

Through the Bible with Les Feldick, Book 20

LESSON ONE * PART I

"LAST STUDY IN ACTS"

Let's turn to Acts Chapter 18. Paul has begun his journeys among the Gentile world of Asia Minor in Western Turkey. He's crossed over into Greece, then down the coastline to Athens. He has moved a few miles to the city of Corinth. Being a port city, Corinth was a bustling commercial city, but it also was wicked and grossly immoral. But to this city Paul comes with the Gospel of Grace among the Gentiles. And beginning with verse 1 we find:

Acts 18:1-3

AFTER these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius [the emperor] had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them [Aquila and Priscilla], and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers."

It was work that required hand work, probably stitching and sewing. I like to equate this with women who have quilting clubs, and they get around that quilting frame and talk. So I can just envision these three people talking as they labor. I'm quite sure that the primary figure was Paul. He was sharing all of his new revelations with this Jewish couple that had come to Corinth from Rome. Paul had a way of disseminating everything that God had revealed to him to anyone who would listen. And he must have been a master teacher because he refers to that in his letters when he would say, "I said such and such to you, and you know this is what I told you, and you remember what I told." So they had grasped it. As he was working with Aquila and Priscilla, he evidently shared all these revelations. Paul goes on his way, then in verse 26 of this same chapter we find that this Jewish couple has also moved on from Corinth over to Ephesus. Ephesus was on the western shores of what is now Turkey. It was there that Paul had started a Church and that letter to the Ephesians was to that congregation.

Acts 18:24

"And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria (in Egypt), an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus."

Remember there is not a New Testament yet. So what Scripture was Apollos mighty in? The Old Testament. This Jewish fellow comes from the area of Alexandria, Egypt. He was eloquent, what we would call a silver-tongued orator. He had all the right expressions, the right charisma, and could captivate his audience.

Acts 18:25

"This man (Apollos, a Jew) was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

In other words, Apollos knew nothing of believing for salvation in Christ's death, burial, and Resurrection (faith in Christ's work plus nothing else, as taught by Paul). He was still back in Christ's earthly ministry. That is the way he had been instructed. I always like to compare Scripture with Scripture in order to make my point. So turn to the Book of Galatians. I want you to see the graphic difference in the language. In Chapter 1 verse 11, we find Paul writing by inspiration of the Holy Spirit (as all of his writings are), although it reads like it is coming from his own thinking, but it isn't. It is inspired by the Spirit of God.

Galatians 1:11,12

"But I certify (I guarantee) you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man (in other words, he didn't go to school or seminary some place and learn it). For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the (instruction? No, but rather the) revelation of Jesus Christ."

Can you see the difference? That's why I'm always stressing be careful when you read. Don't just read to be reading. Every once in a while you hit a word like this that makes all the difference in the world. Paul says that he wasn't taught it, and that's why he's separating himself from the Twelve throughout these first two chapters of Galatians. He wasn't taught it by the Twelve or anyone else, but rather everything that he lays down in his preaching, teaching, and writing, he received by revelation. Apollos was a mighty man in the Scriptures, but he had been instructed. Someone had taught him. Now that should tell us that even though The Lord has ascended back to glory, Paul makes it very plain that he saw Christ face to face. And I don't think that it was only on the road to Damascus, but in other areas of his revelation. The Lord revealed these things to Paul in such a way that even when you go on into Galatians Chapter 2, Peter and the eleven couldn't comprehend what Paul was talking about. It was way beyond anything they had ever heard. And that's what we are talking about: Paul operates by revelation, and Apollos by instruction. Let's return to Acts Chapter 18. Apollos knew only that which took place under John the Baptist's preaching, which was that Jesus was The Christ, The Messiah, repentance, and baptism. Now look what happened in verse 26:

Acts 18:26

"And he (Apollos) began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard (they sat and listened to him), they took him unto them (probably took him home for dinner after the service), and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly (or more completely)."

What's happening? Aquila, and Priscilla had been sitting there with Paul, for we don't know how long, weeks at least, and Paul had been teaching them this tremendous Gospel of Grace. How that everything that man needed for Salvation was accomplished on the Cross, and in the power of His Resurrection, and Apollos knew none of that. I've always encouraged my class people that when they feel their pastor is missing something in Scripture, they should kindly show him from the Scripture what they believe he's missing. Then, if he's an Apollos, he should be able to take it like a man, and say, "I never saw this before." That's what Apollos did. Apollos, highly educated, polished, eloquent in the Scriptures, suddenly realizes from these two common tent makers that there was a

lot he didn't know. We pick this up in the next couple of verses. That as Apollos finishes his ministry there at Ephesus he took to heart the things he had learned in turn from this Jewish couple.

Acts 18:27,28

"And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who (Apollos), when he was come, helped them much which had believed (not through John's message but rather) through grace:" And where did he pick it up from? Aquila and Priscilla. Where did they get it? From working with Paul.

"For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ."

Now Apollos could go beyond that Christ was the Old Testament Messiah. Now I'm sure that he was able to share, especially when you see that word **'Grace'** in verse 27, that Christ died for the sins of the world, He was buried, and He arose from the dead. Do you see the difference? Remember, it took two common, ordinary people to bring that man to this further revelation. And that's where you and I come in. We can approach people who are not teaching more perfectly or completely, and say, "Now wait a minute, you are missing so much." But never do it with pride, or sarcasm, but just humbly and by the Grace of God. Be skilled in the use of this Book. Be able to say, "This is what The Book says and you're missing it." And if they are an Apollos, they will take it to heart. Then you will not only have gained a more informed teacher or pastor, he has gained more love for you and for his congregation.

Let's touch on the final chapters of Acts. Paul goes to Jerusalem, contrary to a lot of warning, which gives rise to a lot of discussion. Was he being pig-headed, should he have listened, should he have stayed away from Jerusalem, or was this everything God intended? I feel Paul got to Jerusalem in spite of all these little road blocks, because here is where he had to make his final move to the Nation of Israel. Again, they had to make their final decree, **"Away with him."** They didn't want any thing to do with Paul or his message. He has to appeal to the Roman authorities, and they come to his rescue. And as you come on through the succeeding chapters and you get to Chapter 27 of this tremendous Book of Acts, we find that Israel continues to reject her Messiah. And as we will see in Romans Chapter 11, because of their rejection of the Messiah, and their fall, salvation goes to the Gentiles: you and I.

But in Chapter 27, Paul has not succeeded in making any dents in the hard armor of the Jewish people. He had to appeal to Rome after spending a year and half in prison in Caesarea and so now Paul is on ship headed for Rome. I think it's amazing that this little Jew in face of everything could, almost without fear, go right into the very capital of that pagan Roman Empire which was now beginning to turn on Christianity. Why did the Romans put up with the Jews and their religion even though the Jews gave them a lot of problems? Sometimes they would come down on the Jews rather harshly. But for the most part the Jewish people had their freedom. I was reading awhile back that even between the Crucifixion and the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. huge sums of money would come from far ends of the Roman Empire to the Temple; the tithes and offerings of the Jewish people. Rome never intercepted a dime of it. If anything, they gave it safe protection.

So more or less the Romans protected the Jewish religion, but they began to persecute Christianity. Why? Well, the best answer I have found is that the Romans were steeped in paganism and

mythology themselves, and had respect for anyone else's religion if it was ancient. But Christianity was new, and on top of that they were claiming a King of power above Rome, and that infuriated them and precipitated this tremendous persecution. But Paul, under arrest, goes right into the heart of all of this. He probably had Roman soldiers chained to him. Now, in Chapter 28, we find Paul at Rome, under house arrest. They are going to let him live in his own rented house, but always with Roman soldiers at his side.

Acts 28:16-19

"And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him. And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together (notice, not the heads of the Christian community. He still has that heart for Israel, so he called for the chief of the Jews): and when they were come together, he said unto them, `Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people (Israel), or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained (or forced) to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of.'"

Acts 28:20

"For this cause therefore (in other words, Paul had nothing to be ashamed of, he had no reason to be under arrest, and for this cause) have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." Never lose sight what Paul says in Ephesians Chapter 3.

Ephesians 3:1

"FOR this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles," But in Acts 28:20 he still has a burden for the Nation of Israel. The reason he was arrested at first was for appealing to the Jews at Jerusalem. And it caused such a riot that they had to bring him under what today we would call protective custody. From there he had to appeal to Caesar. Now closing the Book of Acts at verse 23:

Acts 28:23

"And when they had appointed him a day (where he could meet with these Jewish leaders at Rome), there came many to him into his lodging (he had quite a bit of freedom); to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God,..."

That whole sphere which is under God's Sovereign control. The Kingdom of Heaven is that which was promised to Israel from the time of Abraham, and the Kingdom that will yet come upon the earth. It is within the Kingdom of God. When Paul was in Athens he explained to them that The God they had called "the unknown God," was The God that he was presenting. He was The God that provided all man needs, and The One Who made everything. And it's the same way here when he began to tell these Jewish leaders about the Kingdom of God. He didn't leave a stone unturned.

Acts 28:24-27

"And some (these Jewish leaders) believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. And when they agreed not among themselves (again the Jewish leaders), they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, 'Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive (God spoke this in Isaiah 600 years before Christ): For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them (Spiritually and maybe also physically).'" Verse 28: that crowning statement that will carry all the way to our own present day.

Acts 28:28-31

"Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it. And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves. And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house (today we would say rented house), and received all that came in unto him, Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

When we address The Lord Jesus Christ, that title is everything that He is to you and I in His post-Resurrection experience. He is Lord of Lords. Absolutely He is. He is still the Jesus of Nazareth, The God-Man; but He's also The Christ, The Messiah of Israel. For you and I today, the most inclusive title we can give our Lord is **The Lord Jesus Christ**. Even the Twelve never referred to Jesus only by His Name Jesus. And I still do not feel it's appropriate. When we refer to the name of Jesus we should include the word Lord, and if you want to be all inclusive, then call Him **The Lord Jesus Christ**.

LESSON ONE * PART II

INTRODUCING ROMANS CHAPTER 1:1-15

We begin our study in the Book of Romans. When we teach we try to compare Scripture with Scripture and see what The Word really says, as well as what it doesn't say. Never treat the Word carelessly. As you know, I take teaching The Word of God as an awesome responsibility. Whenever we handle the Word of God it's not something that we can do flippantly, but rather it has to be done with the leading and directing of the Holy Spirit. I can honestly say that my daily prayer is, "**Lord, keep me from error.**" I would never certainly want to mislead anyone, and all I hope to do is to get people into The Book, and enjoying it. I've told my classes over and over that the Dark Ages were called the Dark Ages, whether the historians realize it or not, because The Word of God was locked up in the monasteries and the common man never had access to it. Of course, that's what the Reformers wanted to completely change. They wanted The Word of God in the hands of everyone. This Book is for everyone in every station of society. I try to bring it to the level of young children, and yet get deep enough so people can honestly say, "**My, this is so deep, I've never realized it before.**" Hopefully that is what we are also accomplishing.

Now as an introduction to Paul's letters, I don't have to repeat, as you have heard me say over and over, that I think the Apostle Paul was the greatest human being that ever lived, other than Christ

Himself. I think he probably even overshadows Moses, as great as he was. As I was preparing my thoughts to introduce the Book of Romans, I couldn't help but remember what Jesus said back in His earthly ministry, and I'm going to have you turn to that. Go if you will to Matthew Chapter 11. For a long time this verse was a mystery to me, then all of a sudden I realized what Jesus was referring to, and it makes all the sense in the world. And that is true of all of Scripture. Sometimes we wonder what it's trying to tell us, and then all of a sudden there it is.

I compare Bible study, or understanding the Scriptures, to the way I experience mathematics. I'm not a mathematical genius. When I was in algebra and those advanced courses, I had to work at it. But I found when doing some of these mathematical problems, that it was just like something I couldn't break through. It was just like a cement wall. And then all of a sudden it opened up, and I couldn't write fast enough, especially in geometry and trigonometry, and some of those tough courses. But once you start those formulas unfolding, they just feed the others. But until I got to that place it was just like a stone wall. Well, that's the way that Scripture can be. We can hit a portion and wonder, **"What is this trying to tell me?"** I've told people over the years not to wrestle with it, but just let it rest for the time being, and in time The Lord will open it up. Now this is what happened with this verse that I will show you. Here we have Jesus speaking:

Matthew 11:11

"Verily I say unto you, `Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist (pretty strong statement isn't it): notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

Now who could be the least in the kingdom of heaven? Let's compare Scripture with Scripture, turn to I Corinthians Chapter 15. And as I said in the last lesson, every word that this man writes is Holy Spirit inspired. There is not a single a word, not even a simple article that was not written exactly like God wanted it. This includes the whole Bible. Now when men have gone through The Bible using numerics as they call it (putting a value on every letter as the Hebrew language did and as the Greek language did), they can prove numerically that these main themes of Scripture all fit exactly numerically. You can take out one word and it falls apart. So always remember that every word that this Apostle writes is Holy Spirit inspired. Now in this Scripture in I Corinthians Paul has made mention of the fact that Christ had been raised from the dead. This is the great Resurrection chapter, and verse 6 tells us that Christ was seen of at least 500 brethren.

I Corinthians 15:6-8

"After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present (that is, at this writing), but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James: then of all the apostles (that, of course, was before His ascension). And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."

Now here we've got to stop for a moment because it will be quite a while before we get to Corinthians. What did Paul mean by the statement that he was like one born out of the due time? Well, he was speaking of himself spiritually, as a mother-to-be who has lost her baby. It was a **"preemie"** or an aborted one, or it was a miscarriage. And that is what Paul is referring to himself as. That he had come on the scene before the due time for the Nation of Israel as a whole. He was that sampling that the Nation of Israel will one day be suddenly converted as he was on the road to

Damascus. Remember that the Nation of Israel is still going to experience what Paul experienced, but he's the sampling that came these 1900 + years ahead of it. But the Scripture we came to look at is in verse 9. Remember, who could be least in the Kingdom of Heaven? Jesus had said, **"notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he** (John)." Now look what the Scripture says:

I Corinthians 15:9

"For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God (those Jewish believers back there in the early chapter of Acts)." Now for another verse in the Book of Ephesians, Chapter 3. Again the Apostle is making reference to himself.

Ephesians 3:8a

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints,..." Do you see it? Who do you think Jesus had in mind when he made that statement in Matthew 11:11? This man right here. According to the Holy Spirit we have seen Paul called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven.

As one writer I read many years ago put it this way, **"I am sure that when the Church is finally caught up to meet the Lord in the air, that the Apostle Paul will introduce the Bride to the Groom."** And I tend to agree with this gentleman. And remember, the first event in Heaven will be the marriage of Christ and His Bride, the Church. As we study the writings of Paul which are the most neglected in Scripture today, I give that as the reason for the demise of the power of the Church. The reason our Churches are weak, filled with members, but spiritually dead, as Revelation puts it, **"...they are destitute."** They say, "Look at us we're rich, look at our huge sanctuary, look at our plant, our gym, our tennis court," and this is exactly what Jesus said they would say in Revelation 3, speaking of the Laodicean Church. And that's where we are at the present time. But Jesus said, **"You're poor, you're miserable, you're wretched, and you're blind."** And the reason they are is because they are neglecting this Apostle. How many times my class people have said all they hear from their pulpit is Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. And I know that's also Scripture, but yet you see they are not in the portion of Scripture that the Church needs today, and the Lord knew this Laodicean Church age would be that way. They are neglecting the very basis of our faith, then they wonder why every thing is falling apart spiritually.

So starting in the Book of Romans Chapter 1 verse 1, this least of the Apostles, according to his own description, has to always defend his apostleship. And no wonder, because after all he had been steeped in Judaism, he was a Pharisee of the Pharisees, of the tribe of Benjamin. I think, personally, that he was a member of the Sanhedrin. He was a Jew's Jew, and yet he is the very one that God saw fit to save out Judaism, and commission him to be the Apostle of the Gentiles (Romans 11:13). And again, very few people see that verse, or if they do they ignore it. But it is what God has said, **"That this man is the Apostle of the Gentiles."** Now granted, even Paul said that there would be other apostles that would follow him, and I'm sure he considered Barnabas and Silas apostles. And some of the other men that follow right up in that period of time between Paul and the end of that first century, were reckoned as apostles. But so far as the writing of this Book is concerned, there is only one apostle of the Gentiles, and that is the Apostle Paul. **His letters, and his letters alone are written to the Church!** And any good commentary will point that out. This man always addresses the believers of Grace by faith alone. So here again he begins this tremendous Epistle written to Gentiles at the very center of the Roman Empire, and he starts off by saying:

Romans 1:1

PAUL, a servant (the word servant in the Greek is a lot stronger than our word 'servant.' In the Greek it was a bonds slave. And so he's saying, "Paul a bonds slave") of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,"

I'm going to be making mention of all these things that point up the differences between Paul's Epistles, and much of the rest of Scripture. Because, as I have pointed out over and over, remember that everything from Genesis 12 all the way up until Paul's Epistles were directed primarily, if not exclusively, to the Jew. And especially as he was under the Law. But this man now was commissioned right away at his conversion at Damascus, when God told Ananias:

Acts 9:15

"But the Lord said unto him (Ananias) 'Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles...'"

And then, of course, the Lord took Paul out into the desert, and gave him His revelations. Paul refers to them in Galatians Chapter 1, how that by revelation, God made known unto this man all these things that are now going to come from his pen that you won't find anywhere else in this whole Bible. Paul's pen also says that all Scripture is inspired of God. All of it from cover to cover, not just Paul's, and it's all profitable, it's all good for everyone of us, as well as anyone who has lived before or after us. So Paul never lifts himself up as the only one we are to pay any attention to, but yet he brings out so many doctrines that you won't find anywhere else in Scripture. It behooves us to spend the best part of our time then in Paul's Epistles, and from them funnel back and forth throughout all the rest of the Scriptures.

Now let's go back to the Book of Galatians, Chapter 1, for a moment. I'm not intending to make our study of Paul's letters anything near a commentary. But as I was mulling this over, I see we now have been on the air from Genesis to this point in time for almost four and one-half years. And I think **I could very easily spend five years on just Paul's Epistles.** It wouldn't be any trouble at all, because there is so much in this little section of our New Testament that is so intrinsic to our daily needs and our salvation needs. Everything is in this little section of our Bible. For the most part, the average church-goer gets very little of what Paul is trying to teach. **And, of course, all Paul knows is the work of the Cross. How that Christ died for our sins; He shed His Blood; He was buried, and He rose from the dead. That's the core of everything that he is going to write about.** Now to Galatians Chapter 1, where again in verse 1, he is defending his apostleship.

Galatians 1:1

"PAUL an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead);" No man or group of men commissioned this apostle. See how Paul is constantly bringing in the fact that Christ died and rose from the dead?

Galatians 1:4

"Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:"

Galatians 1:6

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

Remember the problem with the Galatians believers was they were being pressured to go back under the Law (Legalism); do this and do that, keep this and keep that. And so Paul has to hurriedly write this little Epistle to warn them, and to wake them up. "Listen, you're not under Law, but rather under Grace!"

Galatians 1:7

"Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ."

Christianity, since the turn of the century, when higher criticism started in Europe, has been bombarded with perversion. Now don't think of perversion as something way down in the gutter. Perversion is anything that has twisted the truth far enough that it's off center, and it's going to mislead people. And so Paul even here is recognizing that the Galatian Church is being perverted. Someone is coming in and telling them that they have to also keep the Mosaic Law. Now verse 8:

Galatians 1:8

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

That is powerful language! I say this kindly, but I shudder to think of the end of someone who takes this Gospel and perverts it. If I were behind the sacred desk (pulpit), and if I had any inkling that I was misleading those hundreds or thousands of people, then I couldn't sleep at night. Because it is an awesome responsibility when you take the very eternal destiny of people, and lead them astray. I'm going to give you an illustration and no one can put names on it, because the parties are no longer around. One time, a dear brother said, "You know, on Wednesday night, our pastor preaches and teaches almost identical to the way you do, Les. I can't see that much difference. So one time I asked the pastor, **'Why don't you preach like this on Sunday morning?'** And the pastor replied, **'I don't dare.'**" I could never ever stand in front of people and give them a bunch of warm soup, just to give them something to tickle their ears, because I'm afraid of the consequences. Yet that is what a lot of leaders are doing. They are afraid to give the people the truth; they are afraid they will lose that big giver; and they are afraid they will have some people get a little bit disgruntled. And listen, Paul said **that he wasn't afraid of anybody**. He didn't care what anybody thought about him. Oh, he loved everyone, he loved his Jews; he loved the Romans; but he wasn't going to back down from preaching and declaring his Gospel, because he knew the consequences. Now read on:

Galatians 1:9,10

"As we said before, so say I now again, 'If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received (from Paul. Reference I Corinthians 15:1-4), let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.'"

You see when you preach or teach The Word of God, you're not going to make everyone your best buddy. It's just not going to happen. And for that very reason Paul went through all the trials and tribulations that he lists in II Corinthians 11:23-33. We found that he was beaten, imprisoned, starved, shipwrecked, all for the sake of the Gospel, and not only the effects of men, but the satanic powers, and don't think for a moment that it isn't real. And for every one of us that stand for The Word of God, we are going to feel these opposing forces. But we don't do it to please men, we do it to please God. Now verse 11:

Galatians 1:11,12

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ (this was from the ascended Lord in glory)."

Galatians 1:15

"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,"

Oh, the Grace of God which is past our understanding, and it was past Paul's understanding. Why should he, as he called himself the least of all, be made the greatest? Well, Paul will be the first to tell us: **"The Grace of God."** Now verse 16:

Galatians 1:16,17

"To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen (Gentiles); immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus."

Now we covered all that previously. But what Paul is emphasizing, the natural, the normal human thing to have done after having that tremendous experience on the road to Damascus, was to scoot right back down to Jerusalem, look up Peter and the eleven, and say, **"Now look fellows, fill me in. You were with the Lord for three years, you knew Him from start to finish, tell me everything, because I'm supposed to preach to the Gentiles."** But he makes a point of it. He didn't! Why not? Well, I've said this before and I'll say it again: God wanted to distance Paul from the Twelve. He could have nothing to do with them under this new economy of Grace, because they were steeped in Judaism and the Law.

Someone said to me that if I felt Paul was three years out in the Arabian desert (and I do), why so long? Well, it took a year and one-half in prison in Caesarea, I think, to put together all the doctrines that came out from his prison Epistles, and I told my class, very lightly, that it probably took The Lord two and one-half years to get Judaism out of his system. Now that took some doing. I've even had people that came to my classes say, "I had to get rid of all that other stuff that I had been hearing since I was little." And we do. We have to start with a fresh slate. And that's what Paul had to do. He had to put all that background in Judaism and legalism, all aside, so that he could be totally the preacher of God's Grace. And remember, **Grace is unmerited favor.**

INTRODUCING ROMANS CHAPTER 1:1-15

Now let's Pick up Paul in Romans Chapter 1, that great apostle to the Gentiles, the revealer of all the Church Age doctrines. Someday, I'm going to list all the basic doctrines that come only from this great apostle. You can't find them anywhere else, and those are what I call Pauline doctrines. How in the world people can ignore that is just beyond me. Well, back to Chapter 1 of the Book of Romans. In the last lesson we were showing that Paul was uniquely called of God to be the apostle of the Gentiles. Not one of many, but rather he is **The Apostle to the Gentiles**. We know others followed in his footsteps, but nevertheless Paul is the one to whom we must go for our basic doctrines. He's been separated in verse 1 unto The Gospel of God. Now verse 2:

Romans 1:2,3

"(Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;"

Now I have to stop for a moment, and explain the seed of David. Way back in Genesis 3:15 we have the reference to the Seed of the woman. And what would the Seed of the woman accomplish? He would crush the head of the serpent. That was the promised line of redemption, and as some great theologian once put it, that scarlet thread of salvation that starts with Genesis 3:15 and carries all the way through Scripture. So the Seed of the woman was to crush the head of the serpent. Then in Genesis Chapter 12 we have the Abrahamic Covenant, and you know I'm always putting a lot of emphasis on that. And then Paul states in Galatians Chapter 3, verse 16, the following:

Galatians 3:16

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, `And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ.'"

Christ is the Seed of Abraham. We have three distinct seeds that Paul is going to make reference to. First, of course, going all the way back to Genesis Chapter 3, as the Seed of the woman He would crush our archenemy, Satan. Then he refers in Romans 1:3 to Christ the Seed of David. Because out of the seed of David would come Mary, also Joseph, who is the legal father. So now we have not only the Seed of the woman, Who is going to defeat Satan at the Cross, but we have the seed of David which brought Him on the scene in order to become flesh and go the way of the Cross, as well as being the rightful Heir to the throne of David. We also have that reference to the seed of Abraham which brings us into the picture, because when it comes to the realm of faith + nothing, we Gentile believers are referred to by Paul as the seed of Abraham, because, of course, of Christ being the Seed. So repeating verse 3:

Romans 1:3

"Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh:"

In other words, through the line of David and Solomon, here came Mary as well as Joseph. Now verse 4:

Romans 1:4

"And declared to be the Son of God with (what?) power,..."

That's another word that Paul will use over and over when he talks about his Gospel: that it is the power of God. I like to go back and compare Israel in slavery in Egypt to ourselves: coming out of that slavery, coming up against the shores of the Red Sea with seemingly no hope. They have experienced the death angel flying over because they were under the blood, but yet God brings them out of that experience into almost an impossible situation: the shores of the Red Sea, the Egyptian armies behind them, impossibilities on the right and left, and then He tells them to stand still. Well, that's exactly where human individuals find themselves. We are without hope, we've been in the slave market of Satan.

Recently, we had a super good time again in our class. I made reference again to the slave trade as we knew it in America from history books, and it was awful. Not just the slavery itself in the work of the plantation owners, but the whole slave trade. Conditions in those slave ships that brought those poor human beings over from Africa were totally inhuman. I wouldn't treat my cattle that way. It was beyond human description what those poor folk went through, simply because they were slaves. But in the spiritual realm, we were in that same ballpark. And we are going to see that in a future lesson, of where we were before we became believers, and where we were as the offspring of Adam. We were under the same kind of circumstances, spiritually, that those poor slaves were back in the 1700's. All the way from their capture in Africa, across the ocean on those stinking ships, and then into the slave markets they were treated worse than animals; bought and sold. But listen, we were in the same boat spiritually, and God is going to graphically tell us what He saw in everyone of us, and it's not a very pretty picture.

God bought us out of that slave market. He set us free, cleaned us up, gave us a whole new wardrobe, put us in a beautiful place to live, and remember, I'm talking about the spiritual not the material now. He set our feet upon a Rock, gave us hope, and all we had to do for all of that was **believe the Gospel** (I Corinthians 15:1-4) for our salvation. Now then, how did God accomplish it? **With His Power!** You see, in order to buy a slave out of the slave market in Virginia back in the 1840's and 50's, you had to have money, you had to have some clout, influence. Then you could go down and buy slaves. Then they could take them home and do with them what they wanted. No doubt, there were benevolent slave holders and then there were some that were task masters. It took a certain amount of power in order to take somebody out of that slave market. Now, with God, it took all the power at His disposal to bring us out of Satan's slave market. And I'm going to be stressing as we come through these chapters of Romans, that **the power of God, the very same power that put everything out there in the universe was concentrated on everyone of us the moment we believed.** And it was His power that brought us out of the clutches of Satan's slave market. And so this is why you will see Paul constantly refer to "The power of God." Now verse 4 again:

Romans 1:4

"And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness (and what proved it?), by the resurrection from the dead:"

We touched on it a few weeks ago, when back in Acts Chapter 13, the Psalmist declared Him to be the only begotten Son.

Acts 13:33,34

"God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that (He was the only begotten Son) he raised him up from the dead,...'"

Remember, after looking at Acts 13:33,34, I brought you to Romans 1:4. These two passages show the very terminology of the **"Only begotten Son of God"** is not a reference to Bethlehem, but rather a reference to His Resurrection. That's when He became the truly only begotten Son of God. It was the power of Resurrection. Here again, I don't know the times I've had people in my classes come to me and say they have a **Sunday School teacher, or a pastor, or a friend who can believe that Christ died on a Roman Cross, but yet they have a problem with His Resurrection.** Listen, if we can't accept the fact that He was raised from the dead, we have nothing! We are totally lost, because His Resurrection from the dead is the very basis of His power.

Many lessons ago when we were in the Four Gospels, you may remember I made mention of the fact that there was one thing that changed the total attitude of the eleven disciples, who, at the time of His Crucifixion, scattered and ran for their lives out of fear. What changed that fear? The Resurrection! Because you see, after Christ rose from the dead, Peter never again would have kowtowed to a young maid and swore that he never knew Christ. Peter stood up to Rome and, as near as I can tell, all eleven of the apostles were martyred without fear. Why? Because of the truth of Resurrection. And it's the same way with us. We can say with Paul, that we don't have to worry what men can do to this body because they can't touch the invisible immortal part of us which one day is going to be resurrected. And this makes all the difference in the world as far as Christians are concerned, we have the hope of the power of Resurrection. First, in salvation out of deadness, as we will see in Ephesians Chapter 2:1

Ephesians 2:1

"AND you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;" How did He do it? The power of Resurrection! Back to the text:

Romans 1:5

"By whom (here Paul comes back with his apostleship again) we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith (there is only one) among all nations, for his name:"

Do you see the difference? For a moment, let's go to the Book of Matthew for sake of comparison that there is not a contradiction ever. There is just a change in the program. Back in Matthew Chapter 10, Jesus has just chosen the Twelve up around Galilee.

Matthew 10:5,6

"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, 'Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'"

Do you see how plain that is? They were directed only to the Nation of Israel, and throughout His three years of earthly ministry He Himself confined His ministry only to Israel, with only two

exceptions. That was the Roman centurion, and the Canaanite woman, who at first He even ignored, and the Twelve said send her away. Why? Because she was a Gentile. But now come back to Romans and you see it seems like a contradiction. but it isn't, because now God has set Israel aside and now God is going to go to the Gentiles. So now Paul can write:

Romans 1:5,6

"...for obedience to the faith among all nations (not just Israel), for his name. Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints; Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Called to be saints! Now a saint isn't someone who walks around with a halo around his head, or someone who is of sinless perfection. Far from that description. But a saint is someone who has believed what God has promised. Then by virtue of God's imputation, not of anything we have worked for or deserved, but by the act of imputation, God has imputed to us His righteousness simply because we believe. Strictly because of our faith in what He has said. God does that all on our behalf, and we will be looking at that more in-depth as we study the Book of Romans. In imputation, this fact that you and I deserve none of it, He has put it to our account. He has literally inundated us with everything that He has accomplished on our behalf. That's what it means to be a saint.

Romans 1:8

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world."

Now remember at the time Paul's writing the Roman Empire was pretty much the then-known world. I know a lot of people have wondered when I've said that I felt Paul's Gospel had penetrated all the way from Great Britain on the West across both shores of the Mediterranean Sea, and all the way out to the Ganges River of India (because that is as far as the Roman Empire extended), that if Rome was so pagan, and transportation was still relatively slow, how did it happen in that period of time?

Consider the chronology: Paul was converted about 37 A.D., he went for three years of that time to "God's personal seminary," as I call it. That takes you to approximately 40 A.D., then he goes up to his home town of Tarsus and begins his work among the Gentiles, and, of course, he always approaches the Jew first. Then in Acts chapter 15, we had that counsel in Jerusalem, where the Jews were now calling Paul on the carpet for having gone to Gentiles. Look at the time interval. From the time he begins his ministry among the Gentiles in his home town of Tarsus, till that counsel in Jerusalem, it's already 11 years, and see, in that 11-year period of time, he still hasn't written any of his epistles. But he has been seeing Gentiles brought into the Body of Christ.

He wrote his first Epistle to Thessalonica in about 54 A.D. Then four years later in 58 A.D. he writes the little letter of Galatians. Now remember, he has already been on his missionary journeys and established these Churches. But now he has to write to them to admonish them, and encourage them. Then I Corinthians is written in 59 A.D. and the next year he writes II Corinthians in about 60 A.D. Then the same year he writes this Book of Romans, and then four years later in 64 A.D. he writes from Rome in prison, under house arrest, to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and

Philemon. And then the next year while he's still under house arrest in Rome (that would be 65 A.D.), he writes I Timothy and Titus. Then in the last year of his life (probably martyred in either the end of 66 A.D. or the early part of 67 A.D.), he writes his final little Epistle to II Timothy, and that's the letter where he says in Chapter 4 the following:

II Timothy 4:6-8

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

I want you to remember that Paul has been ministering to Gentiles for about twenty-three years before he gets to Rome. That's a long time, and in that twenty-three year period the Book of Romans hasn't even been written yet. So never lose sight of all these things. This just didn't happen in a month or two, this was progressively taking place over the years. And it's the same way with his letters. Paul won't cover all the deep doctrines of Romans when he writes to the Thessalonians, and the further you come into Paul's revelations the deeper they get. And when you reach those final letters like Ephesians and Philippians, most people won't even touch them at all. But that's because it's so deep, it's a higher plane, and this is where God wants us to be, studying to show ourselves approved. He wants us to learn and grow. Back to the question I had earlier.

How did the Gospel get completely through the Roman Empire if Paul's in prison? I have a pet theory. The Roman Army was proud of the way they treated their troops. America is the same way. The Pentagon likes to feel they treat their military quite fairly. They are good at rotating their military personnel. The same way with the Romans. They didn't put some poor soldier at Paul's side, and let him rot there, but after a few weeks or months they would bring in several more to take turns guarding him. And knowing the Apostle Paul, by the time those Roman young men would come in and spend a few days chained to him, how did they leave? Believers! I have to believe that. Remember in another one of his letters it says that his Gospel had even penetrated the Roman Palace. We know Paul didn't, so how did it? By these Roman soldiers. They would go from Paul's house to maybe duty at the Roman Palace and Emperor. Maybe they went to India or Spain. But wherever these Roman soldiers went, if they had become believers, then they would take The Gospel with them to the ends of the earth. That's why he also says in the letter to Titus:

Titus 2:11

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath (past tense) appeared to all men." The Holy Spirit would never have permitted him to say that if it were not true. So from this one man Christianity just scattered throughout the whole Roman Empire. Now Romans 1:9:

Romans 1:9

"For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son (that's another thing that you want to watch for: the various terms that Paul puts on his Gospel. He will never call it the Gospel of the Kingdom, never! He will call it the Gospel of God, Gospel of His Son, My Gospel, The Gospel of the Grace of God, The Gospel of Christ, and so forth, but it's always uniquely Paul's Gospel), that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;"

Along with all of his preaching and teaching, Paul was a man of prayer. And I feel that every believer can also be if he wants to be. We can all be prayer warriors.

Romans 1:10,11

"Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you." He is writing this in about 60 A.D., and he's not going to get there until 63 A.D. So he is still writing from another point in the empire in reference to the day when he will get to Rome.

"For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;" Paul at this time had never been to Rome. The Roman congregation was established by the witnesses of other Gentile Believers. Not this apostle. And Paul recognizes that, but he wants to still have a part in it. Now verse 12:

Romans 1:12-15

"That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also."

Rome was just constantly on this man's heart, and God, of course, didn't permit it's fulfillment until he finally went as a prisoner.

Romans 1:16

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that (most people think many other words should be here rather than) believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

LESSON ONE * PART IV

INTRODUCING ROMANS CHAPTER 1:1-15

Once again we are going to go back to Romans Chapter 1, and pick up where we left off in verse 16. I would like to stress that when you start teaching the Book of Romans, you might not find it as exciting as maybe Genesis or some of the things in the Old Testament or prophecy, But when you get into the nitty gritty of today, and we teach Paul's Epistle, we are teaching where we are right now, today, and it's hard to keep people's attention, because they would rather be talking about something exciting out there in the future, and I can see that. But bear with me because this is what the Church today is about. And when I talk about the Church, I'm talking about that whole realm of people who claim to believe The Bible. I don't care what denominational handle they have. But when the Church gets back into the fundamentals of Paul, then I think we are going to see some exciting things happen in the Church. And if it doesn't, we won't see anything happen, because

things will get worse. Now Romans 1:16 and what a tremendous verse. Most kids learn it in Bible School, or Sunday School.

Romans 1:16a

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ:..."

Now the first thing we have to do is find out what the Gospel of Christ is according to Paul's writings. So come with us to I Corinthians Chapter 15. I'd like to mention an incident regarding this chapter and our TV program, and how a Sovereign God works. It involves just one little family; a husband, his wife and her mother. The chain of events began because one day in the middle of one of our tapings a gentleman came up to me and said, **"Les, it's been a long time since you mentioned I Corinthians 15, The Gospel by which we are saved. Isn't there any way to work it in for one of the lessons?"** So I digressed that next half-hour and spent the whole thirty minutes on The Gospel. We started with I Corinthians 15:1-4. When that program aired one Sunday, this little family was watching and it was exactly what they needed to hear. Weeks later, this young man called and said a unique thing had happened. After watching the program on The Gospel, they said, **"If only the other person of the family could have seen this."** Then, by God's Grace, that same station in Indianapolis just happened to play the same program the next Sunday also, and the individual who needed it was there. They were so thrilled that all of this had just clicked right together. Well, that's what makes all of this so exciting. Now let's look at the Gospel as outlined in I Corinthians Chapter 15, and beginning with verse 1. I never tire of repeating it, and I hope you never get tired of hearing it.

I Corinthians 15:1

"MOREOVER, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;"

"...wherein ye stand" is a positional term. That's why he writes in another place that we are not to be blown about with every wind of doctrine. Some people are so shallow in their understanding of Scriptures, that they see someone on television or someone can come to their door and they have a good line, and a nice approach, and they fall for it. We are supposed to be so well versed in the Scriptures that something like that won't happen. We are to be like an anchor, steadfast, immovable. Now verse 2.

I Corinthians 15:2,3

"By which also ye are saved (it's only by this Gospel that you are saved. It's not by something else), if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." And now here comes Paul's Gospel in verse 3:

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received (here he's talking about what we saw in Galatians in our last lesson, how that by revelation, "He made known unto me," Paul says. This is what the Lord revealed to him. We will find that Paul's Gospel is not based on the Judaistic Law, or just on the fact that Christ was the Messiah of Israel, but it's that The Messiah of Israel, The Son of God, died on that Roman Cross, shed His Blood, was buried and rose again, and here it is), how that

Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;" This was in the Old Testament. It was all in the pre-eternal mind of God, that all of this would fall into place.

I Corinthians 15:4-6a

"And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." That's the Gospel! And to prove that Christ rose from the dead we see in verse 5 and 6 the following.

"And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once;..."

Paul tells us that he also saw Him in person. Paul knew that He was alive. Now back to Romans 1:16. That's The Gospel - that Christ died for the sins of the world. And that's what Paul expressly desires to get across to people. It's so hard for people to comprehend that this is all they have to do. **Just believe the Gospel for Salvation.** If you really believe He will save you. Now you know that I'm not an easy believer. You know that. I'm not just talking about making a mental acknowledgment and you're all right. No, **what I'm talking about is a Holy Spirit driven belief, that my eternal destiny is based on what He did for me on that Cross.** And we will be seeing more and more of that, especially when we get into Romans Chapter 6, where Paul just begins to draw that simple analogy of a little seed that's planted in the ground, but before that plant can come forth, and bring forth fruit it must die first. So the whole analogy is that, **"When Christ died, we died. When He was buried, we were buried. When He arose from the dead, we also arose out of deadness in the old Adamic sin nature to a new life."** Verse 16 again:

Romans 1:16

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it (The Gospel, not our works, or denomination, not anything that we can do, but rather The Gospel) is the power of God unto salvation..."

One of the newer translations waters this down by using the word 'salvation' as a better way to heaven. Salvation is much more than a better way to heaven. Salvation is that all inclusive work of God on our behalf, whereby we are forgiven: He justifies us, He sanctifies us, He glorifies us, He baptizes us into the Body, He seals us with the Holy Spirit, He fills us with the Holy Spirit, and on and on you can go in all that was accomplished on your behalf by an act of God instantly the moment you believe. And you're not going to necessarily feel any of those things, but they have happened to you if you were genuine in your belief. But how do I know that these things have happened to me? The Book says so. And that's where faith comes in. That's what The Book means when it says we are saved by faith and are to live and walk by faith. Taking God at His Word. So, you just simply have to know what The Book says. When you come to Salvation, and say, "I don't understand this or feel any different," remember The Book says that it has happened. And that is what God is pleased by. Remember Hebrews 11:6:

Hebrews 11:6a

"But without faith it is impossible to please him:..."

You should be able to say, **"Yes, I know that I'm forgiven," not because I'm so perfect, or any better than anybody else, but simply because I believe what this Book says!** I can't make it any plainer than that. So when an individual realizes that he's in the cesspool of sin, in that old slave

market, and there is no hope of getting out, unless the power of God takes him out; God pulls him out of that deadness in sin, and gives him new life, sets his feet as the Scriptures say, "***On a Rock,***" and does all these things for him. That's what believing does! After that, you become a totally new person in your outlook on life, in your desires, and you don't work for that. Remember, you won't become a mature Christian overnight. It's going to take time. The Christian life is like coming into physical life. We come into the Christian life as a babe in Christ, just an infant that needs tender loving care. An infant that needs nourishment, and protection. That's what a new believer is.

But God doesn't expect a new believer to stay a babe in Christ. He expects them to begin to grow in Grace, and knowledge and wisdom. To grow in a new lifestyle. Over the years I've told my classes the basic fundamental aspect of a Christian life, the part that will immediately become visible to our friends and relatives, and yes, the whole community; a true born again child of God is going to be a good citizen. Have you ever thought of that? When we are a practicing believer, we will be a good citizen. In other words, you won't find a true child of God giving the police department fits. Now there may be isolated instances, that's always a possibility. But the basic believer will be a good citizen, and a good parent. He will be a good grandparent. He will be a good child. He will be a good teenager. Now that doesn't mean we are perfect. Nevertheless, we will be the kind of person that will enhance society. If you could have a community of 100% born again believers, then you would have a pretty decent place to live.

I'm not saying that it would be perfect. It's just like the local church, no church is perfect. I said on this program once, if it was perfect I'd like to find it, but I wouldn't dare join it because it would be no longer perfect. But, for the most part, God's power unto salvation has imparted all these things on our behalf and they will make us different. That doesn't give us the right to walk around like we are perfect, or better than everybody else. But what we have is an imputed position that God has accomplished on our behalf. We will look at that more in depth later in Chapter 3.

Romans 1:16b

"...for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

I said at the close of the last lesson that there were many things in there that normally people would think should be. Over the years, I have taught to be aware of what is **not** in Scripture that many of us think **should be**. Well, here is a good one. Let me read this verse the way a lot of people think it should have been written. **This is just an example: "For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that repents, and is baptized, joins the church, gives ten percent of his income, does good works, and believes."** But it doesn't say that does it? There are a lot of these things that people just automatically think are requirements for Salvation, and they're not! They are all right in their rightful place **after** Salvation. **But so far as our salvation is concerned it's based totally upon our faith in the Gospel, and what God has said concerning the finished work of the Cross.** Now verse 17:

Romans 1:17a

"For therein (that is, in the power of God in the Gospel) is the righteousness of God revealed (being unveiled)..."

Remember when Christ was hanging on the Cross, and when He finally gave up the ghost, as it says, what happened in the Temple? The veil was rent from the top to the bottom. What did that indicate? That now the way into the very Holy of Holies, the very presence of God, had been opened up and made available, not just to the High Priest on the Day of Atonement, but to everybody. And that is what we must understand, that when Christ died, He completely fulfilled everything that a Holy God could possibly demand. That's why when man tries to say, "But I've got to do this, or I've got to do that," then it's an embarrassment to God Himself, **because He said it's done!** Everything that we need has already been accomplished. Now completing the verse we find:

Romans 1:17

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'"

Now who are the just? Well, the justified ones. What was my best definition of justification? **That judicial act of God whereby He declares the believing sinner just as if he had never sinned.** Now that's the way God sees us. Remember, God hasn't changed and sin hasn't changed, it's still all that it ever was. But the whole sin problem began in Adam, and everyone of us, so far as God is concerned, were in Adam. That's the beginning of all of our troubles. We were in Adam, but when Christ died on the Cross, and we believe what He says about the Cross, then every believer is removed out of Adam, and placed in Christ. Do you see that difference? And now instead of God seeing us in that cesspool of sin which we were in Adam, now He only sees the righteousness and Holiness of Christ, because we're in Him. And if you're in Him, He doesn't see you at all. He sees Christ. Let me show you a verse in the Book of Colossians Chapter 3. Paul is writing to Gentile believers. He could just as well be writing to you and I in Oklahoma or wherever you are.

Colossians 3:1

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above (because we now have a whole new mental attitude about things), where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

Notice that Christ is not on the throne tonight, that's why I maintain that Christ is not the King of the Church. I've said that over and over. He's not on a throne tonight. He's not a King. In His title He's King of Kings and Lord of Lords, but experientially He's not on the throne, He's seated at the right hand of it. Now when He returns and sets up His earthly Kingdom, yes, then He will sit on His throne. Now reading on:

Colossians 3:2

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

You see that's what has happened to the Christian community today, they are not setting their affection on things above, they are setting their affections on material things. I read a book by an Indian missionary (and I'm sure many of you have heard of him), where he was decrying the wealth of the Christian community in America compared to the abject poverty of Christians in India. I could see his point. He said he came here and visited a great Church in one of our huge cities, and was appalled at the sumptuousness of the whole set-up. I am, too. Whenever I go into some of these places, I am just appalled at the money that is being poured into these beautiful buildings that

someone can come in and sit for thirty minutes and enjoy, be entertained, and then go home and forget about it for a week. I personally don't think God is pleased with that. And this was the point that this missionary was making. That over in India those poor little pastors would just exist on almost nothing for the sake of getting The Gospel to those towns and villages. In this light, we are to set our affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

Colossians 3:3

"For ye are dead (that is to the old Adam, that which we were born in. The nature that is rebellious against God, and sinful in all of its appetite. Oh, we try to clean it up, and try to keep it in check with a good home upbringing. That's why so many of our younger generation are adrift tonight, this is why so many have no principles, and are in trouble with the law. That old Adamic nature is free for the most part. But Paul says we are dead to that as believers), and your life is hid (if the God that created this universe hides something, then I guarantee you that no one but He will ever find it. Isn't that right? And that's where we are. We have been hidden by an act of the Almighty God. But look where He hid us) with Christ in God."

That brings to mind an old walnut. That old walnut falls off the tree and here's that big outer shell, and the only way you can get down to the next shell is to break off the outer one. Then you get down to the real tough part, and break that shell, and then way down in the crevices are the meat of the walnut. Every time I break open one I have to say, **"Thank you Lord that's me."** I'm inside that shell hidden in the crevices where no one but God can find me. And that's you and I. Satan and the world can't get at us there, no one can touch us, we're hidden with Christ in God! Can't you go to sleep knowing that? Now that's assurance, that's a promise. I don't feel some outer covering around me. I'm just as vulnerable and so are you, but faith tells me that this is the way it really is. Because this is what God has said. And God is looking for your faith, you're believing Him, you're telling Him, "Yes God You said it and I believe it!" Now back to Romans, and closing verse 17 we find:

Romans 1:17b

"...The just shall live by faith."

Now what great reformer came to that sudden realization? Martin Luther. Do you remember when Martin Luther began the Reformation? What was his great eye opening statement? Just that! "The just shall live by faith." Not all the rituals that he had been inundated with, not all the do's and don'ts of religion. But it was to be by faith and faith alone. And you see when we come into Romans Chapter 4, this is what Paul is going to say about Abraham. He lived by faith!

LESSON TWO * PART I

MANIFOLD RESULTS OF SALVATION: ROMANS 1:16

Let's pick up where we were at the close of the last lesson. I mentioned in the last lesson the word 'salvation' there in Romans 1:16:

Romans 1:16

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation..."

I've made the comment that sometimes new versions just totally water down that word 'Salvation,' and even multitudes of church people do not really comprehend what is in the one word **"Salvation."** Most people think of Salvation as just a fire escape, and that means that they are going to escape going to hell, and they are going to Heaven when they die. But you see the word 'salvation' implies so much more than that. I mentioned in our last lesson that I certainly didn't have time to list all the words and their aspects of Salvation in a 30 minute study. But I would like to take time and run Scripture on some of these words that are associated with the word 'Salvation.' It may take all four lessons to just define that one word. So let's start back in I Corinthians Chapter 15, because salvation is based upon the Gospel, and again, there is only one portion of Scripture that lays out the Gospel so completely and clearly, and yet so simply in these first four verses. When Paul refers to the Gospel this is what he is referring to.

I Corinthians 15:1-3a

"MOREOVER, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand (that is positionally); By which also ye are saved (nothing else saves us), if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received,..."

Now always remember, Paul is so adamant about not receiving his Gospel from the earthly ministry of Christ. He did not go back down to Jerusalem and check in with the Twelve. But instead he had his own private seminary training with the ascended Lord from heaven, out there on the desert. And when he came away from that experience he begins these doctrines of Grace. I have also been so stringent in maintaining that our Gospel has to come primarily from the writings of this Apostle, because he is revealing things that are revealed to him from The Lord after His Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension, from where He is now seated at the Father's right hand. So always keep that in mind. In fact the Book of Hebrews Chapter 6:1 tells us:

Hebrews 6:1a

"THEREFORE leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ,..."

Now what does that mean? Well you don't just stay there, those are elementary principles, and you don't stay in the elementary, you move on. I've always used the analogy of our high school in our secular education. There is no way you can go into higher mathematics if you haven't had third and fourth grade arithmetic. It's utterly impossible. But you don't stay in third and fourth grade arithmetic, you move on, building on what you have learned. And it's the same way with the Scriptures. You must keep moving on to further revelations and move from Christ's earthly ministry to the much deeper things that He revealed to the Apostle Paul. Now when the Apostle Paul says that he is referring us to what he has received, then we must sit up and take notice. Now, reading on about the Gospel in I Corinthians. Verse 3 again:

I Corinthians 15:3,4

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins... And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:"

It was all back there in the Old Testament. It was all prophesied, but it was never really explained. No one understood, but now it comes out so plain that when He died, He died for the sins of the world, as full payment for the sin penalty. But He didn't stay dead, He arose from the dead victorious over sin and Satan and death and Hell! And because He lives, we live. So that's the Gospel, **"That He died for our sins, was buried, and rose again."** Now while we are in I Corinthians, let's back up a few pages to Chapter 1. Remember, this is all Paul knows throughout all his Epistles. The preaching of what He calls my Gospel, the Gospel of the Grace of God, the Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of God, and that's all he knows. Now in I Corinthians Chapter 1, if you will come down to verse 18 you will see what I'm talking about.

I Corinthians 1:18

"For the preaching of the cross (do you see that?) is to them that perish foolishness (it doesn't mean anything, and we will see how the world treats this Gospel a little later in Chapter 1); but unto us which are saved it (The Gospel, the preaching of the Cross) is the power of God."

I can't emphasize the power of God enough. Because this flies in the face of reformers. This flies in the face of good works people. There are so many people who think and preach that you have to earn your way into heaven. How can anyone even think that way There is nothing that we can do but take what God has offered. Now let's drop down to verse 23:

I Corinthians 1:23

"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block (overall they never could accept Who He said He was), and unto the Greeks foolishness;"

With all their high level intellectual philosophy, they were to believe that this humble carpenter from Nazareth accomplished everything that Paul says He accomplished. Foolishness! But now verse 24:

I Corinthians 1:24

"But unto them which are called (the true believer), both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

See, that's a power that man can't even begin to touch. And we are going to see it's a power that has been exercised on our behalf that we can't explain except by faith. Let's look at a couple of verses and one of them is in the Book of Ephesians Chapter 1. Remember, Paul always wrote to believers, and for the most part Gentile believers. So he says to the Ephesian believers what he could just as well be writing to believers today:

Ephesians 1:13

"In whom ye also trusted (believed), after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation (believing that Christ died, was buried and rose again): in whom also after that ye believed (notice there is nothing else added, only believe), ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."

My, what a loaded verse! You know I've had people almost drop their eye teeth as I read this verse. Most will tell you that this flies in the face of everything that they have been taught since infancy. But there is nothing in here that can deal with an infant. An infant can't believe or understand the

Gospel. This is something that someone has to be old enough to know right and wrong and that they are a sinner and need Salvation. They must be old enough to understand The Gospel that Christ died for them. Do you see that? And then after they have heard The Gospel and believed it, then God moves in and He seals us with the Holy Spirit of promise. Now before we go back to Romans let's turn to II Peter for a verse. This is a verse we look at periodically, because it's also such a loaded verse, and you very seldom see anyone use this verse because they are afraid of it or don't understand it at all. This is at the end of his ministry and shortly before he is martyred. Paul's Gospel has been on the scene now a good many years, and even though I think Peter had a hard time comprehending it at the beginning (and he still hasn't really gotten the full knowledge of it), he knows at least enough to tell us this much:

II Peter 3:15a

"And account (or understand) that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation;..."

That's the whole theme of this Book from the time man is created, and falls in Genesis Chapter 3, all the way to the end of this Book. It is a Book that is trying to bring about the salvation of a fallen human race. The whole theme of this Book! And in that regard you can find Christ in one form or another on almost every page from cover to cover. Because this is God's main concern that the human race can find salvation, that's why He has done so much. Verse 15 again:

II Peter 3:15,16

"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things (what things? Salvation, and all that attends it); in which are some things hard to be understood,..."

Get back into Peter's shoes. Peter was steeped in Judaism, steeped in legalism, steeped in Temple worship, steeped in all the Covenant promises coming out of the Old Testament for the Nation of Israel. Then for him to all of a sudden have to admit that God was not dealing anymore with the Nation of Israel on the Covenant promises, but instead, He is out to bring Salvation to the whole human race. That was unthinkable for him (reference Galatians 2:7-9). So Peter has a hard time with Paul's Gospel, and I know he did. And even here at the close of his life, he's still hedging just a little bit.

II Peter 3:16b

"...which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest (or twist), as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

You know I pointed out to the class last night, how many times can you take a rank liberal, or someone from a different religion all together, and they can speak of the Lord, and the Holy Spirit, and make you think that they know what they are talking about, and they know nothing. But they use all the right words, and that's what Peter means here, that they twist the Scripture to their own destruction. Let's go back to Romans Chapter 1, verse 16 again:

Romans 1:16a

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;..."

Most people think it says to everyone that repents, is baptized and joins the church, but it doesn't. Or to everyone that does good. Or to everyone that keeps the commandments. You see, it doesn't say any of those things, **but only to everyone that believeth the Gospel.** Now why do I stress that from program to program? Let's go for a moment to the Book of Hebrews Chapter 11:6 We haven't looked at this verse in a long time. If only humanity could understand this. But the majority completely ignore it. They walk it underfoot:

Hebrews 11:6

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

So what does God look for first and foremost? Faith! And when God doesn't see faith there is nothing that He can do. You can go all the way back to Cain and Abel, and I imagine that Cain was probably a better guy than Abel was. He probably had a more noble personality, and a harder worker, but what was his problem? **No Faith!** He didn't believe what God said. **Abel did!** Esau and Jacob are another perfect example. Esau was probably a better man than Jacob, so far as worldly views were concerned, but why couldn't God use Esau? **No Faith!** He didn't believe a thing concerning what God had said. The Nation of Israel, what was God's constant controversy with that nation? They wouldn't believe Him. After all that He had done on their behalf, and the visible manifestation of His power, yet they just couldn't believe. He said, **"Why didn't they enter into their rest? Because of unbelief!"** What's the problem with the world tonight? It certainly isn't the lack of technology, or education and intelligence, and the ability to read. What's the problem then? They can't believe it when they read it, or hear it. No Faith! And when there is no faith, you cannot even get close to pleasing God! It's impossible. Back to Romans once again.

Romans 1:16b

"...to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

Now naturally, when Paul began his ministry back in the Book of Acts, we found that everywhere he went, he went to the Jew first in the synagogues. It was a logical place to start. Because after all, Israel had been the Covenant people of God, they had been steeped in the Word of God. They were the very writers of this Book, and so it was very logical that was the place to start. But after about thirty-some years, and they continued to reject it, Paul comes to that final statement, and says, **"From henceforth we go to the Gentiles."** And so for the past 1900 + years, this precious Gospel has been going primarily to the Gentiles, but it's still open to a Jew. However, he now is going to have to come the same way we do because Paul says **over and over in the Book of Romans that there is no difference.**

I've told my classes over and over that we know that from the very beginning of His dealing with the Nation of Israel, God called out Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the first thing He let them know was that He was going to set the Nation apart. They were to be a sanctified, set apart nation of people. You get into the Exodus with the Nation preparing to come out of Egypt, and the first three plagues also came upon Israel along with the Egyptians. But after that, He put a division between Israel and Egypt where none of the plagues could touch Israel. And He did that to prove His power.

And so He put that division between them. And that was the beginning then of this great separation that God put between the Jew and the Gentile. And this continued all the way up through the Old Testament. He was dealing primarily with those Covenant people, the Nation of Israel. But they were `stiffnecked' (as the Scriptures called them), they were steeped in unbelief, and finally God had to let the Temple be destroyed in 70 A.D. Then the Nation was dispersed, the land was emptied of them.

And that brings a thought today. **Why can't our politicians seem to understand that Palestine has always been the home of the Jew?** They sure don't act like they understand? They act as if the Jew is the impostor, the carpetbagger, the squatter. That's the way they treat the Jew today. That's his home land, and you can't take that away from him. But God providentially uprooted them, because of their unbelief; but at the same time that He uprooted them, what did He promise them? That He would bring them back again. All the Old Testament screams of that. And we should be aware it, that indeed God is still going to deal with His national people of Israel.

Romans 1:17

"For therein (that refers to the word `salvation' in verse 16) is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written (And then quoting from Hab. 2:4, we find), `The just shall live by faith.'"

Martin Luther finally came to this conclusion. He was cloistered in a Catholic monastery, and then all of a sudden the light shone in, and what did Martin Luther conclude? **"The just shall live by faith."** Not by works, not by religion, or ritual, but by faith. So that became his great theme of the Reformation. I think Christianity has come close to losing it again. We are all wrapped up in works, and materialism, and do this and do that. We have a program for everything. We are losing the whole idea that the just shall live by faith. And if you have heard me teach for a period of time, you know that I have a clear cut definition of the word faith. And what is it? **"Taking God at His Word."** That is all faith is! Let's go back to the Book of Hebrews and look at the Scripture's own definition of The Word. Turn to Chapter 11, the great faith chapter.

Hebrews 11:1-3

"NOW faith is the substance (it's the very core, it's the epitome) of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (things you can't touch and see). For by it the elders (Old Testament saints) obtained a good report. Through faith (by taking God at His word) we understand (and know) that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. " We are dealing with the invisible, and the only way we can comprehend the invisible is how? By faith!

LESSON TWO * PART II

MANIFOLD RESULTS OF SALVATION: ROMANS 1:16

We are still dealing with the word `salvation' coming out of Romans 1:16. So when we are through with the word `salvation' we will go back and pick up in Romans 1:18. **I probably have 12 or 13 aspects on my mind that we need to cover.** The **"imputed righteousness"** of God is involved in

the plan of salvation. In other words the moment we believe, God, by an act of imputation, covered us, or gave to our account his righteousness. It's none of ours, but rather all of His. We can pick this up in Romans Chapter 3 and let's start at 19:

Romans 3:19

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law (now who was under the law? The Jew, Israel, Judaism, Temple worship): that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

How far out does the Law reach? Everybody. It was given to the Jew, he practiced it, it was his religion, and his approach to God. But the Law as we understand the Law, primarily the Ten Commandments, didn't stop with the Jew; it reached out to every last human being, not to save them, because the Law couldn't save a Jew either. But only to condemn! This is where people have totally misconstrued the role of the Law. It was never intended to save a Jew, all it was ever to do was show him his guilt. **The Law was on cold tables of stone.** It wasn't anything that you would like to embrace and hold to your breast. It just sat there, and could do nothing to help that person keep it, and it could do nothing to help someone keep from stealing or anything that it names. All it could do is condemn, guilty, guilty, guilty. And it didn't just stop with the Jew, but it convicts the Gentiles just as thoroughly as it does the Jew. Reading on:

Romans 3:20

"Therefore by the deeds of the law (in other words, by doing what the law commanded, by doing good) there shall no flesh be justified in his sight (the law can't do anything to justify a person): for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Jesus took the law even further. He took it where no one could wiggle out from under it. He said even if you think a wrong, then you've broken the Law.

Romans 3:21

"But (here comes the flip side, remember we are under a whole difference set of circumstances. Christ has died and paid the sin debt. He's been buried, and raised from the dead, and ascended to the Father's right hand, and He's interceding for us) now the righteousness of God (not the individual) without the law is (do you see that? That just puts legalism out in the cold) manifested (being put under the spot light), being witnessed by the law and the prophets (the Old Testament)."

I remember years ago a group of men approached me, and they wanted me to help them start a work in the ministry, and the first thing they told me as we began to visit about some of the things, was that they didn't want any Old Testament taught. I just stopped that conversation, and said I was going home, because I had nothing to teach if I couldn't use the Old Testament. You've got to use the whole Bible because the Scripture all dovetails together. Paul says it so beautifully here. That even though the law has nothing to do with our salvation with the imputing of righteousness from God to us, yet everything that you and I enjoy in this Age of Grace rests on what took place back there in the Old Testament. Now verse 22:

Romans 3:22

"Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe (do you see that? People don't like that, they want to add something else to that little word.

They will always say they've got to do this or that. No you don't - **you believe**. Now when I talk about believing I'm talking about really believing. I'm not talking about a head knowledge. I'm talking about when you get to the place that you can rest on these things, and can say, "I believe it with all my heart, I have no doubt. I may not understand it, but I believe it for my salvation"): *for there is no difference.*"

Paul again is referring to Jew and Gentile. What does it mean to have imputed righteousness? Let's go all the way back to the first man that experienced it. We find that in Genesis Chapter 3. The man who plunged the whole human race under the curse and made everyone of us a sinner by birth. He was also the first one to experience imputed righteousness, that God alone could impute. Now remember, that word 'imputed' was a bookkeeping term in Paul's day. And it was like putting it to the account.

Genesis 3:21

"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins (that implies a sacrificial animal. He had to kill an animal to get their skins, and that of course satisfied the requirement of a blood sacrifice which we know that He demanded. This we will see later in Chapter 4 with Abel. So He kills the sacrificial animals, uses their skins to provide Adam and Eve's clothing, to take the place of the fig leaves that were their idea), and clothed them."

Now many people read that and think that it was just the physical clothing that he put on them. We are dealing with the spiritual phenomena here, and it's the restoration of Adam and Eve back into a relationship with their Creator. And it had to be the bloodbought way, and that's why he had to kill the animal. The only way God can receive lost persons is by the shedding of blood.

Hebrews 9:22

"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission." Never has been, nor will be. We don't hear much about the blood anymore, but that doesn't take it away. So Adam and Eve have an imputed righteousness that clothed them. You may say, "How do you get that?" It is explained so beautifully in Isaiah Chapter 61. This is exactly what Adam and Eve experienced even as Isaiah did. An imputed covering clothing of God's righteousness.

Isaiah 61:10

"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he (God) hath clothed me with the garments of salvation (Salvation is always used the same way. For example, someone is about to go bankrupt, but a rich uncle dies, and leaves him a lot of money. What's the death of that uncle? It's the salvation of this old boy that's about to go broke. All of a sudden he's made whole. That's what salvation has always meant, it's bringing someone out of a destitute place), he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness,..."

And isn't that what we read in verse 22 of Romans 3? He covers us. You and I can't look at each other and see our own righteousness. It's impossible. But when God looks at us He doesn't see my righteousness or yours, but God sees His own righteousness. The imputed righteousness that He has provided. That just leaves us out of the picture all together. There is nothing we can do for our

salvation but believe it. We must keep our hands off, and that's hard for a lot of us to do. Now reading that verse again:

Isaiah 61:10

"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."

Even the plainest of girls is always beautiful when? At her wedding! We've been to a lot of weddings, and I have never seen a bride that wasn't beautiful. And I think that's why the Scripture uses that analogy. When God looks at us He sees something beautiful, but remember he doesn't see us but rather Himself. Now back to Romans Chapter 3. The same thing that happened to Adam and Isaiah, has happened to us if we are believers. And that is that He has covered us with an **"imputed righteousness."** **His righteousness** and not our own. The Scriptures tell us that our righteousness is as filthy rags. And you and I don't even want to think what a filthy rag was in the Scriptural account. But God sees His own righteousness. Now after we have imputed righteousness as part of our salvation we are **'justified.'** And we find justified in verse 24.

Romans 3:24

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:"

We are justified freely without paying anything for it. And my definition of justification is a judicial act of God as the judge sitting on the bench, and that act of God looked down on you and I, the believing sinner, now entering into this great plan of salvation, and He says, **"That because you have believed the Gospel, I now declare you just as if you have never sinned."** Now that's justification! Oh that's hard for people to swallow. We will come to another one just a little later, **'Forgiven.'** Why can God justify us? Because we are forgiven. How can He forgive us? Because we're justified. And it is all rolled together, and is all involved in that one word **'Salvation.'** Which, of course, is prompted by **The power of God.** Nothing that man can do. Let's read the verse again:

Romans 3:24a

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption..."

We have also been **'redeemed,'** and what does that mean? We are bought with a price that has been paid by Someone. Redemption still holds that same definition even today. If you have hocked something at the pawn shop, and all of a sudden you come along with enough bucks to go back to get it, what do you have to do? You have to redeem it. You have to buy it back, and that's the picture of the human race all through Scripture. Adam fell, and God lost the human race, so what did He have to do? He had to redeem it. And the only way He could redeem it was to pay the price. **And Peter says at the close of his life in his little Epistle that you haven't been redeemed with silver and gold, but rather by the precious Blood of Christ.** That's the price of redemption. If you don't like the blood, then don't expect to be redeemed. **Without the shedding of blood there can be no remission.**

God isn't some Santa Clause up there that we can manipulate, and there are a lot of people who think He is. He isn't! God is absolute, He's Sovereign, He's Holy, He's just, and it's going to be done

His way, or no way at all. So He has laid down some of the basic truths, and I don't care if the liberals do throw it out. Let them. They are the ones that are going to suffer the loss. But we had better hang on to the fundamentals. There are some things that have to be fundamental. You go into the professionals, and we have plenty of professional people here, if they digress away from the fundamentals of their profession, and I don't care what it is, where are they going to end up? Probably in court with a liability cause. You have to stay with the fundamentals in whatever you're doing or you're in trouble. And it's the same way with this Book. We have to rest on these basic fundamentals, and one of them is, **"Without faith it's impossible to please God"** and the second one is, **"Without the shedding of blood there can be no remission."** Those are fundamentals and so now we are **redeemed**, we're bought back with the precious Blood of Christ.

Let's look at a couple of other verses so that we don't just depend on one. Let's go back to the Book of Ephesians Chapter 1. And this is what The Book says. Remember, here in Ephesians the phrase "in Christ" is used over 90 times.

Ephesians 1:7

"In whom (speaking of Christ) we have redemption through his blood (there is no other way), the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Notice how these words all fit together to fill that word **'salvation.'** And every one of these words we have discussed and will be discussing, can you take them and handle them? Can you lay them out on a table, or put them under a microscope? No, not one of them. They are all intangible, they are all invisible, so how do we know they happen? By faith, and faith alone. That's the only way I know I have been forgiven. I don't have any great plaque on my wall at home from God that tells me I'm forgiven. Or any decree that says, **"Hey, Les, you're justified, you're redeemed."** None of us have any thing like that. What do we have? The promises of this Book. It says it and because The Book says it, then I know that it's happened. You just claim these verses. You just say, **"Now God, this is what You said, and I believe it."** And God increases that faith, and the more faith we have the more we can believe it, and that's how we grow in Grace and knowledge. Now let's look at another one in Colossians Chapter 1. We're still dealing with the aspect of redemption.

Colossians 1:14

"In whom we have (past tense, it's an absolute, this is it!) redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:"

So we are a forgiven people. You know I'm always warning people that when we talk about believers coming before the judgment seat of Christ, I imagine there are a lot of believers that think that somehow sin is going to be dealt with at the judgment seat of Christ. No way. You will never face your sin when you come up into glory. **Your sins have been judged already, they were judged there at the Cross.** They are under the Blood. **We will come before His judgment seat only to see what rewards we have, for how we have behaved as a believer down here.** The judgment seat is never intended to determine your eternal destiny. My, if you haven't gotten it by that time you never will have, and you won't be in heaven in the first place.

Now the Great White Throne Judgment is a different story. That's going to be only for the lost of all ages. Cain and everyone else who has been rebellious, and has had no faith. No believer will be at

that judgment, and no lost person will be at the judgment seat of Christ. We are going to be there because we have been redeemed and we have been bought with a price.

Now let's touch on **'forgiven.'** What does it mean to be forgiven? Well it means that God has wiped the slate clean. He no longer has a controversy with you and I as a sin problem between us and Him. It's done! Now granted, in our Christian walk we are going to fail, we're going to sin, and fall, but that isn't what God is dealing with in salvation. That's something else. **After** we are a child of God, He will deal with our daily sins, and failures by the matter of confession. And He's going to recognize, **"Yes, you are forgiven"** all sins. You mean what I commit tomorrow has already been forgiven? That's what the Scriptures say. Does that give me license? Absolutely not. You know that. I have never advocated that. I read a great theologian's book out of London, and he said in that book, **"If you really teach and preach the Gospel of Grace as Paul did, then you are going to be accused from time to time of teaching that people who are saved have licenses to sin."** That is just part of the criticism. Paul said the same thing. **"I've been slanderously reported"** But we must understand that God's Grace was so great that He forgave past, present, and future based on His Grace, but that's not license. We still have to walk, and work, pleasing in His sight. Don't tell me you can go out and commit gross sins and still be pleasing in His sight. That's absolutely not Scriptural.

LESSON TWO * PART III

MANIFOLD RESULTS OF SALVATION: ROMANS 1:16

Let's begin with our definition of salvation. We've listed several words connected with salvation, so we'll continue with that study. **"The next item that God did on our behalf the moment we believed, is that God reckoned us as crucified with Christ."** This isn't a progressive unfolding upon us. This an act of God instantaneously the moment we believed, and what makes this term **"Salvation"** so fantastic. God has done all of this without even checking me out to see if I'm worthy of it! So as we study these words associated with salvation, remember these are acts of God, no man can touch them. He alone has done it all! Crucifixion aims at only one thing - death! So you and I as believers have been in the mind of God, put to death. He had to do it that way, because this goes back to the very first law that God gave to the human race, when He told Adam and Eve, and Ezekiel the following:

Genesis 2:17

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Then He puts it in just a slightly different way to Ezekiel: *"The soul that sinneth shall surely die."*

So if God's law has determined that every human being is a sinner because we are sons of Adam, then it means that every human being has to die. I don't know if it's the right term or not but I've often called it a loophole. A loophole is when the law says such and such, but smart lawyers find a way to get through it or around it. Well, God has given us a tremendous loophole to His first law, **"The soul that sinneth shall surely die."** And that loophole was that **He died in our place**, but we

still have to experience the same death that He experienced in the Person of Christ. And we called that substitution. Now Romans Chapter 6:

Romans 6:6a

"Knowing this, that our old man..."

Many people don't know what the Scripture is talking about when it calls us the old man. Well, it's the old Adamic nature that we are born with that is bent to rebellion. I've said: "**You take that sweet innocent little new born baby, how soon will he or she sin?**" Just as quick as they can. They will show it one way or another even in their total innocence. That little Adamic nature pops up, and they show fits of anger. Then when they get a little older, they can lie like the dickens. Did you teach them to lie? No! Where did it come from? That old Adamic nature. And when they get older still, they will start using bad language. Did you teach them? Probably not, but they know how to use it. Where did they get it? The old nature. And so we are all born with that old Adamic nature, which sins before we are old enough to know what's what. And what is the decree? It has to die. God has demanded it. But here is the loophole. Reading verse 6 again:

Romans 6:6

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified (it's put to death) with him (Christ), that the body of sin (the controlling factor of old Adam) might be destroyed (or put out of commission, it has to have that power over us totally broken. No human endeavor can do that. Only the power of God can break the control of our old Adamic nature. We can't do it. Oh, to a degree maybe. With Godly parents and a good home life, we can teach kids a certain amount of restraint and teach them not to do certain things, but there comes a point in the best person's life when they're still going to give in to the control of old Adam. The only way we can be delivered is that Adam has to die), that henceforth we should not serve sin." God in a substitutionary manner died my death, He died your death in your place. Paul makes that plain in Galatians Chapter 2.

Galatians 2:20a

"I am crucified with Christ (do you see that? It's just as plain as it can be): nevertheless I live (Paul wasn't actually nailed to a Roman Cross, but he was crucified, and he's alive); yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:..."

That's called the new life. The new creation he speaks of in II Corinthians Chapter 5. We are a new creation. Why? Because old Adam has been put to death, he's crucified, his power over our daily behavior has been broken, and he's dead. And that's what Paul experienced when he said:

Galatians 2:20

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh (day by day, as we endure the things of this world) I live by the faith (or faithfulness) of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

It's because of what Christ accomplished on our behalf, and what He is to us in our everyday experiences that we are able to cope. And so it's through Christ's faithfulness, and not ours. And when He said He gave Himself for me, then that's substitutionary, and an act of God. **So that when**

Christ hung on that Cross, and died, who else did God see in Christ? Every believer! And that is how we are reckoned as crucified. I didn't make it up, The Book says it. I know that's the way God looks at it! **He said so!** So it's a matter of faith again. We just can't comprehend these things, except through the eyes of faith. That when He died, you and I died. When He lay in the tomb, for all divine purposes, God saw you and I in the tomb; dead to the old life, and ready for Resurrection to the new. Now let's turn to the Book of Ephesians Chapter 2. This is a natural follow up, this is written to every believer.

Ephesians 2:1

"AND you hath (past tense) he quickened (Made alive! Why did He have to make us alive? Because He crucified us. He put old Adam to death on the Cross, He reckoned us in the tomb, but He couldn't leave us there anymore than He could have left Christ in the tomb. Our faith would be for nothing had He not risen from the dead, but He also made us alive), who were dead to trespasses and sins;" Now verse 5:

Ephesians 2:5

"Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved;)"

Do you see how plain that is? Do you believe it? You had better, because that is what The Book says. And so He has quickened us together with Christ, and not by works, or by joining something, but by Grace. The unmerited favor of God accomplished all these things. So it's by Grace you are saved.

Ephesians 2:6

"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:"

You don't feel like you are sitting together in heaven tonight do you? I don't either, but we are so far as God is concerned. We are already seated in the heavenlies in the Person of Christ. This is beyond comprehension. But The Book declares it, and we had better believe it! God already sees us as together with Him in the heavenlies. Then verses 8 and 9 are favorites of many believers.

Ephesians 2:8,9

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Remember this is a gift, and we don't have to work for it. Wouldn't heaven be a boring place if every believer you met would collar you and say, "**Hey, can I tell you what I did to get here?**" That wouldn't be heaven. But that isn't going to happen. **Every believer is going to say the same thing, "I'm here for one reason, the finished work of the Cross, Faith plus nothing."** Then we don't have any room to boast. Even if you said it's faith plus working to keep it, then you could boast on what you did to keep your salvation. No! We have to reckon that God has done everything, and we have done nothing but appropriate it by faith. Amazing Grace! Turn to II Corinthians Chapter 5. This is the nitty gritty of everyday Christian living. This is what every believer has to set his hooks into to strengthen his faith, and not be blown about with every wind of doctrine. This is fundamental, and it all began with what God did on our behalf.

II Corinthians 5:14,15

"For the love of Christ constraineth us (it drives us on); because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." The Gospel plain as day.

But Grace is not a license. Just because God has declared us **forgiven, justified, redeemed, and reconciled**, that doesn't mean we can live as we please, but it brings a love requirement, such a debt for such love that we should want to do all we can to please Him.

II Corinthians 5:16

"Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more."

Paul is referring to Christ's earthly ministry. Was any of this taught in the Four Gospels? No, because this is all based on His death, burial, and Resurrection, and that hadn't happened yet. They couldn't teach doctrine based on His death, burial, and Resurrection. So I maintain you won't find any of this in the Four Gospels. It's impossible. I know men were justified in the Old Testament, but not on the same basis as you and I are under Grace. So Paul says he doesn't even look back at Christ's earthly ministry. That isn't where our doctrines lie. Paul and Christ were about the same age. I'm sure that Saul of Tarsus (that religious Jew) was fretting and fuming every time someone came to the Temple area and told him what Jesus was doing. Oh, Paul knew all about Him, as he says in verse 16. Even though he never had a personal contact so far as we know from Scripture, he knew all about Him. Now verse 17, and this is the verse I wanted to bring you to.

II Corinthians 5:17

"Therefore (because of His work of the Cross) if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (creation): old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

In other words, when old Adam dies, God imparts to us a new divine nature. And that new nature, beloved, cannot sin, because it's divine. It is placed there by an act of God, but we still have the old flesh, the old Adam that is still capable of tripping us up, but so far as the new nature is concerned, **"No it can't sin."** Verse 18:

II Corinthians 5:18

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;"

We hear a lot about reconciliation lately, broken families, and homes. What's the best thing that can happen usually? To be reconciled. To be brought back together, and into full fellowship. It's a lot like redemption. In redemption you have lost control of something. And the only way you can gain control is to buy it back. Someone that has need of reconciliation has been separated, and this is what God wants to do with the whole human race.

II Corinthians 5:19

"To wit (that is to say), that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

I maintain that when Christ died, He paid the sin debt for every human being that ever lived. No one need wake up in eternal doom, and say, "**Well, God didn't supply my needs.**" Yes He did! I gave this illustration once. A man had committed a murder, and was convicted and sentenced to death. While he was waiting in death row to pay for his crime the governor of the state pardoned him and wrote a pardon for him. In the man's anger and rebellion he tore up his pardon and stomped it on the floor, not realizing what it was. So he went to the gallows to be hanged. Just before the trap door was to be opened they asked him if he had anything to say. He said, "**Yes, tell the world I'm not dying for murdering a man, I'm dying because I rejected my pardon.**" That's exactly where every human being is. They have all been pardoned. They have been reconciled, they've had everything done on their behalf that needed to be done, but some don't believe it. They stomp it underfoot. And so they will go to their eternal doom, not because of their sins, but rather their "**UNBELIEF!**" **They have rejected the pardon.** They refuse to hear The Gospel by which they are saved. The pity of it is that He has reconciled the world to Himself. Now reading verse 19 again:

II Corinthians 5:19

"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;..."

I think too many people think that lost people are going to go out to their doom because of their sins. Now that will enter into it no doubt, because they will be judged at the Great White Throne according to the books. Plural. But it isn't their sins that's condemning them, **but their unbelief.** Turn to Hebrews for a graphic illustration. In Chapter 3 we find Paul rehashing the activity of Israel when they rejected the Land of Promise at Kadesh Barnea. God had promised He would send hornets ahead of them to drive out the Canaanites. By the time Israel was ready to settle, the Canaanites would be moving out ahead of them. But the children of Israel rejected it. They said, "**No, we can't take the land, we are like grasshoppers in their sights. The cities are walled, we can't defeat the Canaanites.**" So they wept that night and all the next day. The Land was in front of them, but they couldn't take it. What it all boiled down to we see at the end of this chapter:

Hebrews 3:15-19

"While it is said, 'To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom swear he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that (had sinned so grossly? No but rather because they) believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.'" This all happened at Kadesh Barnea with the incident of the twelve spies.

LESSON TWO * PART IV

MANIFOLD RESULTS OF SALVATION: ROMANS 1:16

Let's continue with our definitions of salvation. Those things that are part and parcel of our Salvation. All the things that God did instantaneously the moment we believed. None of which we could do in the flesh, but were done by an act of God and then appropriated on our part by faith. Remember Hebrews Chapter 11 says:

Hebrews 11:6a

"But without faith it is impossible to please him..."

It has to be reckoned by faith. Now let's come to the word "**Translated.**" You and I didn't feel ourselves suddenly taking a trip. We didn't sense that all of a sudden we were in one place, and now we are in another. But yet the Scriptures say that we have been translated. It's done. Let's turn to Colossians Chapter 1. Here we find Paul praying on behalf of the Colossi believers:

Colossians 1:12,13

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet (or prepared us) to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who (speaking of God the Father) hath (past tense) delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son;"

I don't believe that I have ever heard a sermon on being translated into the Kingdom. Now I've heard a lot of sermons about the Kingdom that is within you. But this is a literal Kingdom - Spiritual as well as physical, one day in the future. When John the Baptist, back there in the account of the Four Gospels said, "**Repent and be baptized for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand,**" what was he referring to? The King was in their midst, and where The King is the Kingdom was sure to come. But Israel rejected The King and the Kingdom, and they crucified Him. He was called back up into glory, and He's seated there at the Father's right hand. But nothing with regard to Kingship and the Kingdom has changed. He's still The King of Kings and Lord of Lords. So the Kingdom is still centered in the Person of Christ. And at Salvation, along with all these other things that God has done on our behalf, **He has** translated us from spiritual darkness into the Kingdom of His dear Son, which is in heaven. But, that same Kingdom one day is yet going to come and be established on the earth. And you and I as believers will be there with it. We will be ruling and reigning with Christ over that Kingdom of which we are now members by virtue of our salvation experience. Looking at verse 13 again:

Colossians 1:13a

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness,..."

That includes Satan, the principalities, and powers that are incumbent upon the human race. But it's also that old Adam and all of his power. All of that has been broken away, and we are now translated into the Kingdom of His dear Son. The world thinks that they are in freedom. And they feel sorry for us because they think we're bound up with our do's and don'ts. But it's the other way around. The world is out there under the chains of darkness, of rebellion, of satanic power, but we have been set free! We have the best exercise of free will of anybody in this world. And that's why we constantly say that our freedom isn't license, because our freedom is so God-given that we don't want to do the things that license would permit. I never want to be misunderstood there. We have that complete

exercise now of the free will that the unsaved person has nothing of. He's bound, he's under chains, and we're free. To reinforce that, let's go for a moment to the Book of Philipians.

Philippians 3:20

"For our conversation (Citizenship) is in heaven (I know you don't feel like you're a citizen of heaven do you? But by faith, you and I know that we are already citizens of heaven, because that's what The Book says); from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

That's the Rapture. I was reminded again recently that I hadn't taught the Rapture since Book 11. In the near future we will teach the Rapture again. We know that's the next event on God's calendar. We don't know when it will be, but it can't be too far into the future. We know that the Lord Jesus Christ will meet us in the air, and that is something that we take by faith. Romans Chapter 8 tells us that we have been "**glorified.**" Now this probably isn't definitive as some of these other things, but nevertheless I want to show you the verse. And remember that Paul always writes to the believer. So this is for every true child of God.

Romans 8:14,15

"For as many are led by the Spirit of God, they are (already) the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

The word 'adoption' here doesn't mean what we normally think of as taking a child from some other union, and bringing it in, and making it legally ours. The word 'adoption' at the time of Paul, meant that they would take a child who had been tutored by tutors under school masters, and at an appointed age they would make him a full heir with the father. In other words, if the father had a business, when the child had finished his tutoring and they felt he was now ready, they would go through the rite of adoption whereby the father would declare that child a full heir in the business.

I'll never forget the first time we went to Israel years ago. My wife is pretty good at bartering and we were in a beautiful gift shop. There was a little lad behind the counter and he couldn't have been over ten or eleven years of age. The father was sitting in the back room at the desk. Iris was bartering with that kid, to bring the price down to where it needed to be, and I thought the guy was losing money with this kid bartering for him. They finally closed the deal, and Iris paid the boy. So I walked back to the gentleman and I said, "Do you speak English?" And he said, "**Oh Yeah.**" So I asked him, "Can you let that little kid transact business like that?" And he said, "**He's never lost me a dime yet.**" You know why? He had been so tutored and so trained that that father had absolute trust in his negotiating. Well that's what it meant to be adopted - to be put in a place of full responsibility.

That's what God has done with every believer. We have been placed as the full child, or joint heir. What a responsibility! That's a responsibility just like that kid. It was his responsibility to see that my wife not take him down too far. He had to still show a profit. And it's the same way with us in the Lord's service. He has placed us in positions of responsibility. To handle this Book whether you are a Sunday School teacher, missionary, or pastor or whatever, is an awesome responsibility. Don't you ever take it lightly, because these things are eternal. And now verses 16 and 17. Remember, the

phrase we are studying has the word '**glorified.**' We will come back to it momentarily. I got sidetracked with the word '**adoption.**'

Romans 8:16,17

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are (already) the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

The moment we became a child of God, the moment we believed, then God declared us a full son of the Father. A joint-heir with Christ. And the way I understand joint-heir is, what's His is also ours as believers. That's what The Book says. Another verse on adoption is in the Book of Ephesians Chapter 1.

Ephesians 1:19-23

"And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 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: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

This word 'fulness' could also have been translated 'complement,' (not with an 'i,' but rather with an 'e'). The Body of Christ of which you and I are members is the complement of Christ. Now what's the complement? Well, back to Genesis 2. Adam and Eve haven't sinned yet. In fact, Eve isn't even on the scene yet. But Adam is here and all the animals are paired up together.

Genesis 2:16-20

"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' And the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone: I will make him an help meet for him.' And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him."

And what's the word '**helpmeet**' in the Hebrew? Complement! He was without his complement. Who are we talking about? Eve. She's not there yet. I often make this analogy. Here comes all these pairs of beasts, and Adam named them. But I'm sure it struck him, "Why do all these animals have their mate, male and female, and I'm all alone?" See, that's what God recognized, and He said, "**It's not good that man should be alone: I will make him an help meet for him....**" And so He creates Eve from out of Adam and she now becomes then his complement. What does that mean? He's completed! Now come back again to where we were in the Book of Ephesians. This, too, is wonders of wonders, miracles of miracles that even the Lord Jesus the crowning Creator God of the universe, has such a love for His Blood-bought Church, His Body, that the Scripture says **He doesn't even**

consider Himself complete until He has us in His presence. Now if that isn't mind boggling I'd like to know what is! But that's what the Scripture says, come back again to verse 22 and 23 again:

Ephesians 1:22,23

"And (God) hath put all things under his (Christ's) feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness (the complement) of him that filleth all in all."

That's the joint-heirship. That's why what He has we're going to one day have. How do I know? By faith! The Book says it. So it's on that basis that we believe. Turn to I Corinthians Chapter 12, and remember Paul is writing to a Gentile congregation primarily.

I Corinthians 12:12

"For as the body (the human body) is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ."

Now here it comes in the next verse. This is another act of God, that you and I never felt, we had no outside manifestation of it. The only way we know that it happened is because The Book says it did.

I Corinthians 12:13

"For by one Spirit (The Holy Spirit) are we all (every believer) baptized into one body (that Church universal, that Body that includes the believers from whatever corner of the globe they may be), whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free: and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

Do you see what that means? That by the invisible act of the Holy Spirit, He placed every believer the moment they believed, the moment they're saved, into this Body of Christ, which will one day be His Bride. Now again remember we're not talking in terms of sexuality, but rather in terms of position. And so the Bride of Christ will be that consortium of all the believers of the Church Age, who have been placed into the Body by the Holy Spirit.

I'm always emphasizing to my classes that I dare say, without judging and without looking at any membership list, I would guess that at least fifty percent of every church roll is unsaved people. Some churches more, and some less. Every church takes in people for membership that are not saved. There's no way they can screen them, because we can't look on the heart. We can't determine who's saved and who's lost. That's an area that only God can look into. **But in the Body of Christ there are no unbelievers. No unsaved person is ever baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ.** So that becomes a criteria as well, not only by having our names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, but have we been baptized into this Body by an act of the Holy Spirit? That guarantees your eternal destiny. And that won't happen until you have believed the Gospel that you find in I Corinthians 15:1-4, and all these attendant aspects of salvation that have been done at the moment we believe. How can you doubt if you have been forgiven, redeemed, justified, glorified, adopted, translated, reconciled, and more, and you still have doubts? How can you? Everyone of these we take by faith. God has said it, we believe it, and we rest on it.

Now I know the old Devil likes to come along and mock the whole idea, but we come right back and claim it: **"God, You said it, and I believe it."** And we hold God to those promises, and He

wants us to. He wants us to say, "**God, You promised.**" That's the whole idea of taking this as the Word of God. If this isn't the Word of God, then I'd have been better off staying home today. I could have been punching cattle all day long. It's been a beautiful day for that. But you see this is more important, because this Book is true, this Book is the Word of God. Let's stay in I Corinthians and turn to Chapter 3. In later studies we will go into the wrath of God in Romans 1:18 and that's not going to be as pretty as these lessons have been. That's going to be the other side of the coin. But here in verse 16 we find Paul again writing to believers as he always writes to believers.

I Corinthians 3:16

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" And again that's a Pauline doctrine that is never mentioned anywhere else in Scripture except by this great apostle.

LESSON THREE * PART I

GOD'S WRATH - IMMORAL MAN - ROMANS 1:17-32

GOD PROVES HIS CASE - MORAL MAN - ROMANS 2

THE VERDICT IS GUILTY - RELIGIOUS MAN - ROM. 3:1-23

Continuing in Romans Chapter 1. We just completed laying out all the things that God did on our behalf the moment we believed as we saw in the word '**Salvation**' and all that it implies. These things are appropriated only by faith - all the good things that God does on our behalf when we believe. Now, we see what I call the flip side of all these good things. In verse 18 we see the other side of the coin and that is that God is also a God of wrath.

I want you to understand that for the last 1900 + years God has not been pouring out wrath whatsoever. Oh, once in a while things may take place that I think are done specifically to still get man's attention, such as maybe a catastrophe, earthquakes and disasters, but that's not the wrath of God. No way! Because we're living in the Age of Grace, and even to the ungodly world, and to those steeped in wickedness, God is still dealing in Grace, and not in judgment. Even the flood as awful as it was, that was not the wrath of God. That was God Who was broken-hearted that everything that He had begun with Adam had so totally fallen apart, but it still wasn't His wrath. It was an act of mercy to unborn generations, because men were killing each other so fast. The flood was almost instantaneous destruction, and to God it was like starting over.

Today, we feel that we are getting close to where God is going to indeed pour out His wrath. He's not going to have an instantaneous destruction as He did in the flood. In other words He's going to cause mankind such suffering and such mental anguish that the Book of Revelation tells us they are going to cry out for the rocks and mountains to fall on them. They're going to cry out for death, but death will flee from them. Because God will be bringing down His wrath on mankind which is rejecting Christ. He's going to do it in absolute fairness and justness, because there are more people living on the planet right now, than probably lived all the way back to the time of Noah. There's over 5 billion people on the planet tonight, but at the time of Christ at His first Advent, there were probably less than 500 million in the then-known world. That's only a half billion. And that was

about 2400 years after the flood. That half billion did not double to a billion until about 1860. Then it doubled again a little after 1900, and then it doubled again in the 1970's. By the year 2020 it will double again to 8 billion. This why the prophets of doom are saying the planet can't support 8 billion people, and I agree with that statement, but I'm not going to worry about a population explosion.

God's wrath is going to be poured out especially during the last 3 1/2 years of the Tribulation because the vast majority of Christ-rejecting people will be living at that time. Now verse 18:

Romans 1:18

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness."

Now the Greek actually makes it a little more distinct than that. The Greek implies they are holding down, in other words they are literally standing on it with their feet; they are trampling underfoot the truth in unrighteousness. I've said over the years, and I haven't had to take it back, that usually in our New Testament whenever you see the word **'Truth'** you can very easily substitute the Name of Jesus Christ. Because what did He tell us in John's Gospel? **"I AM THE WAY THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE."** And anywhere else you see the word **'truth,'** always try it and see if it won't work by inserting the Name Jesus Christ in its place. So what have they done in verse 18? They have taken the Name of Jesus Christ and held it down in unrighteousness and ungodliness. They don't want anything He had to say or anything that comes from this Book in their life.

Romans 1:19,20

"Because that which may be know of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it (the truth) unto them (now how did God show it?). For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen (not in a fog, but it's out there as clear as a bell, the knowledge of the Creator God), being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they (mankind) are without excuse:"

Now I know that this is a hard verse to swallow. Most of you know that from the time of Abraham all the way up into the Book of Acts that God dealt primarily with the Nation of Israel. But what about those pagan Gentiles all around them? Well, the Apostle Paul tells us in the Book of Ephesians Chapter 2, they were without hope.

Ephesians 2:12

"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:"

They were lost, but God stills holds them responsible because they could have known. This is hard for us to comprehend. But God knows that every human being has within his breast the knowledge that there is a Creator God. If they even look at some starry midnight sky they can come to that conclusion. That's what the Scripture teaches. "They are without excuse." They have all the evidence. Turn to the Book of Acts, Chapter 17. Paul is at Athens in this passage, and they are steeped in idolatry and philosophy. But he confronts them there on Mars Hill, and he says in verse 23:

Acts 17:23-27

"For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions (their rituals of pagan worship), I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD, Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands (idols), as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all (not just believers, but to all) life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood (out of Adam) all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should (see that?) seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:"

God is speaking through the Apostle Paul that even these pagan Greeks with no exposure to Judaism, or any written Scripture, should have had a knowledge of the Creator God. The Scripture indicates that The Word of God was written in the stars once upon a time. I think Adam was able to comprehend it, and the pre-flood people understood that the very make-up of the constellations and the planets were to interpret the very Word of God. Satan took it and adulterated it, but in its original form the pre-flood patriarchs had a good understanding just by studying the stars. There's another verse in the Book of Titus. Paul writes this letter toward the end of his ministry. He's only about a year or two away from being martyred. But as he writes to Titus, he's been under house arrest in Rome for the last several years. And here we have a stunning statement, and yet if we just casually read over it we can miss what Paul is saying. But in the light of Romans 1:18 I know what he's saying.

Titus 2:11

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath (already) appeared to all men."

Now granted, when Paul wrote, the Roman Empire comprised ninety percent of the then-known world. But they had all heard. I think Paul is going all the way back to the flood. When Noah and his three sons and their wives came off the ark, they all had a knowledge of God. But what happened? Within a generation or two they began to do what Romans 1:18 says. They began to hold down the truth. They stood on it, and kept it underfoot. Remember all the revelation that God had given mankind, beginning with Adam. Deep in the heart of every human being, even in that Adamic nature, is the knowledge that there is a God. I've had people tell me they are atheists, but that's just an excuse. They're trying to convince themselves they are, but down deep within each atheist is the knowledge of God. So I maintain there is no such thing as an atheist. They all know there is that nagging desire to fill the vacuum that God placed in mankind when He created them. In history and archaeology you will never find a group or a tribe of people that did not have a worship of some sort. And always associated with a blood sacrifice. They're going to have that need for a blood sacrifice, and it all goes back to the way God created mankind. So man has that knowledge that there is a Creator. Now verse 21: the reason they are without excuse is:

Romans 1:21

"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations (Solomon said, "Vanity, vanity, all is vanity." What was he

talking about? Humanism! When they leave God out of their thinking, then it's empty), *and their foolish heart was darkened.*"

Who did the darkening? God did! As soon as God began dealing with Pharaoh through Moses and Aaron, when they confronted him, and said, "**Let our people go,**" God was putting Pharaoh on the spot. He was giving him a choice to either let Israel go or not go. Pharaoh chose not to let them go. Then God sent the first plague, and it made Pharaoh think, but that's as far as it went. The next time Moses and Aaron came in and asked him to let their people go, he said, "**No, I'll not let them go.**" By now the first plague has passed and he hopes there won't be anymore, but he also now was in a more hardened position than he was the first time. So it wasn't as if God zoomed in on his heart like a laser beam, and fried it. The reason his heart got hardened was because he had made a choice. Now he's going to do the same thing the next time, and decide wrong again, and in the process his heart is becoming more and more hard. And every time he refuses to let Israel go, he hardens his own heart, although the Scripture says that God did. So all God really does is put him on the spot.

Now it's the same way with mankind as a whole, when we speak of man's heart being hardened, it isn't that God is responsible, but rather man does it to himself. But it's under the Sovereign volition of God, and this is why when it says that they became vain and their foolish heart was darkened, it became a response of God to their own choosing of their will. And remember, that everything that mankind does under God is based on that free will. You can't get away from it. We are all constantly facing choices. Let's go back to Psalms, Chapter 14, verse 1. This is also going to be appropriate for verse 22, in our study of Romans.

Psalms 14:1a

"THE fool hath said in his heart (now remember the next two words are italicized, so consequently they have been added by the translator, and in this case it's unfortunate. So read this verse with those two words left out), *no, God...*"

Do you see the difference? The foolish man is a man destitute of faith, and so he says, "**No.**" Not that there is no God, but he says "no" to what God has said. And all the way through Biblical history, it was the men who were destitute of faith that did just exactly that. What did Cain do? God said, "Bring me a blood sacrifice, and I'll accept you." What did Cain say? "No, God, I'm not going to bring a blood sacrifice, I'm going to bring what I have grown." Ishmael had the same opportunity and the same Godly father that Isaac had, but what did Ishmael say? "No, God." And the next one was Esau, who was probably a good young man, and yet when it came to things that God had said, what did Esau say? "No, God, I'm not interested." And this is exactly where mankind is tonight. God has said it, but what does man say? "No way, I won't believe it, I won't do it, I don't want any part of it, leave me alone, I'm comfortable." So they choose to put God out of their thinking.

LESSON THREE * PART II

GOD'S WRATH - IMMORAL MAN - ROMANS 1:17-32

GOD PROVES HIS CASE - MORAL MAN - ROMANS 2

THE VERDICT IS GUILTY - RELIGIOUS MAN - ROM. 3:1-23

Now back to our study in Romans Chapter 1. Remember, God has never poured out His wrath on mankind. The world doesn't know what that is. In fact, let's go back to Psalms Chapter 2 and look at God's wrath. I think that is about the first time that word is used with regard to God dealing with mankind. We always use Psalms Chapter 2 in prophecy, because it's basically the outline of all the things that would happen concerning Israel. But here in Psalm 2 the early verses speak of Jew and Gentile rejecting the Anointed One.

Psalms 2:2

"The kings of the earth (Gentiles) set themselves, and the rulers (Jews) take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed,..." This speaks of crucifying Him. And then verse 4:

Psalms 2:4

"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh (that man should be so foolish) the LORD shall have them (the nations) in derision."

Total confusion, and you can see it coming. After they have rejected Him, and continue to reject Him, and finally reached a point of complete confusion; they still think they have all the answers:

Psalms 2:5

"Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath (not in Grace or in love, but in wrath), and vex them in his sore displeasure."

On your way back to the New Testament stop in Matthew Chapter 24 for a moment, and this Scripture is well-known. This is Jesus in His earthly ministry just speaking to the Twelve there on the Mount of Olives. And here He says it so graphically, this is speaking of that final seven years of human history. Now verse 21:

Matthew 24:21

"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world..."

Why did He say that when the flood was so catastrophic and so complete in destroying the human race? Because the flood wasn't considered His wrath. It was actually an act of mercy. They were instantaneously wiped off the face of the earth, and they were gone. But when His wrath is going to be poured out it's going to be 3 1/2 years of things beyond human comprehension. That's what is going to be His wrath, and that's what's coming. The world is setting itself up for it. Now reading the verse again.

Matthew 24:21

"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."

Now let's see how the Book of Revelation speaks of this same period of time. Let's turn to Revelation Chapter 6, and this is only the beginning. I read an article the other day that some of our wealthiest people in America are beginning to see the handwriting on the wall, and like rats leaving the sinking ship, do you know what they're doing? They're buying up property down in the

Caribbean Islands. Some of them are buying a whole island, and building what they hope will be a safe escape from that which is to come. But you know what? They can't hide, just look what it says:

Revelation 6:15-17

"And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondsman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks; 'Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?'"

I know Christendom has just been lulled to sleep with everything but any mention of the wrath of God. You just don't hear it, because people are afraid to talk about it, they don't want to hear it, but The Book says it. The wrath of God is coming. Let's look at Revelation Chapter 9 and verse 20. This is going to set us up for the next verse in Romans Chapter 1 that we're coming to. I didn't plan any of this, it just sort of unfolds by itself. Look what it says here.

Revelation 9:20,21

"And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of the sorceries (drugs), nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."

In spite of all the wrath that has been poured out they still won't change their attitude. Let's look at another verse in Revelation Chapter 14. And here we are at the end of the Tribulation. We've had all these horrible, horrible events take place, things that man has never yet experienced. And now we come to those that are surviving that are in the armies of the world all gathered around Jerusalem, for that last great battle called Armageddon. Verse 16:

Revelation 14:16-18

"And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped (in other words, humanity). And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which 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.'"

Now this is symbolic language, of course, of God gathering the residue of humanity that is still living. He's gathering them there in the Middle East under the military, and the gathering of the grapes into the wine vat is the gathering of these 200,000,000 military people into that valley of Esdraelon down the Jordan valley and all the low laying areas of Israel especially. And these people are going to be packed in like sardines in a can. We know this is contrary to good military operations, but they will be forced by a Sovereign God to just pack their men into these valleys. That's the wine vat! That's like putting grapes into the vat, and now the very presence of God is going to come and crush them as grapes in the vat.

Revelation 14:19

"And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth (in other words, they're going to bring all their armies to the Middle East), and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God."

So you see God's wrath isn't being poured out tonight. We have no idea of what the the wrath of God is going to do. Even though we can experience flood, earthquakes, volcanoes, that's nothing compared to what it will be when the wrath of God will finally be released on mankind that are rejecting Christ and God. Now let's come back to Romans Chapter 1, verse 22, where men and women were without faith:

Romans 1:22

"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,"

I showed you what a fool was according to Scripture in the last lesson. He's the man or woman who says, **"No" to what God says for us.** And that is so typical. When I look at this verse 22, I'm always reminded of the Warren Supreme Court. You may recall when the ex-governor of California became the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. It was the biggest catastrophe that ever hit the United States of America. Because out of that Warren Supreme Court came many decisions that just wrecked our Christian fabric. The most notorious one gave criminals more rights than their victims. Roe vs Wade opened the door to abortion, and I think that was part of that Supreme Court. Taking prayer and God out of the schools was precipitated by the Warren Court. I always have to think so-called brilliant, intellectual, robed men thinking themselves to be wise, probably with more power than any other group of men in the world, and yet they will come out with decisions that are as idiotic as can be. Why? This verse 22 says it all. **" They have rejected what God has said!"** And consequently, they act and respond as a fool. Now verse 23. Becoming fools, saying no to God:

Romans 1:23

"And changed the glory of the incorruptible God (The God who cannot be touched with anything that is less than perfect) into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things."

I don't know all that the Scripture is implying here, but do you see the chronology here is **reverse** from what it was in creation? Here in the order of making their images they start with man and went down to the creeping things, the lowest of creatures. Now if you doubt that, all you have to do is think back to when Israel was in Egypt under the Pharaohs. Everything in Egypt had become a god. All the plagues that God pushed on Egypt were to show Egypt that their gods were nothing. In fact, **they** became a plague. Now as we see here in verse 23 they are changing the glory of the uncorruptible God into these kinds of items to be worshiped. We can't comprehend it, and yet here we are today with intellectual man and all his technology, coming back to the same place. You say, "What are you talking about? How do you know what the New Age movement is all about?" It's coming under the Oriental idol worship, that's all it is, and of course in subtle terms. Their goal is to bring the world right back under the same idolatry that begin at the Tower of Babel. This is when these series of verses really began.

Man first rejected God and His authority with Nimrod, who was not just a great hunter of animals, but also of men. And he was the first world totalitarian despot. He brought them to the Tower of

Babel not with just the idea of building a building of clay and pitch, but he was setting up a religion. That's what it meant by reaching to Heaven. They knew they couldn't build a tower into Heaven, but it was going to be a religious system that they thought would usurp the very throne room of Heaven. And that was the beginning of all pagan idolatry lies... **The Tower of Babel.**

Before the flood, there is never an instance of idolatry. There was no religion of sorts before the flood, no Temple worship, or organized worship. But what happened? Man went completely down the tube, and he became corrupt and violent, because there was nothing to control his thinking. So after the flood we have eight people that have a knowledge of God. Noah and his wife and his three sons and their wives. I think God was in the Ark with them, and yet within two hundred years (which was only a generation or two into that expanding population coming from those eight people) they are now gathered around the Tower of Babel and ready to embrace pagan worship. Isn't that amazing! What are they doing? They are refusing to listen to what God says, and so here is where I think these series of verses had their beginning.

Look at verse 24. Notice the verse starts with the word 'wherefore.' The word 'wherefore' points you right back to where you just came from. So as a result of everything we've said about these last three or four verses concerning the fact that they had a knowledge of God, and all they had to do was look up into the heavens and they could see the proof of it, yet now they are ready to follow a humanist who is now setting up pagan worship, and they fall for it, Why? Because the old human nature is bent on rebelling. Don't look down your nose at these people, because except for the Grace of God, you and I would be no different. We would be right in the middle of what is described in these few verses, and that's sobering. I know if it wasn't for God's Grace I could be where they are. But on the other hand, by the Grace of God they can be where the believers are today, and that's the beauty of it.

Romans 1:24a

"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness..."

He gave them up to a lower life style than what they began with. We are going to start here with the Tower of Babel, and we are going to see the decline of the human race from the Tower of Babel until finally God had to say, **"Well, I'm going to do something different. I'm going to call out one man."** That would be the call of Abram. We are going to see the Nation of Israel as well start on that high plain with a knowledge of God. But even that nation under God's leadership went down, down, down, until finally God would have to say, "There's no remedy." I think you see the same thing happen periodically in various empires or nations where they may begin with a high level of spirituality and knowledge of God, but they degenerate. I think after the Reformation we could find Europe aflame with the Word of God. Those great men of the Reformation who literally fill our history books (at least before political correctness took them out). Great men of God covered all of Europe. What happened? Europe went the same way, down down down until they became destitute of Christianity, and that was by the time World War II rolled around.

Then I like to refer to the British Empire. It was so great that the sun never set on it. Do you know what that meant? From Great Britain you cross the Atlantic, and they had Canada in their domain. From Canada before the sun set, Australia was in it, and by the time you came away from Australia you had Singapore, and Burma. All of that was part and parcel of the British Empire. They had the whole Middle East under their control, and by that time you're back home in England, so the sun

never set on the British Empire. Great Britain was the author and the beginner of foreign missions. The very first foreign missionary that went to the Orient was William Cary coming out of England.

England was the very hotbed of Biblical scholars, but what happened? Down, down, down, and I usually like to give this illustration: **they gave birth to the Beetles**. Isn't that right? I think that was the trigger to the destruction of our social fabric. Oh, they created beautiful music, I won't ever take that away from them. But I always have to be reminded of one of the first times the Beatles came to America, and some reporters were interviewing John Lennon, and they asked him, "**How do you write such beautiful music?**" What do you suppose his response was? He answered, "**I'm inspired by Satan.**" And that was in a news magazine. I read that with my own eyes. In fact just shortly before he was assassinated, he was being interviewed and he repeated that statement. So Great Britain went from that immense empire all the way down to where today she is a nobody in the family of nations. Their empire is gone, they have been struggling economically and in every way, and spiritually they are practically dead. But this has been the track of the human race ever since the Tower of Babel.

Romans 1:24

"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:"

When I teach this verse I always maintain this is essentially sexual immorality between the sexes. Sexual immorality between men and women. They dishonour their own bodies between themselves. Now what was the first step? Idolatry. And just as soon as mankind replaces the true God with a man-made god, their moral fabric begins to rot. All you have to do is go back into the Orient over the times of the years gone by. Steeped in idolatry with their religion, but what is their moral status? They have none. I can remember reading about the opium dens and so forth years ago, and we are just now catching up. This has been the downward track now for ever so long, beginning especially at the Tower of Babel. Empires will go that way, and so will individuals, and never lose sight of that. But for the Grace of God you and I as believers could very well have taken that same track, we could have succumbed to idols, ending up in immorality.

LESSON THREE * PART III

GOD'S WRATH - IMMORAL MAN - ROMANS 1:17-32

GOD PROVES HIS CASE - MORAL MAN - ROMANS 2

THE VERDICT IS GUILTY - RELIGIOUS MAN - ROM. 3:1-23

In the last lesson we studied about God's wrath to come. But maybe we should stop right here, and from here to Chapter 3, God is in so many words, building His case against mankind just like a prosecuting attorney. God is going to categorize them into three areas. We are looking now first and foremost at the first one that He is going to conclude as being guilty, and that is the immoral segment. They have no morals whatsoever. They're destitute of any morality. Then we're going to come in the next series of verses to the moral man or woman, and then we will come to the religious individual. And the conclusion is going to be on all three - **GUILTY!** Then Paul is going to come to

that tremendous conclusion in Romans 3, that there is none that do good. There is none that do righteousness; they are all become unprofitable.

So as we come into this next series of verses, I always like to remind my classes that I'm not judging one little bit, but simply showing what the Scripture says. And it is God building His case now against all of humanity. He is going to start with those who are most obviously guilty - the immoral. In our last lesson we saw just a little bit of this in verse 24. Because they now push God out of their thinking they have now begun to worship everything and anything except the one true God, and as a result they open themselves up to the immoral lifestyle.

I read an article about a year ago by a university secular individual, and he was not writing with any religious overtones. But he made the statement, **"That unless a society is guided and controlled by religious values they cannot last."** Even if it's a religion that you and I don't agree with, it still has guidelines that keep those people under a certain spectrum of behavior, which you have to have or you can't have a society. When you fall into anarchy, and no restraint, then you can't last very long. No nation ever has! The Roman Empire is a good example. They had the greatest military machine at that time, and yet Rome, the city itself, became so corrupt politically, economically, and morally. No one had to come in and defeat them, they defeated themselves. And Rome fell, and of course that is what historians have been screaming about America; we're going down the same road that Rome went. We will destroy ourselves not with some outside power coming in and taking us over, but rather we will destroy ourselves within. God will build His case against the immoral segment of humanity. Let's look at verse 24 once more:

Romans 1:24

"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves."

There was nothing to restrain them because they were now under nothing more than idolatry. And idolatry has no moral code. In fact, I've often told my classes over the years that if you go back and study idolatry and some of the mystical religions of the world, at the very core of their operations is immorality. The pagan temples of the old Greek and Roman gods were just glorified houses of prostitution in the name of religion. So it just follows that when you come from the idolatry of verse 23 you now come to the immorality of verse 24. But mankind is never satisfied to stay on this level.

I remember several years ago, a young medical intern was struggling with a very meager income, and was making about twenty-five dollars a month, and he said, **"You know Les, I've come to the conclusion the only way to really get wealth in this world is to do something that contributes to the degeneracy of society."** And then he named alcohol, prostitution, gambling, and others. It seems anything that degenerates society, people will buy. I remember people telling me that, even in the depression, people would have money for that. They didn't have money for food and shelter and clothes for their kids, but they had money for their booze and immorality, and it will be that way until the wrath of God is going to fall. Let's go on to verse 25. Now from that level of immorality, and that's sexual immorality between the male and female, we find the following:

Romans 1:25a

"Who changed the truth of God into a lie,..."

Here, again, the word **'truth'** can be substituted with the name of Christ Himself. He is the **truth**. Jesus put His stamp of approval upon the marriage relationship, didn't He? God put His stamp of approval upon the marriage relationship way back in the Garden of Eden. And it's all the way through Scriptures. Paul tells us that, **"The marriage bed is undefiled."** God said, **"It's honorable in all."** So in God's restraint, all these things are not only normal, but they're what God has given. But man has taken the God-given things and used them under the influence of the adversary, Satan.

Romans 1:25,26

"Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto (a lower yet level of life style, and now what is it?) vile affections:..."

We don't like this language. I don't, but The Book says it, and we have to teach it. So as a result of their original behavior of rejection, God now gives them up to something even worse. Now they go into vile affections.

Romans 1:26b

"...for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:"

Remember that Satan started with the women in the Garden of Eden. Now this is not a put down to our women, not at all. It's just a fact of human history that Satan started with the women. And you watch through Israel's history. In fact, let's turn to the Book of Jeremiah Chapter 44. Most of the time I never intend to do this, but as the Holy Spirit leads let's follow. I don't want someone to say, **"Well, where do you get this or that?"** I get it from The Book or I wouldn't speak it. Now in this portion of Scripture, God is talking about Israel here, His Covenant people. They had the Temple right in their midst, they had the priesthood, they had a part of the Old Testament. And look what they're doing.

Jeremiah 44:15,16

"Then all the men which knew that their wives had burned incense unto other gods (who was burning the incense? The women were!), and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying, `As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee.'"

See their attitude? The Jews didn't like what Jeremiah had to say, in fact they threw him into prison, and that's where the Babylonians found him. This is why he's called the weeping prophet. He could see what Israel was heading into. They are going deeper into the same kind of sins that we are going to see in Romans Chapter 1.

Jeremiah 44:17

"But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her,"

Now who was that? A female goddess. Every great idolatrous religion has their female goddess, it's been part and parcel of idolatry from day one. We won't take time to read the rest of these verses,

but I just wanted you to see that it was the women of Israel who led the way, and it was precipitated by the worship of a female goddess. So now back to Romans, and we saw in verse 26 that it all started with the women who entered into a homosexual relationship. Rather than that which was heterosexual immorality up in verse 24, they go into the vile affections of the homosexual lifestyle.

Romans 1:27

"And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet." Plain enough? Come back to Genesis Chapter 19. This is the first time that the Scripture deals with what God calls an abomination. That's what it was then, and has been ever since.

Genesis 19:1

"AND there came two angels to Sodom at even;..." Now remember these two angels back in Chapter 18 were called men.

Genesis 18:2

"And he (Abraham) lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him;..." One was The LORD in human form, and the other two were angels as you see in Chapter 19. But in all outward appearance, so far as the people in Sodom are concerned, they are men. They had no idea that they were angels. Now back to Chapter 19 again:

Genesis 19:2

"And he (Lot) said, 'Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways.' And they said, 'Nay' but we will abide in the street all night.'"

Old Lot knew what was going to happen, but he was hoping that he could get them inside before the citizens of Sodom would find out that two strange men were in town. But the angels knew why they were there. This is God putting Sodom and Gomorrah on trial. These two angels were sent to let the Sodomites prove that they were going to be worthy of their sudden destruction. And they sure proved it didn't they? Now verse 4:

Genesis 19:4,5

"But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, (that's where we get the term 'sodomy') compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, 'Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.'"

Plain enough? Now back to Romans: Of course you know what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah. God destroyed it, and we will see here that the New Testament attests to it. Reading verse 27 again we find:

Romans 1:27

"And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet." They are going to reap what they sow one way or another. Let's look for a moment at II Peter Chapter 2. Now again, this is graphic language. I don't see how anybody cannot understand it. Here in verse 5 we are dealing with the flood.

II Peter 2:5,6

"And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow,..."

And again that wasn't the wrath of God per se. It was a disciplinary action because He didn't really make them suffer like they will in the Tribulation. It was just an instantaneous wiping out of Sodom and Gomorrah and it was plowed under. They haven't really proven that they have found Sodom and Gomorrah yet. Some archaeologists are convinced that it's under the Dead Sea, but nevertheless, they haven't been able to excavate and bring Sodom and Gomorrah out where tourists can walk down its renovated streets.

II Peter 2:6b

"...making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;"

Now an example is an example, and it's to tell us something. We are never to forget that the reason God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah was because of its homosexual lifestyle. And the world is never to forget it. But they do, and how sad. God is telling the world tonight, **"Look what I've done to Sodom and Gomorrah, look at what I've done to those kind of people. Wake up!"** And if you want to see what God thinks of their lifestyle look at verse 7:

II Peter 2:7

"And delivered just (or righteous) Lot (who was), vexed (or constantly in turmoil) with the filthy conversation (manner of living) of the wicked:"

Now, remember what I said before. I'm not being judgmental, or looking down my nose at these people. I'm simply saying but by the Grace of God I could be where they are, but on the other hand, by the Grace of God, they could be out of that lifestyle and be where I am, and that's where God wants you. That's why Paul makes it so plain in Romans Chapters 5 and 6 that where sin abounded, God's Grace can be greater. There isn't a soul living on this planet so steeped in sin and wickedness that God won't save in a minute, put his feet on a Rock, clean up his life, and make him a trophy of his Grace. That's what He wants. But the Scripture tells us they walk it underfoot, they do not want to be bothered. Now back to Romans Chapter 1 and verse 28: Once they get into this lifestyle which begins with an idolatrous heart. They may not have to fall down and worship a Buddha or something like that, but they have some sort of an anti-God attitude, or something else that takes God's place.

Romans 1:28

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind (you and I look at some of these things and wonder how can people do this? Well, God has removed all restraints from them, that's why. They don't care what people think, or what God thinks, but it was a judicial act of God to give them over to a reprobate mind), to do those things which are not convenient;"

These things are not normal. They are not that which enhances society, or a community. And it's going to have its effect sooner or later. Now reading on down, these are not pretty verses. I know they're not. I wouldn't dare to tell somebody that this is what they're like. But God can! And God's Word says:

Romans 1:29-32

"Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God (isn't this awful?), spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents (does that ring a bell?), Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection (every time you read about child abuse, or incest, what causes it? They don't have natural affection), implacable (can't reason with them), unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God (they know what's coming), that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."

I remember when the filthy pornographic movie "Deep Throat" was in the news. I don't remember the name of the actress who was in the lead position, but Harvard University, one of our primary seats of higher learning, had her for a guest speaker. And when she walked on stage they gave her a standing ovation. Unbelievable! Now that was several years back. Never forget that those very places of learning that are now the hot bed of such immorality, and leftist political thoughts, were once seminaries teaching this Book. They have just totally gone down the other direction. Ridiculing this Book, and anything concerning God, and will applaud those that live a gutter lifestyle.

I maintain that we're not going to turn it around. I do not see a great nation or world-wide revival. I just can't see it. We may slow it to a degree, and I think that's our prerogative indeed. Let them call Christians the greatest hindrance to progress, but if hindrance to progress is maintaining a moral fabric that can hold together then I'm going to be proud of the fact that I'm hindering. We have to hold back these forces of iniquities until God comes.

LESSON THREE * PART IV

GOD'S WRATH - IMMORAL MAN - ROMANS 1:17-32

GOD PROVES HIS CASE - MORAL MAN - ROMANS 2

THE VERDICT IS GUILTY - RELIGIOUS MAN - ROM. 3:1-23

Here we are going to take the second segment of humanity that God is building His case against. We will slip away from the grossly immoral segment to the moral people, and they're just as guilty. The

moral man wouldn't dream of living like the people we just finished studying. Or would he? Verse 1:

Romans 2:1

"THEREFORE thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest:..."

That's the reason I always say that I won't look down my nose at these people, but I do feel that they are grossly in error. But I won't judge them. If it weren't for the Grace of God, you and I would be where they are, because everyone of us has the potential for all of this, because we are all out of Adam. And it's only the Grace of God, under some parental teaching (which a lot of our young people today are not getting), that delivers us from the potential that's in every human being to go to the same depths. Again in verse 1:

Romans 2:1

"THEREFORE thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself (a hypocrite. That's what the hypocrite likes to do, point the finger at the other fellow. He forgets that when he points there are two or three fingers pointing back at him. So be aware that, if we are going to judge someone, we had better look at ourselves first); for thou that judgest doest the same things."

We wouldn't dream of doing it. Oh, maybe not overtly but what about covertly? Or what about in the thinking processes? I think anyone of us would hate to admit what sometimes runs through our minds. Everyone of you does this, and don't tell me you don't because you wouldn't be a member of the human race. And I've always asked people if what these little kids hear won't register. Oh no? It goes into that subconscious and just lays there until just the right time, then 'boom' it comes alive in the conscience, and they remember it. Now verse 2:

Romans 2:2,3

"But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things (even if it's only covertly). And thinkest thou this, 'O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?'"

Do you see that? Even the good person who wouldn't dream of actually entering into a homosexual relationship, is just as guilty if he do so in his thought processes. Now remember what Jesus did with the commandment, "**Thou shalt not commit adultery?**" He took it so far that none of us are clear of it. Even if you think it in your heart, you're just as guilty as the person that does it, and we know that's hard for us to comprehend, but that's what The Book says.

You move on through all these verses dealing with this moral person who says, "Oh I wouldn't dream of doing those things," and in the same breath he condemns those that do. But God is going to judge him just as much. Now verse 4:

Romans 2:4-8

"Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of

God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath," God has never poured out His wrath, that's something that is yet to come, but when it comes it's going to be beyond human comprehension. Come down to verse 11:

Romans 2:11,12

"For there is no respect of persons with God." God is not going to treat an American better than a Japanese, or a white person better than a black person. With God there is no difference.

"For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law (outside the realm of Judaism, they shall perish without Law, they are not going to be excused because they weren't under the Mosaic system): and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;"

Now we are in the middle of the Children of Israel. We know what the Law does, it condemns everybody. Because every human being that has ever lived, other than Christ Himself, has already broken the Law, and so they are condemned. Now verse 13:

Romans 2:13

"(For not the hearers of the law are just [or justified] before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified....)"

Here is where we have to be careful. That's under the Law. Let's go all the way back to the Book of Exodus Chapter 19. Here the Children of Israel had just recently been brought out of Egypt, and are all encamped around Mount Sinai. Moses has gone up into Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments from The LORD Himself. Now Moses has come back down from the mountain and we find in verse 7 the following:

Exodus 19:7,8

"And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. And all the people (Israel) answered together, and said, 'All that the LORD hath spoken we will (what?) do....'"

Now that's legalism, that's Law, and whatever the Law commanded, Israel said, "We'll do it!" If it was done because it was prompted by faith, that was what God wanted. But nevertheless remember that Law demanded **doing** on the part of its adherents. It had to be prompted by faith, of course, but they still had to do what God said to do. Now let's come back to Romans Chapter 2, and this is what Paul is talking about. **When the Jew was under the Law he couldn't get by with faith + nothing like we can in this age of Grace. He had to have faith + doing something, what ever the Law demanded.**

Romans 2:14,15

"(...For when the Gentiles, which have not the law [now keep that in mind, because in our next lesson when we get into Chapter 3, Paul is going to lay it out as plain as day as to what the Law does and what it does not do], do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the

law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)"

Now that's just human nature, and where does it all begin? In the conscience. When God created Adam he gave him a conscience. And conscience was to precipitate confession. And that is what prompted Abel to bring the required sacrifice. His conscience convicted him, and he listened to it, but you see it's within the realm of human nature to spurn conscience. I mean we can burn it, and get it to the place where it is just no longer active. And of course that is just exactly what so many people do, but it's there and you can't ignore it. Now verse 16. This is just an amazing verse.

Romans 2:16

"In the day when God shall judge the secrets (that is the secret activities of these moral people, as well as the open activity of the immoral) of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."

What's Paul's Gospel again? That Christ died for all these sins. He died for the sins of every homosexual that has ever lived. He died for the sins of these moral hypocrites. He's died for the sins of these religious people that we are going to see in the next series of verses. Consequently, God is going to judge the human race based upon that. You wouldn't have to go where you're going and perish, because Christ has already settled your account if you would just believe it. That reminds me, I have a tape at home called **"Our Godly American Heritage."** The author expresses in that tape and reads from Supreme Court opinions of the early days of our nation, where those Supreme Court judges in their opinions quoted this Book.

Can you imagine that happening today? And in another place on the tape the author points out how our top government officials, Presidents and top Cabinet people maintain that America could not survive unless America remains true to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I could hardly believe that when I saw it. I could understand that men like Washington, and others like him would say, **"We have to stand on this Book."** But many of them even narrowed it down that it has to be based upon the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

And the other day I read some by Thomas Jefferson, and I wouldn't call Jefferson a born again believer. I think Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin both were more or less out of the same bolt of cloth. But Jefferson still came back and said, **"Unless this nation stands and operates under The Word of God it is doomed to fall."** And you and I are seeing it happen right before our eyes. Now let's look at verse 17, and we are going to see the Prosecuting Attorney (God) now move to the third segment and that's the religious person.

Now you know that I have no time for the word 'religion' don't you? I think it is the most awful term in the human language. Religion prompts hatred, and war, it also takes people down the dark paths of legalism. Religion is always man's attempt to somehow please God. **Always remember that Christianity is never a religion! Christianity is God reaching down in mercy and Grace to a lost human race.** Religion never does that. The Apostle Paul uses it in a bad light when he says **he was saved out of the Jews religion.** And that's what Paul was, he was religious, but what was he? He hated the very name of Jesus of Nazareth as a religious person. Now in these succeeding verses that's what we are dealing with - a religious Jew. In fact, that was the primary religion that Paul had to deal with. We find in verse 17 the following:

Romans 2:17

"Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,"

Now most of you have spent enough time in your Sunday School material about the Pharisees and the Sadducees, that you know how they were. Oh, they were self-righteous, and proud of their religious status, and this is what Paul is addressing. Now verse 18:

Romans 2:18-20

"And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law (so they should know); And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law."

In other words, those Pharisees, those religious leaders of Israel had all of that knowledge, and then look at verse 21:

Romans 2:21

"Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?"

What were the priests of Israel known for many times? Stealing from widows and the underprivileged, you bet they did. Why do you suppose that Jesus went through and overturned the tables of the money changers? Because it wasn't even legitimate business. They were charging exorbitant prices for necessary sacrificial animals. Here Paul is alluding to the same thing. Oh, these self-righteous Pharisees, these religious leaders, they had pomp, but underneath they would do anything they could get away with.

Romans 2:22-26

"Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?... Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written (now this is tough language). For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision." In other words, it was very profitable to be a Jew, they had The Word of God, as we are going to see in Chapter 3 and verse 1 in just a moment. But they ignored all that.

Romans 2:27-29

"And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law (in other words Paul is saying, "You bring me a saved Gentile and he will make you blush with shame.")? For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly (now we are speaking in the spiritual realm); neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh (but the true spiritual person, and here Paul is calling him a Jew): But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart (that's spiritual circumcision), in the spirit, and not in the letter (keeping the law); whose praise is not of men, but of God."

I've always told you that circumcision cuts off that which is superfluous in the flesh, so what is superfluous in the spirit? The old Adam. And so at Salvation our old Adam is cut off, and it becomes a heart circumcision. Now Chapter 3 - the final condemnation.

Romans 3:1,2

"WHAT advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God."

They had so much going for them. They had the Covenant promises, they had the Old Testament, they had the prophets, they had the Psalms, the Temple, the priesthood, that was all going for them. But Paul says that still wasn't the important thing. The most important was that unto them were committed the oracles of God. I always make the point that Luke was not a Gentile, he had to be a Jew, and if he wasn't a full Jew he was at least one-half. Because the Scripture makes a point of the fact that only Jews wrote this Book, by inspiration of course. Now come all the way down to verse 5:

Romans 3:5

"But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man)"

Is God going to be unfair when He one day will pour out His wrath on Christ-rejecting mankind? No! Because He's paid the price. Every human being has had his sin debt paid in full at the Cross. Every person that has ever lived has already, so far as God is concerned had reconciliation accomplished. **And all they have to do is believe it.** This is why God will have every right in the world to pour out His wrath. He's done everything possible to make everything as simple as possible so that lost humanity can come back to Him.

Romans 3:6-8

"God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world? For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" Even though he was a religious man and a religious zealot of Judaism, yet God had to tell Saul of Tarsus that he was a sinner. He was undone.

"And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) 'Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.'"

Some time ago, I read a commentary on Romans Chapter 6 by a British Theologian of a bygone day, and he made the claim that if we teach and proclaim the Gospel of Grace as this Book intended it to be taught, then we are going to be accused by some, just like Paul says here that he was slanderously accused. They are going to tell us that if that is the way it is then you're telling me I can live as ungodly as I want so that I can check out the Grace of God. No, that's not what it means. It just simply means that no matter how deep a sinner goes, God's Grace is always greater, and that is never license to see how far we can go.

Now here is where I wanted to end up this lesson. The final verdict. The Prosecuting Attorney has laid out all His reasons. He has categorized the human race into these three areas, now look what the

Scripture says:

Romans 3:9-11

"What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin: As it is written, 'There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.'" Do you see that? That is the final verdict, and to carry it a little further look at verses 22 and 23.

Romans 3:22,23

"Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference (that verse makes a level playing field. No one can say they have a better or lesser advantage because the Scripture says that there is no difference): For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"

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