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Through the Bible with Les Feldick, Book 25

LESSON ONE * PART I

HATH GOD CAST AWAY HIS PEOPLE?

ROMANS 11:1

We hope you will get your Bible and follow along with us, and not depend so much on what you've heard or thought, but rather search the Scriptures with us and see what they really say and don't say. I don't mind you disagreeing with me as long as it's based on Scripture - but if you're going to disagree just because your denomination doesn't agree, then I think you're on pretty thin ice. I feel that we're staying as true to The Word as is humanly possible, and depending totally on the leading of the Holy Spirit as we teach. Paul tells us that these things are spiritually discerned in I Corinthians.

I Corinthians 2:14

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

We can't comprehend these things from the natural man, we must have first and foremost a Salvation experience ourself, and then of course the Holy Spirit enlightens us, and the Scriptures then begin to open up. Now here in Romans Chapter 11 we're dealing with future Israel, and as we study this Chapter you will see that this Chapter flies in the face of what I guess 90% of Christendom stands on. And that premise is that God is all through with the Jew - that when Israel supposedly cried for the crucifixion of Christ that God just turned them out, turned His back on them, and is through with the Jew. So consequently all the Old Testament prophecies and promises fell through the cracks because God is no longer dealing with them. **Well if Christendom is going to take that approach then they have to take at least Romans Chapter 11, besides lots of other verses, and tear them out of their Bibles, and throw them away.** Because here in this Chapter God just trumpets, and blasts out that God is not through with His Covenant people Israel.

Granted, they're out there for these past 1900 + years in Spiritual blindness, and the nation as such is blinded. But as I pointed out in our last lesson, all the way from Genesis Chapter 12, "**The call of Abram**" to well into the Book of Acts it is predominantly Jew only, with exceptions. And we always like to mention the exceptions. **There was Jonah who went to the city of Nineveh, Naaman the Syrian General, Rahab the harlot, Ruth the Moabitess,** those were Gentile exceptions, but for the most part God was dealing with Jew only. Now when we get way into the Book of Acts we find the Apostle Paul called aside, and God tells Him, "**I'm going to send you far hence to the Gentiles**" Let's look at Acts Chapter 28 for example, plus there are a lot of other verses that apply here.

Now of course by the end of Acts Paul is in prison in Rome, he's not too far from his martyrdom, and he's still going to be writing his prison epistles, but nevertheless Paul has already been out there among the Gentiles for many, many years, and at the same time he goes first to the Jew, to the synagogue, and when they reject his message, he goes to the Gentiles. By the time we get to the end of Acts, and Paul has finished his missionary journeys, and he's in prison in Rome, he calls for the Jewish leaders in Rome to meet with him, and he goes over all these things again. How that all the Old Testament Covenant promises had been presented to Israel, but they rejected them when they crucified their Messiah. Now look at Acts Chapter 28, and verse 28.

Acts 28:28

"Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it."

Now it says they will hear it, but it doesn't say that they're all going to be saved. No way, but they will hear it, and we know from Scripture that they have. That's why all the world stands guilty, and that's why Romans 1 says they are without excuse.

Romans 1:20

"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."

So now with the advent of the Apostle Paul going out, it is predominantly now Gentiles only, with again, exceptions. But now who are the exceptions? Jews. You see Jews can become believers of this Gospel (Ref. I Corinthians 15:1-4) but they're few and far between. By far and most of the calling out the Body of Christ is predominately Gentiles, so you see it's become a complete flip flop. Now back to Romans Chapter 11.

Romans 11:1a

"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid."

And remember most of Christendom is taught that He has. Most of Christendom has been taught that the Jews were the Christ killers. They were persecuted unmercifully in the name of religion, and as a result most of Christendom is taught that God's all through with them. But oh, listen, God's not through with the Jew. He's set them aside, and blinded them, but now this Chapter 11 is going to tell us that God is still going to come back, and finish His dealing with His Covenant people, which of course all the Old Testament taught. Ezekiel 37, Deuteronomy 29, Zechariah tells of the day when He will fulfill these promises to His chosen people. But tonight they're out there in blindness, and unbelief, but God has not cast away His people, and I can't emphasize that enough. Now continuing on with verse 1.

Romans 11:1b

"...For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin." Now I've wondered more than once why Paul tells of that. In the Book of Philippians we also read:

Philippians 3:5

"Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews;..."

Why did the Holy Spirit inspire the Apostle Paul to emphasize the tribe that he came from. Now we know that Christ came from the tribe of Judah, but other than that there's not much emphasis on their tribal background, but Paul is inspired to emphasize it. I'd like go back to the Book of Genesis, Chapter 35 and just give you food for thought if nothing else. Now here we have the account of Rachel dying in childbirth for the little baby Benjamin. But as she's dying there in verse 17 we see:

Genesis 35:17,18

"And it came to pass, when she (Rachel) was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, 'Fear not; thou shalt have this son also.' And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin."

Now why the two names? Well you see Benoni in the Hebrew meant, **"The son of my suffering, or sorrow, my heart break."** Because she was dying, she had hard labour, but Jacob turns around and names him Benjamin which meant in the Hebrew, **"The son of my right hand, or the son of strength, the son of power."** Now you see the ancient rabbis took this and studied it, they mulled over it for centuries, and some of them came forth with an idea that this must be a picture of two Messiahs. And so a lot of them taught that there would be a suffering Messiah, the Benoni, but also there would be a ruling Messiah, the Benjamin. They couldn't picture at all that both of these would be embodied in the One and only Messiah. When He came the first time He was the Benoni, He was the suffering Messiah. But when He comes the second time He's going to be the ruling Messiah, the Son of Power, and Strength.

That's the main lesson that I know the Scriptures are teaching here, but I have to keep mulling over in my mind why does the Holy Spirit make Paul emphasize that he too was from the tribe of Benjamin. Now let's go on over to Genesis Chapter 49, and not lose sight of the two aspects of the baby Benjamin, the son of sorrow, and also the son of strength. Now here we find old Jacob on his death bed is making some prophetic utterances concerning all the twelve sons, and we won't look at all of them, but rather just the one that deals with Benjamin and that would be in verse 27, and here Jacob is speaking.

Genesis 49:27

"Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf; in the morning he shall devour the prey, (Now that's a picture of viciousness) and at night he shall divide the spoil."

Here's where I like to bring Saul of Tarsus, and Paul into the picture, and maybe you had never thought of it before. I think that this is why Paul is making reference to the fact that he's from the tribe of Benjamin. What was Saul of Tarsus in his early life? I've referred to him as a raging bull, a religious zealot, hating anything concerning Jesus of Nazareth. I think that in the same light with the two names of Benjamin, in God's eyes Saul was a heartache, how he hated Jesus of Nazareth. But Saul had another side to him just like the name of Benjamin had, and now what does Saul of Tarsus become? Paul the great apostle, the one I'm sure just thrills the heart of God, as he suffered, and suffered, and suffered for the sake of The Gospel. Because of that one little Jew, Christianity swept across the Roman empire, and I think this is a tremendous lesson for us. That way back here in

Genesis God already had the Apostle Paul on His mind, as well as the prophecies concerning the Messiah, and we're not taking anything away from Christ in all of this, but in a lesser role, in a smaller scale the Apostle Paul fits so beautifully as well.

Now if you will come back to Romans Chapter 11 we find that God is not through with His Covenant people, and even this great apostle himself is a Jew, a son of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. I guess I need to take you to another verse in I Corinthians, Chapter 15. And here again Paul makes a tremendous statement that most people miss entirely, and yet it's such a fantastic truth when you see it as I think the Scripture intended you to see it. Here Paul's talking about the resurrection of Christ of course, and let's start at verse 6.

I Corinthians 15:5-8

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

Remember Paul didn't see Jesus as He walked on the earth after His Resurrection, Paul didn't see Him until after his conversion experience on the road to Damascus, which of course, was about 8 years after Pentecost. So what he's claiming is he saw the crucified, resurrected, ascended Lord face to face, and I know that he did. We won't take the time to take you back to the Book of II Corinthians, Chapter 12 where he was caught up into the third heaven. But rather let's look at the last part of verse 8 that we just read. What is Paul referring to when he said that he was born out of due time? Well he's making reference about a physical birth and a physical mother. If a mother gives birth to her baby before the due time, what do we call it in our present day language? A **"Premie."** It came prematurely, and that's exactly what Paul is likening himself to in regards to the whole Nation of Israel. He was born as a **"Premie"** which means at some future date, and remember that a thousand years with God is just a day, but at some future date the whole Nation of Israel is going to experience the same kind of Salvation that Paul did on the road to Damascus. And we know that they are, we know that the Book of Zechariah tells us that they will look on Him as the One they pierced.

Zechariah 12:10

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son,..." Why?

Because just like Paul did on the road to Damascus, the Nation of Israel will suddenly understand Who Jesus really is. And then Isaiah, Chapter 66 tells us that the nation will be born in a day, and so this is all the things that Paul is talking about in this chapter. At the present time the Nation of Israel is set aside, and God is dealing primarily with the Gentiles, and we'll be dealing with that a little deeper a little further into the chapter. But always remember that Israel is still in God's program, Israel is still going to experience her greatest glory. We've been teaching the Book of Acts in one of our other classes, and back there in Chapter 1, remember the disciples ask Jesus a question.

Acts 1:6

"When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

And I always ask, why did they use the word again in that verse? Well they were thinking of all the glory of Solomon's Kingdom. That was Israel's high point so they wanted to know if they were going to experience something like that again. Now Jesus didn't ridicule them and say, "**Get that out of your head because we're talking about spiritual things.**" No He didn't tell them that, because its not a matter of if, but rather when that Kingdom is going to be established, and that's what He told them.

Acts 1:7

"And he said unto them, 'It is not for you to know the times or the seasons,...'"

It's not a matter **if** the kingdom is coming. You bet it is! Israel is going to have the glory, and then some, far more than she did under David and Solomon when they finally have their King, "The King of Kings." And I tell you it's getting closer, and closer every day. The more you read about the exploding technology, and the more you read about electronics and communications, the more it should just scream at us because it just brings us that much closer to the end of this Age of Grace, when Christ is going to return. And we know that He is coming, and if the world scoffs at us that's beside the point. In fact, some one told me the other night, "Les, they've been talking about The Lord coming back for years and years now, and nothing's ever happened." I grinned at him and said, "My, I'm glad you said that, you're fulfilling exactly what the Scriptures say." And then I took him back to the Book of II Peter.

II Peter 3:4

"And saying, 'Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.'"

People have been talking about these things for a long time, but not on a scale like it is today. The world is just screaming at us with all the things that are taking place - that The Lord is coming, and He's coming soon, and we'd better be looking up, and we had better be ready. Now back to Romans Chapter 11, and so here in Paul we have this great man of God. You know I've said more than once that other than Christ Himself, I think the Apostle Paul is the greatest human being that ever lived. I think that he even overshadows Moses, and I also think that when the Bride of Christ is introduced to Christ in glory, I think that the Apostle Paul will be the one that will do the introducing. He has been such a fantastic instrument that God has used to bring this glorious Gospel, and the joy and power of it. So now verse 2.

Romans 11:2

"God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew...."

You know I've taught it for years, when the religious leaders of Israel and Rome consorted together (see that's why they can't call Israel the Christ killers), Israel didn't do it alone. Oh they asked for it, they demanded it, but who carried it out? Rome did, and that's exactly what Psalms 2 tells us.

Psalms 2:2

"The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers (of Israel) take counsel together, against the LORD,...."

And so I don't know where people get it that Israel alone is guilty of killing the Christ. Jew and Gentile together crucified the Christ. But was God caught by surprise? No! It was all in God's foreknowledge, He knew exactly what was going to happen. Jesus Himself told the Twelve just before He went up to Jerusalem to be crucified. And Jesus told them detail by detail of what was going to happen to Him.

Luke 18:32-33

"For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again."

So Christ told them these things, He knew, and He didn't just know it from His earthly ministry, He knew it from eternity past.

Romans 11:2a

"God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew...."

Nothing Israel did caught God by surprise. They were operating under a free will as a nation of people. Anymore, I don't even try to understand how God could set this whole system of humanity in motion, back there in Genesis. He gave men and nations their free will, and yet everything they do is according to His plans. Everything they do is bringing everything to the end that He has planned, and it's all according to His foreknowledge. Now that's hard to comprehend, but God is able, He's Sovereign. He's Omniscient, and is absolutely in control of everything. God has not and will not cast away His people. Let's go to II Samuel, Chapter 7; we always use this passage when we teach the Abrahamic Covenant. After God gave Abraham that Covenant promising a nation of people dwelling in the land, and that some day there would come a government. That Covenant concerning the government did not really come into play until God gives it to King David. Here we have it in this chapter where David is promised that coming from his loins would be a royal family of kings who would rule and reign over the little Nation of Israel. But through that line of kings would some day come the King of Kings, and that of course was Christ born of Mary with Joseph his legal father, and both Mary and Joseph come down those royal family blood lines of David, and Solomon. Here is the promise beginning with verse 14.

II Samuel 7-14-16

"I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, (And we know Israel has) I will chasten him with the rod of men, (And we know God has.) and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. (And here in verse 16 we find God's promise to the Nation of Israel) And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever."

God doesn't lie, God can't lie. God told David that this royal family would go down through history, and beyond history right on into eternity, and out of this royal family of David would come the King of Kings The Lord of Lords, and He is going to come as He did the first time to the Nation of Israel. That's why they have to be in the Middle East at the time of His coming. He's going to come back to

the Mount of Olives as He left in Acts Chapter 1. So regardless what may take place in Israel tonight, rest assured one way or another the Jews are still going to be there when Christ returns at the end of the Tribulation, because He has promised it, and God just cannot lie.

LESSON ONE * PART II

HATH GOD CAST AWAY HIS PEOPLE?

ROMANS 11:1

In our last lesson we talked about **how God has not cast aside his people Israel**. They are still in God's program. They have been set aside for the past 1900 + years, and in the meantime God has turned to the Gentiles. A few Jews can be saved, and they are being saved, but as we'll see in the coming verses it's just a remnant, and God has always kept His remnant. But the day is coming, as we'll see when we get to the end of the Chapter 11, that God is yet going to come back and finish His dealings with the Nation of Israel. They are still going to enjoy all those Covenant promises. They're still going to enjoy a glorious earthly kingdom. And all the earthly promises that God has given the nation are yet going to come to fruition. So don't subscribe to the idea that God is through with the Jew. They are out there in unbelief, and as I have told my classes here in Oklahoma for years and years, don't expect that Israeli government in Jerusalem to be any more spiritual than our government in Washington or the government anywhere else. They are all secular, they are all under the god of this world, Satan, and Israel is no different, but God still has His eye on them as His Covenant people.

Now then in Chapter 11 we just about finished verse 2 in the last lesson, and the last part of that verse says:

Romans 11:2b,3

"...Wot (know) ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, `Lord they have killed thy prophets, and digged down (or destroyed) thine altars: and I am left alone, and they seek my life.'"

You remember old Elijah's setting don't you? That was during the reign of King Ahab, and his wife Jezebel. She was probably the worst of the worst. In fact I always ask people, "Have you ever seen anyone name their little girl Jezebel?" I don't know of one, and I don't think any mother in her right mind would. But old Ahab and Jezebel had been ruling up there in the northern kingdom. They were an ungodly, wicked king and queen. And they had been promoting the worship of Baal, and idol worship, and the Israelites had been falling for it. Elijah had even gone so far as to cause it not to rain for three years, and still Ahab and Jezebel would not change their ways. It finally got to the place by the end of that three years of draught that northern Israel was burned up for lack of water, and Elijah got all the Israelites and the prophets of Baal together up there on Mount Carmel.

Mount Carmel juts in from the Mediterranean Sea, and just south of the present day city of Haifa. When you come off Mount Carmel you go down to the valley of Jezreel (or the valley of Armageddon) where the final great battle will be fought some day. And then it's just a flat plain

almost to the sea of Galilee. Well here they are gathered on Mount Carmel, and Elijah is getting ready to test these gods of Baal.

I Kings 18:26-29

"And they (the Baal prophets) took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, 'O Baal, hear us,' But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. (After this Elijah began to taunt the prophets of Baal) And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, 'Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.' (So Elijah torments them even more.) And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.."

So the prophets of Baal got no answer from their god and now it was Elijah's turn and you know the story of how alters were built with a ditch dug around them, and filled with water. And how the sacrifices were soaked with water probably from the Mediterranean Sea. So Elijah approaches God:

I Kings 18:36b-39

"LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, 'The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.'"

So Elijah proved to Israel that Jehovah was still the God of Israel. Well you know what happened then. Elijah demanded that they kill the 450 prophets of Baal, and they did.

I Kings 19:1,2

"And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, 'So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time.'"

Now this is what's so hard to understand in all of Israel's history. In spite of all the manifestations of the power of their Jehovah God, yet at the drop of a hat they could sink into unbelief. Even this great man Elijah did. Here he had just performed this tremendous miracle, calling down the power of God, had the prophets of Baal put to death, and with one threat from one little woman over there at Jezreel, he runs scared. Now the old boy must have been in awfully good physical shape, because you know how far Elijah ran? All the way down to Mount Sinai, and in my reckoning that's something like 150 miles. Now he probably didn't do it in an hour or two, but nevertheless he ran until he finally sit down under a juniper tree, and we know from the rest of the account that it was down at Mount Sinai.

I Kings 19:4a

"But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die;..." Elijah tells God that he's the only one left.

I Kings 19:14b

"... and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."

That's the way lots of Christians are today We think sometimes that we're the only one left. No we're not. Everywhere you go you can find believers. Oh, they're getting fewer and fewer, but nevertheless they're there. Why? Because God has always kept His remnant. Paul rehearses what took place back there in I Kings, Chapter 19, and he says in verse 4 of Romans 11.

Romans 11:4

"But what saith the answer of God unto him? (Elijah) I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal."

Now we like to think that those seven thousand men had believing wives, and children so maybe there was fourteen to twenty thousand Jews that were still believers in Jehovah. I've always taught my classes over the years that beginning in Genesis to the end of Revelation **you have a doctrine of the remnant**. You can always pick them out because God has always kept a remnant. Now when you get into Christ's earthly ministry He promotes that so beautifully with the analogy, **"Of the wide way, and the narrow way."** The mass of humanity go down the wide or broad way, but the remnant takes the narrow way, and we find that all the way through Scripture. Now Paul goes on to say with regard to the Jew in this Age of Grace which is predominately Gentile.

Romans 11:5

"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant (a small percentage of Jews that had become believers) according to the election of grace."

I just finished reading a book this past week about the testimonies of Jews who have become believers of this Grace Gospel. They were from all different kinds of backgrounds, and it was just amazing how God manipulated the lives of these Jewish people until they came to the place that suddenly they could believe Jesus of Nazareth was indeed The Messiah Who had died for their sins, and it was thrilling reading. But they are remnants, very, very few can believe it, but they're there, and their testimonies of this very thing that Paul is saying here in verses 4 and 5. That even as Elijah was shown that there were seven thousand that hadn't fallen to idolatry, so today there is that remnant of Jews who also can recognize the very Gospel of Grace and the election of grace. Now verse 6, and for these Jews it is no different than for us Gentiles, and you remember I emphasized that especially back in Romans Chapter 3, and Chapter 6 where Paul tells us there is no difference.

Romans 3:9,10

"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:

A Jew doesn't come in on a different level from a Gentile, he doesn't come in on a lower level, but Paul tells us they are all unworthy and without hope: Jew and Gentile. So a Jew has to be saved the

same way we are today, and Paul explains that.

Romans 11:6a

"And if by grace, (that Gospel by which we are saved according to I Corinthians 15:1-4) then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace."

And even our Jewish people have to understand that. If they're going to be saved by this Gospel of Grace they have to drop all their works religion of Judaism. As beautifully as their ceremonies may be, and I will be the first to admit that, for example, their Passover service is a beautiful picture of the whole program of Grace. So many of their feast days are beautiful pictures of our doctrine of Grace, but they won't be saved by keeping those Jewish feast celebrations. They have to come away from that and suddenly realize that it's not by works, not by keeping feast days, but it's all of Grace. There can be no works for a Jew anymore than there is for a Gentile. He says in verse 6:

Romans 11:6b

"...But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

Does it sound like double talk? Well it isn't. Again Paul is emphasizing what he has been almost screaming since we started Romans. **"Our Salvation Is Faith + Nothing!"** Or it's no Salvation at all. Just as soon as we attach something to The Gospel of Grace, be it ever so small, then it becomes a works religion. Christianity today is just inundated with works religion, and it can come in various forms, it's so subtle. I was talking to a lady in one of my classes the other night who, when she was living out in California and her husband was serving in Vietnam, was under a lot of stress raising her kids. And the New Age people took her under their wings, and so subtly just drew her into all this New Age phenomena, but fortunately The Lord opened her eyes, and she was able to turn around and come out of it. But you see all of this **"stuff"** and that's what I call it, is based on works, and when it's works it cannot be Grace. And so whether it's Jew or Gentile, if it's works, it's not Grace, and so we have to come God's way, and that is by faith, and faith alone.

Romans 11:7

"What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it and the rest were blinded."

Now how can God do this? Because He's Sovereign, and can do anything that He wants to do. Let's go back to Romans Chapter 1, and let's review for a moment beginning with verse 23. This takes us all the way back to the Tower of Babel when all of this "junk" really began. All of the roots of the oriental religions, and idolatry, and paganism all started back there at the Tower of Babel, and what happened?

Romans 1:23

"And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things."

In other words, they dreamed up every kind of a god you could think of. And isn't that exactly what Egypt was doing when Israel came out of bondage under Moses? Every one of the plagues was

directed at one of the gods of Egypt. Now since mankind had become so saturated with the the worship of these man-made idols look what happens in verse 24.

Romans 1:24

"Wherefore (because they fell into idolatry) God also gave them up to uncleanness..."

What's God doing to them? God is judiciously causing mankind to even go deeper into his sins. Now we can't comprehend that, but that's what the Scriptures teaches, and when they went into a lower level of sin, you find in verse 26 God put them even lower. Why? Because their unbelief, their rebellion, their behavior)...***through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:"***

Romans 1:26

"For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:"

Now that's not loose language. That says that a Sovereign God judiciously said, "All right, if you want to live at that level, then go down one level lower." Now coming back to Romans 11 we have the same dealing with the Nation of Israel. Oh, they had every opportunity to know the will of God. They had everything going for them. In fact, for a moment let's look at Romans Chapter 3, and this says it better than I ever could.

Romans 3:1,2

"What advantage then hath the Jew? (remember by the time Paul is writing this Israel has already been blinded) or what profit is there of circumcision? (or being a practicing Jew? And here's the answer in the next verse) Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles (or The Word) of God."

In other words, why did God come down so hard on the Nation of Israel in their unbelief? Because they had The Word of God. They had had it for centuries, and what did they do with it? They ignored it, they refused to believe it. I've said it over and over in the years that I've been teaching that when Jesus came on the scene and presented Himself as the King of Israel, Israel should have known, because it was in the Old Testament plain as day. But Israel didn't know. Why? Because of their unbelief, they refused to search the Scriptures. We have the same thing here in Romans Chapter 11. Israel wanted all those things promised from the Old Testament. They didn't want the suffering Saviour that was foretold in the Old Testament Who would suffer and die for the sins of Israel. But they were looking for that King and Kingdom. A glorious earthly Kingdom over which the Son of God Himself would rule and reign, and Israel would be the top dog of all nations. They didn't want anything to do with a suffering Saviour. Why? Because they would have to deal with their sins.

And it's the same way today. You offer America a utopian kingdom with a benevolent dictator or king, would they buy it? Oh, you bet they would. There's nothing that the world wants more than peace and prosperity, and everything going hunky-dory, but you tell America to deal with their sin problem, what are they going to do? They don't want any part of having to deal with that. People need to realize that sin is sin and you can't gloss it over, but that's the world we're living in, and the

Jews of Christ's day were the same way, they did not want to deal with their sins, but they wanted those Romans out of Jerusalem, they wanted the peace and prosperity that a Messiah would bring.

Back to verse 7; we see that Israel wanted all that, but they didn't get what they were seeking. Oh, they wanted the King and the Kingdom, but they didn't get it, because in unbelief they wouldn't reckon the fact that they had to deal first with the sin problem; they had to have a Redeeming Saviour, not just a ruling King. How many times have I given the illustration that back in the ancient days, the perfect illustration of a conquering hero was to come riding in on a big white steed, prancing like a show horse. That was what Israel was looking for, but instead of riding in on a beautiful Arabian steed, He came riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, and not even a grown one at that. And that just blew their minds. No king comes in on a donkey, He should be coming in on a great white stallion, and so they rejected Him; they crucified Him; but not all. Verse 7 again.

Romans 11:7

"What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded."

Now remember that all through Scripture, from Adam all the way to the end of the human experience, who are the Elect? The believer. And so some of these Jews have been elected, yes, they have come to the place of Salvation, they're the chosen, they're in the Body of Christ with the rest of us. But the rest of them have been blinded, and so tonight the Nation of Israel is out there, some of them practicing their religion, some orthodox, some secular, but for the most part they are spiritually blind. Now verse 8.

Romans 11:8

"(According as it is written, (Old Testament. Probably going back to the Book of Isaiah) God hath given them the spirit of slumber, (sleeping spiritually) eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day,"

And you know Paul could write this today, because it hasn't changed a bit. It's just as applicable today as it was when he wrote the Book of Romans. Now verse 9, and again he's going back to the Psalms and quoting King David.

Romans 11:9

"And David saith, 'Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them.'"

What table do you think that the Psalmist was referring to when he said, ***"Let their table be made a snare?"*** The 23d Psalm.

Psalms 23:5

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."

What table was he referring to? God's table. Israel was literally feasting at God's table, and they were getting all the blessings and ramifications of it, but that exalted position of literally sitting at God's table became a snare and a recompense, and it caused them to fall. Horror of horrors, but you know what? He's going to warn us Gentiles that much the same thing can happen to us. That we had better not take all these blessing and this Grace for granted.

LESSON ONE * PART III

HATH GOD CAST AWAY HIS PEOPLE?

ROMANS 11:1

Let's get back to Romans Chapter 11, and we were commenting on verse 9 where David said in the Psalms:

Romans 11:9

"...Let their (that is Israel's as a nation) table be made a snare,..." (and I made reference to that in the last lesson that Israel was literally feasting at the table of God Himself, but it became a snare,) *and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them:"*

As a result of their unbelief and rejecting of all the good things that Jehovah had showered upon them the conclusion was:

Romans 11:10

"Let their eyes (spiritual eyes) be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway."

And so in their unbelief God just made sure that they really wouldn't believe by putting a spiritual blindness upon the nation. I've taught over the years that God deals with the Jew on two levels, National, and Individual. Nationally they're blinded, waiting for the coming of their Messiah at the end of the Tribulation, when all of a sudden the remnant that has been protected will be saved. But today, in the Age of Grace, nationally they're blinded, but an individual Jew has every opportunity to believe The Gospel (Ref. I Corinthians 15:1-4). So don't feel sorry for the Jew that he has no chance, because he does. He has just as much chance of believing The Gospel of God's Grace as we Gentiles, but on the national basis as God dealt with them by bringing them out of Egypt, and He dealt with them on the basis as a nation of people, that has ended. He has blinded them nationally, but individually they can still come into the Body of Christ. Now verse 11, and on that national basis:

Romans 11:11a

"I say then, Have they stumbled (as a nation of people, as a Covenant people) that they should fall? (in other words, out of God's program, that they're completely removed from anything more to do with their God. Well look at his answer.) God forbid:..."

Don't even think such a thing. They haven't fallen out of God's program. God has simply set them aside for a period of time. In the Book of Acts, where you don't really expect to see prophecy, Paul

had started his ministry (I think he was on the island of Cyprus), and Elymas the sorcerer tried to keep Paul from ministering to that Roman deputy, what did Paul do?

Acts 13:11

"And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand."

Although Paul gave him a blindness it wasn't permanent, but only for a season. Now that was indicative of the nation of Israel. They too have been blinded, not forever, but for a season. Now it's been a long season in human reckoning, as it's been over 1900 years, but it's not going to last forever. One day, and we trust that we're getting closer and closer as time runs out, Israel will once again have her spiritual eyes opened. Now continuing on with Romans 11:11.

Romans 11:11a

"...but rather through their fall (because the Nation of Israel rejected their Messiah, and King) salvation is come unto the Gentiles,..."

And that had been unheard of, it was beyond human comprehension, how that the Holy God of glory could use something as graphic and as awful as that Roman Cross to bring about a Gospel that He could send out to the Gentiles free! Without works, without religion, without a ritual, without a priesthood, it was a Gospel that merely had to be believed. Now that's what most people can't comprehend - it's too simple, but this is the way God intended it so that no one Jew or Gentile can ever say, ***"Well I just couldn't measure up, I couldn't reach that."*** No one can say that, it's out there for everyone because Israel fell.

This is strictly hypothetical, from the human stand point, if Israel would have accepted the Christ, if they would have embraced Him as their Redeemer, Messiah, and King, what would have happened? Oh, they could have had the King and the Kingdom, but according to the Old Testament prophecies had they had done that then what could Israel have done? They could have evangelized those Gentiles, and just brought them in by the millions. That was their prospect, but you see that's hypothetical. In the foreknowledge of God it couldn't happen, because He had to die, and so the Nation of Israel rejected Him, they crucified Him, and they continued to reject Him in the early Book of Acts, although Peter and the eleven preached their hearts out. And finally when Israel proved that they were not going to believe, God raised up that other little Jew, that rebel, that raging bull who hated Jesus of Nazareth. He saved him by Grace, and that is the epitome of Grace in the Salvation of Saul of Tarsus.

Then He told Saul before he even got out of Damascus, that He was going to send him far hence to the Gentiles. Israel is going to go out into a spiritual blindness, but Saul would go to the Gentiles, and so this is what this verse is saying. What Israel really did when they rejected The Christ, was open up the windows of heavens for us Gentiles, whose forefathers were pagan. Everyone of us, if we could follow our family tree all the way back, would find that every one of our ancestors were steeped in idolatry, they were steeped in the occult, in mythology or whatever it might be. Israel alone had the true knowledge of the one True God. But God has now done something totally different, as He sent this apostle out to those pagan Gentiles, and they suddenly almost began to

swarm to The Gospel. They had a spiritual hunger that Israel could not comprehend. If you know your Book of Acts, every place that Paul went and preached The Gospel, when the Jews would reject it, he would go to those pagan Gentiles, what would those Gentiles do? They would embrace it, they were thrilled by it, but that made the Jews hate Paul and the Gentiles, because they were infringing upon their God. So the Jews were the chief opponents of Christianity.

Now it's amazing how human nature works. As the Jew then became the chief opponent of Gentiles being saved in time, how did the Gentile react to the Jew? He began to hate them. Now let's look again at this verse. See this is where human nature goes contrary to the will of God.

Romans 11:11

"I say then, 'Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them (the Jew) to jealousy.'"

Now all you have to do is go back to a couple of kids in high school who are dating, and having a good time, and are in love, and all of a sudden there's a falling out. And I dare tell you, unless kids have changed remarkably more than I think, what's one of them going to start doing in order to win their little love back? Well, they're going to date somebody else. Why? To promote jealousy! And this is exactly what God intended to do. God was going to turn to the Gentiles with the idea that Israel would get jealous. **"Hey, they're taking my place. I'd better wake up and get back to where I belong."** But contrary to what God intended it went the other way, and not only did it turn Israel in anger against the Gentiles, they precipitated in return the persecution of the Gentiles against them. Go back and read human history. Ever since Christianity became more or less the official empire religion way back in the early centuries, what did they do to the Jews? Persecuted and killed them by the thousand, chased them out of every place where they had established a community. Why? Because they were the Christ killers, they were the enemies of God, and some of our earlier reformers said horrible things about the Jews, and it was all human reaction to circumstances. Now that isn't the way God intended it, he intended it to turn Israel to Himself by promoting a jealousy.

Romans 11:12

"Now if the fall of them (in other words they're rejecting everything and God is setting them aside and turning to the Gentiles) be the riches of the world..."

The word 'world' here in the Greek is 'cosmos,' which means the world's system. It isn't talking about terra firma - the earth - it's talking about the human system. The politics and economy and the world population, predominately of Gentiles, of course. So the fall of this nation Israel, out of God's program for them, is going to bring about the riches of the world. Now I'm not talking about the riches of wealth, money, gold and silver. We're talking about spiritual riches, what we as Gentiles have enjoyed. Whether we're poor as church mice, as we saw down in Haiti. You can't imagine the poverty. You can't imagine how hungry those poor people are. And yet, what did they have? A spiritual joy! I wish you could have heard those people sing. They'd just raise the roof. Why? They had that joy unspeakable in spite of their poverty. That's what Paul is alluding to when he says:

Romans 11:12

"Now if the fall of them be the riches (the spiritual riches) of the (Gentile) world..."

And it's true. Never lose sight of the fact that our forefathers were steeped in idolatry. They were steeped in paganism, superstition and fear. They didn't have the freedom that we have as believers. I always tell women the greatest feminist movement that ever happened to the human race is Christianity. That's what set women free. If you go back into ancient history and into those pagan cultures, who did all the work? The women! Who did all the child raising? The women! They did it all. I can remember seeing little old eight millimeter film from missionaries coming home from the mission fields, back when I was a kid, and the women were doing it all. They were planting the crops, harvesting, they were grinding the grain, washing the clothes, taking care of the kids, and where were the men? Sitting up against some hut drinking hooch - getting drunk. But Christianity changed all of that. Christianity brought the woman up to the place of respect and on an even keel with mankind. It's been abused, of course. But listen, this is the riches that Paul is talking about. Christianity has just set people free.

Again, I'm logical and I look at things logically as well as spiritually. Have you ever stopped to wonder why did the western civilization explode and bring their standard of living ten times higher than any other place on earth? Why? Christianity! Just stop and look at it for a moment. As Paul went across the Aegean Sea into Greece, The Gospel went to Europe and Europe became the breeding ground of all our inventions and men of science. You go back into every bit of it and it either began on the continent of Europe or England or as they came over to America. And so all of our technology, almost without exception, where did it come out of? Western civilization which had been predominately "**Christian.**" Why? Because Christianity set people free. It loosed them from the superstitions of the pagan world. It loosed them from all the hang-up and the detriment to women and so forth. Christianity did it! And so we'd better thank our Lord that we too have been brought under this Christian influence rather than under some of these pagan religions that do nothing but keep their people subservient, and in ignorance and in superstition. If you don't believe me, go to the library and read the history books. It's in there just as plain as day. But so often time we just don't stop to think. Reading on:

Romans 11:12

"Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them (putting them out in a spiritual blindness, taking away their homeland, priesthood, religion and their temple) the riches of the Gentiles; (now here it comes) how much (what's the word?) more their (now we're talking about Israel. Their what?) fulness?"

They've never attained it yet. They've never attained the fulness God has in store for them. But it's coming. Don't you ever sell the Jew down the river. It's coming. They're going to go through some horrible times. You can already see it in the little nation of Israel. They're being backed into the corner a little bit tighter all the time. And this is why they're so frantically trying to make peace. As I told one of my classes the other night, Israel today is no different than Israel back in the time of Samuel. What was the problem with Israel when Samuel was the last judge? They said, "**Samuel, not anything against you, but we want to be like the nations around us. We don't want to be different anymore. We want to be like the rest of the Gentile nations. We want a king!**" And Samuel says, "**Now stop and think. If you get a king, you're going to be taxed to death. If you get a king, he's going to draft your kids. If you get a king, he's going to put his thumb on you.**" But they said, "**That doesn't matter. We want to be like the rest of the world.**"

Israel is no different today. The government of Israel tonight is frantically seeking to be accepted by the Gentile world. They want their economy to mesh with the European Common Market. They want to be out there competing with the Gentile nations of the world. And God says, "**No you're not! You are a separated people.**" And they haven't learned their lesson. And so as they try to assimilate and try to become just another member of the family of nations, they're getting deeper and deeper into the hole they are digging for themselves. And they're getting backed into the corner. I'll keep emphasizing as long as I live, we're getting closer to the day when Israel will have no hope except the coming of their King. And He will come. The false king first, we know that. Jesus said it in John's Gospel:

John 5:43

"I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive."

That's the Anti-Christ. Sure they will. They're getting ready for it. I've told you more than once that I've had Jewish people tell me what they're looking for in their Messiah. And they can't comprehend that the Messiah is going to be God. He's going to be a man, but he's going to be a superman. He's going to be somebody that has a lot of military apropos. He's going to have a lot of economic for him. He's going to have charisma. He's going to be able to do all the things they think a superman can do. You know what I tell them? "You're describing the Anti-christ." But they just don't see that. So what is left for the nation? Their fullness! All of the fulfilling of all those Old Testament promises are still coming. They've been withheld for almost 2,000 years. God hasn't forgotten them. They're still coming. Now let's go on and don't lose sight, that just because Paul has been dealing with the nation of Israel for three chapters, don't lose sight of what he is. And you highlight this verse. You lock it into your memory bank. Because this is an important verse, one of the most important verses in all of Paul's epistles.

Romans 11:13

"For I speak to you Gentiles, (he's been talking about Israel for three chapters, but who is he talking to? The Gentile believers at Rome and those in our own time.) inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office."

Some of the newer translations move the "**the**" preceding apostle and put in an "**an.**" And when I first saw that, my hair stood on end, because that is a complete violation of the text and it changes Paul's whole position. If he is just another apostle, then he is a liar. Because he claims in all of his letters, as he defends his apostleship, that it was to him and him alone that God revealed these great doctrines of grace. And see how subtly they change the meaning of a verse? But he says, "**I am the apostle of the Gentiles.**" And that's not the half of it. He said, "I magnify my office." You know what that means? He was never going to back down from his role of being God's man for the Gentile world. I tell people all the time, you on your prayer knees, better thank God for this little Jew who was willing to suffer all the things that a human being can suffer in order to get The Gospel to you and I as Gentiles. There's a verse that we use so often, and let's look at it again in the Book of II Peter. I don't know if pastors take the time to listen to me or not, but if they do I hope, and pray, that if they don't get anything else from my teachings at least they get the idea that they have to get into Paul's letters. You are not going to see a viable, living ministry if you do all your preaching and

teaching from the Four Gospels. It's just not back there, and you have to leave those things behind, which I call the "**Milk of the Word.**" And Paul himself in Hebrews tells us:

Hebrews 5:13,14

"For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

So we should get off that milk bottle. I used to tell my high school Sunday School kids years ago when they would come out of junior high into my class, to throw their milk bottles away. We're going to start eating T-Bone steaks, potatoes, and vegetables. Well, that's what the meat of The Word is all about. Now look what II Peter says shortly before he's martyred.

II Peter 3:15,16

"And account (understand) that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; (and that's what the whole Scripture is about.) even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, (that's Romans through Hebrews) speaking in them of these things; (what things? Salvation!) in which (these epistles) are some things hard to be understood, (now good old Peter says that years and years after he had experienced that earthly ministry) which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest... (or twist the Scriptures.. And we see that every day, how they twist the Scriptures, and Paul says that when they do that they make it another Gospel, and the anathema of a Righteous God rests upon these people when they do it. So they twist the Scripture) unto their own destruction."

But you know what the sad part is? It's not just to their own destruction, but also all those people that are under them. Every time somebody twists the Scriptures to their people, whether it's a small or large congregation, they are destroying those people who are listening to them. So we have to come back and search the Scriptures. Peter is telling us to get back to the writings of Paul, and we do have to get into his epistles, because, "**He is the apostle to the Gentiles.**" The Holy Spirit prompted him to say that, and so when some one calls or writes, and says, "**I want to start reading my Bible more, Where should I start.**" I always tell them to start with Romans Chapter 1, and read Romans till they're blue in the face, then go on to one of his other epistles.

LESSON ONE * PART IV

HATH GOD CAST AWAY HIS PEOPLE?

ROMANS 11:1

Now back to where we were. We left off in Romans Chapter 11, and that would be in verse 13. Paul is writing to the believers at Rome, and you and I today.

Romans 11:13

"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office."

In other words, Paul is never going to take a back seat to anybody concerning his apostleship. Now whenever I teach the other letters of Paul I always comment on the fact that whether it's Galatians, or Ephesians or whatever, Paul is always having to defend his apostleship. And of course that is understandable, because people can readily understand the Twelve, and their unique position with Christ in His earthly ministry, and people don't have any problem with that. But here comes this gentleman who was like a raging bull, fighting against everything that spoke of Jesus of Nazareth, and then to proclaim him as an apostle, and especially the apostle of the Gentiles? Even people today have a hard time reconciling that. I've had lots of people that have told me that they have had people in leadership positions in Sunday School tell them that Paul's letters didn't even deserve to be in the Bible. Well, I know that's evident, but you see he's always defending his apostleship because of his unique calling, and his unique background.

Have you ever stopped to think that no one but Saul of Tarsus could have fulfilled the role of this apostle of the Gentiles? Everything just fits so beautifully. Here he is, a Jew's Jew, an Israelite, a Hebrew of the Hebrews of the tribe of Benjamin, and yet he was a Roman by citizenship. Fluent in the Greek, fluent in the culture of the then-known world, and yet in that culminated all the things that were necessary to go, yes to the Jew as a Jew, but also to the Gentiles as a Roman. So it's just unique, and that is why he is the apostle that he is.

Romans 11:14

"If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, (his fellow Jews, if he could make them envious of what the Gentiles are enjoying) and might save some of them."

Now look what he said back in Chapter 9, let's look at verse 3 for a moment. This was the man's heart for his kinsman in the flesh, the Jew.

Romans 9:3,4a

"For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites...;"

Paul never lost that love for his fellow people, the Jews. And even though he recognized himself as the apostle of the Gentiles, yet his heart's desire was to see Jews come into this knowledge of Salvation. But we know they were his enemies everywhere he went. They were his constant opposition, especially as he came down the shores of Greece, from Philippi, to Thessalonica, down to Berea, and Athens. They pursued him from city to city. Why? Instead of creating an envoy that would bring emulation, they created a hatred.

Romans 11:15a

"For if the casting away of them (and blinding them) be the reconciling of the world,..."

That doesn't mean the whole world is going to be saved. A Scripture just comes to mind in II Corinthians, Chapter 5, and verse 18, so let's turn there for a moment. Here the Apostle is writing to the Gentile believers at Corinth.

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;"

Now you all know what reconciliation means. It's taking two parties that have been alienated, that are at odds with one another, and bringing them back to a fellowship. The world tonight is set aside from God, they're at odds with Him, they're enemies of God, and God has done everything possible to reconcile them to Himself. Now verse 19.

II Corinthians 5:19,20a

"To wit, (to say) that God was in Christ, (there's His Deity) reconciling the world (now we'll see this defined a little better when we get back to Romans Chapter 11, but I want you to see the language, that God was in Christ while He hung on that Cross reconciling the whole world) unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ..."

We are to carry out God's bidding while we are in foreign territory. But what I wanted you to see is that the work of the Cross was the reconciling of the whole world. The Book of Hebrews tells us that Christ tasted death for how many? For every man. He didn't die for just the few believers. He died for the whole human race. The subject was brought up in one of our classes last night about the dramatizing of the Cross. There are so many plays about that, and using ketchup for the blood and so forth. But when you stop to think about it, how in the world can any human hope to dramatize the work of the Cross. It's like blasphemy, because it took the very God of creation to do the work of the Cross. That is so far beyond the human endeavor that we can't even reconcile it. That blood was not ordinary blood, and nothing can take its place. That blood was Divine, it was Holy, it had the power within it to cleanse the whole world's sin problem, and then we think we can reduce it to human endeavor. No way! Now back to Romans 11, so Paul tells us that if all this reconciliation was accomplished because Israel rejected it, and now it's been given over to the Gentile world:

Romans 11:15b

"...what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?"

Now when you think of Israel coming back from the dead, I want you to immediately think of one chapter in the Old Testament: Ezekiel Chapter 37. The chapter about the "Dry Bones." Ezekiel saw that valley filled with dry bones, they were very dry, they had been there so long they were as white as snow, and all of a sudden God told Ezekiel, "Prophecy on those bones" and we know in verse 7 they began to shake, rattle, and roll. And all of that was merely a picture of the Nation of Israel who had been out of the land of promise, who had been away from their temple worship, they'd been away from God, they'd been blinded, but now God's going to bring them back to life. It was a picture of the nation of Israel coming back to their homeland as we have been seeing now for the last 48 years.

So the nation of Israel has been shaking and coming back to life, coming back to Israel from every nation under heaven. Oh, the muscle has come back on the bone, the skin is coming back on them as promised in Ezekiel 37:6, but there is still no Spiritual life in them. They are still, even as we speak, spiritually dead. This is the same analogy that Paul is using in Romans Chapter 11, the same thing that Ezekiel saw in Chapter 37. That this is the whole nation of Israel coming back to their

homeland, coming back to life, waiting for the Second Coming (His first coming the Jews think). You know I've told you about the evangelical pastor and the Jewish Rabbi who were discussing the things concerning the Messiah, and this evangelical pastor was trying to convince this Jewish Rabbi that Christ was here the first time, and would be coming again. And the Rabbi said, "No, He's never been here before, He's coming the first time when He comes." And after a bit of argument, finally the Rabbi said, "Ok, let's put it on hold, and when He gets here we'll ask Him if He's been here before."

Well, you see this is the whole mentality of so many people, they cannot reckon the fact that He has been here. He was rejected, He went back to glory, He's coming again, and we're getting close. Now here in verse 15 Paul is referring to this. If this program of reconciliation that has been poured out on the Gentile world, great as it has been however, it's nothing compared to what is going to happen to Israel when God comes back and fulfills His promises with them. And what shall it be?

Romans 11:15b

"...but life from the dead?"

Yes, when the nation of Israel is out in the world they're dead, they are not a viable entity, but oh, they're coming back to the land, and that's why we're seeing the little nation of Israel in the news every single day. And I'm always reminding people, "Look, what other nation on earth that is comprised of only 3-4 million people, and is about the size of Rhode Island, is in the news constantly? That's miraculous. And why? Because they're God's people, and He's getting them ready for His soon return.

Romans 11:16,17

"For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. (so now we come into an interesting illustration, we're going to go into horticulture.) And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, (speaking to Gentiles now.) being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, (the Jews) and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;"

Now we need to stop a moment. Do you realize when you study this verse that it's the direct opposite of how we normally graft things? It's totally opposite, because under normal grafting you take the old root that is native to a particular area. It has survived the climate and soil, and all that, it is native, but it's fruit probably isn't all that good. So what do the horticulturists do? Well they breed up a good hybrid, and of course the only one that I'm acquainted with is the pecan tree. So we've got the old natural pecan, and then you take a hybrid, which is your big nice soft shell, and you cut off that old original trunk of that native pecan, and graft in this beautiful paper shell. Now that's the normal way of grafting, but this is opposite. This is taking the beautiful tree, and casting it aside, and grafting in an old wild olive tree. Now if I understand the wild olive tree correctly, it didn't produce any fruit, it was worthless.

And that's like the Gentiles are. We, as a no-good olive tree, have been grafted into the beautiful original which was Israel. And when I teach this I want to make it very plain that we're not talking about the believers here being grafted in, although we're certainly part of it, but we're talking about the whole Gentile system that has been grafted into that which was original Israel. Now, stop and think, How and through what man did the nation of Israel come about? Abraham. All right let's go

back to Genesis Chapter 12 for a moment, and we'll go directly to verse 3. And remember this has never be abrogated, God has never taken this promise away. Paul has never refuted it, and no one else has, so it's still valid. It's still set in concrete.

Genesis 12:3

"And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee (Abraham) shall all families of the earth be blessed."

Not just Israel, but all the families of the earth. Now then we know that ever since this promise was given to Abraham until we get into Paul going to the Gentiles, Israel enjoyed the fatness of the root of Abraham. Israel was in the promises given to Abraham, but never lose sight of the fact that God also told Abraham he'd be a blessing to all the rest of the world also. Now he can't do it two times at once, so what did he have to do? God had to set Israel aside, broke them off from the fatness of root of Abraham, and He put in Gentiledom. I'm going to use the word Gentiledom as a group of people, the whole Gentile system has now been by the Grace of God, put into the place that Israel enjoyed in that Old Testament. Now wait a minute. Did that mean that all those Israelites were believers? No. But they had the opportunity to be. They had the Word of God, they had everything going for them, but again most of them weren't true believers.

Most of the Israelites in the Old Testament were renegades in unbelief, but yet they were on the root of Abraham. Are you with me? Gentiledom is in the same situation today, they're resting on the root of Abraham. Now that doesn't make us Jews anymore than a grafted paper shell pecan can become a native pecan. We are merely feasting off that which God had promised the man Abraham. Now as the Gentile system has been feasting on all the blessings of the father of Israel, Abraham, that means that The Gospel (Reference I Corinthians 15:1-4) has been going to the Gentiles, he's had just as much opportunity at Salvation, and a relationship with God as Israel did back there. But what has Gentiledom done with this glorious opportunity of being in the place of blessing that Israel lost? They did the same thing that Israel did, they've walked it underfoot, they have cast it aside, they've said thanks, but no thanks. Even though they're in that place of tremendous opportunity, they won't take advantage of it. So the Gentiles have experienced that position now for almost two thousand years. What's going to happen next?

Romans 11:17-20a

"And if some of the branches (Israel) be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, (Gentiles) wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness (promises to Abraham.) of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches, But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. (that would be the Gentile boast) Well; because of unbelief they (Israel) were broken off, and thou standest by faith."

Israel was enjoying the fatness of Abraham, but, what did they do with it? They rejected it in unbelief, and they lost that exalted position that we read about in Romans Chapter 2 or 3. They had the Word of God, and had everything else going for them. So continuing on in verse 20 Paul tell us:

Romans 11:20b-22

"Be not high-minded, (as a Gentile) but fear. (and here's why.) For if God spared not the natural branches, (Israel, the good tree) take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, (Israel) severity; (oh, absolutely God dealt with Israel severely because they rejected so much.) but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

But you see, we Gentiles are fast approaching that same place, where God is going to finally get fed up with the Gentile world system who are rejecting His offer of Grace, and who are rejecting His blessings, who are rejecting believing Who He is and what He is. So what's He going to do? He's going to do the same thing to the Gentiles that He did to Israel. He's going to break off the Gentile, and when He's through with the Gentile, who is He going to put back? The Jew. Do you see how beautiful that is? See what I meant four programs ago when I said anybody who maintains that God is through with the Jew, that there's no more fulfilling of Old Testament prophecy, they've got to take this chapter and tear it out. They have to throw it away because it just sits here and it trumpets, just screams at us, that God is not through with Israel. God is yet going to fulfill all the promises made to Abraham. We've just been fortunate enough that in the interim, while they've been blinded, we've been brought into the place of blessing, as Gentiles! I'm not talking about believers necessarily, I'm talking about the whole Gentile world. We've been brought into the place of having the simple requirement of believing The Gospel. Verse 22 again:

Romans 11:22,23a

"Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, (Gentiledom) goodness: if thou continue in his goodness, (in other words, respond to this offer of Grace and recognize all of His blessings that have been showered upon us) otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in:..."

In other words, one day their unbelief is going to be removed. Will a nation be born in a day? Absolutely! When they see Him coming in the clouds of glory! That remnant of Israel (I think down there in the mountains southeast of Jerusalem that went out in Matthew 24). God has protected them down there for three and one half years from the horrors of Tribulation. He keeps them just like He did Israel in the wilderness under Moses. And that remnant of Israel, when they see Him coming in the clouds of glory, in power, crushing the Gentile world that has taken over the Middle East, then they will recognize Who He is. They will see Him and the nation, the remnant will be saved in a moment and they'll be grafted in. Continuing on:

Romans 11:23b

"... for God is able to graft them in again."

God's not through with Israel. Sure they've been set aside for over 1900 years, but that's nothing in God's program. That's just a flick of the eyelid. And He's going to graft them in again.

Romans 11:24a

"For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature,..."

It's unproductive. I think the name of it was the old Oleander Tree, if I'm not mistaken. It was an olive tree but it didn't produce any olives. And so that's the analogy of Gentiles. They were no good,

they were pagan. God had no reason to go to them except by what? By grace! And so He took the no-good Gentiles and He brought them in and made them a part of the fatness of the Abrahamic Promises. But He says be careful. If you reject this like Israel did, you're going to be cut off just as well as they were and it's going to happen. The day is coming when God will stop the Age of Grace and He's going to set the Gentiles into the horrors of the Tribulation and He's going to turn again to His Covenant people. Looking at verse 24 again:

Romans 11:24

"For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature (just opposite of what we normally do when we graft) into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, (the Nation of Israel) which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?"

Now listen, just stop and think. If God took that which was natural, broke it off, set it aside and grafted in an old wild olive tree, the Gentiles, and He's been letting them enjoy all the possibilities of Salvation and blessing that Israel at one time had, but when they have rejected it, and rejected it, and rejected it, then God will do the same thing with the Gentiles that He did with Israel. He will cast them aside and He will set Israel back on that root of Abraham and Israel is going to go into the kingdom enjoying the blessings.

LESSON TWO * PART I

MYSTERIES GIVEN PAUL;

GOD HAS NOT CHANGED HIS MIND-ROMANS 11:25-34

Now let's go right back to where we left off in the last lesson and that would be in Romans Chapter 11, and verse 25. This chapter is where Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is making it so plain that God is not through with the Nation of Israel. The little nation has been set aside for the past 1900 + years, without their temple, priesthood, sacrifice, and without a homeland until our generation, but God is not through with His Covenant people. We saw that so vividly in the grafting process where Israel was removed, her branches were broken off, and the Gentiles grafted in. Gentiledom has now been placed over the root of the father Abraham, and so Gentiles have been under that blessing of having The Gospel, the opportunity for Salvation. But their day is fast coming to a close because they too have been walking it underfoot, and God's grace and patience is one day soon, we think, going to run out, and then He will go back and pick up where He left off with Israel. Now here in verse 25 Paul writes to the believers:

Romans 11:25a

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant..."

Ignorance is not a lack of brain cells, but rather a lack of having been taught. And I think that's where the church, if I may use the term generally speaking, has failed so miserably because they have not taught their people. And it doesn't matter what group it is. I maintain you ask the average Roman Catholic, "What do you believe?" you will find that most of them can't tell you. You can ask

the average Episcopalian, Baptist, Methodist, or any other group and most of them cannot tell you what they really believe. Why? Because nobody teaches them, and so this is what Paul is driving home, that the believers are to be a well-taught people. We should be well-read in the Scriptures, so this is his statement here.

Romans 11:25a

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery,..."

And I've stressed the word "**mystery**" over the years that this word is one Paul uses so often, and in the Greek, the word is **musterion**, and it simply means, "**secret**." The word can be translated either way, A mystery or a secret. So what Paul is saying then is, ***"That he doesn't want the Gentile believers to be ignorant of a secret that God had kept in His own mind until He revealed it to the Apostle Paul."*** Now I'm going to stop at this word for just a few moments because it's been quite a while since we stressed it. But I've told my classes here in Oklahoma over and over, if you want to do a good Bible study some evening, take a good concordance and just simply look up the word "**mystery**" as it appears in Paul's epistles and you can just make a two or three hour Bible study and it will be so interesting. Then put together all of the concepts that Paul associates with this revelation of a mystery. We constantly remind folks that all of these things that we refer to as coming from the epistles of Paul were never revealed previously in any of God's dealing with mankind. So many of Paul's doctrines you can't find in the Old Testament. You can't find them in Christ's earthly ministry. You don't find them in the early parts of Acts. They were revelations that God had kept secret since the beginning of human history or even before. Now the verse I always like to start out with in that regard, of course, is back to Deuteronomy 29:29. We've looked at it more than once even on the program before. Let's look at it again. Way back there in the beginning of the Bible. And it's something you can sink your teeth in even today.

Deuteronomy 29:29

"The secret things..." (see, there's that word) *belong unto the Lord our God:..."*

Why? Because He's Sovereign. He's the Creator of everything. He can do whatever He wants to do. He's Sovereign. Too many people today have gotten the idea that God is just some big, what shall I say, easygoing grandfather type that they can just sort of manipulate and tweak His nose and get whatever you want. That's not the God of the Bible. The God of the Bible is Sovereign. He is absolute. He is holy. He is righteous. And yet He is a God that is loving and kind and merciful and patient. But, in His sovereignty He has every right in the world to keep things secret as long as He wants to and He will reveal it when He's good and ready and not until. Let's read on.

Deuteronomy 29:29

"The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed (are no longer secret) belong unto us and to our children for ever; that we may do all the words of this law."

This of course was written by Moses. But as I explained to someone in a conversation last night, you want to remember the God of the Old Testament is the same God of the New, even though we're under a whole different set of responsibilities and everything. Yet God hasn't changed. The things that God hated back in the Old Testament economy, God still hates them today. The very things that

God forbade Israel back there in the Levitical system, God still does not condone today. And so even though this was spoken by Moses to the Nation of Israel, yet it's the same God and the same secret holder that we deal with today. Now then if you'll come back to Romans a moment we'll look just quickly at a few of these secrets that God has held all the way up through human history, and revealed only when He called the apostle Paul to be the apostle of the Gentiles. One of the first ones of course, if we'll go through chronologically, so you won't have such a hard time looking for it, is right here in Romans the last chapter - Chapter 16 and verse 25. And don't just shrug these off as unimportant. They are basic to all of the Pauline doctrines. They are different concepts but they are all part of that revelation of the mystery. Now in Romans 16:25:

Romans 16:25a

"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery,..."

Do you see that? In other words, Paul says **"The Gospel that I preach is going to be that Gospel which is part and parcel of these revelations of secret things that had never been revealed before."** That's The Gospel according to the revelation of the mystery. Now let's continue on and finish the verse.

Romans 16:25b

"...which was kept secret (how long?) since the world began."

And that's exactly what Deuteronomy 29:29 is talking about, that God can see fit to keep things secret as long as He wants. But once He reveals it, then it becomes the human responsibility to believe it. Now then, your next one is Corinthians and so you might just want to go on there for a moment. I Corinthians Chapter 4. Now he puts a responsibility on believers of this age. And I know that he's talking here in the first person, but whatever Paul applies to himself, he applies to all of his listeners. And now he says in verse 1:

I Corinthians 4:1

"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the (what?) mysteries of God."

Now what's a steward? He's a caretaker, he's a manager, he's an overseer. How in the world can you oversee or manage, something that you don't know anything about? So if you're going to be what the Bible expects you to be, you'd better be studying. You'd better be learning. What are you to be ready to administer? What should you be looking to be a manager of? **The mysteries!** Well how can you manage them or share them with somebody if you don't know what they are. Let's read on.

I Corinthians 4:2

"Moreover it is required in stewards, (or a manager) that a man be found faithful."

What we have to do is that once we get a hold on these mysteries that we are faithful in passing them on to those who have probably never heard or those who know nothing of it. Now let's just keep turning on through and come to Ephesians Chapter 3. I'm not going to touch on all of them. I'm

just hitting a few of the plainer ones, the easier ones to understand. Let's look at Ephesians Chapter 3 and verse 1. Paul again is establishing the fact that he is dealing primarily with Gentiles.

Ephesians 3:1

"For this cause (in other words, all the things that took place in these first two chapters) I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles." Now let's look at verse 3.

Ephesians 3:3

"How that by revelation (in other words he revealed these things from the ascended Lord in Heaven) he made known unto me the mystery;..."

That revealed body of truth that no one ever before had any concept of. It was of course, back in the Old Testament, in latent form, much of these things that Paul is proclaiming to the Gentiles. Now that we understand this we can go back to the Old Testament and can see that God had it on His mind, but He had not revealed it as it was kept secret. Verse 4.

Ephesians 3:4

"Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ"

People have often asked, "After Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus, and God led him down to Mt. Sinai in Arabia for three years, why would it take so long?" Well, I've got several reasons but one of which of course, you want to remember, is that Saul of Tarsus was steeped in Judaism. Saul of Tarsus was just as human as the rest of us and so it probably took a little while to cleanse his thinking and his behavior under Judaism. But on the other hand, to give the man such a clear-cut understanding of things that had never been revealed before, would naturally take some time. And he had to be so prepared that when he came back from that Arabian experience ready to go out among the Gentile world, going out among abject pagan idolaters, he had to be skilled in what he was proclaiming. And I think that's part and parcel of that three-year training time down in Arabia. But he makes it so plain that all of this was revealed to him and he takes the responsibility of now passing it on to the whole world. Now then, come on and read verse 4 and following:

Ephesians 3:4,5

"Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge (his complete understanding) in the mystery of Christ." (or the secrets) Which in other ages (in other past generations. In other words that takes you all the way back to the Old Testament) was not made known (see how plain the language is? These things that Paul is now revealing were never made known before. And he makes double sure we understand that.) unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed..."

Always go back to Deuteronomy and what does it say? And once it's revealed they belong to us, which means we had better believe it. Now then verse 6. This is this part of the mystery that Paul is dealing with in Ephesians 3. There are all kinds of segments to the mysteries. This is the one he is talking about now.

Ephesians 3:6

"That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ (not by Judaism, not by the Mosaic Law, but how?) by the gospel. (His finished work)

Have you ever read anything like this back in the Old Testament, that Gentiles would become one with Christ or with God? They didn't understand Christ as much back there, but that Gentiles would become one with the God of Abraham? Well, whoever heard of such a thing. Jews would have thrown up their hands in horror if anybody would have approached such a subject. But they didn't. They had no concept. Now God had the Gentiles on His mind - don't ever lose sight of that. But it was under a whole different set of circumstances that what we're seeing here. Now let's read on.

Ephesians 3:7

"Whereof (of this message of revealing this mystery) I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power."

Ephesians 3:9

"And to make all men see (not just Israel or the Gentiles, but the whole human race) what is the fellowship of the mystery, (secret) which from the beginning of the world (age) hath been hid (where?) in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."

The Sovereign God. It's His prerogative to keep things secret if He wants to. And that's where it was. It was hidden in God, the same God who created all things by Jesus Christ. Now let's move on quickly to another little book of Paul's and that's Colossians, that we might get an understanding that one of the aspects of the mysteries is, yes, Israel is going to be spiritually blinded for almost 2000 years. Another revelation is that the Gentiles are going to come into a privileged position with Israel's God in the form of the Body of Christ. Here is another aspect of the mystery, and here he speaks of the Body in which all Gentiles who are now believers are now part of.

Colossians 1:25,26

"Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, (do you see the order?) to fulfil the word of God; (and here it is in verse 26) Even the mystery (secret) which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:"

Do you see how plain that is? All these Pauline truths were held in the mind of God. Israel never had a concept of them, the Twelve had no concept of them, but here comes this renegade, this Saul of Tarsus that God saves by Grace, and to him God now reveals the secrets, the mysteries. And that's why he now has been given the authority to pen these epistles that become the essential part of our Scripture. Paul is the one to whom God has revealed the mysteries. Now to Chapter 2, beginning at verse 2.

Colossians 2:2,3

"That their hearts (and Paul is speaking of the believers up there in Laodicea in Asia Minor) might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment (or the acceptance) of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ. In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

So we see that all treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in the mysteries of God. What is the revelation here that the Old Testament is vague about? The Trinity! Now we know that the Old Testament has evidences of the Triune God, but you see this is why the Hebrews, and the Rabbi's even of our own present day, call Christians almost pagan because we worship three Gods. They don't recognize the Trinity back there in the Old Testament, and they still don't. But here is a revelation that God is a Triune God, and it's a revelation that Paul brings out that God is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Turn to I Corinthians 15, and again we have Paul talking about a mystery. Something totally different again. First he talks about the Gentiles becoming one with God. Then he talks about God, and the revelation about Who He really is as the Triune God, and now we come to a revelation of something totally different, but yet all part of that same complex revelation. Something that is never referred to anywhere else in Scripture, and that's why people have such a hard time contemplating it even today and that is what we call, "***The Rapture.***" That's a Pauline doctrine that you won't find anywhere else in your Bible. But now look what Paul calls it.

I Corinthians 15:51a

"Behold, I shew you a mystery;..."

Something that has never before been revealed. Now what's this mystery or secret? Oh, that there's going to be one group of believers who are not going to die physically. They're going to be alive when everything comes to a culmination, and you can't find that anywhere else in Scripture, and so it's part of the mystery. There is going to be a group of believers at the end of the Church Age that are going to be suddenly changed, and be from here to there in a split second. I was mulling it over again just the other day and it's hard to comprehend. No wonder the unbeliever scoffs at it. I can understand why he would because it takes some faith to believe that all of a sudden Christ will leave Glory, will come to the atmosphere, the trumpet's going to sound, the archangel is going to shout and all of a sudden, all the dead believers of the Church Age are going to be raised from wherever they are. They're going to be resurrected, gone up to meet The Lord in the air and then a split second right behind them, here we come that are still alive and remain. This is hard to comprehend. I can't envision millions of people suddenly congregating up there someplace in the atmosphere and then going back with Christ to Heaven. But what does The Book say? Exactly that. And so I believe it even though I can't comprehend it. This is a mystery, a secret, revealed to the Apostle Paul and now it's no longer a secret and we're to believe it.

I Corinthians 15:51b

"We shall not all sleep, (die physically) but we shall all be changed."

And then of course he goes on to say how it will happen. Let's go to I Thessalonians Chapter 4. He doesn't use the word "mystery" in this portion, but nevertheless, he's talking about the same thing, so it too is part of the mystery. And that is what we call the outcalling or the Rapture of the Church. And again he uses the same word he uses in I Corinthians 15, "I would not have you to be ignorant."

I Thessalonians 4:13

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep (your loved ones who were believers and have died) that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."

I always call this the qualifications for the **Rapture**. This is all you need to be in that great company that one day soon is going to be called out of here.

I Thessalonians 4:14

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again,..."

Do you believe it? The Gospel. (Ref: I Corinthians 15:1-4) I had a gentleman here and he will never know what his testimony meant to me. He'd always had trouble with the resurrection. He could believe all the rest of it, but he couldn't believe the resurrection. A highly educated man, a brilliant man, he said, "All of a sudden one day, The Lord opened my eyes somehow or another and I believed it. And everything changed."

I Thessalonians 4:16,17

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be (what) caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:...."

Those are the words that we have coined the word "*Rapture*" - caught up to meet The Lord in the air.

LESSON TWO * PART II

MYSTERIES GIVEN PAUL;

GOD HAS NOT CHANGED HIS MIND-ROMANS 11:25-34

Let's start where we left off in Romans Chapter 11 verse 25. What we want you to do is to become a student of the Word. But most people judge it without ever looking at it. I've often asked people, "Have you ever made comment about a book of fiction that you never read? Do you ever tell somebody that that book is not worth reading?" The answer is usually, "Well, No." I say, "Then why do you do it to this Book, because it's still a book." And all that we ask is before people begin to criticize it and scoff at it that they take some time and study it. Let's turn to Romans Chapter 11 and we will look at the next part of verse 25.

Romans 11:25

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel,..."

Now that's the core of this particular part of the mystery. This is something that nowhere else in Scripture has ever been, revealed that the nation of Israel would be sovereignly, judiciously blinded by God for a long period of time, which of course has been 1900 years. Now we know the Old Testament certainly warned Israel that if they were disobedient that God would chastise them. He would bring in their enemies and so on and so forth. But I can think of nowhere in the Scripture where God actually told Israel that a day would come when they would be spiritually blinded. We get a little brief preview back in Acts Chapter 13 beginning at verse 6. Now just for a little

background, Paul now is beginning his missionary journey among the Gentiles. The church at Antioch is going to send him and Barnabas out. Now when they came to the island of Paphos:

Acts 13:6-11

"And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a [what?] Jew, [now remember the island of Paphos is primarily Gentile and no doubt under Roman dominion] whose name was Barjesus. Which was with the deputy [governor] of the country, [who was a Roman] Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. [he wasn't any dummy and for some reason or another, he called for Paul and Barnabas because he had some spiritual interest and questions.] But Elymas the sorcerer [this Jew] (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, [in other words he did everything he could to keep that Roman deputy from hearing the word of God from the lips of the Apostle Paul] seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. [As a result of this Jew's imposing opposition,] Then Saul, (who is also called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost [in other words he didn't do it just as a human reaction in anger or anything like that] set his eyes on him. [this Jew, this sorcerer] And said `O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease [or stop] to pervert the right ways of the Lord?' [in other words, Are you not going to stop hindering the gospel from going to a Gentile? And evidently the answer was no because you go right into the next verse] And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, [Paul didn't do anything but turn it over into God's hands] and thou shalt be blind, [physically blind,] not seeing the sun [not for the rest of his life but for what?] for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand."

Now you know what I think that is? That is a preview of what the Nation of Israel would do from that point on. Because you see everywhere that Paul went he would normally first go to the Jews in their synagogues, and when they rejected his message these Jews would then stir up trouble when Paul would turn to the Gentiles. So the Jews became his chief opposition, and they opposed Christianity left and right, and then as we saw back in Romans Chapter 11, and verse 7, they were blinded. This is exactly what God did to the nation as a whole, just like Paul did to Elymas the sorcerer:

Romans 11:7

"What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election (the believers) hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded."

Who blinded them? God did, and He set a spiritual blindness on the nation that is holding until this very day. But it's not going to last forever, because one day that blindness is going to fall from the nation's eyes, and God will once again pick up where He left off with them. Now let's come back and continue our study about this mystery given to Paul in Romans 11:25. Nothing in Scripture foretold that there would be a long 1900 + period of time that Israel would be spiritually blinded as we have seen them be. But now let's see when the Scripture says that will be. Looking at the last part of verse 25 again we find:

Romans 11:25b

"...that blindness in part (not forever) is happened to Israel, until..."

Now those of you who have heard me teach for a long time know that "**until**" is a time word. I shocked one of my classes a couple of weeks ago. They all know that I've always taught that there is no way we can know the day, month or year that The Lord is coming for the Church. It's an imminent return, but we never set dates. Then I just shocked that class when I said, you're all wondering when the Church is going to be raptured. Well I'm going to tell you exactly when it will be raptured, and some thought that I had gone out into left field. When is the Church going to be raptured? When the last person has been saved and completes the "Body." Now I don't know what day, month, and year that will be, but that is the "**until**." Israel is going to remain blinded "**until**." The rest of the verse reads:

Romans 11:25b

"...that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

Now what's the fulness of the Gentiles? The Body of Christ. Those are the only Gentiles that God is filling and filling and filling, and He's bringing them in. Now we need to turn to the Book of Acts again Chapter 15 for a reference. And of course here in this chapter is the big controversy between Peter and the eleven down at Jerusalem. The Apostle Paul is dealing with the Gentiles up at Antioch, and telling them that they were having Salvation apart from Judaism, without circumcision, without commanding them to keep the Law. So they've brought Paul and Barnabas all the way up to Jerusalem, and are really trying to settle the matter. "**Are you not going to stop teaching these Gentiles that they can be saved without keeping the Law?**" If you doubt me, come on up to verse 5 of Chapter 15 in Acts.

Acts 15:5

"But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed (they were part and parcel of that Jewish congregation at Jerusalem) saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, (that is the Gentile believers up there at Antioch) and to command them to keep the Law of Moses."

Paul said there's no way that's going to be part of my message. And so there was a confrontation, a big argument. As we studied the Book of Acts several months ago, Peter finally came to Paul's defense, remembering a long time ago. How long ago? About 14 years back, that he had gone to the house of Cornelius. And he had witnessed that God would save a Gentile without ascribing to Judaism, without repentance and water baptism. They were saved even before Peter got that far. Now Peter wakes up here in Acts 15 which is a long time after that.

Acts 15:7

"And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, `Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, (that is from among the Jewish believers) that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe."

Now after Peter goes through all his explanation, you come down to verse 12:

Acts 15:12-14

"Then all the multitude (that is of these Jewish believers there at Jerusalem) kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the

Gentiles by them. And after they had held their peace, (they finally settled down and listened to some common sense approach to all of this) James (who was moderating the meeting) answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon (or Peter) hath declared how God at the first (that would be at the house of Cornelius) did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them (the Gentiles) a people for his name."

Now what is that? The Church, which is his Body. So for the last 1900+ years now the Church is being formed mainly by Gentiles who are being called out from among what they are, pagans or whatever, and becoming members of the body of Christ. Now as we've already seen then, as soon as that began, the Jews got envious and began to oppose it everywhere that Paul went. And God put a blindness upon the Nation. Remember, I'm always teaching and always reminding people, God deals with the Jew on two levels: National and personal. Now when he blinds them nationally, that does not take away the personal opportunity for Salvation. So don't ever think that God's being unfair. A Jew still has every opportunity for Salvation that we do, but it's on a personal basis and not on a national. So God is now calling out Gentiles as a people for His name, which is what we refer to now from Paul's epistles, as the Church which is His Body, the Body of Christ.

Now I'd like to use this analogy. I had just read an article, written by a physiologist, or he might have been an embryologist. He dealt with the fetus in the womb. And of course I'm not going to tell you anything you don't know, but I think it's such a beautiful analogy. At the beginning of pregnancy, that mother's body immediately begins to put all kinds of different cells into exactly the right place. And by the time that 9-month period is over, that little fetus has got all of his little fingers, fingernails, the eyes and everything now complete. And isn't it amazing, as this author pointed out, that the body rarely makes a mistake by making one finger much longer than it should be or making toes longer. But everything stops its cell-making process at exactly the right time. And when it's all completed and that little baby is complete and the cell-making process stops, then what? Delivery!

Now the Church is the same way. God has been adding individual believers from all around the world; Chinese, Japanese, Russians, Burmans, French, British, Americans, Canadians, whatever. Believers are coming into the Body one at a time. But isn't it amazing, just like the fetus in the mother's womb, one day the Body of Christ is finally going to have the last person in place. We don't know where it will be, but one day the last person is going to be put into the Body of Christ - It's complete. Now what's God going to do? He's going to deliver it from it's confines here on earth and we're going to Raptured out, as we saw in our last program, and that then becomes the **"until"** of Romans 11:25. Because you see, as soon as God has completed His work with the Gentile Body of Christ, where is He going to turn to? The Jew! Now of course, the Jew is going to have to go through those seven years of Tribulation before he enjoys all the blessings of Christ's return.

But nevertheless, we know from II Thessalonians Chapter 2, that as soon as the Church is gone, the Anti-christ is going to make his appearance and the world is going to go into that seven years, which is predominately the time that God starts dealing with Israel. And so that's when their blindness is going to fall away. As soon as the Church is gone and the Tribulation begins. Now at the same time, since we have the times or fulness of the Gentiles here in Romans 11, go back with me to Luke 21 and we have the other side of the coin, so far as Gentiles are concerned. And this of course is the unbelieving element. Now the fulness of the Gentiles here in Romans are the Church-Age believers,

but Luke 21 speaks of another group of Gentiles who will be the unbelievers. The unsaved world of Gentiledom. Let's look at verse 23 and Jesus is speaking.

Luke 21:23

"But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people."

Now he is speaking in Palestine, he's speaking to Jews, and so this is where all of this is going to take place, isn't it? But he's not talking about the end-time, He's talking about 70 A.D. here. He's talking about Titus' great invasion and destruction of the temple. We pick that up now in verse 24.

Luke 21:24

"And they (the Jews of Jerusalem) shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: (now there's the clue that this is 70 A.D. and not the last of the Tribulation, because at the end of the Tribulation the Jews are not going to be led captive into all the nations. They're going to just survive until their Messiah appears. But here they were and we know they were. They were emptied out of the land and they were dispersed into every nation on the face of the earth.) and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, (what's the next word?) until (there's your time word. How long is Jerusalem going to be under the boot of the Gentile armies?) the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled."

Now what are we talking about? Beginning way back here in 606 B.C., way back at Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Jerusalem, is the first time that Jerusalem falls under the complete control of a Gentile empire, Babylon. All the way up through human history. All the way to the time of the Cross and at that time it was the Romans. And even as you come on into modern history, Israel has been under the control of various Gentile nations; the Moors, the Turks, and lastly before Israel finally made her independence, was Great Britain, under mandate. Britain was in charge of the Nation of Israel. Now of course, they've had a semblance of sovereignty, but for the most part, Israel is under the heavy hand of the U.N. or all the other nations and so forth.

And so they have been under the control of Gentiles ever since 606 B.C. and they will be until Christ returns at His Second Coming. Right now, running sort of parallel to that (not totally, but at least since the onset of the Church Age, which of course would be sometime between 30 and 40 A.D., when the Church, the Body of Christ, had its beginning). For the last 1900+ years the Church has been accumulating, they've been brought into the Body, and it will be filled and Christ will take it out at what we call the Rapture. The Rapture will take place 7 years before the Second Coming. Here's what I want all of you to see, and even those out in television, that the Rapture will take place just before the Tribulation. All the way back here, we've had the out-calling of the Gentiles into the Body of Christ, which is the Church. It will end with the Rapture. These two processes, the times of the Gentiles, during which Jerusalem is under Gentile control, is going to end at the Second Coming. The fulness of the Gentiles will end at the Rapture. Have you got that?

All the way since 606 B.C., what has the Gentile world been doing with regard to the God of this Book, progressively? Well, more and more rebellion. More and more accumulating wickedness. I've been showing my classes here in Oklahoma that many of the writers of the so called New Age religions, began their authoring of books in the late 1800's. After the return of the century, more

came out. But the average church person never even heard about it. Very few people read their books and so forth. But they've been out there. And now, of course, it's beginning to snowball. Now with the advent of all this New Age religion, remember it's pagan, and they may talk a good line, but their basic behavior is anti-Christian, anti-God, it's wickedness in one way or another. Now, you remember when God told Abraham in the Abrahamic Covenant there in Genesis, that He would make of him a great nation? You remember one of the first prophecies in your Bible is that God told Abraham that his offspring would end up in a land that was not theirs and that they would be there in slavery for 400 years? And then he gave the reason why the children of Abraham would have to stay out of the land of Canaan. And what was it? The iniquity of those Canaanites was not yet full. In other words, God gave the Canaanite people 400 years to straighten up their act. But instead, what did they do? They went deeper and deeper into wickedness. And so, when Joshua finally came across the Jordan River, what did God tell Joshua and the children of Israel to do with the Canaanites? Destroy them! Don't spare a one! Why? Because they had gone down so far.

The Gentile world is fast approaching the same place. Now I read just as much as anybody, I guess, of the media and so forth. But there's nothing that the press likes to ridicule more than the outpouring of God's wrath. They just think that's totally ridiculous, that there is no such thing as God intervening in human history in pouring out His wrath. Well, I've got news for them. God is patient tonight, He's gracious, He's kind. He's letting man just take his own way. But listen, there's a day coming because this "**until**" is still in Scripture. And when this "**until**" happens, when the times of the Gentiles will have run their course, in will come that last 7 years of Tribulation with the horrors of it. You and I can't begin to imagine what the last 3 and 1/2 of those 7 years are going to be. It is beyond human description, but it's coming. But you see these two parallel Gentile groups, you have the outcalling of the Church here in Romans 11:25, which is the fulness of the Gentiles. That obedient group of Gentiles who have believed The Gospel. (Ref: I Corinthians 15:1-4) Running concurrent with it ever since 606 B.C. you have the times of ungodly Gentiledom. And all you have to do is look at human history. What have they brought on the world? Misery, war, famine, disease, despair. That's been their lot and it's going to culminate in those final 7 years. The last 3 1/2 will end the Gentile domination of the city of Jerusalem, when Christ returns.

I was just writing a little article for our newsletter about praying for the peace of Jerusalem, as Psalms instructs us.

Psalms 122:7

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee." When you pray for that you pray for The Lord's return.

LESSON TWO * PART III

MYSTERIES GIVEN PAUL;

GOD HAS NOT CHANGED HIS MIND-ROMANS 11:25-34

In the past few lessons we've been talking about how God is not through with the Nation of Israel, they've been blinded, and broken off from the roots of Abraham, and have been out there now for

the past 1900 + years in a spiritual national blindness, but God hasn't lost track of them. God knows where everyone of them are, and as we have seen in our generation, the Jew is coming back to his homeland. He's certainly not out of the woods, and they have a long way to go yet before they have the reality of their King and their Kingdom, but nevertheless they're coming back from every nation under heaven you might say, and getting ready for what now we'll pick up in verse 26. We studied about the fulness of the Gentiles coming in in our last lesson, so they're **(The Church)** is out of the way as The Lord takes them up to glory **(Rapture)** and the unbelieving Gentile world will go on into the Tribulation, but the Tribulation is primarily God dealing again with His Covenant people.

Romans 11:26

"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:"

All Israel? Well hardly, but remember, what part of Israel is God interested in? The believers, and so all of believing Israel will be saved. Unbelieving Israel? No. We need to go to the Book of Zechariah, and look at Chapter 13. I'm sure that the word **"all Israel"** in verse 26 speaks to a remnant, and not to the total number of Israelites that will be living on the planet at that time. You all realize that the number of Jews today is around 15 million. Only 3 or 4 million are in Israel itself, and the rest are still in America, Russia, and various other areas of the world. But here in Zechariah it tells us something that chases up all the way back to Romans Chapter 11 that **"all Israel shall be saved:"**

Zechariah 13:8,9

"And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, (Israel) saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. (now there's your remnant) And I will bring the third part through the fire, (the fires of Tribulation, the wrath, the vexation) and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, 'It is my people:' and they shall say, 'The LORD is my God.'"

Now go to Jeremiah Chapter 31, verse 31, in that little portion of Scripture that we call, **"The new Covenant."** The new Covenant is not Church ground, but rather Israel.

Jeremiah 31:31

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, (this sets it in concrete, and nothing can change it.) that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:"

All Israel. Don't you buy this stuff that the ten tribes of Israel are lost, because God knows where they all are, and each of the twelve tribes will be represented in the end times. So God tells us that He will make a new Covenant with Israel. Now verse 32.

Jeremiah 31:32,33

"Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; (in other words this Covenant is not the Law) which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them,' saith the LORD. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel ; 'After those days,' saith the LORD, 'I will put my

law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Isn't that exactly what Zechariah said? The day would come when that 1/3 who would be a surviving remnant will suddenly realize that Jehovah is their God. They'll recognize that Jesus of Nazareth is their Messiah, and God is going to call them, "**My People**" once again. He doesn't call them that today, but He will then, and this is the new Covenant. Now verse 34:

Jeremiah 31:34

"And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD:' (that's what Moses had instructed them back in Deuteronomy) for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Now that's Israel's future, but only a remnant of them, or a third, the rest of them will be cut off as we read in the Book of Zechariah, and die. Now go to Matthew Chapter 24. And here again Jesus is speaking to the Twelve. They are there on the Mount of Olives, and they have been asking questions:

Matthew 24:3

"And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?'"

So in those first 14 verses Jesus tells about everything that's going to open up that seven years period of Tribulation. The famines, wars, and pestilences, earthquakes, and so forth. But now in verse 15 he brings them to the mid-point of that Tribulation. So at the end of that first 3 1/2 years of that Tribulation we find:

Matthew 24:15,16

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, [that's in Daniel Chapter 9, verse 26 and 27] stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:"

In order to make this stick let's go back to the Book of Daniel for a moment, and look at Chapter 9. I think you have to see it for yourselves or else it may go in one ear and out the other. And remember earlier in this chapter Daniel says that there are a total of 490 years of prophecy determined upon the Nation of Israel, and here we have the first 483 in verses 25, and 26.

Daniel 9:26,27

"And after threescore and two weeks (that's 62 weeks, + the other 7 weeks that were earlier makes a total of 69 weeks or for a total of 483 years) shall Messiah be cut off, (His crucifixion) but not for himself: and the people of the prince (The Anti-christ) that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; (who destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 A.D.? Titus the Roman general. So it's the Roman people from which this Anti-christ will come, or at least the old Roman Empire.) and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."

Now we come to that final week or 7 years. We have 483 years fulfilled almost to the exact day of the 490 years that were prophesied on Israel from the time of Nehemiah until the crucifixion. But we still have 7 years or 1 week left, and here they come in verse 27.

Daniel 9:27a

"And he (the Anti-christ, this prince that shall come from out of the boundaries of the old Roman Empire) shall confirm the covenant (or make a treaty) with many..."

Normally we feel that this treaty is with the Nation of Israel, but it's also going to involve a lot of the Arab worlds, as the whole Middle East is a powder keg, not just Israel. I think this man Anti-christ will come in and make this peace agreement with Israel and her neighbors. Now let's finish verse 27.

Daniel 9:27b

"...and in the midst (middle) of the week: (that's at the end of 3 1/2 years) he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

Now, whenever you read a verse like that, I always tell my class people to stop and ask yourself a question. Simple questions. In order for Israel to practice sacrifices what do they have to have? The Temple! So this verse tells us that before the midpoint of the Tribulation takes place, Israel will have to have her temple. Right now, it kind of seems hopeless, but don't give up on God. He says they're going to have their temple again someday. Whether the anti-christ will make an agreement back here at the beginning with the Muslim world, that will permit Israel to somehow erect a place of worship next to the Mosque of Omar, or whatever, I don't know. But I know they will have their temple and it's going to be operating by the mid-point of the 7 years because this man is going to come into it and he's going to cause the sacrifice and the oblation, the rituals, to stop.

Daniel 9:27b

"...for the overspreading of abominations (it's going to get awful) he (the Anti-christ) shall make it (the temple) desolate, even until the consummation, (end) and that determined (all the things foretold in the book of Revelation: the trumpet judgments, the bowl judgments, the things that are going to happen on the earth in that last 3 1/2 years. That's what Daniel is referring to. All those things are going to happen) shall be poured upon the desolate (the Anti-christ)." So here is what Jesus is now talking about when he says:

Matthew 24:15

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)"

And that is that the Anti-christ will come from his place, I think in Western Europe, to come down to stand in the holy place (the Temple in Jerusalem). He's going to defile it, turn on the Jew, take away their freedom of worship and then Revelation tells that at the same hour, in this mid-point of the Tribulation, a remnant of Israel is going to flee into the mountains from the city of Jerusalem and the area of Judea. Now that's what Jesus is talking about in Matthew 24.

Matthew 24:16

"The let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains:"

The nearest mountains for safety would be, we think, to the southeast. Some people think it will be the red rock city of Petra. But whatever, they'll be fleeing the city, probably to the southeast and then look at the cross-section of society that we've got in these verses. This is not the 144,000. This is a cross-section of Jewish society as they will be fleeing from the city of Jerusalem as soon as they get word that the Anti-christ or whatever his name may be at that time, has defiled the Temple and has turned on the Jew.

Matthew 24:17

"Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house."

My own projection on this is that these are probably retired folk and people of means, rather wealthy, and they're spending their spare time up on their roof top patio. They've probably got a lot of expensive things in their home that they're going to be reluctant to leave behind, but Jesus said it's going to be so urgent, you'll have so little need for the things of your wealth, leave them behind. Don't stop to take a thing out of your house. Now, that's one group of people. Let's look at another in verse 18.

Matthew 24:18

"Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes."

Now you're dealing with the working class people. In Christ's day, Israel was an agrarian nation, as most of the world. So today the type of people that he's referring to would probably be the computer operators and the office workers and the stock brokers and what have you. But whatever they may be, they better just drop it and get out of there fast. Don't even bother to go and get an extra suit of clothes. Now verse 19 where we come to another segment of Jewish society.

Matthew 24:19

"But woe unto them that are with child, (young, pregnant mothers-to-be) and to them that give suck in those days!"

Those that are nursing, young mothers. A complete cross-section of people. Older people, middle-aged people, younger people. Now verse 20. Since they're going to be back under the Law, they have the Temple worship for the first 3 1/2 years.

Matthew 24:20

"But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, (when it would be cold and miserable) neither on the sabbath day:"

That would limit how far they could walk according to their law. So if it's on a weekday, there would be no limitation, because they're going to have to cover quite a few miles to get down to the mountains. Now verse 21.

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."

You picked that up in the book of Revelation. The trumpet judgments, the bowl judgments, etc.

Matthew 24:22

"And except those days should be shortened, (I don't believe it's going to be made three years instead of 3 1/2, but I think the Greek word here implies that when that three and one half years is over, it's not going to go an hour over. It's going to be ended right on schedule. And so Jesus said if it wouldn't be, if that period of time would go on even for 24 or 48 hours) there should no flesh be saved: but for (what's the next word?) the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

Whether it's back in Genesis or in Revelation, all through human history, who are the elect? The believers! Whether he's Jew or Gentile. They are the elect of God. Now then, there's going to be a group of Jews who are the elect of God. And if it weren't that this thing is ended right on schedule, even they would not be able to survive. So who are we talking about? This escaping remnant of Jews that are fleeing from Jerusalem down to the mountains. And they're going to be supernaturally escorted. You pick that up in Revelation Chapter 12. And just like Israel coming out of Egypt, it's almost a direct parallel. Even as Israel came out of Egypt and Pharaoh's army is behind them, Who intervened on their behalf? God did, supernaturally. I've told my classes for 20 + years that just as soon as this seven years start, as soon as that man signs that treaty with Israel and the Middle Eastern nations, the supernatural is going to become commonplace. We're not used to the supernatural today. We're not used to seeing angels intervene. We're not used to God using an earthquake to do a particular thing. But when this seven years starts, the supernatural is going to be taking place one right after another.

Number 1, the two witnesses are going to appear, whoever they are. If they're Moses and Elijah, that will definitely be a supernatural phenomena. For two men who lived over two thousand years ago to come back on the scene. It will be supernatural. Those 144,000 Jews, 12,000 from each one of the twelve tribes. Nobody could do that today. You ask a Jew today what tribe do you come from, he more than likely can't tell you. But supernaturally God's going to know who they are. He's going to know what tribe they're all from. And He will set them apart and send them out. The supernatural will become commonplace.

Now the same way here. Supernaturally, this remnant of the Jews that are going to survive that last three and one half years will, without them knowing why, are going to make their way down from Jerusalem. They're going to be as one large group like Israel coming out of Egypt, making their way to the mountains in the southeast. The Anti-christ is going to try and destroy them with an armed force. And again, God will intervene. Just like He opened the Red Sea to help Israel, this time He's going to open the earth and pour the Anti-christ's army into it and cover them up. It's still a supernatural phenomena. Israel's remnant is going to be safe. God's going to feed them there for three and one half years, much like the wilderness experience. They won't have to worry about clothes, or shelter because God is going to take care of them totally for three and one half years. Then at the end of the three and one half years when they see Christ returning in glory, there at the

Battle of Armageddon, and as He pours out His wrath upon Christ-rejecting Gentiles who have gathered in the Middle East, this remnant of Israel will be saved in totality, every last one of them.

Go back to the last chapter of John. The eighth sign as we've studied it some time ago in the book of John. Remember the first seven took place before His resurrection. The eighth one took place after His resurrection. But they were all indicative of God doing something for the Nation of Israel. Look at John 21:5. Remember the disciples are on the Sea of Galilee. Even though they've recognized Christ in His resurrected body, they still haven't been able to contemplate the whole idea of Christ being raised from the dead. So here they are on the Sea of Galilee fishing and they'd been fishing all night, and The Lord's on the shore the next morning at breakfast.

John 21:5

"Then Jesus saith unto them, 'Children, (He's speaking to the eleven) have ye any meat?' They answered him, 'No.'" I always have to stop here. Can't you hear a good fisherman after being skunked? "How many did you catch?" "Nothing." You see they're all alike. And these were no different.

John 21:6

"And he said unto them, 'Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it (the net) for the multitude of fishes.'" Verse 11 is the real sign of this miracle.

John 21:11

"Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken."

What happened the last time he told them to cast on another side? It broke! But not here. So what's the sign? That when God puts out that final net to His remnant, is He going to lose a one of them? Not a one and that's the sign of the last chapter of John, that when God makes His final move with the Nation of Israel, of that one-third remnant, He's not going to miss one. They're all going to suddenly believe. Now, let's go back to Zechariah, Chapter 12 and verse 10.

Zechariah 12:10

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they (the house of David, the Jew) shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son,..." Now let's quickly go to Zechariah 13 verse 6.

Zechariah 13:6

"And one shall say unto him, 'What are these wounds in thine hands?' Then he shall answer, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends,'"

And so what's going to happen? Every Jew of that remnant will see the nail pierced hands and that pierced side, and they're going to suddenly, miraculously to the last Jew, just like the last fish in that

net, they're all going to believe that now He is their crucified risen Savior and Lord and Redeemer. Now the nation, as Isaiah says, will become a nation in a day.

LESSON TWO * PART IV

MYSTERIES GIVEN PAUL;

GOD HAS NOT CHANGED HIS MIND-ROMANS 11:25-34

Let's get back to Romans Chapter 11. In order to pick up the flow let's go back up to verse 26 where Paul writes:

Romans 11:26-28a

"And so all Israel shall be saved: (we looked at that. I believe that the escaping remnant in Matthew 24:15 will be that remnant) as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins (and we went back and looked at the new Covenant in Jeremiah). As concerning the gospel,..."

Now of course you always have to ask, what Gospel? I've made reference of a little booklet by Paul Van Gorder, one of the Bible teachers on the Old Radio Bible Class, and the title of the booklet was, ***Which Gospel When***, and low and behold the other day I ran into a gentlemen who had a whole stack of them. Paul Van Gorder made it so plain that The Gospel proclaimed during Christ's earthly ministry, and by the twelve disciples was the **"Gospel of the Kingdom."** And the **"Gospel of the Grace of God"** came from the Apostle Paul (Reference I Corinthians 15:1-4). The same God of course, because God never changes, but He can change His message, and that's what we talked about in our earlier lessons, **"The Mysteries."** So out of that revelation of the mysteries comes what Paul calls, **"The Gospel of the Grace of God."** In another place Paul calls it, **"That Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles."** In another place he calls it, **"My Gospel."** And still another he calls it the **"Gospel of God, The Gospel of Christ."** But The Gospel that Paul is referring to in verse 28 is **Paul's Gospel, that Christ died, shed His sinless Blood, was buried, and rose again from the dead. Now that's The Gospel to believe for your Salvation.** You can't add anything to it, you can't take anything from it. So this Gospel then is what the Jew has been opposing ever since it began.

Romans 11:28

"As concerning the gospel, they (the Jews) are enemies for your sakes: but (let's not try to destroy them because they're our enemies; why?) as touching the election, (God extending Salvation to them) they are beloved for the fathers' sakes."

Now who were the fathers? Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Remember that God had a special relationship with Abraham didn't He? He loved Abraham, as well as David, a man after His own heart. And so God constantly goes back to those patriarchs and His love for them when He deals with their offspring, and I think that is what Paul is saying. That the election, that remnant of Israel that God is still preparing for that end-time event are beloved because of their forefathers Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and so on and so forth. Now verse 29:

Romans 11:29

"For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

Now that word *"repentance"* I think is crushed, and crucified about as much as any word in the English language. What is the true definition of repentance as we see it here in Paul's writings? Well, it is not falling down on your face and weeping in sorrow for your sins, but rather the repentance spoken of here is a change of mind, a change of thinking. Now then when it comes to God's dealing with Israel, Has He changed His mind? No! Now look at the verse in that light. Treating repentance as changing His mind. ***"For the gifts and calling of God are without changing His mind."*** Now isn't that plain? Well, what do we mean? Let's go back to Genesis 12, because this is what it's all referring back to. So let's just see what it says in those first three verses, the Abrahamic Covenant.

Genesis 12:1-3

"Now the LORD had said (back in Chapter 11) unto Abram, 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: (now look at verse 2, where God is speaking to the man Abraham where He says:) And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and I will curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.'"

Now do you think God changed His mind? No! He hasn't changed His mind. That's still valid, that is still true, and that Abrahamic Covenant is still going to be fulfilled. Now you want to remember that this is still the whole idea of Christ's first coming was to fulfill these promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Israel rejected it out of hand to the place that they crucified their Messiah. Did God turn His back on them forever? No. Like we've seen for the last several lessons, we've seen He has set them aside. He blinded them, but He hasn't taken them out of His program. He's still going to come back, and finish the Abrahamic Covenant. Absolutely He is. Now let's go on over to Chapter 15 for a moment, and here in this passage we find Abraham showing his humanity. You know that's what I always like to point out when I teach about these Old Testament characters. They were just as human as we are, they weren't some super people, just as common and everyday as we are.

Now God has been promising Abraham a land, and a nation of people, but who's in the land? The Canaanites. Abraham is a stranger, he probably had to ask permission wherever he went with his flocks. In fact, while we were in Israel back in 1975, and Israel was still just coming out of their statehood, every place that an Arab or anyone would take their flocks, they would have to ask the orchard owner whether they could graze their sheep or goats for any number of days. I imagine it was much the same way with Abraham. He didn't own a stick of ground. And he was a stranger in a land that had been promised to him, but he still didn't have the deed to it. Now just watch how human he is. Let's look at verse 8 of Chapter 15, where God has been making all these promises and then Abraham said:

Genesis 15:8

"And he said, 'Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?'"

God's word wasn't even enough for a man like Abraham. He said, "I want some proof." And what does God do? He gives it to him. He gives him the deed to the land in the succeeding verses, all the way down from verse 10 to verse 18, God deeded, not just that little land from the Mediterranean to Jordan, but look how much God deeded to Abraham in verse 18. And the same day that he deeded the land, by virtue of the old customs, I think coming out the laws of Hammurabi.

Genesis 15:18-21

"In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'Unto thy seed have I given (past tense) this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates: The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.'"

All these different tribes were dwelling in that area of the world. That was a promise and God gave it to Abram, deeded it to him. You think He's going to change His mind now all of a sudden and say, 'Well no, I'm not going to let you have it'. No way! So regardless of what Israel does with the land, whether they give it back or whether they fight for it or whatever, you rest assured when Christ returns they're going to have the whole Middle East as their homeland. All the way from the river of Egypt to the great river, Euphrates, all the way from Mt. Hermon, all the way down to the Red Sea. That's going to be Israel's homeland. They haven't gotten it yet, they're not even close, but they're going to. Why? Because the *gifts and calling of God are without His changing His mind*. Now, let's look at another promise in II Samuel Chapter 7. God is dealing with David. Another one of the patriarchs, a man after His own heart. And God loved David and David loved his God. But now look what God is saying:

II Samuel 7:12,13

"And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, (God's not going to intervene in the physical element of death) I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, (in other words it would be his own son) and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever."

This is the promise of that kingly line that would go all the way from David down to the coming of Christ the King. Here it's all promised. The house of David.

II Samuel 7:14

"I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, (and is he going to? You'd better believe it!) I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:"

Has Israel experienced that? Why, constantly they've been under the disciplining of their God. All you have to do is go back and read the book of Judges. What is that a story of? A story of a nation that was on a roller coaster. They would go up to a spiritual high under a righteous, holy judge and he'd die and what would happen to the nation? Down into the steps of sin and rejection. God would raise up another good judge and here they'd come again. And they would be blessed and they would be victorious over their enemies and then down they went. Up and down and up and down. Yes, God chastised them, but did He ever give up on them? No! We've seen this all the way through Israel's

experience that God has promised them and promised them and promised them, a King and a kingdom. He came the first time, they rejected it, they crucified Him.

And so The Lord in resurrection power went back to glory. To forget about Israel? No. Like a MacArthur who left the Philipians and said, 'I will come back', that's exactly what Jesus told the Twelve there on the Mt. of Olives. He's going back to Heaven, but He said, 'I'm coming back'. The angel announced it, if The Lord Himself didn't. And so Israel is approaching the day, we feel, that their Messiah is going to be coming back. Now, come back to Hosea for a moment. Beautiful prophecy. Hosea Chapter 6 and verse 1. Now these are promises that God has given to the nation through the prophets.

Hosea 6:1

"Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up."

Watch the language there. What did it mean that he had torn and smitten? He chastised them! He had exercised discipline on them. But what are the last words of that verse? He will bind us up. What does that mean? He's going to heal them. He's going to heal the land. He's going to heal their nation.

Hosea 6:2a

"After two days (when we speak of prophetic days, according to Peter, how long is that? 'A day is but a thousand years in God's sight and a thousand years is but a day'. So I think it's speaking of 2,000 years here) will he revive us:..."

Isn't He doing it? Of course. You go back to pre-World War II. Go back to the 30's and all the way back then into the early 1900's and the 1800's. Who would have ever dreamed that the Jews would one day have their own land and a sovereign government. Only Bible scholars, they were writing about it, but no one else ever thought of it. Whenever the Jews would talk to the powers that be in England and America and what have you, they would laugh at them. The English actually offered them a piece of Africa for their homeland that was uninhabitable for the most part, and they said, "No we don't want a piece of ground in Africa, we want our own homeland, Israel." And here they are. They've been coming back now for the last 100 years, and since 1948 they have been pretty much an independent state.

Hosea 6:2,3

"After two days (or two thousand years) will he revive us: in the third day (which takes you into the Kingdom age) he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." Indeed, He's going to be ruling from Jerusalem, and He will right there in their midst. Now verse 3, when they come into that Kingdom economy:

"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."

Now we in America are not so much concerned with the former and latter rain, but in the Middle East it was everything. That's why Israel became a waste land for thousands of years, they lost the

latter rain. They may have had some of the earlier rain, but they would never get that latter rain. But now since Israel is a nation and they're beginning to green up and it's beginning to blossom as a rose, Israel is beginning to experience the former and the latter rains. In other words, they are getting it in two times during the year instead of one. All of these are simply to show as Paul says, concerning the elect of Israel, that God has not changed His mind. Now to Romans Chapter 11, verse 30.

Romans 11:30

"For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief:" Remember what we saw earlier in this Chapter? Just go back a page, because that's the only way you learn is to go over and over it.

Romans 11:11

"I say then, `Have they (the Nation of Israel) stumbled that they should fall? (in other words, become completely out of God's program) God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the (whom?) Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.'" Oh, wonder of wonders. Now let's go back to the last part of the chapter and that's exactly what Paul is going to say.

Romans 11:33

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

This is beyond us. How in the world could He take a Covenant people like Israel, give them all the promises that He gave to the patriarchs and the prophets, then even through the coming of their Messiah, and deal with them on Covenant ground. And then see them crucify the One He gave them, and cry out in total rebellion, "Away with him." And then have God say because they did that, "I'll now send Salvation to the Gentiles." Who would have ever thought of anything like that? No one but God! But this is what God did. And so, because they rejected everything that God had promised, they have brought about what had to be done for our Salvation. And that of course, was His sacrificial death and His burial and His Resurrection.

Romans 11:30

"For as ye in times past have not believed God,..."

We have two facets. We can **believe in God**. How many people do that? Just about everybody, at least in America. We're open to the Scriptures and so forth. Most Americans will admit they believe in God. But what's the other one? **Believe God!** Now that narrows it down. How many people believe God? That becomes then, faith. Believing in God doesn't take faith into consideration at all. But to believe God, is faith, when we take God at His Word. Now that's exactly what we're talking about here. The Gentiles, for thousands of years, did not believe God. They may have believed in some god, but they did not believe God. And you see, this is where all of a sudden it makes such a difference when we believe God, we take what He says and we believe it, and that's what? **Faith!** So when the Scripture says that Christ died for your sins and rose from the dead, what does God expect us to do with it? Believe it! And when we believe it with all our heart, what does God do again? He opens up our whole ability to believe, He comes in, He makes us a new person and all these things become so easy to comprehend. Which before were just so hard to comprehend. Now let's go on.

Romans 11:32-34

"For God hath concluded them (Israel) all in unbelief, (because of their total rejection) that He might have mercy upon (how many?) all. (now who are the all? Jew and Gentile. The whole human race.) O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! (we can't even come close to comprehending His wisdom.) how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?"

Now I think that history can pretty much prove presidents or kings rise and fall pretty much based on the men around them. If they've got weak advisors, or people that are constantly getting the president or king or whatever, in hot water, history is not going to be very kind to them, are they? God doesn't have that problem. He doesn't need a cabinet. He doesn't need counselors. He's all the counseling that He ever needed. You know I always like to use that verse in Acts about the predetermined counsel of God and the foreknowledge of God? What does that mean? That the Triune God came together and without any outside counsel, they put the whole thing together and His ways are past human understanding.

LESSON THREE * PART I

OUR LOGICAL INTELLIGENT SERVICE - ROMANS 12

PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING - ROMANS 13-16

Now let's get back into teaching The Book. We trust the Holy Spirit will enhance your understanding as you read, and as you study, because this Book is the most exciting Book on the earth. Now we're ready to go into Romans Chapter 12, and you remember for the past several lessons we have been in the intervening Chapters of 9-11 which, when we started studying them, I reminded you that they were parenthetical. And just like the structure of an English sentence you can have a complete sentence, and then open it up, and put in a parenthetical statement, you can take that statement back out and still have your complete sentence. Now that's the whole idea of parenthetics, and that's the way it is with these three chapters here in Romans. You come to the end of Chapter 8, and then all of a sudden there is this parenthetical thinking of Chapters 9, 10, and 11 where the Apostle Paul, by inspiration of course, deals with the Nation of Israel with regard to the Gentiles. And then when those three chapters end, he comes back to Chapter 12, and verse one, and what I always like to emphasize when he starts out this verse:

Romans 12:1a

"I Beseech you therefore,..."

Usually in other places he would start out the verse with, **"Therefore."** And when you see therefore or wherefore, what do you do? Well you go back, and see what Paul is referring to. Now back in Chapter 8, verse 1 Paul says:

Romans 8:1a

"There is therefore now no condemnation...."

You don't have to go all the way back to Chapter 1 on that *"therefore,"* but on that one we went back to Chapter 5, and Chapter 7. But here in Chapter 12, with this *"therefore"* you have to ask yourself, well where does Paul want me to go back to? On this *"therefore"* he doesn't want us to go back to Chapters 9-11 that's for sure, and he doesn't want us to go back just to Chapter 8, but rather go all the way to the first eight chapters, and as we come into Chapter 12:

Romans 12:1a

"I Beseech you therefore, (on the basis of everything that he has written or taught in those first eight chapters) brethren, by the mercies of God,..."

Now that's not just empty talk. When you go back and reflect on everything that was written in those first eight chapters, what is really exploding throughout those chapters? The mercies of God. He is not some ogre up there Who is just waiting to zap people when they have done something wrong. Neither is He a Santa Clause waiting to be manipulated, but He is a God of mercy. Remember when we started Romans, and came into Chapters 1-3, God, by the pen of the Apostle Paul, built His case against the whole human race. First we had the immoral person. There was no doubt that he stood in need, but then God went from that immoral person to a good moral person, and then to the religious Jew, because after all the Jews were the only real religion of Paul's day. And then you come into Chapter 3, what was the conclusion? Whether they were immoral, or moral, or religious Jews, they were all enemies of God. There is none that seeketh after God. There is none righteous, no not one, and then the capstone of it all is Romans 3:23:

Romans 3:23

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" The immoral, the moral, and the religious. Everyone has come short of the glory of God, and then what's the very next verse there in Chapter 3?

Romans 3:24-26

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, (He's fair, He's honest in being) and the justifier of him which (Notice all the things that people think they have to do, but those things are not in this verse.. Things like joining the church, baptism, do this and do that, but rather) believeth..."

Do you see that? That's so simple that it just throws a curve a people, and they just about go into orbit, but that's what The Book says. **"He is the justifier of them that believe."** And then you go into Chapter 4, and He uses Abraham as that epitome of faith. The man when he was a hundred years old, when God said, **"You, and your ninety-year old wife Sara are going to have a son, and from that child I'm going to build a nation of people."** And Romans 4:20 says:

Romans 4:20

"He (Abraham) staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief;"

What did Abraham do? He believed God who was rich in mercy even to the man Abraham, and then you come into Chapter 5, what's the first verse of Chapter 5?

Romans 5:1

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:"

Then in Chapter 6, he goes through this whole idea of being identified with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. That just as surely as Christ was crucified on that Roman Cross, you and I have also been crucified. And of course Paul brings that to the light then in Galatians Chapter 2, and verse 20:

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 I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Now all of this is what Paul is making reference to, and then remember we came into Chapter 7, and Paul came into the dilemma that everyone of us are faced with. Oh, the things we know we should do, we don't. And the things we know that we shouldn't do, we do, and Paul went through that same dilemma. And then Paul ends up Chapter 7 by saying:

Romans 7:24

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

And then Chapter 8, and I've always said that if every American would read this chapter once a day, then we'd see a change in this country. Just from that one chapter, and what does verse 1 of that chapter say?

Romans 8:1a

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,..."

And how do we get into Christ Jesus? By believing The Gospel. (Ref. I Corinthians 15:1-4) Now for a moment I want you to turn back with me to Chapter 8, and let's look at those closing verses from which we're going to jump right into Romans Chapter 12, and verse 1. So let's look at Romans Chapter 8, that tremendous chapter of our great Salvation, not based on what we have done, but what Christ has done on our behalf. We have to read these verses because they are just so far beyond human comprehension, that we have to read it, and read it, and read it, and believe it, believe it, and believe it. And here it is:

Romans 8:35,36

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, 'For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.'"

That's the world's attitude toward the believer, and has been ever since the beginning of time. Even back in the Old Testament economy, why did the pagan people around Israel so hate the Jew?

Because of their relationship with their Creator God, and it's still the same today. Now verse 37:

Romans 8:37

"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

Now verse 38, and the Apostle Paul's words should be our words, we should be able to say exactly the same thing, and in verse 38 the word "*persuaded*" in the Greek is much stronger than what we normally think of as finally consenting to something. It is a word that denotes absolute certainty, without a doubt, and look what it says:

Romans 8:38,39

"For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Now then with that as a background, and everything we've reviewed in these first 8 chapters, flip over to Romans Chapter 12, and what this first verse says.

Romans 12:1

"I Beseech you therefore,..."

Now what does the word 'beseech' really mean? It's a begging. I plead with you. In other words, is Paul by inspiration laying down a command that you will or else? See this is the difference, and we're going to see it in another word in a little bit. This is the difference between Grace and Law. Law says pick up sticks on the Sabbath day, and what's the result? Death by stoning. Now we're not under that. If we sin, if we fail, we're not going to be utterly chastised or cast out. But God is going to deal with us in love, we know that He will discipline when we fail if we don't respond, and He'll move on from one level of discipline to another. But it's still the whole idea, "**It's up to us.**" As a believer we have such intense liberties that very few people in Christendom understand. In fact turn with me to the Book of Galatians for a moment, and we'll see the word and how he uses it. Remember, Galatians is written because these believers were being hammered by the Jewish believers to come back under the Law, to practice circumcision, and Judaism to the fullest extent, and Paul had to write this little letter to refute all that. We're not under the law, we're not under any demands of those commandments, and so instead he says in verse 1 of Chapter 5:

Galatians 5:1

"Stand fast therefore (and that means just exactly what it says. Be immovable) in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

And bondage was legalism. Do you see that? So when you enter into that Salvation that we talked about back in Romans Chapter 1 and verse 16, and all the ramifications of it: justification, sanctification, forgiveness, being baptized into the Body of Christ, the Holy Spirit indwelling, and on and on we could go. Oh what did all that imply? That we're in Christ, but we have also been set free. A liberty like nothing else on this planet, we are set free. Now back to Romans Chapter 12, and verse 1, with this whole concept that as a believer, as a child of God who has the promise that

nothing can separate us from the love of God. We have the promise that now being justified by faith that we have peace with God, now Paul goes on to say:

Romans 12:1

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present (and that means just exactly what it says. Just say, "Lord, here am I," like Isaiah of old. And that's all we have to do. We don't have to cross raging rivers, or run from this place to another, we don't have to go out and try to get an education that God can use. We just simply say, "Lord, here am I, use me," and that's presenting) your bodies a living sacrifice,..."

Now that throws a curve at us, because ordinarily what do we think of as a sacrifice? Well, the animals that were killed that gave up their life, as Christ the Sacrifice that was killed, put to death the Cross. But you see the death that we now die is a substitutionary death in the Person of Christ. That's what Paul meant in Galatians:

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 I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Although Paul said he was crucified, was he dead? No, he was writing the Book of Galatians when he said it, and it's the same way with us. As a believer, yes, we've died, we have been put to death in the mind of God on the Cross of Calvary. We died when Christ died, but oh, we're alive! And now it's our duty, not a command, but rather our duty in light of everything that God has done on our behalf, and we did nothing to present ourselves to Him. I'm going to use this next statement merely for shock. Spiritually we had to stand before God stark naked, and that's the best way I can put it, with no hope anywhere of getting any help, because when a naked person is caught in a predicament, he's not going to go out and look for a set of clothes, he's going to hope for the best.

Now that's exactly where we were spiritually, we were naked before God, we had nothing we could do, we didn't even have fig leaves, and so we just had to stand there at His mercy, and mercy was poured out, and He came in, and He did everything that needs to be done, if people will simply believe it. Well, what is a living sacrifice? I'm going to take you back to the Book of Hebrews for a moment. Hebrews was a Book written to the Hebrews, and it was in light of all the Old Testament sacrifices, and rituals, and what have you. Let's look at Chapter 13. I'm going to take you off the hook. I'm going to give you the idea of presenting your body, "**A living sacrifice.**" From the time you get up in the morning until you lay your head back on the pillow at night, and it's so easy especially for us living in blessed America. And I hope you take this verse with you from this day forward, because this is all God is looking for. This is that living sacrifice that He is asking. Now remember God is not commanding it, or demanding it, but rather He is asking for it. That's what the word beseech means. "I'm asking you, I'm begging of you," and here it is:

Hebrews 13:15

"By him (that is the crucified Christ up there in verses 12 and 13. By virtue of His death, burial, resurrection on our behalf) therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

And this is what God is looking for first and foremost. He wants to hear our lips speak praise, and thanksgiving to Him all day everyday. And that's the easiest way to fulfill Romans Chapter 12. Now I'll guarantee that if you have a believer who is going to be offering lips of praise to God seven days a week, you're going to have a believer who is going to start accomplishing things for God as well. I mean it's just going to work hand and glove, it's that automatic. Now then come back with me to Romans Chapter 12, and again in verse 1. And remember we were talking about this living sacrifice, and don't let it stop with the lips of praise, because it will move on into other areas of your life.

Romans 12:1

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy,..."

Now that scares people, and it used to scare me because I didn't want to be thought of as holy, because then you're just sort of out of everything, you're some sort of a kook, or oddball, but listen, Christianity is never that. But here we are holy, what does that mean? Just simply set-apart. Now when the vessels in the Temple were declared holy what did that mean? Well they were set apart for Temple use, and nothing else. In other words, the high priest's wife couldn't come down to the Temple and borrow a ladle, because those instruments were set apart for Temple use, and nothing else. And that's exactly what we're for. We are a set-apart people. Now that doesn't make us an oddball, but it does, in God's mind, designate us as people of The Book, as people who are living to please Him first. Now, as I've told my children over the years, that comes down to the word "Priority." You have to set your priorities, what is most important in your life. Well remember what the Scriptures says:

Matthew 6:33

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Priority says, "God First!" After that these other things can come at their rightful place. Now back to Romans again.

Romans 12:1b

"...that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, (now this is what I want to show you in the Greek that I had never known before) which is your reasonable service."

For about 20 years now, when I teach Romans I tell folks that these last five Chapters 12-16 of Romans are just practical Christian living. What do I mean by practical? It's common, it's ordinary, there isn't anything in these five chapters that would take you out of the mainstream of your community, and make you an oddball. If you could live in a community where people 99.9% lived out these last five chapters of Romans, you'd be in the closest thing to heaven on earth. But we won't do it, none of us do, but oh it's so practical. Getting back to the Greek part of that verse, "reasonable service" as Paul uses it, are the two Greek words `Logikos' and `Latreia' which means `ritual' or `service.' Now so that you can see what I mean let's go back to the Book of Hebrews again. Remember the best and only way to really learn is to compare Scripture with Scripture. Hebrews is

rehearsing all the Old Testament rituals of Judaism. Explaining the Day of Atonement and all the rest. Now in Chapter 9:1 we find.

Hebrews 9:1a

"Then verily the first covenant (Law) had also ordinances of divine service,..."

And that's the same Greek word 'Latreia' as we have back in Romans, but the word **divine** comes from a different Greek word that implied the established or prescribed ritual according to the Law. Now that was prescribed. I mean when people came to the temple they knew exactly what they were to do and how and when. You know, I've accompanied Catholic friends to one of their services, and I say this with no ridicule, but it's just a fact of life. If you were not Catholic and you were to attend a Roman mass or something like that with a Catholic, they will get up and kneel, then they'll stand and then kneel. Well, the visitor about 5 minutes into it, what does he become? Totally confused, because about the time you're kneeling, they are standing. Now the Jew was the same way. When they went into their Synagogue service, they knew exactly when to sit, when to stand, when to respond - there was no confusion because it was established ritual, a religious service. Now come back to Romans Chapter 12 and we have the same service, Latreia, but instead of divine or ritualistic, or religious, our word is in the Greek, 'Logikos,' and our translators for the most part, have translated it "intelligent." Now, read it that way.

Romans 12:1

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable (intelligent) service." Or you could say, "logical service," or "practical service."

Isn't that beautiful? We're no longer under the demands of a certain ritual of "you'll do it this way and this way." We're set free. We're not under any particular commanding type of ritual. We are an individual, accountable to God and God alone. And that is our logical, practical, service. I like that. I don't know whether you're catching it, but when I saw this last week as I was getting ready for this, I thought, "Well now that's exactly what I've been telling people but I didn't have the Greek to prove it." But now I do. For the Jew or for a person who is in a religion, they have to follow the rituals. But you and I as set-free believers, don't have a prescribed ritual to follow. But we are just simply in tune with God and we do that which of course He leads us to do. Now let's go on to verse 2.

Romans 12:2a

"And be not conformed to this (what?) world:....."

Now the word 'world' in Scripture is usually used in two Greek words - 'Kosmos' from which we get the word 'cosmopolitan,' or 'Aion,' which means 'age.' In other words, we are not to be molded by the god of this age or the god of this world. Now, all the way back to the Garden of Eden, once Adam fell, and he dropped the ball of dominion that he was given to carry, who picked it up? Satan did! And what does the Scripture call Satan? The god of this world! The world, which John says, lies in the lap of the Wicked One. And that's where most of the people are tied. But this verse says not to be conformed to this world and the god of it.

LESSON THREE * PART II

OUR LOGICAL INTELLIGENT SERVICE - ROMANS 12

PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING - ROMANS 13-16

Now let's jump right back into Romans 12 and verse 2. Remember Paul has just made the plea in verse 1:

Romans 12:1

"I Beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies (not your soul, but rather your body, flesh and blood that we operate in) a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable (logical, practical) service."

We're not under a mandate of law or rules and regulations, but we respond as the Holy Spirit leads us in our life of service, in our testimony, and everything. Now then verse 2:

Romans 12:2a

"And be not conformed to this world:.."

Now I always like to explain the word *'conformed'* this way: Most of you have seen your wife or someone pour that hot jello into a jello mold, and once that jello sets, it's going to be just exactly the shape of that mold. You can do much the same thing with soft steel, it's molded, and once it's molded it's set, and that's the way it is. This is just exactly the analogy that Paul is saying, "Don't be poured into Satan's mold." Oh, he has one ready for you, absolutely he does. We know he's the god of this world, as we've seen over and over again. And remember in our closing remarks in the last lesson we find, **"The world lieth in the lap of the Wicked One, and the whole world system out there is under his control."** And as soon as we come out away from that, of course, then we are marked people. The world knows us, and don't think for a minute it doesn't. But this is what Paul is admonishing us now of our own free will, because we're not being forced. So the whole plea here is, "Don't be molded according to this old world which is in the control of the Wicked One." But the opposite in verse 2 is:

Romans 12:2a

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed..."

And again a lot of time we miss the impact of these words. I'm no Greek scholar. I'm just like the average one of you, or a Sunday School teacher, But do you realize that again in the Greek that this word **"transformed"** here in Romans 12 is the same word, **"Transfigured"** when Christ was transfigured up there on the Mount of Transfiguration in Matthew Chapter 17. Now you all know what happened when Peter, James, John, and Jesus went up to that Mount of Transfiguration. Remember He was changed right before their eyes. He took on all the appearances of His glory. And the voice from heaven recognized Him as such:

Matthew 17:5b

"...This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

Now that's the same word that Paul uses here as "**being transformed.**" We're not all of a sudden going to have that glorious appearance as Jesus did, and another word that comes out of the same Greek root is, "**Metamorphosis.**" We are to be metamorphosized. Now what's that? When that old ugly cocoon suddenly opens up, and out of that caterpillar comes that beautiful butterfly. Now that's to be the experience of the believer, we're to be transformed, we're to be transfigured, we are to be totally changed from what we were before. I had a young lady tell me once, "I'm sure glad I'm a Christian, because I know I'm bad enough even as a Christian, but what in the world would I be if I weren't?" And isn't that the way most of us have to look at it? I can be an ornery critter, even as a Christian, but remember we have been transformed, and Paul is reminding us of this. Now you don't expect a beautiful butterfly to fly around looking like an old vulture do you? No, but rather you expect him to be the innocent fluttering beauty that it is, and that's what we are to be. We're to be different from what we were before.

How does it take place? Not by works. I'll take you back to the car battery illustration. When your car battery is dead, you don't go with a basin of soapy water, and clean it up. That's ridiculous. But that's what people try to do with the spirit. They're constantly somehow trying to clean up their own act, somehow do something that will appease God. But listen, you can wash that battery till dooms day, and you're not going to put a charge into it until you bring in an outside source. Well it's the same way here. That why *works religion* is as doomed to failure as anything can be, because you cannot go into the invisible part of a man's make up, and touch it. Remember, only God can do that. No preacher, priest, teacher or denomination can touch it. And the reason God can touch it is He is the Creator of that invisible part of us. Now the reason I'm touching on the invisible part is the next word in verse 2 is, "**Mind.**"

Romans 12:2a

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind...."

Now you all know enough about your physical anatomy. And the mind is as real as your hands, feet, and eyes. You know it is or you wouldn't be here, you'd be locked up some place. But who can see the mind? Now I have a pathologist setting right here in front of me, and he has done many autopsies, and I've asked him before, "Have you ever seen a person's mind?" No, but we know it was in there while they were living. So it's in that area of the invisible then that only God can work.

Romans 12:2a

"...but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind,..."

We can't renew the mind only God can do that, but even God can't do it until we believe. And then God moves in and yes, He transforms us. In II Corinthians Chapter 5, starting at verse 14, Paul is writing to that carnal congregation at Corinth. They had just recently come out of an immoral pagan background, and were still having problems with their own morality, but here Paul sends this letter to these people and says:

II Corinthians 5:14-17

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, (or conclude) that if one died for all, then were all dead: (the whole human race) And that he died for all, that they which live (spiritually

now as a result of their new birth) *should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh;* (Paul is reflecting back on Christ's earthly ministry) *yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh,* (in other words Paul was contemporary with Christ, he knew Him during His earthly ministry.) *yet now henceforth know we him no more.* (now here is the verse that I wanted.) *Therefore if any man (person) be in Christ, he is a new creature: (creation) old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."*

Now that's part of the new birth, that's part of Salvation. God has created within us a transformed mind. He is the One that transfigured us from a hell-bound sinner to a heaven-bound saint, and it's just that simple, and we can't do a thing, except stand open before Him and say, "Lord, there's nothing I can do." So then The Lord moves in just like He did with Israel on the shores of the Red Sea. My, what did Israel do there? Did they start looking for something that would float? No! God told them to stand still, don't do anything, don't try to build a bridge that will float, just stand still. And that's exactly where the unbeliever has to come to, and that he too can do nothing until God moves in, and performs then the miracle of Salvation which in this verse He creates within us a whole new mind, will, and emotion. The personality has to be totally re-created. The old Adam has to die, old Adam with all of the things concerning the world has to die. And then in his place, God with a miraculous work, will then give us that transformed mind. Now back to Romans Chapter 12. Now once we've had that renewing of the mind, the Salvation experience, that creating within us a new man, then we can prove or live out daily:

Romans 12:2b

"...what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

You know I've had so many people over the past 25 years say, "**Les, how can I find God's will for my life?**" And that is a good question, but how do you start? Well, first you have to start by becoming a child of His, because God doesn't fool with the unbelieving world, He just let's them go. He's waiting for them to respond to His Salvation, but He is not in control of their lifestyle, and that carries on even into our own everyday living. You can't legislate morality, it's just impossible to pass laws that will force the unsaved world to live a Christian life, it just won't happen. But rather it has to be that act of God that transforms us, and makes us that new creation as a result of His work, and then all we have to do is just search the Scriptures, you're in an attitude of prayer, you're in an attitude of fellowship with other believers, and God will show you His will. I can't claim to have had some great light from heaven, because I was a victim of circumstances if you want to put it that way. Just circumstances, doors opened, doors closed, doors opened, doors closed, and that's how I got to where I am, and I think it's that way with every believer. So that's how we come to ***that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.***

Beginning with verse 3 are the various gifts that God has given to every believer. Every believer has at least one of these gifts, some may be fortunate enough to have two, but again that's according to God's will. We were just talking to Elsie who is visiting from California, and she has that unique gift of approaching people who are usually unapproachable. Now that's a gift, and I hope she will always use it to the fullest. I remember a lady in Iowa who would open up her home for our Bible Study on Saturday nights for about 40-50 teen-agers, and she was complaining one night to me that she didn't have a gift. I said, "Are you crazy? How many people could get that many young people

in here for 3 hours on a Saturday night, singing, and studying the Word? That's a gift." She had never thought of it that way before. But that's the way so many of us are, we have that gift, we practice it at times, and we just don't realize what we have. So don't go looking up your gift, but rather as we go through the list you'll know where you're strong. Now verse 3 and 4:

Romans 12:3,4

"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:"

I Corinthians Chapter 12 says it so much better than I can. And here Paul is using the analogy of a human body.

I Corinthians 12:12,15

"For as the body (the human body) is one, and hath many members, (in other words we have ten fingers and toes, two eyes, etc.) and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ, (or the Body of Christ) For by one Spirit are we (not just the most spiritual, not just a chosen few, but how many believers?) all baptized (or placed) into one body, (of Christ. Now it's not a denomination,) whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. (now Paul comes back to the physical body again for an illustration.) For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, 'Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?'"

Now here Paul is being ridiculous, of course, to the extreme to make his point. What if our human foot would say to the mind, leave me alone I'm not part of you, but you see that's not the way it works. Or your little toe which is usually unseen, and you don't really comprehend it, but just lose that little toe, will you miss it? You'd better believe it, because that little toe is part of the body. Now come back to Romans, and this is exactly the illustration Paul is drawing. This illustration of the Body of Christ is going to have some members that are just as unseen, and unknown as the little toe on your foot, but are they important? Absolutely, that believer is important, he's a member of the Body of Christ. Others are going to be more visible, you're going to have your Billy Grahams, and famous evangelists, but are they anymore important? No. They are no more important than that believer who is represented in the little toe, and so never sit back and and say, "Oh, God can't use me because I'm a nobody." Hey, if you're in Christ, you're a somebody.

Romans 12:5,6

"So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us (we're not all going to have that same gift. Who's in control of gift giving? God is. God imparts your particular gifts whether it's great or small. He's the one who is building the Body), whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith:"

Remember at the time Paul was writing these letters, the New Testament hadn't come together yet, the Four Gospels I don't think were even written. And Paul's letters hadn't become part of Scripture,

so how was God promoting the Word? Through gifted men who spoke forth the Word of God. That's what prophesy means. It doesn't mean telling the future like Isaiah did, but rather they were gifted men to speak the Word of God. Now let's go on to the next one.

Romans 12:7

"Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;"

Now you can have all kinds of ministry, but whatever it is determines that it's your gift, and put it to use. The last part of that verse speaks of teaching. Granted not everyone can teach, but there's a lot more people that can than do. Why don't they? Well they're afraid like I used to be. I was scared to death to get up in front of even ten of my own peers when I was a kid, but God overcame that, and now I know that He's given me the gift of teaching, but it isn't me that is teaching. It's Him. And the same way with you. Whatever your gift is, don't ever say, "Look what I can do." It's a gift that God has given, and He has designated. Now verse 8:

Romans 12:8a

"Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation..."

Not everybody can exhort someone without making them mad. Do you know what it means to exhort someone? To push them, encourage them, and a lot of people will rebel at that if it's from the wrong person, but if you have that gift, get after it. The lady in Iowa who opened her home to the teen-agers, encouraged one of those lads, after he had come out of Iowa State University, to go to a good Bible School, and as a result he has gone into the ministry full time. And that's what it takes, and as a result there was a life that became productive. Now giving:

Romans 12:8a

"...he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity;..."

Not everybody has that ability, not everybody has the gift of giving, and I've experienced some that do, and my they know how to give, and they know when to give. Why? Because it's a gift that God has given them.

Romans 12:8b

"...he that ruleth, with diligence:..."

Here I think it's going into the working of the local church. Not everybody has the ability to be a leader in the local church, but if you have leadership ability, and people are willing to follow you, get after it, and give God the credit.

Romans 12:8b

"...he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness...."

My wife, Iris, is a nurse, and she can tell you better than I can that some visitors come into the hospital room and make people sicker than they were before. But some can come into that room,

and make that sick person feel like a million dollars. Now that's also a gift that everyone doesn't have.

Romans 12:9a

"Let love (which is the very core of Christianity anyway) be without dissimulation...."

Now don't just skim over a big word like that. If you don't know, go get your dictionary. What does dissimulation mean? Don't be hypocritical, and just try to use your gift with the wealthy people, but you've got to be able to do it with the lower echelon also. Don't sort people out according to where they are in the social ladder. Your love and gift has to be without dissimulation.

Romans 12:9b

"...Abhor that which is evil;..."

You see this is one of the failures of Christianity today. Christianity is no longer showing its hatred for evil. They're rolling with it, they're condoning it, and will say "So what? There's nothing we can do about it." Listen we are never to stop abhorring that which is evil. I'm not one to point these things out, and never have been, because I feel that if I teach The Book, and can get people into The Book, they're soon going to see what God calls evil, I don't have to tell you. All you have to do is go back into the Book of Leviticus, and you can find out real fast all the things that God forbade Israel to do. God hasn't changed. Those same wicked sins are just as wicked today as they were back then. But it's not in the legal context that it was back there. Now reading on:

Romans 12:9

"...cleave to that which is good."

Now we're living in a time where there is a concept that what is black is white, what is evil is good, what's good is evil. We are totally seeing our values mixed up, and of course it's a ploy of Satan. That's all a part of what I call this end time conspiracy, and it's getting the world ready for the appearance of the Anti-christ. Everything we see, this explosion in technology, is all God's way of letting Satan have his free course, but what's he working for? A world government, a world leader, a world religion, and you think it isn't coming? It's so close it should keep you awake at night. And it would if we didn't know that The Lord is going to come first, and remove us. I, for one, don't believe that you and I are going to go into the Tribulation, and so this is our prayer, that The Lord will come and take us before this world leader comes and makes his appearance.

LESSON THREE * PART III

OUR LOGICAL INTELLIGENT SERVICE - ROMANS 12

PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING - ROMANS 13-16

Now getting back to our study; here in Romans Chapter 12 we have been talking about the gifts that God has imparted to every member of the Body of Christ to fulfill His purpose. A lot of these gifts are most functional within the local Body of Christ, within the local church, but it's not confined to

that. You can use your gift anywhere, anytime. Let's pick up the Scriptures in verse 17 where we come into our attitude to those `round about us. Not just in our church, but our community as a whole.

Romans 12:17

"Recompense to no man evil for evil Provide things honest in the sight of all men."

Now you know the human response: someone does you dirty, then do them dirty in return, but of course that's just not the Christian principal. We're to provide things honest in the sight of all men. I'd rather charge too little as to overcharge anyone, and if we have that kind of attitude of our fellow men, that we're not out to get them, to take advantage of them, but to be a square dealer as we used to call it. Now verse 18, and this will probably raise some eye brows. I guess we have all been hammered with the idea that if you're a Christian then you've just got to let people do to you as they will, because after all you're in no position to argue with anyone because you're a Christian. Well I've always said that verse 18 is a loop hole.

Romans 12:18

"If it be possible, (there's going to be times when it won't be possible, let's face it) as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."

That's great, but listen, we're living in a devil's world, and it's not always possible. I have some illustrations in my own experience, of people that have been in my classes, where they have been in the position that they're a Christian, and can't do anything about it. I'm thinking about a man several years ago, he and his wife sold a little business that they had made their living from, and he had sold it on a contract hoping that from the contact income he and his wife would have a decent living. But the buyer never bothered to pay them, never gave them any interest, certainly no principal, and he let the business all deteriorate down to nothing. He was telling me about it one night after class, and I said, "Good heavens, man, have you ever heard of a court?" He said, "I'm a Christian, I can't take the man to court." I said, "Is he a fellow believer? Is he in the same Church Body that you're in?" He said, "Oh, no, he's not even a Christian." I said, "Then for goodness sake get after him, because that's your prerogative. Go get you a good lawyer. You don't have to sit there and starve to death because some crook is not fulfilling his obligations." He said, "Oh, you really think so?" I said "I know so." and I showed him this verse. He had done everything that he could in order to make the guy make some payments, and he was almost starving, because somebody was being a deadbeat on his contract. Now do you think that's wrong to go to a lawyer in those circumstances? No.

Remember when Paul was called before the religious leaders in Israel? Go back with me for a moment to Acts Chapter 23. Here Paul is up before the great religious leaders of his day, and they're giving him a bad time. Do you think Paul just stood there like a milk toast? No he didn't, he fired back, and I think once in a while we have to. Now don't take me wrong; this should not be the common thing to do, but if it's impossible to do anything else, then you have to exert your Christian right.

Acts 23:1-3

"And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, (of these religious leaders) said, 'Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.' And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. (why? Because in Ananias' mind he was lying. He hadn't lived in good conscience so he ordered them to strike Paul, and they did. Look how Paul responds.) Then said Paul unto him, 'God shall smite thee, thou whited wall (what is that? Paul calls him a blatant hypocrite: "You religious leader, you know nothing of the things of God"): for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?"

What did Paul do? He exerted his right even as a Christian. We won't take time to look up the other one, but remember when Paul was brought before the Roman magistrates up there in Philippi, and they had beaten him without trial by jury, and the next morning they wanted him to leave town, what did Paul say:

Acts 16:37

"But Paul said unto them, 'They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.'"

So here Paul exerted his legal privilege, and I see nothing wrong with that. Now I don't think believers should run to a lawyer at the drop of a hat, that's not what I'm saying. But when it gets to the place that we have no other way to turn, we do not have lay down, and say "Well, walk on me because I'm a Christian." So I use this verse for this very basis, that there may come a time when you have to use this verse also.

Romans 12:19

"Dearly beloved avenge not yourselves, (now this flies in the face of human nature, we always want to get even, but the Scripture says to a believer, "We don't have to try and get even. Who's going to do it for us?") but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay,' saith the Lord."

It may take Him longer than it would us, but He will. What goes around comes around, and it never fails. If God is in control, and you know He is, and someone has misused you, give God time, He's going to square the matter, and I'd rather have God do it than me. And then the admonition in verse 20 and 21:

Romans 12:20,21

"Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head, Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

Well, so much for the practicality of the Christian gifts, and of our dealing with the people around us. Now to Chapter 13, and Paul is going to talk about our attitude toward government. Of course, one of the beauties of democracy is if we don't like what we see in government we can complain, we can say what we want, because we have that kind of freedom. But here Paul is admonishing the believer to recognize that every central government is there by divine appointment. I know this is hard to reconcile. Was Hitler there by God's Sovereign divine appointment? Absolutely he was. And

regardless who America has in the White House that we may not be proud of, listen, he is still there by God's Sovereign appointment.

Romans 13:1

"Let every soul (saved and unsaved) be subject unto the higher powers. (this is speaking of our civil government) For there is no power (no king, no prime minister, no president) but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God."

Now those of you who have heard me teach for many, many years have heard me say that one of the amazing things to me is that when you start way back there in the Garden of Eden, we find God turned over to human choice pretty much the exercise of his free will. And not only to individuals, but to nations. Nations have been given their free exercise, God isn't in there constantly haranguing them, but in spite of the fact that He has given individuals, and nations, that exercise of free will, after 6000 years of human history, where are we in God's program? Right on schedule, and this is what is so amazing that through wars and famines, and revolutions, the world is just exactly tonight where God intended it to be. Now that's amazing isn't it? But that's how He works, He puts in our civil government in a way that we can't understand or comprehend. Now verse 2:

Romans 13:2

"Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."

Now I know this raises questions. What if someday we should have a completely totalitarian, ungodly government? Well, first and foremost, it's the believers responsibility to live peaceably under that government. But I think the only place where we as believers will have the right to resist that government is when they go contrary to our Christian experience, and to the commands of Scripture. Then, of course, I think as believers we have every right to say, "Hey, wait a minute I can't do that." Until then we are to give ourselves under control of the central government. Then verse 3 is the reason: Why do we have government? So we can pursue joy, happiness, and so on.

Romans 13:3-5

"For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. (criminal element) Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he (government) is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: (capitol punishment) for he is a minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."

Now in verse 6 we all kind of rebel at this one, and since government has been given by God to help us pursue our life of happiness, yet in order for government to protect us, to give us this that we need, what do we have to do?. Well we have to pay some taxes. I don't believe that we have to pay as much as we are, but, nevertheless, the government does need tax money so they can operate. So that's what he means in verse 6:

Romans 13:6

"For this cause (because of all the things that God intended government to do) pay ye tribute (taxes) also: for they (government) are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing."

People paid taxes in Christ's time, and they've been doing it ever since, and they're getting better at it all the time aren't they? I mean they can tax you to death now, and act like they are doing you a favor, but a certain amount of it is required if we're going to have a workable government.

Romans 13:7a,8

"Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due;... Owe no man any thing, (we can better translate as not defrauding, or taking advantage of anyone. There is certainly nothing wrong with going to the bank, and borrowing money to buy a home for example) but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath (past tense) fulfilled the law."

Now all it takes to fulfill the Law, is to have love operate in your daily experience. Now then look at Chapter 6 for a moment to see something with your own eyes. Most never realize this complete difference between Law and Grace.

Romans 6:14

"For sin (or the old Adam) shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

We're not under the rituals and stipulations of the Law of Israel, we are not under the demands of Israel. That's all been set aside, and now we're under Grace, but Grace isn't a license. That doesn't mean that we can just do as we please, that we can go ahead and sin as we please, no, that's not Grace.

Romans 6:15

"What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid."

Don't think such a thing, we're still under God's providence, but we're not under His Law as such that if you break it this is what's going to happen. But God's mind on sin hasn't changed. But now we're under Grace. Now back to Romans 13. Now, since we're under Grace, love is the dominant force in the life of the believer. Remember, love is the fulfilling of the Law, so when love is operating, look what happens:

Romans 13:9

"For this, `Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'" Now where are those statements coming from? The Ten Commandments, the Law. And when you get into the Book of Ephesians, Paul uses the one concerning children.

Ephesians 6:1

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise;"

But you see even though Paul repeats nine of those ten commandments, and I think most of you who have heard me teach know which one he doesn't repeat, and that is the Sabbath. The Sabbath has absolutely nothing to do with the believer today. In fact I suppose I should have a whole lesson on that term "*Sabbath*." The Sabbath was strictly the seventh day, as a day of rest for the Nation of Israel. It is absolutely incorrect to call our Sunday the Sabbath. The Sabbath was the seventh day, and it was given only to the Nation of Israel, long before the Law, but when the Law came the Sabbath was incorporated into it. So Paul never makes mention of that commandment concerning the Sabbath because we have nothing to do with that. But the other nine are still part and parcel of our Christian experience. Just because we're a believer we don't have a right to commit adultery, or to kill, and all these other things. So love is what keeps us in the straight and narrow.

Usually when I teach this I put two lines on the board, and on the one side it's love for God, the love for the One Who bought us. And on the other line is love for other people, and so that keeps us then within the guidelines of God's commandments.

Romans 13:10

"Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: (if you love your neighbor you can't do him dirty, oh, he may do you some, but if love is operating as much as lieth in us we'll let God take care of it.) therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

Now where is the epitome of love expressed that fulfilled the Law? On the Cross. What put Christ on the Cross? Love, It was His love for lost mankind that set His eyes to the Cross. It was love that nailed Him to the Cross. It was love that caused God to pour out mercy at the Cross. Now when that love has been imparted to you and I as believers, do you see how sensible that becomes? That same kind of love then is our attitude toward the people around us, and even our enemies, if we have such

Romans 13:11a

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep:..."

What kind of sleep? Spiritual sleep, and that's where the Church is tonight. They are sound asleep. They are totally unaware of all the things that are taking place in this world tonight that are getting the stage set for the coming of that final seven years of human history. They have no idea, and we're talking about church people who don't realize how close we are. But Paul says we are in the end times, and if Paul thought we were 2000 years ago, then imagine how close we are now.

Romans 13:11b-14

"...for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

Let's go on to Chapter 14. Here Paul is going to deal with the disputes between believers. In Paul's day one of the biggest things was eating meat that had been offered to an idolatrous temple, and let's look at just a few things that he says.

Romans 14:1

"Him that is weak in the faith (do you see who we're dealing with? We're not talking about the strong believer, but rather the weak one, maybe a really new believer) receive ye, (into your fellowship) but not to doubtful disputations."

Don't bring him in and let him cause a lot of argument, because he sees you eating meat that you bought at the market place, and it probably came from the Temple, and he won't touch it, so don't get into a big argument over it.

Romans 14:2

"For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs."

So what does the weak one become? A vegetarian. Now you know from Scripture when even old Elijah was out there and the ravens fed him, what did they feed him? Herbs and veggies? Meat. And so all the way through Scripture there is absolutely nothing that says we cannot eat meat. Now I know some of you don't agree with me, but you're not arguing with me, you're arguing with The Book. And The Book says that meat is part of God's diet, and there's nothing wrong with eating meat. If your doctor tells you that you are absolutely in a position that you can't eat it, then that's different. But for the normal healthy individual there's nothing wrong with meat. So Paul says here, "Don't let someone come along and say that they are a vegetarian, and you are a testimony of evil when you eat meat." And that's what they were doing, and Paul says how you deal with it.

Romans 14:3

"Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth; for God hath received him."

Remember what The Book tells us in Romans 8? Who can judge us? No one because Who alone is the Judge? The One Who died for me. And it's the same way here. When you come into contact with other believers who may not live the lifestyle that you think they should, remember you're in no position to judge. You may be able to point them to something in Scripture, but you can't judge another person. Paul absolutely rejects that out of hand. Now verse 4 and here Paul uses an everyday example.

Romans 14:4a

"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?..."

You're not his boss. You're not paying his wages. Are you going to judge him? Don't judge someone else. You're not the boss. God is. And in verse 5 he gets into the business of days.

Romans 14:5,6a

"One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it...."

Here again, one person may establish one day, and another person will say, "**Hey, to me they are all alike.**" Well, **that's the liberty of the Christian faith.** We'll pick this up in our next lesson.

LESSON THREE * PART IV

OUR LOGICAL INTELLIGENT SERVICE - ROMANS 12

PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING - ROMANS 13-16

Now in Chapter 14 of Romans, Paul has been dealing with believers who have been having trouble with other believers concerning doubtful practices. Now it doesn't just have to be eating meat offered to idols, it could be in the matter of diet, alcoholic beverages, and multitudes of things that are not necessarily delineated in Scripture. It becomes then the option of the individual before God as to what he can and can not do. That brings us back to our "liberty" again, but we have to be careful that we do not do something that in our own mind is not wrong if it's going to cause a weak believer to stumble. And that was the whole concept of Chapter 14.

If I see nothing wrong in eating a good juicy T-Bone steak, but yet there's a weaker believer who says, "Les, how in the world can you eat meat like that?" Then for his sake I have to say, "I won't eat meat for his sake until he gets to the place that he can see that I wasn't wrong." Now that comes into every aspect of life, and sooner or later they will come to that place where they will see, according to Scripture, that we're not all that wrong in some of the things that we do. I think it's come to the same place with the observance of Sunday. Don't get me wrong, I'm not telling people to forget about Sunday as our day of rest and so forth, and the operation of the local church. But scripturally there is no demand whatsoever from the Apostle Paul that Sunday is any different day than any other day of the week. And so again by tradition we have been programmed into the idea that Sunday is the same as the Sabbath was in Israel, and it is not. Sunday is just another day of the week so far as God is concerned. And I think what the admonition is, that for you and I as believers, everyday should be a Sunday. Everyday should be a day of recognizing God, and giving Him all His due, and we shouldn't have a particular day programmed into our schedule. This is covered in Chapter 14, and it's all self explanatory, and then he puts the wrap up here in the first verses of Chapter 15.

Romans 15:1-3

"We then that are strong (mature believers) ought to bear the infirmities of the weak (or the hang ups of the younger believers. Now when I say younger believers they may be 70 years old but have only been a believer for a few years. And so the mature believer has to take into consideration the idea of that younger believer, and not cause him to stumble), and not to please ourselves." And now we come to that attitude that we're not going to just please ourselves, but the person next to us.

"Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification (in other words to his growth in his Christian life. And in verse 3, here comes Christ as our primary example). For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, 'The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.'" In other words, why did Christ die? Because He loved mankind. He had to die in order to settle the sin problem, but He could have rejected it and said, "No," but He chose for the sake of mankind, out of that motivating love, to go to the Cross and purchase our Salvation.

Romans 15:4

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime (even as Paul wrote his epistles I'm sure the Four Gospels hadn't been written, and certainly had not come together as Scripture, so when Paul speaks of Scripture or things written aforetime, what's he referring to? The Old Testament. So what he's really saying is that all the things written in the Old Testament) were written for our learning,..."

Now I always like to try and clarify where I'm afraid that I have been misunderstood. Someone told me awhile back that a pastor told this individual, "Don't you listen to Les Feldick, because he says that you're not to read the Four Gospels." Now you know I have never said anything like that, but they can twist it you know. I have never told anybody not to look at the Old Testament or not to look at the Gospels, but here it is. Everything that was written before Paul wrote is for the believers' learning. And I would say the same thing with the Gospels. Granted there's not Church doctrine in the Gospels, but that doesn't mean that we don't study them. That doesn't mean that we don't make application. In fact I always have the primary one, when Jesus was talking to the Twelve up there on the northern shores of Galilee, and He probably saw a northern city ten to fifteen miles away sitting up there on the mountain side, and what did He say to the disciples as a perfect illustration? "You're just like that city on a hill:"

Matthew 5:14

"Ye are the light of the world, A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid."

Now who was to be the light of the world according to all the Old Testament promises? Israel, the Jew. But Israel rejected that opportunity of becoming the light of the world, so now by application, who today is the light of the world? You and I as believers, and so we can still make the same application. In the verse right before that He used salt as the example.

Matthew 5:13

"Ye are the salt of the earth;..."

Christ was talking to the Twelve indicative to the Nation of Israel, but we know Israel rejected that role, so today who is the salt of the earth? Again, you and I as believers. Absolutely we are, and the same throughout all the Gospel accounts. We can see perfect applications, even though it was spoken to Israel under the Law, so here's where we have to be careful. But now back to Romans and Paul tells us that these Old Testament things were written not for our doctrine. You won't find Grace Salvation back in the Old Testament. You won't find anything concerning the Body of Christ, or the Rapture of the Church, and all these things that are indicative of the Body of Christ. But does that mean we don't study the Old Testament? No way. You all know how I love to teach Genesis. I could just teach Genesis year in and year out, because it all had its beginnings back there, and that's where you get the foundation even for what we believe as Grace Age believers. Now reading on in verse 4:

Romans 15:4b

"that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

I had a question come in from someone a while back who had just lost a baby 7 days old. The question was, "Will we see that little one again, and I want some Scripture to back you up." Well where do you suppose I went? Right back to when David lost that child from Bathsheba. Remember how he mourned for that little one, and finally David came to the conclusion;

II Samuel 12:23

"But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

That was a seven-day old baby also. Was it secure? Was it in God's presence? Yes, because you know David didn't speak of going to hell, David is going to be in Heaven. So when he spoke of that 7-day old child that he had just lost, and that he would go to it someday, where do you find that? Old Testament. So all these things that we can glean from the Old Testament, even though they may not have the doctrines for our Salvation (because you won't find the doctrine that Christ died for sins, was buried, and rose again in the Old Testament), but all the seeds of it are back there going all the way back to Genesis 3:15.

Romans 15:8

"Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision (Jews) for the truth of God (for what purposes?) to confirm the promises made unto the fathers."

And those fathers were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Well, what's he talking about? Here again you have to go back to Genesis Chapter 12, and what do you have? Abrahamic Covenant. And what was the Abrahamic Covenant? From this man Abraham would come a nation of people, and God would put them in a geographical land, and one day He Himself in the Person of The Son would come and be their Messiah, King, and Redeemer. Now this was all promised back there in the Old Testament. And so He was the Minister to the Jew first and foremost. You remember the verse in John and Matthew:

John 1:11

"He came unto his own, (the Jew) and his own received him not."

Matthew 15:24

"But he (Jesus) answered and said, 'I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'"

And when they had their final opportunity to yet repent of the horrible deed of crucifying their Messiah, they rejected it. Then in the Book of Acts, it was like a crescendo of rejection when Israel stoned what man? Stephen. And from that point on Israel just goes down through the cracks, and in its place comes the Apostle Paul going to the Gentiles. But it all had its seed back there in the Old Testament. So He came to the Nation of Israel:

Romans 15:8b-9a

"...to confirm the promises (the Covenants) made unto the fathers (now verse 9); And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy:"

I don't think I have even understood it as far back as I should have, but I certainly do now, and that is the mercy and the Grace of God. So often I think mankind thinks, "Oh, well, after all, God didn't do that much extra, we sort of deserved it, He made us, and He had to do something decent for us." No He didn't. We deserve absolutely nothing, so why did He provide a way back to Himself?

Because of His mercy. And as I've said so often on this program, when Christ died on the Cross, and took all the wrath of God for the sins of the world, not only did God pour out His wrath, but He also poured out His mercy. And we no longer have to beg for mercy, it's already been poured out, it's all there, and all we have to do is appropriate it by faith.

Romans 15:10

"And again he saith, (speaking from the Old Testament) 'Rejoice, ye Gentiles,...'" Even though God was dealing primarily with the Nation of Israel all the way from Abraham till we get into the Book of Acts, God didn't forget about the Gentiles. He couldn't deal with them till Christ went to the Cross.

Romans 15:11,12

"And again, Praise The Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, there shall be a root of Jesse, (David's father, and Christ is considered the Son of David, so here's the connection now all the way back through Jesse, David, Solomon, and that whole line of Jewish Kings) and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust." It's never happened, but it's going to. When Christ sets up His millennium reign, He's still going to be King of Kings and Lord of Lords not just over Israel, but over the whole Gentile world.

Romans 15:13

"Now the God of hope (hope in Scripture is not like we hope it rains. But hope in Scripture is that definite view into the future that God is going to fulfill it) fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

And then Paul begins now talking about his own future, and how he is longing to go to Jerusalem, contrary to a lot of things that happened to him that he shouldn't go. Yet he had such a burning love for his people, the Jew, that he is just determined that he's still going to get back to Jerusalem.

Romans 15:14-18

"And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. (Now remember who Paul is writing to. He's writing to believers in the city of Rome who are primarily Gentiles.) Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God (Grace is the primary word in Paul's vocabulary, the Grace of God). That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed."

The Apostle has still been looking for the day that he would not only stop at Rome, but that he would go on west to Spain.

Romans 15:24-26

"Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you (the believers at Rome): for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company. But now (first and foremost) I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints." Paul had no idea that he would end up going to Rome by virtue of the prisoner route. He had no idea of that at all, but he is determined first to go to Jerusalem to minister unto the saints, the believing Jews there in Jerusalem.

"For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem."

I read an account the other day, and it gave me a whole new perspective on some of these things. The Apostle Paul has been laboring there in western Turkey, and then a little later on, in Macedonia and Achaia in Greece. Now I don't know how much you know history or geography today, but you see that area of Greece is totally mountainous. There is very little opportunity for creating any wealth to speak of so those new believers that Paul had brought about in Achaia and Macedonia, in the more rural parts of Greece, were intensely poor. They were poverty stricken, and yet what did they do? They gave of what they had so that Paul could take the offering to those poor saints in Jerusalem who were Jews. The guy who wrote the article made this analogy, and it changed my whole perspective on all this.

Here we sit in wealthy America, and we send missionaries to the poverty stricken areas of the world, and where they've never heard The Gospel. How would the average Church here in America feel today if some of those new believers, let's say in New Guinea out there in the jungles where they have nothing, would send an offering back to them? Why it would almost repulse people wouldn't it? But that's exactly what they did here. Here these people that are now Paul's new converts to Christianity, dirt poor, and yet they bring together offerings for the Jewish believers back there in Jerusalem where civilization had been head and shoulders above what these poor people had been enduring. But do you see the lesson? When people become true children of God, they have a whole different outlook on everything. Instead of those people sitting over there saying, "Send us some of that American money," what were they doing? They were sending it back to the homeland; in this case Jerusalem. It's something I don't think most of us think of.

Romans 15:27

"It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things."

Now do you know what this verse says? I realize I've taught it, and I hope I've made it plain that on the spiritual level the Jew is absolutely no different than a Gentile tonight. He's a sinner in need of a saving Grace just as well as a Gentile. He has no special privileges to The Gospel. He has no position that puts him in a better place than a Gentile. He is just as much in need of the plan of Salvation as any Gentile. But even though they are not under the Covenant promises tonight, they are out there sinners in need of Salvation, but if God didn't have His Sovereign thumb on them, somehow or other they would have long disappeared from the scene. That little nation would have been swallowed up by assimilation of all the other nations of the world. The other Hitlers would have totally annihilated them, and he wasn't the only one so why are they still there? Because God has Sovereignly watched over them.

I have a snapshot at home that I just cherish. Our kids were little, and they were down on the seashore playing on the edge of the water, and I took a snapshot of Iris as she was sitting there watching every move those three little kids made. I imagine that she was ready to jump if suddenly one of them fell in the water or something, but isn't that exactly what God is doing with Israel? Oh, they're on their own, but He's watching over them like a hawk. He has brought them through, and listen, He has to because prophecy has to be fulfilled. The Nation of Israel has to be there in unbelief. They have to be in the land in order for God to consummate those 7 years of Tribulation. And if every Jew was a Christian, if every Jew was a believer, and the Rapture took place what would be left? Well no one to fulfill prophecy, and so we have to understand this, that yes, God in His Sovereign eagle eyes is watching over them, and He's keeping them intact as a nation.

Where in the world would the 144,000 come from if there weren't any Jews left? You have to have 12,000 out of each of the 12 tribes to fulfill that prophecy. Jeremiah 31 says that the sun would fall out of its place in the heavens if Israel would stop being a nation. The sun, moon, and stars would cease to shine it says if Israel ceases to be, so they have to stay there. So this is what Paul is talking about, that even you and I as believers, have to have a concern for the fleshly needs of the Jew even today, and that flies in the face of anti-Semitism as it's raising its head again around the world.

Well in the couple of minutes that we have left, Paul now comes into Chapter 16, and there's not a lot of doctrine in this chapter unless you want to call women's role in Christian service as doctrine, and I guess it is. You know I've heard Paul castigated over the years. A group of feminists down at the university were trying their utmost to get all the Bibles off the campus. And it was for the simple reason that Paul was such an anti-feminist. Well bless their heart, they were so ignorant. There is not a man in Scripture that gives more commendation to the female of the species than the Apostle Paul. I think in this Chapter 16 alone there are at least 8 women that Paul enumerates who were intrinsic in helping him in the ministry. In fact, in verse 1 of this epistle to the Romans (one of the most important books of our Bible), do you know that this was entrusted to a woman to get it to where it was supposed to go? Yes it was, look what it says:

Romans 16:1,2

"I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea (a seaport east of Corinth's main city): That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also."

In other words, Paul sends this tremendous epistle of Romans from Corinth to the Roman Church by way of this lady we know as Phebe. Probably a business lady, but he entrusted this to a woman, and all the way through the chapter he commends over and over the women who helped him much in the ministry. Don't ever say there's not a place for the women in the Church.

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