.

Now I’ve got to emphasize that. Because nearly everybody tries to blenderize the Scriptures and say that—for example in Matthew 24:41—the two women working at the mill, where one will be taken and the other one left is the Rapture. Another one is John 14 where God says, “I will go and prepare a place for you.” Many say that’s the Rapture. No, it couldn’t be! Because then God would be betraying the secret. God doesn’t work that way. God does not lie. If those examples were the Rapture, then Paul wasn’t shown a mystery or secret as God says he was!

All right, now here is the secret that has never been revealed before. And whenever I get letters of opposition, and it’s getting worse and worse; not just for me, but for everybody that is proclaiming this end time event, the Rapture. It’s coming under attack more and more. In fact, I mentioned last week at the prophecy conference. In 1998 Tim Lahaye wrote a book Rapture Under Attack. Well, now it is 10 years later and it has just been compounded.

It’s no longer a kind letter that says, “Well, Les, I just can’t agree.” Now they attack and say, “Where do you get such a dumb idea?” And a lot of them like to refer to this Margaret McDonald. Oh, the minute I see that—and for you out in television, if you’re going to write to me on the Rapture, don’t mention Margaret McDonald. Because when you do, your letter goes straight in the trash can. And I don’t mind
telling people that. I got one just the other day and the first thing I saw – Margaret McDonald – I didn’t even read it. Waste basket time!

Do you know who Margaret McDonald was? No. Most people don’t unless you’re in my position. But I first ran into it, I’m going to say at least 20 years ago in one of the five cities where I go and teach. And it happened because many of the people in this one particular large church were in my weeknight class. And the pastor got wind of the fact that I was teaching the Rapture. Well, the next Sunday he puts out hundreds and hundreds of copies of where this idea of the Rapture began. And how it went back to the middle 1800’s at the time of John Darby that there was this teenage girl who was running on less than a full tank mentally and she had a vision. And in this vision she saw the Bible opened up dispensationally and the Rapture. She took it, supposedly, to John Darby, and John Darby just jumped on it.

Now listen. John Darby was one of the top theologians of his time—middle 1800’s. He had already published his own Bible translation. I’ve got a copy somewhere. Tremendous scholar. And you think he would listen to a teenage girl who wasn’t all there? But see, that’s what they’re trying to tell people. That this whole concept was given to John Darby by this whatever and that he latched on to it, and then from that point on we have the rise of dispensationalism. That’s a lie straight out of the head office of the god of this world, Satan. Don’t you ever believe it.

Now I think I shared in the last taping. I had a poor gentleman. I think he’s from Kentucky, 88 years old. And he said, “Les, I’ve used my Scofield Bible since I was saved 60 years ago, and now I saw this on the Internet.” He sent me a copy of it. It was just pure garbage trying to destroy the veracity and the validity of the Scofield Study Bible. Just literally ridiculing it and had all kinds of reasons why nobody should use it. Well, see, those are the satanic attacks that are coming in these last days.

All right, now of all the letters that I’ve had through the years, there aren’t that many—probably—what? One a month, if that? I doubt it. We get hundreds of letters a day. If you get one a month, that’s only one out of thousands. They immediately start showing me these Scripture verses to refute my teaching of the Rapture. Well, where are they getting all their Scripture? Old Testament, the Four Gospels, and the Book of Revelation. They totally ignore Paul’s Epistles, and he was the only one given this secret. So what do I do? I just skim through it. If I don’t see a reference to any of Paul’s epistles, waste basket. They haven’t got an ounce of ground to stand on. Why should I bother trying to prove my
point? Because the first thing these people have to understand is, as I’ve already said, **only Paul has anything to do with the Rapture, because only Paul teaches the Body of Christ**!

And anybody can see that by just simply reading the rest of Scripture. You will not find one reference, not one, to the Body of Christ, except Romans through Philemon. That’s all. Well now, does that take such an intellect to put two and two together? That if this Apostle alone was given the revelation of these mysteries that would bring about the Body of Christ, could these other places have reference to it and it still be called a secret? It can’t happen. Here’s the key in verse 51.

*I Corinthians 15:51*

“It’s a mystery; (A secret. And here’s the secret.) **We shall not all sleep,** (or die physically) **but we shall all be changed,**” Now that’s obvious. When we come to the end of the Church Age, there’s going to be living believers.

Well, is God going to kill them all first so He can resurrect them from the dead? Well, no way. Once He’s resurrected the believers of the Body who have died and they’re reunited with their soul and spirit, then the next event is to change those of us who are still on the planet earth from this body we are living in to the new resurrected body in an instant. And many can’t seem to buy into that, because I guess it’s too hard. Hey, with God, nothing is impossible!

I’m going to do quickly like what I did the other night over the period of an hour. It is to show that this idea of believers being taken off the planet before the Tribulation begins is scriptural, as the Body of Christ has absolutely nothing to do with the horrors of the Tribulation, which are death and destruction.

Okay, now I’m going to have to watch the time. Ordinarily, I don’t do that. But on this half hour, I’m going to watch my time. Let’s turn first and foremost back to Revelation chapter 6. Now ordinarily when I teach Revelation 6, I like to also use Matthew 24. But I’m not going to do that for sake of time today. But in Revelation chapter 6 you can start with verse 1. Here we have the appearance of the anti-Christ, or the next event after the Rapture has taken place. By then the Church is gone, because we can have nothing to do with death and destruction, which I’m going to show you in these next 18 minutes. But here we go. This is prophecy concerning the Second Coming.

Now, the first seal is the appearance of the white horse—the fake Christ, the anti-Christ. Then in verse 3 we have the appearance of the red horse.
**Revelation 6:3-4**

“And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second creature say, Come and see. 4. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.”

Now back up really quickly to I Thessalonians chapter 5. Ordinarily Paul makes very little allusion to prophecy except in rare occasions. I think this is one of them, as well as in II Thessalonians. I Thessalonians chapter 4 is his comparison passage with I Corinthians 15:51.

**I Thessalonians 4:17**

“Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” Now you drop down into chapter 5, and we’re going to be dealing with those that are left behind.

**I Thessalonians 5:1-3a**

“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write to you. 2. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord (Now that’s the Tribulation. Those final seven years are called the Day of the Lord.) cometh as a thief in the night. 3. For (Now watch this.) when they (That is the world’s population) shall say, Peace and safety;…”

Now that’s the white horse of Revelation 6:2. The anti-Christ is going to come in promising peace and prosperity. Israel will be euphoric. They’re going to have permission to rebuild their Temple. They can lay down their military. The anti-Christ is going to promise their borders and their safety, and the whole world is in euphoria with them. This guy is supposedly almost the copy of the true Christ.

All right, so now Paul is telling us, yes, when the Tribulation opens, it’s going to be peace and safety.

**I Thessalonians 5:3b**

“…then (What’s the next event?) sudden destruction cometh upon them,…” Now, come back to Revelation 6 again. That’s exactly what we’ve got. After the white horse of peace and safety, now you come into the second horse and it’s “red.” The rider of this horse is given the power--

**Revelation 6:4b**
“...to take peace from the earth, (And they’re going to end up--) and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.” Now, I associate that with the prophecy of Ezekiel 38 and 39 where Russia, heading up many of the Muslim nations of the world, will invade Israel.

I put it toward the end of the first year of the seven. Because in biblical history, if a king came on the throne as much as one day before the end of a year and goes into the next year, that one day was considered a full year. That’s biblical timing. Now, if this Russian invasion comes along at about the 11th month of the Tribulation, then Israel still has one month of that year plus six full years to fulfill Ezekiel 39—which says they will take seven years to clean up the residue of this destroyed Russian army on the hills of Israel. That’s why I put it in the 11th month of the seven years of Tribulation. All right, “but peace has been taken from the earth.”

Now as a result of that invasion, of course, there’s going to be tremendous loss of food production. Because I honestly feel that the Russians are going to preempt everything they’ve got on North America, knowing that we would come to Israel’s defense. But we’re going to have enough nukes out there in submarines and flying in planes and maybe some silos that will survive. And we will retaliate and do the same to Russia. So, you’ve got Russia obliterated. You’ve got America obliterated. The two greatest food production areas of the world are gone.

So, what’s the next great event? Famine. Oh, it’s as logical as daylight follows dark. That’s back in Revelation 6 verse 6. Then he sees the fourth angel and the fourth creature saying:

Revelation 6:7b-8a
“...Come and see. 8. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death,...” All right, put two words in that scenario and what would it be? Death and destruction. Not peace and safety. Death and destruction.

Now for sake of time, I’m going to jump right over to Revelation chapter 14. I’m not going to look at the companion portion in Isaiah, for sake of time. But if you want to put it in your notes, that would be in Isaiah 63—where this final judgment that’s going to come on planet earth is likened to putting grapes in a grape vat. Now it stands to reason. They harvested the grapes and threw them into this huge
hollowed-out stone. They can’t just let those grapes sit there. So what do they have to do? Crush them one way or another.

Now there was one that we saw in Israel for a demonstration. They put a couple of teenage kids in there, and they would stomp the grapes barefooted. But the whole idea was to crush the grapes so that the juice would run out of a trough on the bottom. All right, now this is used symbolically of God’s bringing in the armies that are left in the world to the valleys of Israel, which will become God’s grape vat. Okay, Revelation chapter 14 and we’ll start at verse 14 and do this quickly.

Revelation 14:14-15

“So I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. (speaking of a harvest) 15. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.” It’s time for God’s final judgment.

Revelation 14:16-19

“And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. 17. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18. And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. 19. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress (not of a vineyard, but--) of the wrath of God.”

All right, now we’ve got to do a little thinking. The vast military that’s still left by the end of the seven years of Tribulation will be the Orient. China has boasted a 200 million men army ever since Mao. We’re still going to have the millions down in Africa and Europe. I’m maintaining that Russia and America and the Muslim world are already gone. But all these armies that are left of the world, the anti-Christ is going to put out the command to bring them to the Middle East to get rid of the Jewish problem. Their thought will be to get rid of Israel once and for all.

Well, it’ll be a God-directed thing. It’s going to be supernatural. These men, not knowing what they’re doing, are going to command their armies to make their way to the Nation of Israel. They’re going to pack them into the valleys of Israel. Now, we normally think of the Valley of Megiddo—the Valley of Esdraelon—which runs
from the northern part of the Sea of Galilee straight west to Mount Carmel. You can stand on Mount Carmel and you can see the Valley of Megiddo. But just a few miles north is another large valley flat as a table top called the Hula Valley, which used to be swamps. When the Jews came back from their dispersion, the first thing they did was drain those swamps. It’s now great farmland, a flat valley.

Then along the Mediterranean Coast, you’ve got the Valley of Sharon. That’s the third one. Then you’ve got another valley, which makes up the Jordan Valley. Now there you’ve got the Jordan Valley; you’ve got the Valley of Sharon; you’ve got the Valley of Jezreel (or the Valley of Esdraelon or Megiddo, whatever you want to call it); and you’ve got the Hula Valley. Now those valleys will hold millions upon millions of troops.

You know, I read an interesting statistic years ago, not that many, but probably in the last ten years. Every man, woman, and child in America could be put inside the city limits of Jacksonville, FL. Now, I didn’t dream that up. Somebody else did, because Jacksonville, FL, has a large land area. I looked it up on the map. But when you put people in like sardines in a can, you can get millions into a small space. And God’s going to do it. He’s going to cause these army generals, stupid as it may seem, to pack their armies into these valleys of Israel. Why? It’s God’s grape vat. The human beings are the grapes. But like I said in the beginning of all of this, when you get them in the vat, what do you have to do next? You’ve got to crush them.

Okay, now let’s jump across the page in my Bible to chapter 16. Here we have the crushing element. Millions upon millions upon millions of the world’s troops packed into the valleys of Israel, and here comes the final judgment. Revelation 16 verse 21, this is the last judgment before the seven years ends and God brings in the scenario for the Kingdom.

Revelation 16:21a

“And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent…” If you’ve got a marginal help, it’s what? One hundred pounds. One hundred pound chunks of ice are going to come cascading down on these millions of men out there in the open field. So what have you got? You’ve got a river of melting ice and blood that will indeed run as deep as a horse’s bridle.

I think, if it is not already topographically possible, God will make it. That river of blood will find its way to the Jordan Valley. It’s going to run all the way to the Red Sea which is, as it says here, a hundred and eighty miles. That’s what’s coming. That’s the wrath of God! All of the things from the day that peace is taken
from the earth at the 11th month of the seven years is nothing but death and destruction. Everything pertaining to the Second Coming is death and destruction.

Now, let’s go back and show how Paul warns us for our final days on the planet. That’s going to be in II Timothy chapter 3. I shared with the prophecy conference last week how I was driving home from one of my classes in Oklahoma here a few years ago and turned on talk radio about 9:30 that night. I happened to catch Michael Reagan. He was just starting his program. And he said, “Fellow Americans, last night as my wife and I were having our family devotions, I read II Timothy chapter 3 starting at verse 1.” And he said, “When I was through, my wife said, Michael, you have to read this on the air!” And so he said, “Fellow Americans, that’s what I’m going to do.” And he read it and here it is. Read with me.

**II Timothy 3:1**

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.” Now you want to remember, Paul has only one last day in mind, and that’s the Body of Christ. He’s not concerned about prophecy. He’s dealing only with the Gentile Body of Christ.

**II Timothy 3:2-5**

“For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3. Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4. Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5. Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”

And Michael stopped and said, “Fellow Americans, this is where we are.” Is it? It’s tomorrow’s newspaper! It’s next week’s newspaper. It’s exactly where we are. But now here’s my point. Is there one word of death or destruction? Not a word. Now isn’t that amazing? This is the scenario that you and I can look for at the trumpet call.

We don’t have to look for vast devastation. We don’t have to look for millions upon millions of people being put to death. In fact, I made the point the other night. In Revelation chapter 6 when at the mid-point of the Tribulation it says one-fourth of the world’s people will be killed. Good heavens, what’s one fourth of seven billion people? One point seven five billion! Not million! One and three quarters of a billion people are going to be dead by the end of the first three-and-a-half years. We can’t image what that’s going to be like. But by the end of the seven, they’re just
about all going to be dead. There’s just going to be little smattering of survivors around the planet.

But see, Paul doesn’t allude to that. Paul says it’s a breakdown of moral and spiritual things. See the difference. Boy, that’s as different as daylight and dark. You and I aren’t going to be part of that death and destruction. This is what we look for. All right, now in the two minutes I have left, let’s just capitalize on this.

II Timothy 3:2a

*For men shall be lovers of their own selves,*…” Instead of lovers of God. True? Well, you know it is. Nothing matters to the human race today like the economy. And it isn’t just America, it’s everywhere. All people are concerned about is how much money they can make. And that’s all centered on self.

All right, now I’m going to go all the way down to verse 5. This is the one that slaps us in the face every time we turn around. We’re in a time where people--

II Timothy 3:5a

*“Having a form of godliness,*…” Any power? None. It’s all flim-flam. I call it hip-hop religion. And that’s all it is. There’s no power of God in it.

I had one of my converts out of Roman Catholicism call from Chicago after Christmas time. She had gone with a friend to one of these large mega churches and said, “Les, I was in that church for little over an hour and never once heard the name of Jesus Christ. Not once.” Well, what is that? Oh, it’s church. It’s a form of godliness, but there’s no power. There’s no preaching of Paul’s Gospel of salvation as found in I Corinthians 15:1-4. It’s a feel-good religion. I could name them, but I don’t like to do that. That’s not my style. I’m just going to show the truth, and let the chips fall where they may.

But see, this is why I’m making such a dividing line between the Body of Christ which was a secret kept in the mind of God and never revealed in any of the prophetic statements. Not one iota. The mystery of the Rapture has nothing to do with the death and destruction of the end-time scenario. And then they ridicule us for believing that we’re gong to be taken out before the Tribulation begins? Man, this is the glory of being in the Body of Christ! This is our “Blessed Hope” that we’re looking for!

*Titus 2:13*
“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:”