

Grace school with the Bible

R. Jordan

EPH 301 –1

We are beginning the book of Ephesians. There are 6 chapters, 155 verses, and 3039 words in the book of Ephesians. It is not a very big book, as far as verses and words, and yet there is a tremendous amount of information.

The word “Ephesians” means “desirable ones”.

It is important to recognize where you have come from, when you come to the book of Ephesians. We have studied the issue about how the Pauline Epistles lay themselves out on a comparison chart with 2 Timothy 3:16. We studied that Romans is a book of doctrine, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians and Galatians are books of reproof and correction in relation to the doctrine in the book of Romans. Then you have the book of Ephesians, which is the next great book of doctrine. Then you have Philippians and Colossians, which reflect the reproof and correction in regard to the doctrine taught in the book of Ephesians.

The doctrine in Romans focuses on the crosswork of Christ, while the doctrine in Ephesians focuses on the church, the body of Christ.

Then after Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, you have 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians, which are two epistles that focus on the doctrine of the coming of Christ – the revelation of the rapture. There are no more church epistles after that, because after the coming of Christ reproof and correction are not necessary.

So, the next epistles are the Personal Epistles – we call them the Pastoral Epistles, (Timothy, Titus, and Philemon), which focus on the congregation, the gathering of the church together in local assemblies of believers, and how they should organize and function and those kinds of things.

Now, when you come to Ephesians, you have gone the first step. We laid the foundation of the establishment truth back there in the book of Romans. We laid the foundation of “my gospel”, and we now come to “the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery”. Ephesians focuses on the mystery program. It especially focuses on the issue of the church, body of Christ.

Somebody said that the book of Ephesians talks about the body of which Christ is the head. Colossians talks about the Head of the body.

Well, how about the book of Philippians, in-between Ephesians and Colossians? Well, if Ephesians focuses on the body of Christ, (the body of which Christ is the head), and Colossians focuses on the Head of the body, then Philippians focuses on the mind of Christ in the believer.

Now, let me show you how that works.

In Ephesians, the issue is the body of Christ. And again, that is the agency that God is forming today in order to use in the ages to come to reconcile the heavenly places back under the authority and the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. We will see those issues as we study Ephesians carefully.

Philippians is a book that focuses, not so much on the broad aspect of the church universal and the one body of Christ, but Paul says in Philippians 2:5, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”

In Philippians 1:27, he says, “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”

Philippians 2:5 – “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 3:15 – “Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded.” In other words, let’s think alike. It has to do with the mind of Christ functioning in the individual believers. Let all of us together think alike. Let’s allow that thinking to permeate the activity in our relationship one with another.

Especially notice Philippians 2:12,13 – “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.” Now that is the idea – let’s be obedient to the divine viewpoint, because it is God that is working in us. God works in you to will – he puts the desire and burden in you, and he directs you and tells you what he wants you to do, through his word. It is the word working in you. In verse 12 he says, “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed.” Well, what have you been obeying? You’ve been obeying the word. How does God work? He works as you obey his word. The Spirit of God energizes his word, and he wills, and he does. He creates the desire of the will, the understanding, the motivation, and then he performs it. “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13).

Philippians is a very personal book, and it focuses on his working in the individual believer.

On the other hand, look at Colossians 2. It focuses on Christ as the head of the body. Colossians 2:18,19 – “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.” The idea is that the Colossians were not holding the Head, they weren’t focusing on Christ and what they had in him. They wanted to become the Head themselves. They were vainly puffed up in their fleshly minds. They were functioning on the basis of human viewpoint rather than on the basis of Colossians 3:1 – “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.”

So, in Colossians, he says, “Hey, Christ is the head”. “And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power” (Colossians 2:10).

In Colossians 1:18, he says, “And he is the head of the body, the church.” You need to focus on him, and let him hold your attention. That is Colossians – focusing on the head. Ephesians focuses on the body of Christ of which he is the head – the doctrine. Philippians focuses on the mind of Christ in the believer. If you are going to live like the body of Christ that you have been made, then you need to have his mind working in you. If you are going to behave like you are the body of which he is the head, then you have to have his mind and his viewpoint working in you. If you are going to believe like he is the head, you can’t let anything else take his place. You can’t put religion, or ceremony, or all those other programs in the world before him. You can’t let those things take his place. He has to be the center of everything, and that is Colossians – corrections.

Remember where you are when you’re in Ephesians. The church, the body of Christ, which Christ is the head is the issue. It is the body in the sense that it is the agency that God is forming today, and going to use in the ages to come, to restore the heavenly places under his authority.

Now, if you remember Romans 16:25,26, we are moving from “my gospel” to “the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest.” We understand that. We understand what the mystery is in the sense of its special revelation to Paul.

Well, now we are going to move away from just focusing on how we’ve been equipped to live on the planet earth as members of the body (Romans) to how he has equipped you to function down on earth. You have been completely, totally, justified, and the sin question has been taken out of the way. You have been filled with the Spirit of God, and you have been empowered, and you have been equipped with divine operating assets. Now, you are to function in an absolute total victory program. You are to live a complete, total, victorious life for his glory. You are to live for him on this earth, as a full-grown adult son.

Please understand that you never get to the place where you do not have to apply these things. Think back two years ago and realize how far you’ve come in your understanding and the capacity that you have been gaining to function as a full-grown adult, knowing who you are and what God put you here to do.

Paul says, “I have some things to show you about what God put you here to do.” You are in this body; you have all these assets; you have this special purpose of God. Paul says, “Now, God has something he is going to do with that that is so fantastic, and you are in such a wonderful program, and there is a special opposition against you today like you never dreamed of.” He says, “I want you to know about that.”

So, now we are going to get involved in the details of the mystery program, the agency, the body of Christ, and its purpose and its plans for the body of Christ. This is advanced truth.

Notice Ephesians 1:1 – “PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.” This epistle is written, not just for saints, but for the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus. It is written for saints who are established believers. It is written for saints who have had that edification of their soul, that basic foundation. They have been faithful to establish the foundation in their soul. The foundation truths are there, and they are faithful in the edification of their soul. They are ready to go on into some more things and to build up a super structure of understanding on that foundation. So, Ephesians is advanced truth for established believers.

Now, I have several things, just by way of introduction, in this lesson. Number one, the writer of the book is the apostle Paul. Ephesians 1:1 – “PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.” There are some names that you recognize instantaneously when you hear them, and Paul is one of those names. Paul is our apostle (Romans 11:13). I am not going over a long dissertation, in this lesson, about who Paul is; because if you don’t have that straight by now, me going over it is not going to get it for you.

In Romans 11:13, Paul said, “For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.”

(If, by chance, you have not taken the preceding courses, I encourage you to go back and to carefully study. You can either get Mr. Stam’s book Paul’s Apostleship and Message, or go back and study through some of the previous classes. I want to mention that because there is a possibility that someone might be taking this class without taking the previous classes.)

But you must understand that Paul is our apostle. That means that the book of Ephesians is particularly and especially our mail.

Now, not only is Paul an apostle, but look at Ephesians 3:1. He writes the book, not simply as Paul, the apostle, but also as Paul, the prisoner. “FOR this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles.”

Ephesians 4:1 – “I THEREFORE, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you.” Do you see that?

Ephesians 6:20 – “For which I am an ambassador in bonds.” He is in chains for the message that he is preaching, for the sake of that message.

So, the book of Ephesians is called a Prison Epistle. You need to understand that term. Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians are called Prison Epistles, because Paul was a prisoner when he wrote them. That helps you to understand something about the time in which the book was written.

Paul became a prisoner in Acts 21. In Acts 21 through Acts 28, he is a prisoner. Basically, he spends two years as a prisoner in Caesarea, and then he is a prisoner in Romans (Acts 28) for another two years. So, there is at least four years plus that he is a prisoner in the last few chapters in the book of Acts. So, sometime during that period Paul wrote these books. He probably wrote it at the very end, and I am going to show you why I say that.

Acts 28:29,30 – “And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves. And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him.”

Now look back at verse 16 – “And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.” Do you see that? Paul is under house arrest. He is a prisoner, and that soldier is keeping him. He is no doubt chained to him. He is in bonds. He is not free to come and go, but instead of living in the dungeon, he is allowed to live in his own hired house in bonds.

Acts 28:31 – “Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.”

Notice, when Luke writes the book, he writes it after Paul has been in Rome as a prisoner for two years. He writes it after those two years are over with.

If Paul had been executed at that time, what would you have expected Luke to do? He would have said, “That’s it, the story is over; Paul’s dead.” But he doesn’t, so that raises a question. Was Paul then released after the close of the book of Acts? The indication, in the scripture, is that he was released, and that Paul suffered two imprisonments. He is imprisoned in the last chapters of the book of Acts, (Caesarea and Rome), for four years plus some. At the end of that four-year plus period in Rome, he is released for a period of unknown duration. During that period of time, he has an extensive ministry. Then he is re-imprisoned, tried, and executed.

Turn to Titus 1 and I will show you some evidences that Paul got out of prison after the book of Acts is over. The books of Titus and 2 Timothy are written after the close of the book of Acts.

Titus 1:5 – “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.” Paul left Titus in Crete. How do you leave somebody in Crete? You leave him there and go somewhere else. If Paul did not go to Crete, he would have sent Titus to Crete, not left him in Crete. Paul went to Crete and left Titus there.

Go back and read Acts 27 and you will see that on the way to Rome, as a prisoner, Paul doesn’t go to Crete. They see it from shipboard, but they don’t go to Crete. Besides that, in Acts 27, there is no indication that Titus is with Paul.

So, sometime after Acts 28, Paul takes Titus, and they go to Crete, and they minister there. Evidently, they spend some time there, because there is a going work in Crete; and Paul leaves Timothy there to get it organized (establish elders, etc.).

Besides that, look at Titus 1:10,11 – “For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped.”

Titus 1:12,13 – “One of themselves, *even* a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians *are* always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true.” Paul knew them. Maybe he got to know them before he got saved, but he knew enough about the people that were there. He knew about the

contention with the circumcision. He knew enough about them to give instructions to Titus. So, there is a going work at Crete. Where did it come from? The indication is that Paul took Titus there. He doesn't do it in the book of Acts, so the implication is that this is after Acts.

So, he is in prison. He gets released and ministers in Crete.

That is not all. In 1 Timothy, Paul writes back to Timothy who is at Ephesus. 1 Timothy 1:3 – “As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine.” Now, Timothy is to teach people that they are not to change the doctrine.

Now, if you go over in Acts 20, Paul is on his way to Jerusalem, and he ends up in Rome. He goes through Ephesus. In Acts 20, he goes to Miletus, and he calls the Ephesian elders down to talk to him. Do you remember the story? He warns them about people who are going to depart from the faith, and people from outside coming in and people from within departing. Later on he writes to Timothy and tells Timothy, “That stuff I warned you about has come now come to pass.”

Now, the departure from the faith evidently hadn't happened in Acts 20. That is what I am trying to say to you. After Acts 20, he tells Timothy, “Hey, the departure is there. You charge them.” They were teaching other doctrine, and they were departing from the faith. In Acts 20, Paul says, “Elders, after I leave you, people are going to depart from the faith. You need to be sure to rebuke them about it.”

Now, later on, he writes to Timothy, and he says, “I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine.” He said, “Timothy, when we were there at Ephesus, I requested you to stay at Ephesus and correct these people that are departing from the faith. You get them straight while I go over and preach in Macedonia.” That had to take place after the book of Acts is over with.

Do you understand the reason I am saying that? It hadn't taken place in Acts 20.

When did he visit Ephesus after Acts 20? He did not go back to Ephesus in the book of Acts! He goes over there in Rome. He goes up to Caesarea for two years as a prisoner there, then goes over to Rome. Well, when did he get back to Ephesus and Macedonia? It had to be after the book of Acts comes to a conclusion.

Well, in order for him to have gotten over there into Greece and minister to those at Ephesus and Macedonia after he was in jail in Rome, he had to get out of jail in Rome and go over there and minister, and then, be imprisoned again and executed.

I am trying to show you some verses that indicate that he was released from prison after Acts 28:31.

Turn to Philippians 1. Paul is in jail in Acts 28 when he writes Philippians. He expects to get out of jail soon. Philippians 1:19 – “For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.” What kind of salvation is he talking about there? Isn't he already a saved man? Yes he is. He is talking about getting out of jail.

Look at verses 24-26 – “Nevertheless to abide in the flesh *is* more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.” He is expecting to get out of jail and go up there and minister in Macedonia, and then go up there to Philippi and see those people.

Philippians 2:24 – “But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.” He is expecting to get out and go see them.

Look at the book of Philemon, which was written at the same time. Verse 22 – “But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.” Do you see that? He said, “Philemon get me a room ready up there in Colossi, because I am coming to see you.” He was expecting to get out of jail.

Evidently, he did get out of jail, and he had an extensive ministry. He preached in Macedonia (modern-day Greece), and in Ephesus. He preached in Crete. He went down to Miletum. Perhaps, he even went to Spain and Nicopolis. There is a verse in Titus where he talks about some things in Nicopolis (Titus 3:12). You know, by Romans 15, he wanted to go to Spain. I wouldn't be surprised if the guy didn't get there. He is a hustler. He didn't let any grass grow under his feet.

My point to you is that Paul is in jail, and then he is released, and then he is re-imprisoned. 2 Timothy 2:9 – “Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, *even* unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.” He is in jail again, and this time he is in the dungeon.

In 2 Timothy 4:13, Paul wants the coat that he left at Troas. If you read the rest of that passage, he begins to recount things; and those things didn't happen five or ten years ago. If you left your coat at Troas, you are not talking about a coat that you left in somebody's closet five years ago. He left his coat at Troas. In other words, he was down there just a little while ago.

So, evidently, it wasn't too long ago that he was out of jail, and now he is back in jail.

Paul talks about his trial in 2 Timothy 4:16 – nobody stood with him in his defense. Then he talks about his execution in verses 6 and 7.

So, you have a picture of the apostle Paul in jail in the last few chapters of Acts. Then he gets out of jail and has an extensive ministry for some unknown duration of time. And then he is put back in prison, and then he is executed.

With regard to the Prison Epistles, you need to know which one of those imprisonments it was, when he wrote these books. That is why it is important.

Ephesians 6:19,20 – “And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” He is bound, and yet he can preach. Isn't that what we read in Acts 28:16, 30, 31? He is in his own hired house preaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ – the kingdom of God and so forth. And yet, he is under house arrest. So, it seems like Ephesians would be written during the Acts 28 imprisonment, from Rome, at the close of the book of Acts. Do you see why I say that?

Now, why is it important that the book of Ephesians is written at the close of the book of Acts? Why is it important that the Prison Epistles are written at the end of the book of Acts? What difference does it make? What if they were written in Acts 20? Would that make a difference?

1 Corinthians 13:8-10 – “Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” Paul says that there will come a time when perfect knowledge comes, when the completion of the revelation, being given to him, is reached.

Colossians 1:25,26 – “Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; *Even* the mystery.” Hey folks, the revelation given to the apostle Paul does what to the word of God? It completes the word of God.

Didn't you ever wonder why the book of Acts goes “zap” and it's over with? What makes Luke just quit? Luke writes a book describing the fall of Israel – salvation going to the Gentiles. Luke is there with Paul to the end. Hey, Luke is there, but they begin to get this information; and he gets these books and this revelation, and the Prison Epistles are the norm. The standard has been reached for the dispensation of grace. When you are reading Ephesians, the norm and the standard for the dispensation of grace has been reached. The transition things are over with.

1 Corinthians 13:11,12 – “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” He said, “Back there in Acts, we didn't know everything, but now we have complete, full

revelation. Now we have the total realm of knowledge that God has for us today.” You reach that capstone in those Prison Epistles.

So, when you come to the Prison Epistles, you have reached the standard, and the final revelation, for the dispensation of grace. And that is important to understand. The body of information has been growing and yet there are some things, even back in his Acts Epistles, (Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians), that we do not do today. How many of you speak in tongues today? How many of you have the gift of healing and the gift of knowledge? I know some people run around saying that they do these things. But you do what the bible says – you try them out. Then, do you know what will happen? You will discover that they don’t have those gifts today. They do not do those things. There is not one person in Chicago, or anywhere else, that professes to speak in tongues that does in scripturally. And if they did it scripturally, do you know what would happen? It would all dry up just like that!

Do you know what would happen with all these “tongue churches” if they did what God’s word says for them to do? They would dry up in two weeks.

Do you know why? They would dry up because God is not doing that today. So, if you would do it the way God would do it, do you know what would happen? It wouldn’t get done. It wouldn’t happen because God is not doing it. The same thing is true with the healing programs. The same thing is true with the word of knowledge and all of those nine gifts in 1 Corinthians.

Did they work in Corinth? Did they work in the body of Christ then? They sure did!

Do you understand why, when you get over in Ephesians, you can begin (in chapter 4) to gauge those gifts and you see what is still there? You know what operates today. It is important for you to get that.

Now, it is true that the body of Christ began before the end of the book of Acts. And you can demonstrate that the body of Christ began before end of the book of Acts by using Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. When was the church at Philippi established? Acts 16. When is the church at Ephesus established? Acts 19. Hey folks, the churches that he established in the book of Acts, he later on writes these epistles to and says, “You guys over here in Acts are the guys that Ephesians is talking about.” Well, when did the thing at Ephesus start? Acts 19.

See, you can get them either way you go, but the thing I had in mind was the completed revelation.

Now, Ephesians has companion epistles – Philippians and Colossians. Again, Paul writes Philippians and Colossians from jail.

In Colossians 4:18, Paul says, “Remember my bonds.” He is in jail.

Now, the letter to the Ephesians was sent to the church at Ephesus by a man named Tychicus. Ephesians 6:21 – it was delivered by Tychicus. He delivers the book of Ephesians. Phoebe delivered Romans, and Tychicus delivers Ephesians.

Evidently, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians were written basically at the same time, by the apostle Paul. For sure, Ephesians and Colossians were, and it seems that Philippians was too.

Colossians 4:7 – “All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, *who is* a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord.” So, evidently, Paul wrote Ephesians, and he wrote Colossians, and he sent them both with Tychicus to deliver. Tychicus had to go by Colossi and drop off the book there with Onesimus. Verse 9 – “With Onesimus, (that’s the book of Philemon), a faithful and beloved brother, who is *one* of you.” So Philemon and Onesimus lived at Colossi.

Onesimus is Philemon’s runaway slave, but he went to Rome and got saved under Paul’s ministry. He became a great helper of Paul. Paul sends him back to Philemon. Paul writes the book of Philemon and puts it in the hands of Onesimus and says, “You take this back and give it to Philemon from me.” He gives the book of Colossians to Tychicus and Onesimus, and they take it back.

He had a lot of confidence in that runaway slave to put two books of the word of God in his hand. Do you see that?

So, Onesimus and Tychicus, and evidently Epaphras too according to verse 12, (the pastor of the church at Colossi), carry the Colossians and Philemon Epistles. Then Tychicus goes on to Rome with the Ephesian book.

So, there is a group of these brothers. Epaphroditus is in Rome with Paul. He is sick. He is a Philippian. He would have taken the book of Philippians back to the Philippians. Tychicus is an Ephesian and he would take the Ephesians their letter. Epaphras and Onesimus are Colossians. All these brothers are working together, just like you are working together in the ministry.

Now, Ephesians and Colossians are especially kindred books. I want you to compare a couple of passages with me.

Ephesians 1:7 – “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”

Colossians 1:14 – “In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins.”

Do you see how those verses are almost verbatim?

Now, look at Ephesians 1:10 – “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him.”

Colossians 1:20 – “And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven.” Do you see the comparison there?

Ephesians 3:2 – “If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to youward.”

In verse 9, he says, “And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.”

In verse 5, he says, “Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men.”

Look back at Colossians 1:25,26 and you will see all of that in 2 verses. “Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; *Even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.” The same thing is in those two verses that you can read in nine verses in Ephesians 3.

Do you see the comparison there, the correlation, between the two?

Ephesians 4:32 – “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

Colossians 3:13 – “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do ye*.”

Compare Ephesians 5:22 – 6:9 with Colossians 3:18 – 4:1.

Look at Ephesians 5:22 – “Wives, submit yourselves.”

Ephesians 5:25 – “Husbands, love your wives.”

Ephesians 6:1 – “Children, obey your parents.”

Ephesians 6:4 – “And, ye fathers.”

Ephesians 6:5 – “Servants.”

Ephesians 6:9 – “And, ye masters.”

Now look at Colossians 3:18 – “Wives.”

Colossians 3:19 – “Husbands.”

Colossians 3:20 – “Children.”

Colossians 3:21 – “Fathers.”

Colossians 3:22 – “Servants.”

Colossians 4:1 – “Masters.”

Do you see how that social order is exactly the same order in both books? They compare.

This is a marvelous verse. Colossians 2:13 – “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.” That’s Ephesians 2:1-12 if you ever saw it, in one verse.

“And you, being dead in your sins” is Ephesians 2:1 – “AND you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”

“And the uncircumcision of your flesh” is Ephesians 2:11,12 – “Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past, Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” Do you see that? You are alienated on the basis of two things – one, your personal position and predicament, (you are dead in sins), and two, your dispensational disadvantage. And, there they are in one verse.

Colossians and Ephesians are comparisons.

There are some handouts with this class that lists some of the passages that I just gave you and a bunch of other passages. There is also a table of some of the doctrines that are comparable in the two books. You want to be aware of those comparisons between Ephesians and Colossians. There is a tremendous camaraderie between the two books.

One book is not a condensation, and one book is not an expansion of the other. They are two completely independent epistles. And yet, they are not identical twins, but they are twins. There is a tremendous commentary back and forth.

Remember when I tried to show you how Paul said things in Romans and Galatians that were almost verbatim? Well, when you study Ephesians, you are going to study Colossians almost verbatim. When you study Romans, you get the understanding of how you can go to Corinthians and understand what is going on there. And, the same thing is true with Philippians. So, the great commentary on Ephesians is Colossians just like the great commentary on Romans is Galatians and Corinthians.

Turn to Ephesians 1 – “PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus.” That is the assembly at Ephesus.

Now, the last thing I want you to notice by way of introduction is that there is a problem, in verse 1, in the text. It is a textural problem. If you have a new bible, (New American Standard, or New International, or any of the new bibles on the market today), that has a footnote by “at Ephesus” at the bottom, it will say, “In some ancient manuscripts, or in the best manuscripts, the words ‘at Ephesus’ do not appear.”

Now, according to the note, the words “at Ephesus” do not appear in the two best manuscripts. Guess what manuscripts they are talking about? They are referring to Siniaticus and Vaticanus, (‘Aleph and B), just like clockwork. To call them the best is a highly subjective, bias, bigoted, prejudice opinion. They are the oldest, but brother, they are a long way from the best.

Three cursive manuscripts, (P47, 427, 1739), left it out too.

By the way, Origen left it out too. Isn’t that interesting? I wonder what his reason was for leaving “at Ephesus” out? I don’t know if Origen did it to start with or not, but he was in favor of leaving it out.

Anyway, there is another handout in this class that discusses reasons that demonstrate that the epistle is written to the church at Ephesus. The first one is that all the known manuscripts, (both Uncial and Cursive), except Siniaticus and Vaticanus and these other three, have the word “at Ephesus” in them. In other words, all the manuscripts that have ever been discovered, except ‘Aleph and B, have “at Ephesus” in them. So, you are not talking about much evidence for leaving it out.

And without any exception, all the known manuscripts, (including Vaticanus and Sinaiticus), had the words “at Ephesus” in them at some time.

Now, every version, and every manuscript, has a title to the book. Do you know what they call the book of Ephesians? They call it “The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians”. Every one of them do that. Isn’t that interesting?

You can read down through the things on the handout.

Usually, it is taught that the words “at Ephesus” were left out because Paul intended the book to be a circular letter – a letter that traveled around to a lot of different churches or to all the different churches.

Now, what is the basic problem with that? The problem is that all of the books were intended to be circular letters that traveled around to all the different churches. If you know anything about how the New Testament is put together and what the bible says about the epistles, you know that they all were circular epistles. So, you don’t have to leave out “at Ephesus” to make it circular. The title and the destination of the church that it was written to, would do what for you when you made a copy? It would help identify and discriminate it, between all the others, just like it does for you. So, they are all circular epistles. That is one of those things that just demonstrate how foolish scholarship can sometimes be. The circular epistle idea is based on the idea that the words should not be there to start with, which is a very bogus, suspect concept and basis upon which to base bible doctrine. In a nice way, I am trying to say that it is nuts!

People say, “Well, maybe it shouldn’t be there.” Then all of the sudden doubt sets in, and then they begin to get all kinds of ideas.

Usually people point to two things. Number one, Colossians 4:16 – “And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea.” That is circularizing them. They say, “See they are passing them around, aren’t we smart?” Well, they are all circular epistles. If you don’t believe that, read 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and see that Paul demands that of his epistles in the very first epistle that he wrote. That’s enough for any bible student to note. But they say, “See, the Colossians were to read the epistle. Their epistle was to go to Laodicea, but the Laodicean’s epistle was to come over to them. But we do not have an epistle from the Laodicean Church, so that must be Ephesians. So Ephesians is really the epistle from Laodicean, right? Doesn’t Paul say there is an epistle from Laodicea? We are not going to say our bible is incomplete, are we?”

Now, all of the sudden Bishop of Hermes and the Book of Enoch need to get in there, because Enoch prophesied, and it isn’t in the bible. So now we have to go look for the lost books of the bible and all of that. That is just more of that superstitious stuff that people get involved in.

Hey people, we studied Colossians 4:16 at some length back when we studied Manuscript Evidence. There are a lot of explanations besides it being the book of Ephesians. The most obvious is that it wasn’t intended to be part of the word of God to start with. Paul wrote a whole lot of epistles that didn’t show up in the bible. In 1 Corinthians, Paul says that it is the second epistle that he wrote them. Well, should we call 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians 3 Corinthians and leave a blank space between Romans and 2 Corinthians? No, we just recognize that the divine design for the establishment of the canon worked, and the books that should not be there are not there and the books that are there are the ones that should be there.

Besides that, how do you know that the Laodiceans didn’t have a copy of some book that Paul wanted them to have, but that the Colossians didn’t have? Maybe they had a copy of Romans. There are many explanations.

Now, there is another reason that is given. They say that the book of Ephesians wasn’t written to the Ephesian church because Paul spent three years there; and when you read through

Ephesians, he talks to them like he doesn't even know them. There is nothing real personal written to the people in Ephesians.

Ephesians 1:15 – “Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.” Is he saying, “After I heard of you people getting saved”? Well, why would he say that when he was there for three years when they were establishing the church.

Ephesians 3:2 – “If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to youward.” Had the Ephesians heard about it? Yes they had. Well then why does he say, “if ye have heard”? This is why some people say, “See it couldn't have been written to Ephesians.”

But, that is just a matter of interpretation. Can't I say to you, “If you heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given to Paul, you better get on the stick with it”? Does that mean you hadn't heard about it? No, that is just a challenge. That is the way that word is used a lot in the bible – if ye then be risen with him. Well, are you? Sure you are. It just means if you are my son, act like it. That is just a matter of interpretation.

Ephesians 1:15 – “Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith.” There are two ways to take that passage. It doesn't say, “When I heard of you getting saved.” He said, “When I heard of your faith and love unto all the saints, Cease not to make mention of you and so forth.” You can take passage after passage where Paul said, “I heard of your faith” – talking about it being spread abroad unto all the world. If Paul heard of their faith, he had to hear of their ministry, didn't he? He said, “Hey, I heard of the ministry that God has given you people down there, and I've been praying for you.” It is not necessarily talking about them getting saved.

Beside that, look back at verses 12 and 13 – “That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also *trusted*.” Couldn't it be that there were some people at Ephesus that got saved after Paul left in Acts 19 – people that he hadn't met, but that he heard about? Wouldn't that make sense? Sure it would. Do you need to take “at Ephesus” out and have a circular epistle running around with no name on it? No, you don't need to do that.

Somebody may say, “Yeah, but Paul doesn't give them any personal greetings.” Yes he does. Ephesians 6:21 – “But that ye also may know my affairs, *and* how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things.” Now, tell me something. If you sent the guy down there and he got all the information that they are going to need to know about, what does he need to write?

Did you ever read 2 Corinthians? Paul spent a year and a half at Corinth, yet when he writes the book, he doesn't send them any personal “how do you do's”. Does that mean you should take 2 Corinthians away?

Remember studying Romans 16? Paul never laid eyes on the Romans and yet you have a whole chapter of “Hi how are you” – salute, salute, salute. He had never even been there.

So, that is no criteria. I understand that it is at least an argument that has some weight to it on face, but it isn't conclusive. And it certainly doesn't demand anything.

Now, go back to Ephesians 1:1 – “PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.” What in the world does that mean? It doesn't mean a thing if you leave “at Ephesus” out. It would read “to the saints which are, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.” Which are what or where? It doesn't make any sense.

If you are interested in Paul's style, and being consistent every time and in every epistle, you check it. Romans, Corinthians, Philippians – check them all. Every time Paul identifies the saints “which are”, he always tells you where they are. Ephesians would be the only place that he didn't do it. It would be very inconsistent.

I know who is inconsistent. It is the guy who takes it out. That is who is inconsistent.

Let's look at Acts. Paul establishes the church at Ephesus.

Acts 19:9,10 – "...disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus (at Ephesus). And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia (modern-day Turkey) heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." Verse 26 – "Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands." There is a tremendous work, a tremendous evangelistic outreach that spreads out from Ephesus. Paul stays at Ephesus, a great Christian Center where the gospel reaches out all over Asia from Ephesus.

Now, in fact, Paul had never been to Colossi to see the Colossian church, and it was not very far from Ephesus. In Colossians 2:1, he said, "I've never seen you people in the flesh." He was never there before. But, the Colossians came to Ephesus because Ephesus was a great commercial and metropolitan center, like Chicago. They come here and get saved.

What have I been telling you guys about the ministry? You have everybody in the world right here; you don't need to go to Timbuktu. Go find Timbuktu here in Chicago and send them home.

Do you know where I learned that? I'm not brilliant. I read that in Acts 19. That is what the guy is doing.

Do you want world missions? Find you an Ephesus.

By the way, when Paul wrote in Acts 20:17 "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church", how many elders were there? There was more than one elder. How many local churches do you reckon there were at Ephesus? There was probably a whole bunch of churches there. There were three at Rome. That was a big ministry in Acts 19, so they had a bunch of churches at Ephesus. When you read about Ephesus, you are probably reading about, not so much Ephesus as a tiny city, but "greater Ephesus".

You understand what I mean when I say Chicagoland. I go all over the country and when people say, "Where are you from", I say, "Chicago". I don't live in Chicago. I have lived in Chicago for about six months in the last six years. But, when people ask me where I live, I say, "Chicago". What do I mean? They have a term for it – Chicago Land. You have Chicago the city and it's environs.

When you read Ephesus and the epistle to the Ephesians, it is an epistle written to that Great Center. Those people enjoyed Paul's teaching ministry for the longest period of time (a longer period of time than any other group that we know about) and Paul writes to give them further revelation. He gives that further revelation to them in written form.

Now, there is not any bible reason to believe that the book of Ephesians was not written to the church at Ephesus. It wasn't written to one local church, but it was written to "The Church at Ephesus". In other words, it was written to all of those local assemblies in that area, and it would have been copied and sent around to all of the assemblies everywhere. All of his epistles were circular in nature, and there isn't any reason, in the bible, to believe that the book of Ephesians is any different.

I introduced the book of Ephesians in the last lesson. I gave you some information about the writer, the time of the writing, and the companions to the book. I talked a little bit about the people to whom it was written – the Ephesians. I tried to show you how the book of Ephesians is like all of Paul's other epistles – it is a circular epistle. It was not meant just for the Ephesian church, but then none of Paul's epistles were meant singularly for the church that they were sent to. (When I say that, I don't mean it the way it sounded.) He wrote it to them, but then copies were made and distributed all around and collated together into the New Testament as we have it today. So, that information is important for you to understand.

The book of Ephesians outlines itself basically into two sections – chapters 1, 2, and 3, and then chapters 4, 5, and 6. The first three chapters follow Paul's standard procedure. First, there is doctrine (1-3), and then the second part has to do with duty (4-6). The first part has to do with how you believe, and what you understand. The second part has to do with the duty that comes naturally out of the doctrine. Doctrine always produces duty. It always produces responsibility and responsiveness from the people.

The first three chapters deal with our wealth, the wealth that we have in Christ. The key verse (1:3) – “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ.” In the first three chapters, Paul deals with how rich we are in Christ, and what our calling is in Christ – the calling of the church the body of Christ.

Then in chapters 4-6 you have the walk of the believer – the walk of the body in particular. You have the conduct of the body in these chapters – the conduct that the body should reflect. It is our walk. The key verse (4:1) – “I THEREFORE, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.”

In the first three chapters, you have “our position” in the heavenlies in Christ, and then in the last three chapters you have “our practice on the earth”. In the first three chapters you see your riches in Christ, and in the last three chapters you see your responsibilities for Christ.

In the first section, Paul prays, in 1:15 and following, that the saints might be enlightened, that they might understand this information. Then right before he begins the second section (chapters 4-6), he prays for them to be empowered – that this information, (the doctrine), would be stored in their soul in such a way that it energizes and empowers them, according to grace motivation, to walk worthy.

Now, any of those outlines are okay as long as you understand that chapters 1-3 are concerning the doctrine and chapters 4-6 are concerning duty. Chapters 1-3 deal with your calling, and chapters 4-6 deal with your conduct.

Some people like to make three divisions. They will talk about your Wealth in Christ, your Walk in Christ, and then your Warfare (the armour 6:9– 6:24). Then they would have an outline with Your Calling, Your Conduct, and Your Conflict. You will see all kinds of different outlines.

One of the most popular books ever written about the book of Ephesians was written by Watchman Nee. He has the most ingenious outline of the three-fold nature – Sit (you sit with Christ in heavenly places), Walk (with Christ), and then Stand. Now, that is a good outline.

But, frankly, if you will stick with the two-fold outline, you will be better off because your warfare is really a part of your walk. In Ephesians 4, he starts off with your walk, 4:1 – 5:17 – “...walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called ...walk not as other Gentiles walk ...walk in love...walk circumspectly ... walk as children of light.”

Then he begins to talk about your witness. Beginning in 5:18 he talks about being filled with the Spirit, and the social order, and the result that comes out of that. He is talking about the witness

that you have. Then he talks about your warfare. And all of that is really under the classification of your walk.

You have “the calling” in chapters 1-3, and then you have “the walk” of the local church in the earth, (on this planet), representing or demonstrating his heavenly position. Your conduct is to reflect your position. And the issue in Ephesians, over and over again, is the local assembly. He sees the local assembly as a reflection of the church the body of Christ as a whole. But, the one body is, of course, paramount.

One man labels his outline “Seated Together” and “Growing Together” – seated together in Christ and growing together in Christ.

I’ve seen another outline labeled “Exposition” and “Exhortation”.

You’ll see all different kinds of outlines.

There is one outline I want to give you as a handout. I think it is one of the most fascinating that I ever saw. How a man ever came up with something like this, I will never know.

But I don’t like to give out a lot of outlines, because I am afraid people will stop reading the bible and stop thinking for themselves and just rely on the information in the outline.

When I was just a teenager I used to have a habit of going out every now and then on Saturday and just spend the day reading the word. I would take a hammock and tie it between two trees, and I would spend the night. I would hang a lamp up in the tree and spend the night out in the woods all by myself. I would spend an evening and a day just praying and reading my bible. I liked to get away – just me and the Lord. There is nothing tremendously sanctimonious about that, but it is a good exercise for a young man. It was especially good for me because I was working in the Mission and it was a routine – everyday and everyday with no days off, unless you took a day off.

One time I went off to the edge of Mississippi to a man’s farm. I sat in his field one morning and read the book of Ephesians seventeen times, one time after another. And I remember doing that because that is when the book of Ephesians got hold of my heart like it never had before. And it has never let go!

It is a short book. It is just 3,039 words, and 155 verses. It is an easy book to read over and over again because it is short. Romans is a little more difficult because it is longer. You can still do that with Romans but maybe not as often.

But, I read Ephesians over and over in just a few hours, and I remember the division. When you read it like that, and you get it in your mind, everything is so clear – the doctrine, (what you are and who you are), and what you are to do about it, (how you are to live). That really gripped me.

I talked to you before how a book flows. If you read it over and over, you will see that those two divisions we just talked about are basically it.

In Ephesians 1:3, when he says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ”, that word “blessed” is the Greek word that we get our English word “eulogy” from. When you go to a funeral someone gives a eulogy – they speak well of the dead person. The English word is just an Anglicization of the Greek word. It just means to speak well of somebody, to say good things about someone.

Now, one man took the word EULOGIE (he spelled it with an “E”), and he gave a title to each one of the letters. He divided the book according to the title. That way he has a smart way of doing it that looks real nice, and it is easy to remember.

- E – Eternal Foundation (Ephesians 1)
- U – Universal Scope (Ephesians 2)
- L – Lofty Goal (Ephesians 3 – wisdom of God and the principalities and powers in heavenly places)

- O – Organic Unity (Ephesians 4:1-16)
- G – Glorious Renewal (the walk of the new man Ephesians 4:17 – 6:9)
- E – Effective Armour (Ephesians 6:10 – 6:24)

Now, that is an interesting outline, and I like it. I forget the man's name that I picked that up from. But, it is interesting to me.

Now, the reason I do not give you a lot of outlines is not because I don't make them every now and then and use them. But, too often, when you give someone an outline, ten years from now, they never think about the book except the way that you outlined it. It is okay to take an outline like the one above and think of the book that way.

The outline above divides the book in half – Adoration and Exhortation. He says there is "Adoration" for the Eternal Foundation, Universal Scope, and Lofty Goals. Then there is "Exhortation" with regard to the Organic Unity, Glorious Renewal, and Effective Armour. He recognizes the divisions, and then he just gives a title to each of the sections.

I think he has the sections clearly identified without dividing them up, but he had to divide this up in order to make his outline. It would be easier to divide it according to the way the word "walk" occurs in there. It starts in 4:1 and goes through 5:17, rather than the way he did, but there isn't anything wrong with his way. It's okay.

When you get these outlines, they tend to be forced and arbitrary, and then the students do not think for themselves.

Now, it is good to use outlines if they help you, and if you have a purpose in them.

I want you to know how to divide the book, and that outline above is a good outline. It stands out bold because there's a purpose.

If you are good at alliterative outlines, use them. When I first started preaching, every message I preached for the first eight or ten years was alliteration, either the first letter was all the same, or there were words that were the same. Some of my friends would bring their messages over and let me alliterate them because I was good at it.

Then, one day I just decided that I was tired of preaching outlines that made it hard for me to preach the bible. So, I quit that and started just preaching the bible and not the outlines.

Now people say, "Your messages don't have any point to them."

I say, "Well, that's just from your point of view."

Ephesians 1:1,2 – "PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ."

Now, I talked to you about the fact that the book of Ephesians was written by Paul, an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is an apostle by the will of God. And if at this point, you still need me to explain to you and spend a lot of time talking to you about whom Paul is, then we have a little problem here; and I think you might be in the wrong class. So I am not going to spend a lot of time on that.

But I would like to remind you and say to you that Paul is an apostle by the will of God. And the one question that the church has never asked (so they would never come up with the answer) is: Why Paul? They just seem to ignore that question. So, they never get around to answering the question, which would liberate them from the shackles of the satanic policy of evil, against the gospel of grace today.

Satan's policy of evil against the body of Christ is to destroy, to pervert, and to take grace out of the gospel message and out of the practical message of Christian living also. You are saved by

grace, and you walk by grace. Satan wants to pervert grace so grace is not grace anymore either when you offer it to a saved man or when you, as a believer, try to walk on the basis of grace. He wants to destroy your motivation and destroy your empowerment and so forth.

So, if the church asks, and if you properly answer the question about who Paul is, then you have those things taken care of.

Notice what it says in Ephesians 1:1. It is written to the saints which are at Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ Jesus. It is written to the saints and faithful. Now that's two things – the standing and the state.

By the way, you can divide the book of Ephesians – chapters 1-3 is your standing in Christ, and chapters 4-6 is your state in the world, on the planet.

What is your standing? You are a saint, a saint of God. The word “saint” means “somebody who is set apart”.

The religious system says that somebody who lived a good life and then died can be canonized. They say, “These people were saints and they did a few miracles”, but that does not have anything to do with it.

The saints mentioned in Ephesians are living people. A saint is someone who has been sanctified, and set apart. God sets them apart and says, “These are mine, so don't anybody mess with them. These people belong to me.”

Ephesians 1:1 says that they are not just saints, (saved people), but they are faithful in Christ Jesus. Their walk is reflecting who they are in Christ.

Now when he calls them faithful in Christ Jesus, that reflects the fact that they have established souls. They have the Pauline design, (the divine design for the establishment of their soul), functioning in their life, and the foundation has been firmly laid in their soul. They have been through the book of Romans. They have gone through the foundation material, and now they are ready to build upon that foundation.

The book of Ephesians assumes that you have been through the book of Romans. Do you remember when we started studying Romans, and I pointed out to you that there are only two of Paul's epistles where his name stands alone in the very first verse? In every other Pauline Epistle his name is associated with somebody else – he is writing to that church. Romans and Ephesians are the only two epistles that Paul wrote where Paul's name stands alone in the very first verse. They are the two tremendous doctrinal epistles, one lays the foundation and the other builds the superstructure for the edification of the believer, for the house of doctrine that is to be in your soul. Romans expects you to move on to Ephesians.

In Romans 12:5, he tells you about the one body, (all members of one body). He doesn't explain it or deal with it in any great detail. He assumes you will get that later. He just introduces it because he knows you are going to get it in detail in Ephesians.

In Romans 16, he talks about you being established according to “my gospel” and “the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery”. It is the mystery program. He expects you to get the gospel, the foundation laid, and then go on to Ephesians. When you get to Ephesians, he immediately addresses people whom he assumes have already been through Romans.

Look at Ephesians 3:6. He defines the mystery and the body of Christ. “That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ (how?) by the gospel.” Notice that he doesn't explain the gospel very much, does he? Where do you go to find out what the gospel is? You have been through Romans and you understand that. You are faithful.

These Ephesians saints are properly oriented to the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit, and they understand these things. They are faithful. They have the foundation laid in their soul that is going to equip them to go on into the information that he gives them in the book of Ephesians.

Turn to 1 Corinthians 3. Paul would never have said about the Corinthians what he said about the Ephesians. He would never have said that the Corinthians were faithful. They were saints, right? 1 Corinthians 1:1 – “PAUL, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother, Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.” The Corinthians were saints, but they were not faithful. They did not have that foundation laid properly in their souls as yet.

So, in 1 Corinthians 3:1 he says to them, “AND I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even as* unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.*” Do you see that? He says to them, “There is some information that you are not yet able to get because you do not have the foundation laid.” He says, “You couldn’t get this stuff over here properly because you don’t have the preliminary information, the preparatory information laid in your understanding. I am giving you a little milk to help you to grow so that you will be able to grow up and get this stuff later.”

1 Corinthians 3:3 – “For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?”

People ask this question: why can’t people see the mystery? Have you ever asked yourself that question? I go all over the country preaching, and I get mail here all the time, and people ask the same question – why can’t they see this? It is so clear in the bible! Why can’t people see this? Well, that is what Paul said about the Corinthians.

When people ask that question, generally speaking, what they mean is why can’t they see the “Ephesian truths”, the things revealed over there in Ephesians? Why can’t they get that? When you understand that the mystery, the secret message committed to Paul, is the whole realm of Pauline truth, you understand that when somebody gets the gospel, and gets saved, they have seen the mystery, or at least a part of it. Paul’s gospel was a secret, right? Nobody knew it before Paul, but now it is made manifest, and it’s a part of that secret message given to Paul.

Well, why can’t people see that stuff over there in Ephesians? Why couldn’t the Corinthians see it? Well, he tells you in chapter one and chapter two of 1 Corinthians. Did you ever read those chapters thinking about it that way?

Look at 1 Corinthians 1:17 – “For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.” Then he goes on down and talks to you about the wisdom of words. We are going to study that passage later on in the Ambassadorship Class.

The Corinthians were caught up with the wisdom of words, with the wise words of man’s viewpoint. They were going on human viewpoint, not divine viewpoint. They were not properly related to the authority that the word of God has in the life of a believer. They got saved by believing it, by believing grace, by believing the message that God’s word gave them; but now they have gone back and added human wisdom in it, and they have destroyed the authority of the word of God.

In 1 Corinthians 2, you find that not only are they not going on divine viewpoint, but they have their own wise ideas.

1 Corinthians 2:2 – “For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” Well, wait a minute! If I need to talk to you about Jesus Christ and him crucified, what’s the matter? Have you got the foundation laid in your soul yet? No! Paul said, “Hey, you guys are not properly related to the gospel yet. You haven’t got the crosswork down yet. You haven’t got the foundation laid in your soul yet, so I am sticking with that. You need to get properly related to the gospel message.”

Then in 1 Corinthians 2:6,7, he says, “Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak

the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.” He says, “Hey, this advanced information is for the perfected believer. It is not for you guys. You all are not yet oriented to the teaching ministry, to the way the Spirit of God teaches people.” They were not oriented properly to the establishment ministry of the Holy Spirit.

You think about that – the Ephesians truths, and some of these high and lofty things about God, and what he is going to do with the body of Christ. You begin to see the fact that in Ephesians we are identified as being in Christ, and he is everything. He is exalted and so forth and he is all that there is; he’s the eternal foundation of everything. You begin to see how that thing works, and you begin to say, “Man, everybody ought to just love this.”

But, some people never have the appreciation for it. They can never build a solid house unless they have that solid foundation. People come along and throw a few shingles on the lot, and maybe they throw a window or an attic fan, and the poor dude hasn’t got the foundation built. He doesn’t have the sub-floor or the floor, or anything; and somebody’s out there nailing shingles on his back.

Well, the problem is that you people get ahead of yourselves. You beat your head against the wall trying to get people to see something in the bible, in the book of Ephesians, (or Ephesians level information), when they do not have the other things right. When you deal with somebody, do you know where you need to start? Number one, you need to start with the authority of the scripture – the book is the book. You are going on divine viewpoint, and you will have to teach people to do that.

You will go on to ministries and you will go into churches; and when you get in there, you will see that those believers and saints have been taken captive by the devil according to his policy of evil. They have forsaken the idea that human viewpoint is not the issue. They had their ears tuned to the wisdom of words. You will have to wean them from that and point them back to the authority of the word of God in their life and the necessity to make it the absolute final authority. You will have to help them understand that it is not appearance, not the way things look, and not the way things operate. You will have to help them to understand how to let the word be the authority. Then you will need to get them properly oriented to the gospel, and to grace, and to how grace operates. Then, get them involved in getting that foundation laid in their soul.

Haven’t you seen what that did for you? Some of you brethren, sitting in this class, had pieces of that information in your minds and in your hearts for a long time. Then you began to put it together according to the way that Paul says to put it together. What does it do? It lashes it all together, doesn’t it? It builds a strong foundation. Well, what happened to you, will happen to others. You do the same thing for other people.

You will find that people are just like those Galatians who were “so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel”. It was the gospel that perverted grace. You will find, in your ministry, that you will be involved in ministering to people who have been removed, “so soon removed”. They left quickly. You will minister to people in churches where you go that have been taken snare by the devil according to his policy of evil. They believe that doctrine. They have been moved away.

And, you will find that after you leave your own church, your people will have that same tendency. So, you must gird them.

You need to understand that the Ephesians were saints and faithful. These were faithful people who had the foundation laid.

Paul would have never said that about the Corinthians because the Corinthians were not faithful. They were not properly oriented to the way the ministry is carried on today.

1 Corinthians 4:2 – “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”

2 Timothy 2:2 – “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”

Do you want to see a faithful man? Look at Ephesians 6:21 – “But that ye also may know my affairs, *and* how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things.” That is a great epitaph to have. You want the Lord to hang the sign out over your shingle, “A Faithful Minister”. You want to be somebody committed to doing the work the way God wants it done.

Ephesians 1:1 – “PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.” Now, our standing (we are saints), and our state, (our walk), are to match. We are to faithfully represent who we are and what God has made us in Christ.

I call your attention to the fact that the first thing that you read in Ephesians is that these people were faithful. The great Epistle of grace is Ephesians. Grace does not do away with responsibility, rather the standard of grace is objectivity, accountability. You are now able to be responsible when before you were not. You are now able to be objective and deal with the details of life objectively for God’s glory. You now can be accountable for who you are and what you do. And, that is the wonderful position of grace. Grace holds you accountable and allows you to be accountable. Grace does not just excuse everything that goes on in the world. Grace does not mean you are not responsible. Just because God gives you everything on the principle of grace, it doesn’t make you irresponsible. It allows you to be responsible. That’s what grace does for you.

Look at Ephesians 6 so that you understand that this is the expressed teaching of the Ephesian Epistles. In fact Ephesians, Colossians, and 2 Timothy, (the three Prison Epistles), deal specifically with this. Ephesians 6:8 – “Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.” Now, folks, there is accountability for what you do, and the verse says that the man is going to “receive of the Lord”.

Ephesians 6:9 – “And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.”

Colossians 3:23-25 – “And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.” Folks, grace does not do away with accountability. And if it does, the plain statements in the bible do not mean anything.

Now, you understand that there is a great deal of difference between receiving an “inheritance” and receiving the “reward of the inheritance”.

2 Timothy 2:11 – “*It is* a faithful saying: For if we be dead with *him*, we shall also live with *him*.” Did you die with the Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary? Then you are going to live with him, aren’t you? There is no doubt about that.

Verse 12 – “If we suffer, we shall also reign with *him*.” Isn’t that interesting? When are you going to reign with him? You will reign with him over yonder when you live with him – “resurrection.” You are dead with him and you will be raised with him. You suffer with him now, the sufferings of this present time, (service for him), and you will reign with him over there.

Continuing in verse 12 – “If we deny *him*, he also will deny us.” If we deny the sufferings, he also will deny us. What is he going to deny us? He will deny us “the reigning”, the reward.

Verse 13 – “If we believe not, *yet* he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.” If you quit believing and you deny the faith, it doesn’t make any difference. God saved you, not on the basis of what you were doing, but on the basis of his own grace. It is all God and it is all “his standard”. He is not going to deny himself.

Somebody will say, “That denies grace.” No it doesn’t! He doesn’t deny himself. He is going to save you by grace; but he saves you by his grace, and then as you receive Christ Jesus the Lord by grace through faith, so walk ye in him. How? You do it by grace. Your walk as a believer, day by

day, is on the basis of grace, which is the only principle that will work in your life as a believer. You go out and serve the Lord, and it is his grace that works in you abundantly, right?

You go up to the Judgment Seat of Christ and he says, "Okay, you are going to receive for the good that you have done. Here is this reign over here for your service for the Lord."

And you say, "But Lord, you saved me by your grace, and then it was your grace that did it in me. It isn't me; I don't deserve this reward."

And he says, "Yeah, that's right; this is a grace program."

Do you see that? That doesn't deny grace; that is grace in operation. What would deny grace would be to say that there isn't anything out there, and that would deny, not just grace, but the plain statements of the word of God.

Ephesians 1:1 – "PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus." Notice that expression "in Christ Jesus". It occurs some ten times in the first fourteen verses of the book, and some twenty seven times all total in Ephesians. That is a key expression in the book. It is a key to everything. Everything starts in Christ Jesus.

Look at Ephesians 1:3 – "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." The whole thing starts in Christ.

But, the whole thing ends in Christ too. Ephesians 1:10 – "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even in him*: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance." Everything begins in Christ, and everything ends in Christ. He is the foundation of everything that is going on. (That is why the man put the "Eternal Foundation" as the first point in that outline we just discussed.)

Everything that you will find out about your wealth and your riches will be that you get them all in Christ. The spiritual position of the believer today is in union with Christ. You have been totally identified with the Lord Jesus Christ, so much so that we are going to see passages where he talks about Christ, and he is really talking about the body of Christ. Do you understand how that works? You are in such living union with him.

By the way, you want to notice when Paul says in Ephesians 1:1 – "... to the saints ... and to the faithful in Christ Jesus." That is where both your standing and your walk find their basis.

Ephesians 1:2 – "Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ." Now, I am not going to say anything about that verse because I have talked to you repeatedly about the tremendous importance of that salutation. (Go back and review your notes from Romans 1, if by chance you possibly don't remember, even if you don't want to admit it.) Notice that statement, "Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ." Grace and peace are the official proclamations. That is Paul's opening statement in every epistle that he writes. And that is Paul's (the apostle of the Gentiles for this age) official statement of the attitude of God Almighty and his son, the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the official attitude of God today toward the world and especially toward us. So, there is a tremendous dispensational thing there, and you do not want to miss that.

Ephesians 1:3 – "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ."

Now I want to define a few words there for you. The Greek word for the word "blessed" is "eulogetos" and it is where we get our word for eulogy. (That is where that outline came from that we discussed E-U-L-O-G-E.) But, the word as a verb, according to Webster's dictionary, means "to confer well being or prosperity upon someone or thing." When you bless somebody, you confer well being on him or her. In other words, you say good things about him. *I am giving good things to you.* As an adjective, the word means, "enjoying happiness", and that is usually the way we think about it.

But, in this verse, it is not an adjective. It is a verb, and as a verb the word means “to speak something good and kind and prosperous to, or about, somebody”. So the word is a eulogy. It is giving high praise to somebody – “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”. Let’s speak well of God; let’s praise God. It is that kind of a thing. Remember that the word “blessed” means to speak well of, or to bestow high praise upon.”

Now, you want to notice the term “all spiritual blessings”. What does the expression “spiritual blessings” mean? A “spiritual blessing” is a blessing of the Spirit. In other words, it is a blessing given by the Spirit. A “spiritual blessing” is a blessing of the Spirit, something that comes by way of the Spirit. When he talks about “all spiritual blessings”, it means “every spiritual thing that God the Father can speak well of”. Wouldn’t that be all spiritual blessings?

Now, you are probably thinking *why would he say it that way?* There are some spiritual things that God cannot speak well of. You do understand that, don’t you? Ephesians 6:12 identifies one of them – “spiritual wickedness in high *places*”. Did he speak well of that? No! But, you possess every spiritual thing that God the Father can speak well of.

Then he uses the expression “heavenly *places*”. Now, notice that the word *places* is in italics. A word in italics represents a word that really isn’t in the Greek text, but it is supplied by the translator because it is necessary in order to carry the meaning over in the translation. The Greek just says, “who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies”. Heavenlies is an adjective (a word that describes a person, place, or thing). The Greek language has a way of using an adjective and omitting the noun. They omitted the noun or the pronoun that the adjective described. In their thinking, it would be understood.

For example, if I say, “Close the door”, what is the verb in that sentence? It is “close”. What is the object in that sentence? It is “door”. Well, where is the subject? Doesn’t a sentence need a subject? The subject is understood. You don’t have any problem with that, do you? Do you know what a Greek would do if he had to diagram that sentence? He would pull his hair out! Why? You just omitted the rule because you are supposed to have a subject. You can’t have a sentence without a subject and a predicate. You have a predicate and an object, but no subject. We know the subject is understood. Well, the Greeks did that too in their language; they had those kinds of rules too.

So, you have the adjective, heavenly, but no noun to modify it. You have to put the noun in there so it makes sense in English, so the translators put it in.

Let me give you an illustration. I will show you another place where that same thing happens. (There are a lot of passages like that.)

1 Corinthians 12:1 – “NOW concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.” The word *gifts* is in italics. If it said, “NOW concerning spiritual, brethren”, we would say, “spiritual what”? Well, if you look at the context, you will see in verse 4 that the context is about gifts, so they put the word gifts in there. Do you know why they put gifts in there? They did it because they understood what the Greek language was talking about, and they got a word out of the context that clearly identified the issue.

Now, if you turn to Revelation 12, you will notice that there is a verse over there in a remote context that clearly identifies the reason for using the phrase “heavenly places”.

First look at Ephesians 4:9,10 – “(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)” Well, if you go far above all heavens, what is that? Is that a geographic location? Is that a place? It is pretty obvious that it is, isn’t it?

Look at Ephesians 2:6 – “And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus.” Do you reckon that is a geographic location where the Lord Jesus Christ is? Is he somewhere? Sure he is! If he isn’t, you’re in trouble.

Look at Ephesians 3:10 – “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church.” Do you reckon the principalities and powers are in a geographic location?

Just in case you are wondering, look at Revelation 12:7 – “And there was war in heaven.” Where was the war? It was in heaven. Where are the principalities and powers? They are in heavenly places. Continuing in verse 7 – “Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels.” There are the principalities and powers; there was a war in heaven.

Revelation 12:8 – “And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.” The Greek word for place is “topos”. We get the word “top” or “topographical”. It is a geographical location.

Do you know why they put “heavenly *places*” in Ephesians? They did it because it is a location; it’s a place; it’s somewhere. It is not a state of mind, but it is a sphere of activity, a location in which things operate. It is not a heavenly, divine state of mind like some people try to make you think it is. It is a real place!

Okay, let’s go back to Ephesians 1:3. You want to remember those three definitions: blessed, all spiritual blessings, and heavenly places. I gave you those definitions so that now when we go through the verse, it will make it a little easier for you.

Ephesians 1:3 – “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ.” Notice that we bless him – “Blessed *be* the God and Father”. We speak well of him because he has blessed us. Do you know what that is? That is grace. It is grace motivation. Do we speak well of him because we are so wonderful and good? No, we’re just responding to all of his blessings to us. We love him because he first loved us. That is grace motivation, and don’t forget that. If you want to be motivated to praise God, then get hold of the spiritual possessions, and blessings, and riches that you have in Christ. Do you know what that will do? If you get hold of those things, it will cause you to praise God.

Do you want to go out and minister to people, and get them back on the foundation, and get them stirred up and motivated to serve God properly? Well, that’s what you want to do. If you want them to have grace motivation, you need to make them see how wealthy they are in Christ; and if that won’t excite them brother, your puny little efforts to do otherwise won’t help. If you perceive how wealthy you are, you will get excited and so will the people that you minister to.

Ephesians 1:3 – Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ.” The source of our blessings is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God the Father has made us rich in Christ. That verse says, “who hath blessed us”. The source of our blessing is God the Father. He made you rich in Christ.

Look at Ephesians 1:7 – The end of the verse talks about “the riches of his grace”.

If you look at verse 18, he talks about “the riches of the glory”.

In verse 11, he talks about “in whom we have obtained an inheritance”.

The terms “inheritance” and “riches” are financial terms. We talked about that in another class. They are terms that describe wealth.

Do you know what he is saying to you? He is saying, “Hey, God the Father has made you rich.” Is your daddy rich? He sure is rich.

*Our father is rich in houses and lands
He holds the wealth of the world in his hands
Of rubies and diamonds and silver and gold
His coffers are full of riches untold
I am a child of the king, a child of the king
With Jesus my Saviour I am a child of the king*

Please understand that the riches and the rubies and the diamonds that he has for us are not just material things. The scope of our blessings is not just the material. God has taken every spiritual thing that he can say something good about, and it is ours. (We are going to get to that in a little while.) You are rich people, and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ made you so.

Did you notice what he calls him? He calls him “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”. The God of Christ is a reference to Christ’s humanity – “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” He emphasizes both sides of who Christ is – the God (that emphasizes Christ’s humanity) and the Father (that emphasizes his deity). He is “the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us.” Christ is the channel through which the blessings come to us, and it is as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ that he blesses us.

That is the full, complete title of God – God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you want to see the reason for that, look at 2 Corinthians 1:3 – “Blessed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (who is he?), the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.” It is as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ that God is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. Do you understand that? Because he is the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, he can be the Father of mercies to you, and he can be the God of all comfort to you. So, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, provided all of these things.

Do you see in Ephesians 1:3 how it says that he is yours – the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is through Christ that every spiritual blessing flows from the Father, through the Spirit, to us. Now that is important for you to remember.

Ephesians 1:3 – “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *p*laces in Christ.” Notice, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, (all three), are all involved in this. God the Father is the source of the blessing. God the Son is the channel. God the Holy Spirit is the one who ministers our riches that come from the Father through the Son.

You want to notice that the Trinity is mentioned repeatedly in the book of Ephesians. He mentions God the Father in verse 3. Then he mentions God the Son in verse 7. Then he mentions God the Holy Spirit in verses 13 and 14. Then you have another statement of the trinity in Ephesians 2:18. In Ephesians 3:14-17, you have another reference to the three of them. In Ephesians 4:4-6, you have another reference. In Ephesians 5:18-20, you have another reference. So, in the book of Ephesians, Paul focuses on the triune God sending out all of these blessings to us.

My uncle used to say that if you take Ephesians 1-14, it divides itself up. First there are the blessings from God the Father, then there are the blessings from God the Son, and then there are the blessings from God the Holy Spirit. My uncle used to say something that I always give him credit for, but it almost sounds sacrilegious. He said, “God the Father is the brains, God the Son is the showboat, and God the Holy Spirit is the workhorse of the trinity.” I always remembered that because it is kind of catchy. The Father is the brains, the Son is the showboat, (he’s the one that is always glorified and magnified), and God the Holy Spirit is the work horse, (he’s down here getting it done and applying it).

But, God the Father is the source. God the Son is always the one who makes the payment and provision. The Father plans it, and the Son pays for it and provides it, and the Holy Spirit allows you to partake of it by coming down and applying it to us – by indwelling us down here.

God the Father and God the Son are there in heaven, the Son rejected, at the Father’s right hand. The Holy Spirit is down here indwelling us, making us worthy ambassadors. It is through the Holy Spirit’s instrumentality that we now possess all of these spiritual blessings.

In the last lesson, we talked about the source of our blessings coming from God the Father, and the scope of the blessings and the riches that we have in Christ being all spiritual blessings– all the blessings that the Spirit has for us in Christ.

Ephesians 1:3 – “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ.” That begins a long section (verses 3-14) where Paul just lays out, one after another, the tremendous blessings that God the Father has provided for us in Christ by the Spirit of God. All spiritual blessings are ours. “All spiritual blessings” is just another way of saying “all of the blessings of the Spirit”. The Holy Spirit is the one who channels our riches to us from the Father through the Son.

If you go down through the list in verses 3-14, you will see an initial listing of these things. He lays these things out in quick, rapid secession. It is as though he is just reminding you of things that you basically already know – things that you already have in your understanding from having studied the book of Romans where the foundation was laid.

The blessings come from:

- The Father (verses 3-6).
- The Son (verses 7-12).
- The Holy Spirit (verses 13, 14).

They are:

- Past blessings from the Father.
- Present blessings from the Son.
- Future blessings from the Spirit.

They have to do with:

- Election from the Father.
- Redemption through the Son.
- Certification through the Spirit.

There are all kinds of ways that you can classify them, but that is just a categorization of them. “All spiritual blessings in heavenly *places in Christ*.” It is important that you notice that Christ is where they all are.

Romans 8:32 and Colossians 2:10 are two verses that you need to memorize in connection with Ephesians 1:3.

Romans 8:32 – “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” When I read that verse, I think of that commercial that they used to have on television about Alkaseltzer – the one with the guy sitting on the bed with his head hanging down saying, “I can’t believe I ate the whole thing!” That’s it! If God “spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him (in Christ) give us all things?” You have all spiritual blessings in Christ because God did everything for you there, and everything is in him.

Colossians 2:10 – “And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.” You are complete in Christ. You have all spiritual blessings in him. You have all things in him.

Do you know what that does, folks? That makes Christ everything! That's what the grace message does. The gospel of grace makes the Lord Jesus Christ everything. When you preach grace, that is what you do; and that is what is so exciting about the grace message – that Christ becomes our all and in all. He is it, and that's all there is to it. He is the foundation for everything that we have and everything that we are; and that is "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places".

In time past, God promised his earthly people material blessings as a reward for obedience. Turn to Deuteronomy 28. I want you to follow this. God promised his earthly people, Israel, material blessings as a reward for obedience to him.

Now, please understand me. The Old Testament, the Kingdom Program, (the Prophetic Program), does not place a higher value on material blessings than it does on spiritual blessings. In the Kingdom Program, Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things (the material blessings) shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). The Kingdom Program, (the Prophetic Program), does not exalt the material above the spiritual. The spiritual is always first, but God promised his earthly people material blessings as a reward for their obedience to him.

Deuteronomy 28:1,2 – "AND it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe *and* to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God." How do you get the blessings? You get them by being obedient? If you have the spiritual attitude right, and if you will, by faith, obey these things that God gave you, you will get the blessings.

Verses 3-10: - "Blessed *shalt* thou *be* in the city, and blessed *shalt* thou *be* in the field. Blessed *shall be* the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed *shall be* thy basket and thy store. Blessed *shalt* thou *be* when thou comest in, and blessed *shalt* thou *be* when thou goest out. The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee.

Verses 12,13 – "The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do *them*."

Brother, God told Israel, "If you do what I tell you, you will be the top dog. You will have plenty of food to eat. You will have material prosperity, and blessing, and safety, and security in your land."

Verses 15,16 – "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: Cursed *shalt* thou *be* in the city, and cursed *shalt* thou *be* in the field." Then he just repeats the things. He says, "Buddy, if you aren't obedient, I am going to take all of these blessings away from you."

In time past, under the prophetic program, when they were obedient, they could expect material blessings. When they were disobedient, they could expect cursing.

Deuteronomy 7:12 – "Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which

he sware unto thy fathers: And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine.” I am reading those verses so you can see that it is literal, physical, visible, earthly, material blessings and prosperity that they are going to receive.

Verse 14,15 – “Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. And the LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all *them* that hate thee.” Do you see that? They are physical blessings: health, prosperity, and so forth, as the reward for obedience to God.

Write down Leviticus 26 and read that chapter. It is a tremendous passage on that very same thing.

Out of dozens that we could look at, let me show you one verse. Psalm 37:16 – “A little that a righteous man hath *is* better than the riches of many wicked.” I want you to see that. He said, “It is better to be poor and have just a little, than it is to have a whole lot and be a wicked man.”

You say, “Well how in the world could that happen if God is blessing them with abundance if they are obedient, (righteous), and he is taking away the abundance if they are wicked?” How could a righteous man be poor? The reason is because that promise in Deuteronomy 28 is a promise to the Nation. He is talking about national prosperity, national wealth, and putting them above all the nations of the earth. He is not talking about individuals, but he is talking about the Nation.

When the Nation went into apostacy, what happened to it? They had poverty, no rain, captivity, and so forth.

Now, if you are a righteous man and your nation is in poverty, where are you going to be? You will be in poverty with your nation.

But, what will a wicked man do? He will go out and do whatever it takes to hook up with the system that is oppressing him, and he will prosper. So, that is how you get there.

He is saying that it is important to be righteous – right spiritually. So, don’t ever get the idea that just because they had material blessings, for reward for faithful obedience, the Prophetic Program was not interested in the spiritual. That is the problem that Israel had – they thought material things were it!

They are told in the New Testament three times (Matthew 1:21, Acts 3:25, 26, Romans 11:26,27) that it is a sin problem. They didn’t get that spiritual thing right. “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). They’re going to take that nation and save them from their sin, and they did not respond to that.

Now, when you come to Ephesians 1:3, you have the exact opposite type of a situation than the one you have back there in the Prophetic Program. In time past, God promises Israel, (his earthly people), material blessings as a reward for their faithful obedience. But now, we are not promised any physical, material blessings as a reward for obedience. In fact, there is nothing physical like that promised to you in any way.

Ephesians 1:3 – “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ.” They are spiritual blessings.

Someone will say, “Well what about Philippians 4:19”? “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Now, notice where the riches are – the riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Where is glory? Glory is in the heavenly places. What are the riches that he’s talking about? He is talking about Ephesians 1:3. That is almost a direct reference, just in other words. He is going to supply your need according to all spiritual blessings that are yours in heavenly places.

But, what kind of a supply is “all spiritual blessings” going to give you? Listen to me! God has never promised to shield members of the body of Christ from either poverty or pain. And if you do not believe that, look back at Philippians 4:10,11 – “But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content.” Did you ever read that verse that says, “Godliness with contentment is great gain”? He said, “I learned, whatever state I am in, to be content”.

Philippians 4:12 – “I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.” He says, “I know how to sit on top and I know how to sit underneath the table”. Paul says, “It doesn't make any difference because “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13).

Do you know how he gets through “the abounding” and “the abasement”? Do you know how he gets through the poverty and the prosperity? The answer is verse 13 – God supplies the need. It is a spiritual supply of a spiritual need that gives you the capacity to handle the details of your life, no matter what they are, for God’s glory.

So, God isn’t going to intervene and touch your garden and cause you to have a big crop just because you obey him. God is not going to reach down and put gas in your gas tank. But that doesn’t mean that God will not supply the wherewithal to get the ministry taken care of. But, he does not reach down and do it the way he did it with Israel. He does not give material blessings; he gives spiritual blessings.

But watch the spiritual blessings, (verse 14), - “Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.” These Philippians sent money, an offering, to Paul. Did the offering that they sent Paul come from the motivation of the Spirit of God inside of them using the doctrine that is in them?

When Paul received the offering, was that offering a physical or spiritual blessing to the guy? It had to be both. But, wait a minute! He already learned how to live in poverty and how to live in prosperity, right? So, he has that taken care of, doesn't he?

Look what he says in verses 15-18 – “Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: (the money was not the issue) but I desire fruit (spiritual fruit) that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things *which were sent* from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.” Paul didn’t look at that stuff and say, “Oh, look at the physical things I have!” He took those physical things and looked at them as a spiritual service.

Now, you can get all out of balance with this thing. When you understand that our blessings today are spiritual blessings, you can all of the sudden just pontificate and pronounce that God does not do anything physical in the world today; and you have no physical affect on one another, and that just isn’t true. You don’t believe that because you see the Philippians supply a need for Paul in those verses we just read.

But, how was the physical need supplied? Did God just say, “Rain!” and the rain fell? No! Did he just say, “Car, don’t run out of gas!” No! How did he do it? He did it through other members of the body of Christ – they heard the word Paul preached “by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God” (2 Corinthians 4:2). That word goes into their soul, the Spirit of God takes that word in their soul, and they see Paul’s ministry there as a camaraderie, a spiritual fellowship between them and his ministry, and the doctrine in their soul motivates them to give toward his ministry. Do you see that?

And, when he receives it, does he receive it from them? Yes, and he thanks God for the spiritual gift, the spiritual sacrifice. He is looking at the real issue.

Listen, the body of Christ has a ministry, one member to another, to nourish and to help and so forth. That's the way the work of the ministry is done. We're talking about the 'nitty gritty' right here – money to carry on the ministry. How is it supplied? How will the work of the ministry be carried on? The body of Christ will do it.

Do you know how God works in the world today? He works through his word resident in the body of Christ. He works through his body. It is not outward intervention, like it was under the Kingdom Program, where God would come in and intervene and do certain things. But, rather, the blessing today is a result of his word working.

God has not promised to shield you from poverty. I know you hear a lot of preaching about all this prosperity business. Do you know what those preachers are doing? They are quoting Deuteronomy 28. Listen to the man on the television and read the verses he is reading to you, and you will see that it is Deuteronomy 28.

Just the other day, I was in New York for a meeting on Sunday morning. While I was at the hotel, I turned the television on and this man was prancing up and down through the audience quoting Deuteronomy 28 and saying, "That's you!" That is not you, is it? That preaching will bring confusion and destruction to your life as a believer. You need to know what to expect from God and how God operates today. That is important! The focus is on the spiritual – blessings that we have in Christ.

Philippians 4:19 – "But my God shall supply all your need." That is a promise given to the Philippians – the Philippians who were faithful in their obedience, in their heartfelt participation in the work of Paul's ministry. That is not a verse that is given to just anybody to go out and do anything they want to and expect God to feed them.

There were plenty of times when Paul was hungry. It says that he was back in verse 12. What's the matter? Was he out of the will of God when he was doing the work of the ministry? If you get hungry in the work of the ministry and you don't have a physical supply met or something like that, don't you blame God and say, "God is against me and God hates me or he wouldn't let this happen to me! If I was right, God wouldn't let me get sick!"

Do you know why you get sick? I am sick right now. I have a terrible cold that I've had since Sunday. I got a sore throat after I led the singing Sunday night, and I had a fever when I got home. It has been getting worse ever since. Now, I could get in my closet and say, "Oh God, heal me! Oh God, for the glory of the ministry, take it away!" Or, I could just say, "Lord, I have to teach that class tonight, and we are making video tapes to train men all around the country, so I have to be able to think straight. I am working for the sake of the ministry and for the good of the work, for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, don't worry about what I feel, but just take that sore throat away from me right now!" That would be asking for a spiritual reason, wouldn't it? Sure it would! Then do you know what would happen? I'd still have to eat some peppermint so I could talk. Do you know why? It's because God does not reach down and do that kind of thing today.

Now, everyone here knows that the healing ministry is over with today. But, why is it that when you get sick, all of the sudden you think it's over with for everybody but you?

I know a dear brother that sat under Mr. O'Hare's ministry, and I used to hear him say that the healing program is not in operation today. Then not too long ago, he had a brush with cancer; and he made every deal with God that you could imagine, if God would heal him and spare him. He went to the doctor and he got well. The doctor fixed it for the time being anyway. Now, he is out breaking his neck trying to pay God back. And, he got angry with me because I told him that I didn't believe God healed him directly and miraculously.

If I don't die from this cold, it's because God had mercy on me. You ought to get sick and die. Sin should just kill you. You should have been dead six years ago. It is just by the mercy of God that we are still living.

Paul said in Philippians 2:27 – “For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him” (Epaphroditus). He was right next door to death, but he got well. God had mercy on him.

When you get sick, do you know what you should say about it?

Romans 8:22 – “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.” Didn't I tell you that the two most important words in that verse are “until now”? One day, (in the kingdom), the creation will not groan and travail in pain. Didn't you just read over there in Deuteronomy 7 that he will take all of that stuff away? He will heal them and take all sickness and sorrow away.

But, it hasn't come yet because the dispensation of grace is dragging out. As long as the dispensation of grace is extended, the healing program can't come into effect, can it? The body of Christ goes out and then the healing program comes back in. We groan and travail in pain together because another day of grace has been extended.

Do you know why you groan and travail in pain? It's because of sin. You're part of a fallen creation.

I have been to visit folks in the hospital many times, and you will go visit them also. You will sit across the bed from some dear old saint while they are sick because of old age and infirmities. And they will wonder what they did to make God mad at them and put them in the hospital. They will say, “What did I do? Why doesn't God have my best interest on his heart anymore?” They begin to doubt him and question him, and they come under a cloud of guilt and rejection.

Do you know something folks? That is wrong! So, you have to fortify people to go through rough times and pressure and know that if they are sick, it may or may not be because they did something wrong. If you go out and get drunk six or seven nights a week, you will be sick as a dog; and don't look at me and tell me that Adam did that to you. Don't look at me and tell me God did it to you.

I used to work with those bums at the Rescue Mission, and they would come in sick. I don't have any sympathy for a guy when he pours something into his stomach that would start a fire if you lit a match to it. Put that alcohol in a bowl and light a match to it and see what it does. Go drink some gasoline and it will work a little quicker! The guy says, “Oh, I'm sick!” Well, quit drinking that hooch!

Now, that doesn't mean I do not have sympathy for the man or that I don't have a heart for him. I am just saying, “Don't complain to me about that! Let's just fix it.” I get a little impatient about getting things fixed. If you have a problem, here's the way to deal with the problem. If you have a problem that is caused by sin, there is a way to deal with it. If it's your responsibility; you can handle it. God has fixed you so that you can deal with it, and you need to deal with it or quit squalling about it. It's your move – either deal with it or quit screaming bloody murder about the consequences. You obviously desire the consequences, right?

Hey, when you stick your hand in the fire, you say, “It hurts!” Well, what is the answer? You can pull it out, or you can have roasted fingers for supper.

It is that same way with what we are reading. You have the victory in Christ, and you don't have to look at the physical things. You look at the things that aren't seen.

You know why we are part of a groaning creation and hence we suffer. Sometimes we suffer because of the natural consequences of our own bad decisions, but a lot of times, we just suffer because we are in a groaning creation. We suffer because we are getting old.

Mr. Stam talked to a man on the phone today who is 95 or 96 years old. His wife said that he tried to leave home yesterday. He was a railroad conductor for about 55 years, and yesterday he said, “I got to go; the train is waiting, and they won't pull out of the station unless I'm there.” And, she

had to bodily restrain him to keep him home. Do you think that's much fun? I don't reckon that is much fun. Today the man is acting himself and talking to Mr. Stam on the telephone. Now, where do you reckon that comes from? It happens when that old body just wears out, and if the Lord tarries, someday your body will wear out.

I understand that some things just come from the natural consequences of bad decisions, but then some things happen just because we live in a groaning creation. But, the issue isn't the flesh. You are going to drop that flesh anyway. God is going to take you out and give you a new body and put you in a place where that old body couldn't go anyway. It isn't the issue! It hasn't been saved; it will be saved at the resurrection.

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are not worthy to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

2 Corinthians 4:16 – "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day." Do you see how God is going to supply the need? The outward man can, will, and does perish, but in the face of that, the inward man is renewed day by day.

Verses 17,18 – "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal." Focus on the spiritual, the eternal, every blessing that the Spirit of God has for you in Christ. Focus on those things! Don't focus on getting another meal, or having an automobile, or a big bank account, or a nice television and whatever else, but focus on the work of the ministry. As you go out and do the work of the ministry, and that work of the ministry commends itself to other believers and other believers begin to gather around, do you know what happens? There is a spiritual fellowship in the gospel, (in the work), and then the needs of the ministry begin to be supplied. The funds to do the work are supplied along with the meeting house and so on and so forth.

You understand how you minister back and forth to one another. Someone has a need, and on what basis do you minister? The basis is spiritual.

So, we are not promised to be shielded from poverty or pain. Today, the spiritual is much more important than the physical and material. The physical and the material are not an issue with the believer today. You cannot tell whether you are prospering or not prospering by whether or not you have physical blessings, or physical prosperity, or physical health.

Ephesians 1:3 – "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ." The scope of the blessings is spiritual blessings. The sphere of the blessings is heavenly places in Christ. That is important!

You understand that the sphere of our blessings is the heavenly places.

1 Corinthians 15:42-44 – "So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body (a body equipped to live here on this earth in this sphere in which we now live), and there is a spiritual body (a body equipped to live in the heavenly places, in the realm of the Spirit)." God Almighty has equipped us to live in the heavenly places. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in that sphere, in Christ.

Do you know what will happen to your natural body when the rapture comes? You are going to drop it! Has that sunk into your head? It should have. By the time we have come this far through Romans, Paul expects you to understand that you have spiritual blessings in heavenly places. You will leave all the physical here. God is even going to give you a new body that is not for this realm; it is for the heavenly places.

Let me tell you something about "the twelve in the body" and "the twelve out of the body". I heard a guy preach on Sunday, and he was talking about the body of Christ not being on the earth

but being in the heavenly places, and that we are heavenly people. Well, if the body of Christ goes to heavenly places and up yonder, can you please tell me how twelve of the members of the body of Christ are going to be down here on the earth? It would be pretty hard. I don't understand that! I don't understand how somebody would say that. If I believed that the twelve, and the kingdom saints, got into the body of Christ, I would believe the body of Christ is going to reign on the earth because I know where they are said to be in the millennium. But, the body of Christ is up yonder.

I talked to you in a previous lesson about the heavenly places being geographical locations in the heavens – the blessings that the Spirit of God has for us in Christ are up there. We are going there, and we will leave the physical behind.

That is why when you get over into Paul's Prison Epistles and you read the prayers that he prayed in the Prison Epistles, when he talks about our blessings and those kinds of things, he always looked at spiritual things and never at material things. He never prayed that you would have something physical that you don't have now. But, he always prayed that you get spiritual perception and that your spiritual character would be developed. He did not pray for material things – that you would get healed. He did not pray that you would have abundance and that kind of thing. He prayed for spiritual perception and that your character would be developed.

If your spiritual character is developed, and there is a work of the ministry that is in need of personnel, or finances, or correct doctrine to be placed into it, what are you going to do if you have sound doctrine and spiritual perception? Aren't you going to provide for the physical need, or the doctrinal input? Sure you are. It is a spiritual ministry, because the sphere of our operation is in heavenly places. We need to be oriented to those heavenly places.

Gentlemen, our wealth is up there in the heavenly places not down here on the earth. Paul says, "Set your affections on things above." He is talking about the program that is ours in heavenly places. We are seated with Christ there, and not only that but the opposition that is up there is our opposition. There are principalities and powers, (some angelic beings), in the heavens up there that occupy those positions of rank and authority that we will occupy one day, and they are opposed to what is going on in the body of Christ. They are opposed to what you are doing. They are opposed to this bible class, and they will be opposed to your ministry when it begins, and you are going to be right on the front line of their point of interest. They will try to bring something to bear in your life – some viewpoint based on the wisdom of words, or some attitude out in you. They know you.

People say, "Can the devil read your mind?" No he can't. But, every unsaved person is demon possessed. And that demon had access to your thinking, and everything about you, before you got saved. When you got saved, out he went. But, that rascal knows you better than your wife does, or better than your husband does, or better than your mama does. Don't think that they do not know all about you. And, you fight a spiritual warfare based on doctrine.

Now, we have been looking at that in the Ambassadorship Class. You have to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ because you are constantly being bombarded with the policy of the adversary, the evil policy against the body of Christ, whose desire is to cause you not to stand in the position that you have in Christ. He does not want you to stand in the position that God has given you, in Christ, in heavenly places because when you do that, you have an impact up there and that bothers him. So, he wants you to stand in something else. He just wants to move you away from grace and put you into something else, and then it doesn't bother him. So, you need to remember what you're dealing with.

Turn back to Ephesians 1:4. Paul is talking about all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ – the blessings that he blessed us with. Verse 4 – "According as (our blessing is according as) he (the Father) hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." In other words, the blessings that we have, (all spiritual blessings in heavenly places), are according to a purpose that God had before the foundation of the world.

Back before the foundation of the world, God (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit) had a purpose. The world was formed, and man was put on it. Later man falls and the seed of the woman is promised to be a redeemer. God sets the Gentiles aside and takes Israel, and the seed of the woman becomes the seed of Abraham and then you have the seed of David who is the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is crucified, and he is resurrected and ascends back up into heaven. The Holy Spirit comes on the believers in Acts 2, and then the fall of Israel takes place. When the fall of Israel takes place, God reconciles the world to himself. He saves Saul of Tarsus and reveals to Saul a system of knowledge and information that he kept secret since the world began.

So, you have a Prophetic Program that goes on until the Mystery Program comes in. And when that Mystery Program comes in, he says that he has blessed us, (people in Christ), with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Israel will get the earth in the Kingdom (material earthly people). We, the body of Christ, will be in positions of rank and authority in the heavenly places. God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ according as he hath chosen us in him (in Christ) before the foundation of the world. In other words, God had a purpose before the foundation of the world that we are now a part of that is going to extend out in the ages to come. And our blessings, our riches and wealth, are according to the purpose that he had before the foundation of the world. Before the foundation of the world, the father chose us in Christ.

Ephesians 1:4 – “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.” I am going to read a verse shortly that talks about from the foundation of the world. The difference between the mystery program and the kingdom program is that one is made known from the foundation of the world, and one is kept secret from the foundation of the world but was purposed in God before the foundation of the world. Our blessing is according to the purpose that he had before the foundation of the world. Paul says, “According as he hath chosen us”.

Now, Paul will list the blessings that he has given to us in Christ, and the first blessing is the fact that we are a part of a program that God planned from eternity past. He is going to list your blessings, and then it’s like he says, “See them! Well, go get them; they’re yours!”

There is an old expression that says, “*Possess your possessions*”.

Here is an interesting thing – a parallel. Israel comes to the Jordan River, Moses dies, Joshua takes them across into the Promised Land (the book of Joshua). He says, “Go in and possess the cities which the Lord thy God hath given thee”. Did God give the Promised Land to Israel? Was it theirs? Yes, it was theirs. Did they possess it? No, they had to go in and take it over, didn’t they? It belonged to them, ‘positionally’ it was theirs, but they had to go in and possess it. The book of Joshua describes the Nation Israel going in and possessing its possessions.

Joshua is the Ephesians of the Old Testament, and Ephesians is the Joshua of the New Testament.

Let me give you a hint in your bible study. You can spend some real profitable study in Joshua studying how they possess those possessions, and then compare that with the book of Ephesians. It will work, and it is fascinating. It makes good preaching too!

Anyway, in Ephesians, he is going to list some of your spiritual blessings. The first one has to do with the body of Christ being chosen.

Now, Ephesians 1:4 – “According as he hath chosen us.” Who chose you? Who did the choosing? God the Father did the choosing. That should comfort you. God the Father initiated his own plan. It wasn’t left up to you. Aren’t you glad it wasn’t? You better be! God is the initiator of his plan and his purpose. We do not have to seek him, but he sought us.

*Jesus sought me when a stranger
Wandering from the fold of God
He that rescued me from danger*

Interposed his precious blood.

He did it. You did not have to seek him; he sought you. If he hadn't sought you, you would have never found him. Do you understand that? God is the initiator. He is the one that takes the action. Without him, there would not be any going.

And, in the passage here, he is going to tell you what God is doing. You are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ. He is about to tell you what God has provided for you. You have been made a part of what God Almighty has purposed and planned and is doing, and it's God's activity.

I have said to you before, if understanding that truth can't get your blood circulating, I don't think anything can.

Something happens in a person's life, and they go all to pieces, like God doesn't have a program, like God doesn't have a plan, like God isn't doing anything in the world today. He is! What is he doing? He's forming the church, the body of Christ. Look what you are a part of! When you get hold of that, and that grips your heart, it changes your whole attitude about life.

Ephesians 1:4 – "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." Who did it? God did it; it's God's program; it's God's choosing; it's what God did. What did he do? He chose us.

Turn to Mark 13. "Chosen us" is the definition of the word "election".

Mark 13:20 – "And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen." Who were the elect? What is the definition of "the elect"? It is those "whom he hath chosen". Do you see that? Don't worry about the context. I just want the definition of the word "elect". Elect = Chosen. The elect are those whom he hath chosen.

So, in Ephesians 1:4, you have the doctrine of election. "According as he hath chosen us in him." Do you know what you do when you choose something? You say, "It's mine!" You choose it; you pick it out; you select it. You choose something, which makes it something very special. When you are a "chosen one" that has to do with a position of honor and privilege and position. To be a member of the body of Christ is to be in a position of honor. That is a privileged position. And that is what it means to be chosen.

Notice who he chose – "he hath chosen us". Who are the elect? The elect are "us". Who are the "us", saved people or lost people? The "us" refers to saved people, members of the body of Christ. The elect are not lost. The elect are never lost. The term "elect" is a term that is used in the bible to refer to the status of the believer, and it is a position and a status that is not true of unbelievers.

Now, what does that mean? That means that you are one of the elect. Let me ask you something. Were you one of the elect before you were saved? He says, "before the foundation of the world he chose us in Christ". Well, were you one of the elect before you were saved? Were you lost before you were saved? Can one of the elect ever be lost? Then, were you one of the elect before you got saved? You must not have been. Before you trusted Christ and got saved, where you "in Christ"? Doesn't Paul talk about those who were in Christ "before me" in Romans 16:7? Wasn't there a time in Paul's life when he was not in Christ? Well, if you are not in Christ, are you one of the elect? You are chosen "in him", aren't you? How do you get to be one of the elect? You get in him! Are you following that? The term "elect", (the chosen one), is a reference to the position that people have in Christ. Colossians 3:12 – "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering." (Put on therefore, as the children of God.) The "elect of God" is a term that is used to describe who you are as a saved person. It is a term about the status that you have as a believer. You are one of the chosen ones.

Now, the "us" is the body of Christ. Please notice, (and we will go over this in great detail in the next lesson), before the foundation of the world God Almighty chose to form the church, the body

of Christ. God chose the church, the body of Christ, and purposed before the foundation of the world. When we trusted the Lord Jesus Christ, God Almighty chose and purposed before the foundation of the world to form the church, the body of Christ, out of people who believed the gospel of the grace of God. When you believed the gospel, God the Holy Spirit put you into Christ, and in Christ you became one of the elect.

Sometimes that doesn't match up with all of the theological doctrines about election. But, the elect are always those who are in Christ. And in Christ they share his election. We share his election and therefore can be termed "the elect". You get your election in Christ, not in yourself.

Ephesians 1:3 – “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ.” Now, that verse sets the tone for the book. The issue in Ephesians is being blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. It is important that you understand that – you have been blessed with all spiritual blessings. You are complete in Christ.

Gentlemen, God is as rich to you in Christ as he is to me in Christ. He is as rich to that sinner that just trusted Christ and got saved, (the second he trusted Christ), as he is to you. God is as rich to that newborn believer as he is to a believer that has been saved for 50 or 60 years. There is a total equality of blessing in Christ. You have to understand that – nobody is ahead of the other as far as blessing and standing before God. We all have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ. God is as rich to one in Christ as he is to another.

Now, you understand that the level of our enjoyment of those riches is different, don't you? You understand that the level of enjoyment that you have of your riches in Christ is based upon your appropriation and your appreciation, by faith, of that grace wherein you stand. In Romans 5:2, Paul says, “We have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.” We can appreciate our blessings by studying the word of God. You will never appreciate what you have in Christ until you get in the word of God. You will never enjoy the assets that you have in Christ until you get in the word of God. He has given you every divine operating asset that he has for you and that you will ever need. It is yours; it belongs to you; you possess it. It is yours in Christ.

Now, the Christian life is made up of getting in the word of God and finding out what God has done for you – studying it, understanding it, and letting it take root in your life, and appreciating it, and seeing it go to work in you. That is the issue in the Christian life, and that is the issue of serving the Lord. It is taking the blessings and appreciating them, and understanding them, and believing them, and letting them operate in your life.

So, I want you to understand that the level of your enjoyment of the blessings might differ, and it will differ on the basis of how much time you spend in the word learning the things and then how much you allow the word to renew your mind. We studied Romans already and you understand that you can take in information, but the issue is not just throwing out a bunch of verses. The issue is developing that renewed mind, gaining that godly outlook, getting to the place where you think like God thinks about you and about what you are doing. That is important; and as you do that, your level of appreciation and your level of spiritual maturity, your ability to walk worthy and live up to the position that you have in Christ, is more and more of a reality in your everyday life.

You are blessed with all spiritual blessings. The purpose of the blessings is to make us spiritual-minded people, and faithful saints. That is the purpose of the blessings. The purpose of the blessing is not to make you carnal. You already are carnal. The purpose of the spiritual blessings is to make you spiritual people, and the focus is on the spiritual blessings.

Now, I want you to understand this, and I want to be careful to say this to you clearly and forcefully. I talked to you in the last lesson about how God in time past promised Israel physical blessings as a reward for their faithfulness. Today, God doesn't promise physical blessings to us. He doesn't promise to shield us from either poverty or pain. He doesn't promise to give us prosperity and health and those kinds of things. The focus is on the spiritual. But, that does not necessarily mean that nothing physical is involved in what God is doing today. It does not mean that nothing physical necessarily will follow the spiritual blessings. That is not the idea at all. Being blessed with spiritual blessings does not have anything to do with the idea that God does not work today. Sometimes the concept is that God is not working at all as far as material blessings, but he is working in the spiritual

realm today. Sometimes the misunderstanding develops that God doesn't do anything that is physical – there is nothing physical accomplished by God today. And you know that is not true. You have a bible don't you? God Almighty wrote his word, and through a design that he himself developed, (providential preservation), he preserved his word. Providence is the foresight of God to superintend and care for something. God designed a plan whereby his word would be preserved, and he saw that that plan was executed.

How is God's word preserved through the dispensation of grace? It is preserved through the church, the body of Christ. God works through the body of Christ today. God does not work in outward circumstances in your life, but he works with the word within you. You don't need to look at this circumstance and that circumstance and say, "Well, God did this and God did that, therefore I can conclude his will is so and so." You look into his word. You never have a right to say that God wills something unless you can look in the word of God and determine on the basis of a renewed mind out of the word of God that that is what God said he wanted done.

Too often we cop out – just like we blame the devil for stuff, we blame God for too much stuff. God expects you to operate as an adult son with a renewed mind, with a mental attitude of godliness – the ability to perceive and to think and to look at things the way God looks at them, and to discern the will of God. You are to discern what God would have you to do. Then you operate on that spiritual minded basis and you are focused on the spiritual issues.

People, physical things that happen are accomplished in the world today as a result of the flow and the working of the spiritual activity of the body of Christ. Do you understand what I am saying to you? As you walk in the Spirit, as you mind the things of the Spirit of God, as you do that which you know is the will of God in your life, then things are accomplished. That is how God works and gets things done. As you are sensitive with that renewed mind, then the things of God get accomplished, and the purpose of God, (that overall will of God that he has accomplished), is carried out.

For example, you have a bible. That is a physical book, yet it is a spiritual book. The word working in the body through history has preserved the book – physical results. 1 Corinthians 9:14 says, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." If they have ministered to you spiritual things, is it any great thing that you minister to them carnal things? It is no big deal that you pay money to someone when he teaches you the word of God. If he is spending his life studying, and preaching, and teaching the word of God, and you are eating the word of God, you should pay. If you are eating, you should pay for the groceries. That is what he is saying.

So, what happens? You sit under a man's ministry, or people sit under your ministry, and by the manifestation of the truth, you commend yourself to their heart; and the word of God that dwells in them is motivated by the word that you preach to them to be commended to your ministry. Then, they respond by obeying the word of God and making sure the physical needs are met. Do you understand what I am saying? Physical things often follow the flow of the spiritual activity, but the focus is not on the physical thing, whether it is there or not there. The physical things are of secondary importance. The focus is on the spiritual activity. God works through his body in the world of physical things, but he works through the body based on the flowing and the activity and the working of the spiritual blessings – the blessings that the Spirit of God has for us.

When we say that blessings are spiritual, we are not saying that there is nothing physical that ever follows or that is ever accomplished. The fact that you are physically here tonight is a result of God working. If I didn't get saved, December 31, 1962, you would not be here tonight. There would not be a class. I would be a millionaire down in Mobile.

You laugh, but in 1970 I left Mobile and went to Salem, Alabama and started a little church. I made \$2400.00 that year. If I had made \$100.00 less, I would not have had to file income taxes that year. But, I turned down a job to go there and start that church. The man offered me \$20,000 for the

job that I turned down. That was a base salary with a promise of promotion. I know a man that has the job that they offered to me, and he is making six figures and doesn't work half the week. All he had to do is do what the guy told him and sit there like a dumb thump, and I am good at doing that. So, I figure I could have made it.

What's the difference? I got saved and God went to work – the doctrine in me both to will and to do his own good pleasure.

You wouldn't be taking this class, if you didn't get saved.

Do you understand what I mean? They are physical results that come from spiritual activity. If you had not taken the word of God and had not been willing to operate on the basis of the rightly divided word, you would not be taking this class.

The standard of God's working is spiritual blessings, and the emphasis on the spiritual blessings is not simply to do away with the physical, but the emphasis is that the blessings are not the products of the world in which we live. The blessings don't come from the world in which we live. They come from the Spirit of Almighty God. So, don't get confused when people talk about the spiritual blessings and say that therefore there are no physical blessings.

Listen people, Paul said that God has given us all things richly to enjoy. That is an interesting verse. But people get the idea that there aren't any physical blessings at all. But he is talking about the fact that the source of our blessings is not the physical, material world around us, but the source of our blessings is the Spirit of God. It is the blessings that the Spirit of God has for us. And, whether physical good things or bad things attend our life is not the issue. You do not judge your standing before God on the basis of whether you have a big bank account or a little bank account. A lot of folks believe that if they have a lot of material blessings, God is blessing them. That is wrong. Then a lot of folks think that if they do not have any money, (they are in poverty), that is proof that they are right. That is wrong. That has nothing to do with it.

Do you understand that at times, in your ministry, you will preach the word and people are going to love you, and get behind you, and support you, and get involved in your ministry with you, and the ministry will go ahead financially and so forth? And then other times you will be doing exactly the same thing, with the same heart, and with the same faithfulness, and it will be like talking to a wall. Even your wife will quit listening to you. But, the measure by which you measure your spiritual blessings is in Christ. And God is as rich to you in Christ as he is to the other fellow, no matter what your physical circumstances.

Now, the standard of God's working, and the standard of the blessing, is the Spirit, and the standard of the spiritual blessings is in verse 4. It is God working according to his purpose in verse 4. He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings according as he hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world. In other words, God had a purpose that he determined to accomplish in Christ before the foundation of the world. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit had a purpose before the foundation of the world. Jesus Christ dies and the church the body of Christ is formed. God Almighty before the foundation of the world had a purpose in Christ in forming the church, the body of Christ. And you are blessed today in Christ according to the purpose that God had back before the foundation of the world, before anything material or physical or visible was ever created. So the source of your blessing does not have anything to do with outward circumstances. It does not have anything to do with blessing. It does not have anything to do with cursing, but it has to do with what God Almighty determined to do before the foundation of the world. That is the measure and the standard by which you are blessed. Oh yes sir! That is some blessing!

Now, I talked to you about verse 4 already, but I want to continue with it. Ephesians 1:4–
“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.” He chose us; he elected us. How did he do it? He did it in him. Who did it? God the Father did it. When did he do it? He did it before the foundation of the world. I want you to notice that expression.

The issue of our election before the foundation of the world is a disheartening, divisive, degrading doctrine to many people. It is something that bothers many people, and yet it is a glorious truth when you properly understand it.

Some time ago, I had a young lady come to visit me. She sat in my office and she said, "Preacher, you got to explain this issue of election to me because if it is true what I have been told, God is a monster, and I can't love him, and I can't believe in him!" She was just physically distraught and spiritually defeated and disheartened by the issue of the election that we have in Christ before the foundation of the world. And, her problem was that she had been taught things that were not scriptural. She misunderstood the issue. She did not properly understand it.

Now, I am going to try to show you some things about election, and I want you to understand that there are a lot of folks that are not going to agree with what I am going to say. That shouldn't surprise you. There are a lot of folks that do not agree with a lot of things I say. But, I want to try to show you some things in the bible and give you a biblical perspective about them.

There are two theological systems that we have talked about often. One is called Calvinism, (founded by John Calvin), and the other is called Arminianism, (founded by Joseph Arminius). Their followers developed great theological systems, both of which focus on the issue of election, both of which seek to defend the honor of God Almighty. The Calvinist wants to defend the issue of the sovereignty of God, a non-biblical term but certainly a scriptural idea that God is God and free to do that which he chooses to do. The Arminian wants to defend the responsibility of man, the integrity of God to hold man responsible for his activity. And they develop theological systems, both of which have parts of the truth, neither of which have the thing laid out.

The issue about election cannot be understood unless it is understood in light of dispensational truth. Calvinists and Arminians are both non-dispensationalists. Even if the Calvinist or Arminian himself is a dispensationalist, when he discusses the issue of election, he jettisons his dispensational position and becomes a non-dispensationalist because to maintain his position, he has to be non-dispensational.

Now, I am not a Calvinist, and I am not an Arminian.

I was in a restaurant one time down in Florida. I was going through the cafeteria line, and a preacher asked me, "How many points are you?" I did not know what he was talking about. He said, "What point Calvinist are you?" He meant *are you a 'four pointer' or a 'five pointer'?*

I turned around and grinned a little sheepishly at him and I said, "I'm a 'no point' Calvinist". He did not talk to me the rest of the meal. He got all upset and bent out of shape. He probably went away and said, "Well, Brother Jordan is an Arminian." But, if he would have asked me how many 'point Arminian' I was, I would have said that I am a 'no point' Arminian.

I listened to a tape one time, and the man on the tape said, "I'm not either or; I'm neither nor." A Calvinist says that you are either a Calvinist or an Arminian, and an Arminian says that you are either an Arminian or a Calvinist. Well, I am neither a Calvinist nor an Arminian. I am a dispensationalist.

We should call ourselves bible believers, not theologians, not involved in theological systems, but bible believers.

Now, this issue about being chosen in him before the foundation of the world clearly relates this choosing to the Mystery Program. In Ephesians 1, you have the mystery truth of election. Please notice that this is a dispensational truth in a dispensational timeline. There is no way to get this thing outside of the context of dispensational understanding.

Ephesians 1:4 – We are chosen in him "before the foundation of the world". Compare that with Matthew 25:31-34 – "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." The rapture of the body of Christ takes place, (he comes back and takes the body of Christ out), then the tribulation period takes place on the earth.

Then Christ comes back to the earth and establishes his kingdom and sits on the throne of his glory in the kingdom. Matthew 25:31 is a reference to when the Son of man comes in his glory. The “Son of man” is a messianic title. The Messiah, King of Israel, comes in his glory and sits on the throne of his glory.

Matthew 25:32,33 – “And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.”

Verse 34 – “Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” From the time God Almighty put Adam on the earth, and man on the earth, and put the earth in motion, the issue on this earth has been that kingdom. I have told you people time and time again that the issue on this earth is the authority of a throne over the planet. The whole issue in the whole universe is the authority of a throne over the universe. And, God put man on the earth and ordained a kingdom. He made man a prophet, a priest, and a king to go out and subdue the earth, but man failed and lost the crown. So, Jesus Christ came to do for man what man could not do for himself. Christ will come back on the earth one day and establish that kingdom which was prepared for man from the foundation of the earth.

Now, the kingdom program, the prophesied program, deals with issues that have been made known from the foundation of the world. But, if you look in Ephesians 1, you see something quite different from that. We are chosen in him according to a different program, one that was chosen in God and purposed in God before the foundation of the earth, and that program is called the Mystery Program. You have prophecy and you have the mystery, and those two programs are different. It isn't too hard to understand that. The Abrahamic Covenant related to the earthly people, Israel, and God's earthly purpose and earthly program through them. And as he set the nation Israel aside, he introduced a new program. He raised up Paul and gave him a new revelation. And this election from eternity past has to do with the formation of the church, the body of Christ, during the dispensation of grace. The election that we are involved in today, the mystery truth of election, refers specifically to the present age in which we live. It has to do with God's purpose before the foundation of the world to form the church, the body of Christ.

2 Timothy 1:9 – “Who (talking about God) hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace.” God did not call you according to what you were doing, but he called you according to his purpose (what he's doing) and his grace “which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” Before the world began, God had a purpose, and he had a program in Christ.

2 Timothy 1:10,11 – “But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.” That information is made known through the apostle Paul. That is why it is called his eternal purpose. It stretches back into eternity past and extends out into eternity future.

Titus 1:2 – “In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began.” God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit promised eternal life to some people before the world began. “In hope of eternal life, which God ... promised before the world began.” Who was back there before the world began? The Godhead was back there, and they had an “Eternal Life Conference”. They sat down and developed and designed a purpose, and a will, and a program that they were going to execute in time. And that purpose has to do with the formation of the church the body of Christ – giving eternal life to some people.

Do you remember Galatians 3 and Romans 4 – the necessity? What does God give to people that have perfect righteousness? He gives them eternal life. God foreseeing and God knowing what

he had in mind all along, justifies Abraham in a special and unique manner so you and I (the Gentiles) can get in on the promise. Does it look like it was related just to Israel?

Titus 1:3 – “But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me (Paul) according to the commandment of God our Saviour.” That mystery information is made known to us today through the apostle Paul. Therefore, I know that the purpose that he had before the foundation of the world had to do with forming the church the body of Christ because that is what is made known through Paul.

Isn't it marvelous to think that God Almighty planned something before the foundation of the world and that is what we are involved in? That is enough to get your blood circulating.

We sing that song *His grace has planned it all 'tis mine but to believe and recognize his work of love in Christ receive*. That is a great song. That should excite you! That is the program that you are involved in!

Now, there are four different elections in the bible.

First, there is the “election of angels” (1 Timothy 5:21). I am not going to get into that right now, but there is an elect company of angels.

Second, is the nation Israel. Isaiah 45:4 – “For Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.” Isaiah 44:1 – “YET now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen.”

Isaiah 41:8 – “But thou, Israel, *art* my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.” The nation Israel is God’s servant, his friend, and his elect (his chosen people). God Almighty called and chose the nation Israel to be a special people for himself – an agency to execute his purpose in the earth. What is his purpose in the earth? His purpose is to establish a kingdom. God chose the nation Israel to be the agency through which that kingdom is to be established and the agency through which his purpose in the earth is to be accomplished.

When did he choose Israel out? He chose Israel when mankind failed (Genesis 11). God chose out Abraham and his seed to be the instrumentality through which his purpose is to be executed on the earth.

Matthew 24:24 – “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” Who are the elect there? The elect are Israel.

Verse 31 – “And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” Who are the elect there? It's Israel. He is gathering together the nation Israel.

Write down next to that verse, in your bible, Isaiah 27:12,13 and Zechariah 2:5,6 and they will identify the elect as being the nation Israel, the believing nation.

So, you have an election of the nation Israel – the agency through which God is going to accomplish his purpose in the earth. They are chosen out when mankind fails.

Third, is the body of Christ – Ephesians 1:4, 2 Timothy 1:9, and Colossians 3:12. God Almighty called the body of Christ to be a special people, a heavenly people, to execute his purpose in the heavenly places just as Israel will execute his purpose on the earth. He chose Israel to execute his purpose on the earth, a special people, an agency through which his purpose will be accomplished. He chose the church the body of Christ as an agency through which his purpose will be accomplished in the heavens. When mankind failed, he chose out Israel. When Israel falls, he

chooses out the church the body of Christ, a special group of people to execute his purpose in the heavenly places according to a secret purpose that he had before the foundation of the world.

Colossians 3:12 – “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.” You and I, members of the body of Christ, (verses 10 and 11 are talking about the body of Christ), put on “as the elect of God”. Who is the body of Christ? They are the elect of God.

Now, you say, “Well, what about the individual?” Concerning these elections, the nation is elected in Israel’s election. The individual Israelite could be a part of the believing remnant, and he becomes a part of that on the basis of his individual faith. All they that are of Israel are not Israel, only the ones that have the proper response. Do you remember that from Romans 9? Well, it’s the same issue here – just as the calling with Israel is the calling of a corporate body, (a nation), so it is with the body of Christ. The election of the body of Christ is a corporate election, meaning the body is elected to the privilege and the position and for the purpose of functioning as an agency to exercise the purpose of God in the heavenly places.

In Ephesians 3:10,11 he says that one of the functions of the body of Christ is to make known to the principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God according to his eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ. The eternal purpose that he purposes in Christ is worked out through the agency, the body of Christ, in the heavenly places.

Now, concerning your individual election – you as an individual participate in that corporate election of the body when you by faith trust the Lord Jesus Christ on the basis of believing the gospel. 1 Corinthians 1:21 – “...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” Don’t forget that verse! Your individual election is on the basis of 1 Corinthians 1:21 – God in his sovereign free will has chosen and purposed to save them that believe the gospel. Now that is what God says his sovereign free will is, and you can argue the rest of the issues out any way you want to, but that is what God Almighty says. That is not the philosophical viewpoint of theology, but that is the issue of divine viewpoint in the scripture. You don’t want to forget that!

Fourth, is the election of Jesus Christ. Isaiah 42:1 – “BEHOLD my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; (Matthew 3:17) I have put my spirit upon him: (Matthew 3:16) he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.” In Matthew 12:18 that passage is quoted as a reference to Jesus Christ (Isaiah 42:1). That passage is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, and he is described by Jehovah as “my elect”.

Now listen to me! Think about this! The only individual elected by God, in the bible, and the only individual ever to be born into the human race with his destiny predetermined beforehand was the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, before the foundation of the world, is the only individual who had all of the details of his life predetermined by God Almighty. His destiny was prefixed by God before he was born.

Did Jesus Christ have to be saved? No he didn’t and that makes him a very unique individual, doesn’t it? Peter said he went to that cross by the determinant counsel and foreknowledge of God. God foreknew it, but God also determined that it would happen. He came into the world to go to the cross. That is why he came. He is the only person, the only individual, who ever had his destiny prefixed.

Now, the nation Israel is God’s elect agency because the nation Israel is to be one with Christ in that kingdom. He said, “I am the vine”. Isaiah 45:25 says, “In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.” Israel is elected because she is to be one with Christ in that kingdom.

The body of Christ is the elect because we are one with Christ. Listen people, when you get placed into Christ, you are just sharing his election, okay? You are not getting something of yours, on

your own, on the basis of you, but you are sharing his election, his destiny, what God has determined to do in Christ. You simply become a part of what God determined to do in Christ. Do you see how that makes him everything?

Now, your individual participation in what God has determined to do in Christ is based upon you believing that Christ died for your sins and then God the Holy Spirit taking you and placing you into him. And, in Christ, you share all of the blessings, one of which is participation in this program that God has ordained before the foundation of the world to accomplish in the Lord Jesus Christ.

You are chosen according to Ephesians 1:4 – “According as he hath chosen us in him.” It doesn't say that he chose you to be in him. Do you see that? It says that he chose you in him. When you get in him, he is God's elect, so who are you? You share his election, his privileged position. You share a part in everything that God has for you. You want to remember, people, the elect are always those who are in Christ, whether it's Israel or whether it's the body. You are sharing in God's purpose that he is going to accomplish in Christ. You get your election in Christ, not in yourself. That is what I am trying to emphasize. And if you see that, you will see that you do not, in any way, base your election on what you are or anything in you.

If you don't yet know that faith is not a work, then you have not come far enough to understand the issue of election. You need to go back and get that straight.

Now, there was a time when the apostle Paul was not in Christ.

Romans 16:7 – “Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.” There was a time in Paul's life when he was not in Christ. There came a time when he, by faith, trusted the Lord Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Spirit took him and placed him into Christ. *The mechanics of positional truth is the Spirit baptism (1 Corinthians 12:13)*. “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” That means we are baptized into living union with Christ.

How do you get into Christ? You get into Christ by the Spirit of God putting you into Christ, and the Spirit of God does that when you believe the gospel of your salvation. (We will see that when we get to Ephesians 1:13.)

Now, the elect are those in Christ. Lost people are never described as the elect. It is a term that doesn't have anything to do with lost people. Can the elect ever be lost? No, they are never going to be lost. Then were you one of the elect when you were lost? No, you were not. Where are you chosen? You are chosen in Christ. Before you were in Christ, were you one of the chosen? Now, if you get that through your thick skull, it will help you.

Ephesians 1:4 – “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, (why did he choose us?) that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.” Our position before God is to be that which is holy and without blame before God in love. “In love” is just synonymous with “being in Christ”, in his dear son, in the beloved one (verse 6 says).

Now, when he talks about being “holy and without blame”, he is talking about the climax. God has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame. That is talking about the position that we are going to have in the heavenly places before God. He is talking about this being the purpose for which God has us destined in the heavenly places.

Turn to Ephesians 5 and notice the issue about being holy and without blame before him. (Notice that the purpose of the choosing looks forward to the climax and the final consummation in the heavenly places, the final positions that we have.) Ephesians 5:25 – “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.” Why did he love the church and give himself for it? Verses 26,27 – “That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, (why?), That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” He is talking about the fact that Christ gave himself to the church that he might sanctify it, that he might present it to himself. That is talking

about him having an agency, in the heavenly places, that is without spot or blemish that he can use in the heavenly places as his worthy representatives.

Ephesians 1:4,5 – “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children.”

(In the next lesson, we will study about the adoption of children. When you are in Christ, God has predetermined that you would have the adoption of children, which is that resurrection status in the heavenly places of being holy and without blame before him in love.)

Now, I want to look at one other thing about verse 4. When he talks about being chosen in him before the foundation of the world, I can't overemphasize the importance of that as a dispensational issue. In the bible, Jesus Christ is the Son of David. Then he is described as the Son of Abraham. Then he is described as the Son of man. Then he is described as the Son of God. He has those four positions.

As the son of Abraham, he preaches the gospel of the kingdom, and he preaches that message exclusively to the nation Israel in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. As the son of Abraham, he preaches the gospel of the circumcision, and he preaches about the blessings of God first to Israel and through them to the nations. The blessings are going out to the nation through Israel. He preaches that to the nation Israel first, in the Acts period.

As the Son of man, he preaches the gospel of the uncircumcision, and he preaches that message of reconciliation through the apostle Paul in Romans through Galatians.

Then, as the Son of God, he preaches the gospel of the grace of God. He preaches the eternal purpose of God in Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians.

As the Son of David, he goes back and talks about the covenants, and he bases the gospel of the kingdom on what was promised to David.

As the Son of Abraham, he goes back and talks about that circumcision hope.

As the Son of man, he goes back to Adam in the book of Romans. Remember when we studied Romans and I showed you how he goes back to Adam? What came in with Adam? Sin did, and forgiveness of sin, and dealing with sin, taking care of the sin issue. The sin issue is settled forever in the book of Romans.

Then there is the Son of God, when you come to the book of Ephesians, and you have gone back now before the foundation of world. You have gone back before the fall, and you're looking into the counsels of the Godhead; and when you come to the book of Ephesians, you are no longer looking at God's plan in light of the fall. That has been taken care of in the book of Romans. You have been equipped to live as a child of God and overcome the fall, and overcome sin, and overcome all the ramifications of sin. Now you have been equipped to live in an absolute total victory program over sin, haven't you?

In Ephesians he says, “Okay, let's go one step further back. Let's go back and focus not on God's program in light of sin, but let's go back and see what the Father intends to do and to realize in his Son before all this stuff got messed up out here. Are you following what I am saying to you? We are going back before the foundation of the world, and we are going to see God's eternal purpose. Sin has been dealt with, and all these things have been accomplished.

Now, let's look at God's eternal purpose. What does Ephesians 2:8-10 say? “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Where did he ordain them? He ordained that we should walk in them before the foundation of the world.

Today, we are walking according to a purpose, and a will, and a plan of God that he had before the foundation of the world. And he fixed it so we can walk in light of what he purposed to

accomplish in Christ before Paul, before any problems. We're walking according to his eternal purpose.

God's original intention was to populate this universe with a perfect creation that gave honor and glory unto himself, and that is what we are a part of, and our blessings today are according to that purpose. That is something! And, that is why it is important for you to appreciate that. You have to understand the dispensational issues involved in the election, and that is why I keep emphasizing those things.

Ephesians 1:3-6 – “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

Now, verse 5 is a continuation of the issue that he begins in verse 4, and it gives you the climax of the election that he has described in detail for you in verse 4. In verse 4 he talks about God’s choosing, God’s elect purpose, the election that we are participating in. He talks about God’s purpose in forming the church the body of Christ, a chosen group of people, a body of believers that he purposed to use in the ages to come in the heavenly places for his honor and glory. He talks about becoming a part of this election that God purposed before the foundation of the world. The climax, the thing to which this group of believers is going to be used, is described in verse 5. He has chosen us before the foundation of the world “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself.” We are predestinated to the adoption of children. The body of Christ was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. God had a purpose before the foundation of the world to form the church the body of Christ. That body of believers is predestinated unto the adoption of children.

Now the word “predestination” is a word that gets a lot of emotional response from people very quickly. It is a word that is used in theology, and often times it is used as a synonym with election. But, it is not a synonym of election, and it is not a synonym for something that God has worked out in that kind of a way. The bible use of the word is very different from the loose theological use that is often in vogue. The word “predestinate” means “to be marked out beforehand.” Do you see the word “destined, destination” in that word? Then you put the prefix “pre” in front of it; you have a destiny; there is something that you are marked out for; he has destined to do something. Then “pre” is before. It is to be marked out beforehand for a particular purpose.

Now, the word is used four times in the bible, in Paul’s epistles. It is used twice in Romans 8 and twice in Ephesians 1 (verses 5 and 11). Verse 11 – “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated.” Notice, we are predestinated, and every situation concerning predestination refers to saved people. It refers to believers every time Paul uses it – “Having predestinated us (saved people)” Ephesians 1:5. It does not refer to God ‘predestinating’ somebody who is unsaved either to heaven or to hell, but it refers to something that God does with people who have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ during the dispensation of grace.

Romans 8:29 – “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son.” It is something that God did with the body of Christ, whom he foreknew. He predestinated them to be conformed to the image of his Son. He predestinated us to the adoption of children.

Romans 8:30 – “Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called.” The people that God determined to do this with, he executed their salvation program in its entirety.

But, I want you to understand that it is a term that always refers to saved people, believers. It is never a term that is used to describe God predestinating one person to heaven and another person to hell. It is always a term that is used to describe God’s purposes with saved people.

Ephesians 1:5 – “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children.” We are not predestinated to heaven or to hell, but we are predestinated to the adoption of children.

Now, it is important that you understand the issue of adoption because many people do not understand what adoption is in the bible; and they do not allow the bible to set up its own definitions for its own terms. How many times have I told you that the bible defines its own terms? You don't go to theology, and you don't go to the world to define the terms of the bible, because the bible defines its own terms. It sets up its own terms and the definitions thereof.

We are predestinated unto the adoption of children. That does not say that we are predestinated to heaven or hell. It does not say that we are predestinated to be justified and saved, in the sense of justification, to be born into the family of God. You do not get into the family of God by adoption. Sometimes people say that they trusted Christ and they were adopted into the family of God. No, they were not. They were born into the family of God.

You are a son because you are born into his family. You are a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus; and when you trust Christ as your Savior, God the Holy Spirit regenerates you, he imparts life to you, and you are born into the family of God. You are a 'born one' and that is what the word "child" means. You have been regenerated by the washing and the renewing of the Holy Ghost (Titus 3:5). That is how you become a member of the family of God, and you are a member of the family of God according to Ephesians 3:15.

Now, we have been predestinated unto adoption, and adoption is a reference in Paul's epistles to a special place of blessing. It is not a reference to becoming a member of the family, but to having a special place of blessing in the family. The only person who could be adopted was someone who was already in the family, already a son or child of the father. Then this father's son gets the privilege of being placed into the capacity of adulthood, in the place of a responsible position.

Galatians 4:1 – "NOW I say, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child, (notice he is the heir, the child, the son of the father, my son, my child, my born one), differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all." Here is the guy that is going to inherit everything; he is daddy's heir. But when he is in that childhood state, he is just like a servant. He is told what to do; he is told when to do it; he is told how to do it. He is under tutors and governors. Tutors are teachers and they tell him what to do. Governors stop him from doing things. He is told what he can do and what he can't do. He is a child. He is like a butler; he is told when to go to work and what to do when he is at work and what he is not to do. He is controlled by others.

Galatians 4:2-7 – "But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." You are no more a servant, which means you are no more in the capacity and classification of the servant, but now you have the job description of a son.

The issue of adoption means to be brought into a place of special relationship. The word simply means to be placed in the full place of his son, getting the full position of sonship. In other words, the kid doesn't have the privileges of being an adult until the time according to the father, then he has a barmitzvah, then he has the time when he is given all the privileges of a son. He comes of age so to speak. Now he can get a driver's license and buy a car and pay the insurance and all the rest. So, he is on his own.

Now, the adoption that you and I have been predestinated to has to do with this issue. God Almighty has predestinated the body of Christ to the adoption of sons, to the public attestation of being his full-grown sons.

Adoption in the bible refers to something that is future from where we are right now. You and I have received the spirit of adoption. We have been predestinated unto the adoption, but we have not received that adoption in its entirety at the moment.

Romans 8:22,23 – “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, (what is the adoption?), the redemption of our body.” That is a reference to the resurrection of the body of Christ at the rapture.

Ephesians 1:13,14 – “In whom (Christ) ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.” Here’s the purchased possession, the church the body of Christ. That purchased possession, according to verse 11, is predestinated “according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will” unto an inheritance. We do not have the inheritance yet; we are predestinated; we are marked out as those who are going to receive the inheritance. The Holy Spirit of God is given to us as an earnest, as a down payment, as a promissory pledge, as a guarantee that we will get that inheritance, which we have not received as yet. But, we’re as good as having received it because we have the Holy Spirit who makes that a reality in our life now. The Holy Spirit is the earnest, the down payment of the inheritance in the heavenly places until the redemption of the purchased possession, until the redemption of the body of Christ, that is until the redemption of our body – a future reference to the resurrection of Christ.

Ephesians 4:30, “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” The day of redemption is the rapture – the resurrection. Our bodies are changed.

In Romans 8:29, he predestinated us “*to be* conformed to the image of his Son.” It has to do with sharing the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 3:21 – “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” It is a reference to the resurrection and the tremendous transformation whereby he will change our vile bodies “according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things” by taking us out and giving us that redemption.

The references are clear that the adoption is the redemption of our bodies. God has marked us out as those who will share in the glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ. We will share everything with the Son for all eternity.

Notice the issue of “the earnest of the Spirit”. He is the earnest of our inheritance. He is the one who makes that inheritance a reality in us now. He is the down payment on the possession. Galatians 4:6,7 – “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” That is the actual possession of the adoption, the public manifestation where God will publicly declare us to be sons – the barmitzvah, if you will, for the body of Christ. God will publicly demonstrate us to be his full-grown sons with all the privileges of Jesus Christ himself at that day of redemption. It will be a tremendous day of God publicly declaring us to be his sons.

That event is future. Therefore, because it is a guarantee, God sends his Spirit as a seal to guarantee our presence. But also, the Spirit of God who is in us now cries Abba, Father. In Romans 8, he is called the Spirit of adoption. The one who is going to execute that adoption and redemption at the rapture is God the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we have him indwelling making that inheritance a reality, making that adoption, that privileged position of sonship, a reality in our lives right now. Therefore we are able to cry Abba, Father. Right now we are to live as though we are already in the heavenlies. We are to live like whom God made us. He made us to be people who have that inheritance, and who have glorified bodies, in whom the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, (his life, his

actions, his attitude), is manifest. God is to be manifest in the flesh, the life also of the Lord Jesus is to be manifest in mortal bodies (how?) by the Spirit of adoption.

Now “the Spirit of adoption” is the Holy Spirit. The Spirit who is going to accomplish that is in us now. He is accomplishing that now and allowing us to live now like who we are in Christ. It is the Holy Spirit’s function to make all of this real in our life now.

There are three adoptions in the bible.

1. Jesus Christ is adopted.
2. Israel is adopted.
3. The church, the body of Christ, is adopted.

It is important to get the three adoptions straight. Number one is Christ. Galatians 4:4,5– “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Notice that Jesus Christ was made under the law.

Turn to Hebrews 5. It is important to understand what is going on in the passages here. Hebrews 5:8 – “Though he were a Son, (that’s Christ), yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.” Now compare that with Galatians 4 and notice what he is saying. Christ is a Son, and yet he learned obedience meaning he took the place of a child under tutors and governors. In Galatians 4, the tutors and governors are a reference to the function of the law. The law was a tutor and a governor of God’s people in time past. Christ comes made under the law, placed under the tutors and governors, and therefore is obedient just like a servant and a slave would be obedient. He was obedient until the time appointed of the Father where he was declared to be “my Son”. Hebrews 5:8 is a reference to the time when Christ learned obedience, when he came under the law.

Because he humbled himself and made himself obedient on the form of a servant, there is a time when God exalts him. God Almighty declares him to be his son. God the Father bestows an adoption on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 1:1 – “GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things.”

Galatians 4 – He is a servant until the time when he is heir of all. But he doesn't differ from a servant. He is learning obedience until the time appointed of the Father. And at that time appointed of the Father, he is declared to be the heir of everything. You better treat him like the heir of everything. You don’t tell him what to do, because now he tells you what to do.

Now, when was Christ appointed the heir of all things by God the Father? Hebrews 1:3 – “Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” Jesus Christ dies at Calvary, and purges our sins. He is resurrected, and then he ascends up and sits down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. The Father says, “Come sit down at my right hand and so forth”.

Verse 4 – “Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.” Jesus Christ received the inheritance from the Father. He was appointed heir of all things by God the Father. By that inheritance, he received a more excellent name than everybody else in creation.

Verse 5 – “For unto which of the angels, (he is going to explain, in detail, the inheritance in the rest of the chapter), said he at any time, Thou art my Son.” That’s it! The time appointed unto the Father – he sets up this child out here publicly, and he says, “This is my Son.” That is the barmitzvah. “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?” The declaration in verse 5 is in reference to the adoption. The Lord Jesus Christ receives the inheritance from the Father by adoption. And when the time appointed of the Father came, then God the Father publicly, openly, declared him to be his son, heir of all things; and that took place at the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The issue at the resurrection has to

do with the Lord Jesus Christ being declared to be the heir of all things. Before he ascended up, he said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and earth. I have all the authority; it is mine now, and the Father has declared it to be so."

Turn to Psalm 2, and notice where that passage is quoted from.

When the Lord Jesus Christ ascends up and sits down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, that was a sign, a public demonstration of his appointment as heir of all things, of his adoption.

Psalm 2:6-8 – "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance." He said, "Just ask me and I will give you the kingdoms out here; they are yours!"

The Lord Jesus Christ received the inheritance by way of the adoption. He received the position of adoption, 'top son', full privileges. He received the kingdom. Hebrews 1 deals with that. He receives some other things, and Hebrews 1 goes over that, but that is not my point to you about what is involved in the inheritance. My point is the fact that the inheritance is received from the Father, and "this day have I begotten thee" is a reference to the resurrection of Christ.

It is important for you to see that the adoption is connected with his resurrection, just as our adoption is connected with our resurrection, just as Israel's adoption will be connected with her resurrection.

Acts 13:33,34 is talking about Christ – "God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead." Do you see that? He is saying, "As concerning the statement in Psalms, he raised him up from the dead *now* no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David."

Listen, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the time when God Almighty declares him to be "my Son, my full-grown son". It is the time according to the Father. He is a child learning obedience, and declared to be the one who receives the inheritance in a public attestation. He ascends up to the right hand of the Majesty on high as a sign and a demonstration, and he sits there as a sign of that appointment.

One day he will come back and receive that inheritance; and when he does, the body of Christ and Israel will participate with him and be the means whereby he takes possession of his inheritance. Through Israel, he takes possession of the kingdom on the earth. Through the body of Christ, he takes possession of his inheritance in the heavenly places.

Romans 1:3 – "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; (talking about the gospel of God), And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, (how?), by the resurrection from the dead." I hope you see that! Jesus Christ is adopted; and by his adoption, he receives an inheritance from the Father, and that inheritance is the universe.

You go back there and read through Hebrews 1. (We did that when we studied Romans 4.) You go down through Hebrews 1 and you will see the inheritance that he receives. In verse 5 he receives the resurrected body at the resurrection. In verse 6 he receives angelic subjection. In verse 7 he receives the headship over the creation. In verse 8, he receives an everlasting kingdom. The new heavens and the new earth are in verse 10. In verse 13, there is universal subjection. All of that in the prophetic program focuses on Israel.

We now know that we participate in that by being the participants in his heavenly kingdom. Through the church, the body of Christ, he fills up the positions of rank and authority in the heavenly places just like he fills up the positions in the earthly places.

We talked about the heavenly places, and I tried to say to you that that is not a state of mind. It is not a spiritual sphere of thinking and that kind of thing, but it is a position of reality. It does not

matter if you refer to it as “the heavenly places” or just “the heavenlies”. You can make the adjective substitutive and make it a noun itself. It is all right to make it equivalent to heaven. But it is still the positions of rank and authority in the universe.

Now, the first adoption is Jesus Christ. He receives the inheritance from the Father. He was declared to be the Son of God with power. The time appointed of the Father for that declaration is at the resurrection. Prior to that he learned obedience. There are a lot of things involved in that. It explains a lot of things that happened back over yonder, but from here on out things change. He now has the keys of death and hell and so on and so forth (Revelation 1 and so forth). Now, he sits there in that position as the inheritor of the universe – the rightful king.

Now, turn to Romans 9 and notice that Israel is said to have an inheritance. Romans 9:3-5 – “For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.” Of course, in chapters 9-11 Paul is describing and going over in detail the issue of the fall of Israel – that they have been set aside and so forth and his concern for them in that regard. But, he starts out by describing the exalted position, the honorable position that they have – the position of honour that they were given. And it was to them that pertained first the adoption.

Now, you want to understand the issue of adoption with Israel. In other words, there is a time period with the Nation when they are under tutors and governors; but for them there was a promise that they would not always be children under tutors and governors. There will be a time when God publicly declares them and demonstrates them to be his full-grown sons, and they will be able to go into the kingdom and function as full-grown sons. Then they will have all of the inheritance rights and privileges of sons.

Now, look at Exodus 4:22 – “And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, (the Lord is giving Moses instructions to give to Pharaoh), Thus saith the LORD, Israel *is* my son, *even* my firstborn.” Do you see that position of privilege? They are a favored privileged people.

Who receives the inheritance in a family? The firstborn does. He is the leader; he is the patriarch; he is the priest; he is the one that represents everybody else. “Israel *is* my son, *even* my firstborn.”

Hosea 11:1 – “WHEN Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called him my son out of Egypt.” When he called him out of Egypt and brought that nation out, they are his son; but they are a child, hence they are put under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the Father.

Jeremiah 31:31,32 – “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 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; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD.” God Almighty took the nation Israel, as it were, out of the land of Egypt; and he took them by the hand like you take a little child. He led them out of that land of Egypt, and he dealt with them just like they were little children. He dealt through tutors and governors, and he put them under the law (a schoolmaster). He put them under teachers, and he put them under that law, and they were to learn obedience as Christ learned obedience until the time appointed of the Father. When that time appointed of the Father came, John the Baptist showed up; and he cried, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” No longer is the issue going to be the tutors and governors but the time is coming, (it is at hand), when you have the opportunity to receive the adoption.

Acts 3:18-21 – “But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that

your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." The time appointed of the Father, appointed by God Almighty, the time of restitution, is that kingdom. Christ comes back, and then Israel is adopted. They share in his inheritance.

Romans 11:25-29 – "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, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. 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: For this *is* my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, (touching the purpose that God has in that Nation), *they are* beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance." They might not be getting it today, but they will get it one day.

Well, then what is God doing in the interval? He is forming the church, the body of Christ and we too have been made participants in an adoption. We too have an adoption.

And again, Jesus Christ in his resurrection is given that adoption. He is given a name and is declared to be the Father's Son. He is appointed heir of all things, not just the things on the earth but all things. You know in

Colossians 1:16-18 that he is made the head of the body that he might have preeminence in all things, all the positions of rank and authority in the heavens not just on the earth.

So, Israel receives her adoption. The Nation is resurrected; the saints in time past are physically resurrected to go in – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and so forth sit down in the kingdom of heaven with the nations. And the nation Israel is resurrected, and the nation Israel sits on that throne. The Nation's resurrection is not a physical resurrection like an individual being dead and coming to life, but it is the resurrection of the Nation – the national resurrection.

We studied in Daniel 12 that the Nation is resurrected and appointed heir of all things. All of the saved Israelites and so forth that receive the reward of the inheritance are in the kingdom. His inheritance in the earth is gained through Israel.

Now, the body of Christ will be declared to be his sons and share in his inheritance in the heavenly places. The time appointed of the Father is the resurrection of the body. Romans 8:23 – "... waiting for the adoption." That is the public attestation that we are the sons of God and if sons then heirs of God, with Christ Jesus according to Galatians 4. We share his inheritance.

Notice Romans 8:15 – "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; (he didn't put us under the law), but ye have received the Spirit of adoption."

Our situation is different from Israel's situation. Israel is placed under the law in time past, and they are under tutors and governors and so forth until the time appointed of the Father, which was the Acts period, to receive the kingdom. They receive the adoption when Christ comes back and he publicly demonstrates Israel to be his son, his chosen people.

You and I, as members of the body of Christ, are never placed under the law. From the time you get saved until the time of the rapture, God does not say that that is childhood for you. He says that you immediately go right past childhood to immediate full sonship just as though you were already resurrected – present your bodies as living sacrifices, (living dead men), like you are already resurrected.

Romans 6:13 – "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead." Paul says, "My desire is to obtain to the resurrection of the dead." He is not talking about getting a resurrection because he

knows he has it in Philippians 3:20. He knows he is going to be resurrected, and he knows where his physical resurrection is. He is talking about enjoying the power of his resurrection right now in daily life.

And how do you do that? Verse 15 is very clear – the Holy Spirit makes that position that we have in Christ a reality in our practice as we walk, not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

Walking after the Spirit is walking in line with what the Spirit of God is doing and walking according to who the Spirit of God has made us in Christ. It has to do with walking in grace and in the program of grace – walking right now led by the Spirit of God, walking as the sons that God has made us to be. What a privilege! We are not put under tutors and governors like children trying to adhere to the law principle with performance standards and adhering to all of the expectations and goals that people require. Rather, we can deal with one another on the basis of grace, and we can deal with ourselves on the basis of grace. We can function on that basis and see God's grace become a living reality demonstrated before men in us now by his Spirit as one day it will be in living reality in the ages to come.

Ephesians 1:5 – “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.” All this stuff is according to the good pleasure of his will. It is not according to our apparatus; it is not according to our comprehension (understanding of it); it is not according to the strength of our faith or how devoted we are in our lives. It is not according to our mental capacity or our intensity of service, but it is according to the good pleasure of his will.

Please notice the issue of the will of God. You will struggle through life sometimes wondering what God's will is, and where he wants you, and this and that and the next thing. But, the will of God, in the bible, is not a reference to where you are going to be at 3:00pm tomorrow. (You have heard me say that a hundred times.) The will of God, in Paul's epistles, is describing God's plan and God's purpose.

Ephesians 1:9 – “Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.”

Ephesians 1:11 – “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”

When you read, in the bible, about the will of God for your life, it has to do with what God is doing in the world today. What is God's purpose today? His purpose is in forming the church, the body of Christ. As you by faith trust Christ, he puts you into the body of Christ, and now you are a part of what God is doing, and you need to find out what the purpose of the body of Christ is on planet earth.

What is the purpose that God has for the body of Christ? How should a member of the body of Christ function and live in the circumstances of life? How should he function and live as a father, or a husband, or an employer, or a pastor? Find out, and then you function that way.

You see, he doesn't say that a member of the body of Christ shouldn't live in Chicago. (I wish he had!) The issue is not that! God is forming the body of Christ, but he is not manipulating circumstances. The doctrine that is in us lives out of us.

Colossians 1:9,10 – “For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.” If you want to be right in your life, and if you want the details of your life to be handled the way that pleases and honors God, then you need to know what God is doing today. And, if you find out what God is doing today according to the word of God rightly divided, you will have the instructions to handle the details of your life in line with what God wants done and what he is doing in the world today.

God Almighty is at work today, but he isn't doing what most people think he's doing. He isn't forming the kingdom; he isn't reclaiming real estate; he isn't setting the nations of the earth right. He will do those things and work through his dispensational purposes in time; but today he is forming the body of Christ, and he works through that body to that end.

If you want to know the will of God, then you have to know who you are in Christ, who God has made you in Christ, and then how to operate on the basis of who you are, and then get on with the program.

The will of God is similar to a show I watched on TV when I was a kid. It was called "The Big Picture". They went over World War II naval engagements and air engagements, and they gave you the big picture of the battle. You backed off and looked at the big picture, and that is the issue.

But, we are selfish, so we want to know *What about me?* But, you don't find out about me until you find out what God is doing. When you get that, then your part in it will become naturally apparent to you because the doctrine that is resident in your soul will give you discernment to handle the details of your life so you are in line with what God is doing.

We are predestinated to the adoption, according to the good pleasure of his will. Ephesians 1:6 is the purpose – that we would be "To the praise of the glory of his grace." God Almighty is going to get the praise of the glory of his grace in the ages to come through the church, the body of Christ.

Isaiah 43:21 – the nation Israel is destined in the kingdom for the praise of God's glory.

The church, the body of Christ, (Ephesians 1:6) is destined to the adoption for the praise of the glory of his grace, and that is a fantastic thing to contemplate. We are predestinated to be such monuments of grace as to manifest the glory of that grace before the entire universe for all eternity.

Ephesians 2:7 – "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." That is what God is going to do with us. He is going to make us an eternal monument to manifest forth the glory of his grace. We have a fantastic future!

Notice the expression "To the praise of the glory of his grace". Notice Ephesians 1:12 – "That we should be to the praise of his glory." Notice the end of verse 14 – "... unto the praise of his glory."

Ephesians 1:1-6 describes what God the Father is doing, how the Father has laid the plan and that all of the Father's work is for the praise of the glory of his grace.

Ephesians 1:7-12 describes what the Son has done, and it works out just to be to the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 1:13,14 focuses in on the work of the Holy Spirit, and it is for the purpose of the praise of his glory.

Everything that God Almighty does is for the praise of his glory. The nation Israel will manifest his glory in the earth. The body of Christ will be to the praise of the glory of his grace throughout the ages to come in the heavenly places. You and I, as members of his body, have the opportunity right now by virtue of the Spirit of God, that spirit of adoption, to manifest what will be manifest fully through us in eternity.

**EPH 301 – 6
(Test)**

On a separate sheet of properly headed paper answer the following questions. Remember to use complete sentences where appropriate.

1. The book of Ephesians presents:
 - (a) the mind of Christ
 - (b) the Head of the body
 - (c) the Body of which Christ is the Head
2. Ephesians is a sister epistle to:
 - (a) Colossians
 - (b) Philippians
 - (c) Romans
3. In Ephesians we find the standard and norm of doctrine and practice for the dispensation of grace. True or False?
4. Give two proof texts that all of Paul's epistles were circulated among the different churches.
5. How would you answer those who remove "at Ephesus" from Ephesians 1:1?
6. Give an outline of the book of Ephesians.
7. Explain the title "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ".
8. What is meant by the term "spiritual blessings"?
9. How would you answer those who say "places" should be removed from the phrase "heavenly places"?
10. Explain the significance and meaning of being "in Christ".
11. In time past God promised his earthly people material blessings as a reward for their obedience. Why has He given us spiritual blessings instead?
12. Exactly what does Paul have in mind by the term "heavenly places"?
13. Compare Ephesians 1:3 and Hebrews 3:1 and explain 'to what' each has reference.
14. There are four elections in the bible. Explain each one.
15. What is the dispensational significance of the phrase "before the foundation of the world"?
16. Who are the elect of Ephesians 1:4?

17. Explain what is meant by predestination and to whom it refers.
18. Define adoption and explain this important doctrine as it relates to the body of Christ.
19. There are three adoptions in the bible. Explain each.
20. 'To what' is the will of God a reference in 1:5?

Ephesians 1:3-6 – “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

Now, when we went over verse 6, in the last lesson, I remember talking to you about the phrase “To the praise of the glory of his grace”. We have been predestinated to the adoption of children; we have been destined to receive the status of full-grown sons, and it is according to the good pleasure of his will. Our predestination, what God is doing today in the body of Christ, is according to God’s plan and purpose. Our adoption is to the praise of the glory of his grace. God has predestinated us to such a future – we are going to be monuments to the manifestation of the glory of his grace through the ages to come. Israel will manifest it on the earth, and we’ll manifest it in the heavenly places.

Isaiah 43:21 is a verse you want to write down in relation to Israel manifesting God’s glory. Ephesians 2:7 is a verse about the body of Christ manifesting the glory of his grace.

Do you see that phrase in Ephesians 1:6 “To the praise of the glory of his grace”? Verse 12 is a verse like verse 6 – “That we should be to the praise of his glory.” Verse 14 – “unto the praise of his glory.” Verses 3-6 focus on the work of God the Father. The Father’s work and His activity in our age is for the praise of the glory of his grace. Verses 7-12 focus on the things that we have and the work of God the Son. It is for the purpose of the praise of his glory. Verses 13,14 focus on the work of God the Holy Spirit, and it is for the praise of his glory. The whole issue, the whole ball of wax, the whole activity has to do with God’s glory and his praise being manifested through the church, the body of Christ.

Ephesians 1:6 – “... wherein (in his grace) he (God) hath made us accepted in the beloved.” God’s grace has given us a place of absolute total acceptance before God Almighty. And that acceptance is in the beloved – in Christ.

That title, “the beloved”, is important. Matthew 3:17 – “And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Well, if you stand in Christ and you are accepted in the beloved, what is God’s attitude towards you? He is well pleased with you, isn’t he?

Matthew 17:5 – “... This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” Well, if you are in Christ and you are accepted in the beloved, who is the one you should listen to? Who should you focus on? You should focus on Christ because he is the issue.

Colossians 1:13 – “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son.” It is his dear Son, the one that he loves. We have been translated into the kingdom of his beloved, the Son of his love, his dear son, the one that is dear to his heart.

We say, “The apple of my eye, or the darling of our heart.” And that is what Christ is to the Father.

In Christ, we have total acceptance – accepted in the beloved. God has given us unconditional acceptance in Christ. That is grace! It is talking about his grace wherein he has made us accepted in the beloved. We have unconditional acceptance before God Almighty through grace.

Romans 3:24 – “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

Now that gives you a lot to think about. But, before we get into that notice something in Ephesians 1:4 that I did not mention when we studied that verse. “According as he (the Father) hath

chosen us in him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”

He has chosen us in Christ. He made us accepted in Christ, and he did it before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

Notice Jesus praying to the Father, in his high priestly prayer, in John 17:24 – “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, (the 12 apostles), be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” God the Father loved the Lord Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world, and he chose you in Christ before the foundation of the world that you might be holy and without blame before him in love.

Now, I know the expression “in love” belongs in Ephesians 1:4, and not Ephesians 1:5, because of that connection in John 17:24. It is not in the wrong verse due to incorrect punctuation in the Greek text and all of that. Sometimes you hear people say that the phrase “in love” should be the beginning of verse 5 “In love having predestinated us” and not the end of verse 4.

They do that on the basis of two things. One, it is their personal choice, and that is what they want it to say. Two, it is very poor Greek grammar to do it that way. I have never personally talked to one person that said that who could translate the passage. So, they do it just on the basis of hearing somebody say it, and they like the idea.

But, I know the “in love” belongs in verse 4 on the basis of John 17:24. God Almighty gave us a position in Christ, and God accepts us in the beloved. He accepts us in Christ, and God’s attitude toward us is the same as his attitude towards Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:19,20 – We have been redeemed “But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.” Jesus Christ was a lamb foreordained before the foundation of the world. What are his characteristics? He is without blemish and without spot before the foundation of the world.

Ephesians 1:4 – You are chosen in him before the foundation of the world that you should “be holy (without any spot or problems) and without blame.” Do you understand that God Almighty has identified you so closely with the Lord Jesus Christ that what he says about you in Ephesians 1 are the same things that he says about his son? Now, that is fantastic! That is being unconditionally accepted by God Almighty in the person, in the merits, in Christ, and that is our standing.

Now, when you understand that unconditional acceptance that you have, you can begin to understand how to operate as a believer because God is never mad at you. How does God treat you? He treats you the same way he treats the Lord Jesus Christ. Is he ever mad at Christ? No, and he sees you in the merits, not of yourself, but in the merits of his Son. And when he says, “Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called”, where are you called? You are called in Christ. What do you have to live up to? Who are you? You are in Christ! You are like him! He is the issue, and that gives you security, doesn't it? It sure does!

Also, it should give you some sanity. In Romans 12:3 he says that man should “think soberly”. Don't think above yourself, but think soberly, think right. Who are you? You are a member of the body of Christ. You are a part of what God is doing, and you should act like it. That will add some sanity into your life.

People talk about needing a better self-image. Well, that would be hard to get, wouldn't it? The closer you get to the light, the more you see the dirt. Did you ever notice that? You need to stop trying to have a self-concept and see yourself in Christ, see Christ and everything God has made you there. Focus on that, and find the purpose for which God has put you in the body of Christ to do and then do it. That will add some sanity to your life. It will also add some sanctity to your life.

2 Corinthians 5:9 – “Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, (whether we're present with the Lord or down here on the earth), we may be accepted of him.” Wait a minute! Why

is Paul working? Didn't Ephesians 1:6 say that you are accepted in the beloved? Then what is he talking about in

2 Corinthians when he says that he is working to be accepted? Is he saying that he is working to get saved? No, you know better than that. It is the difference between your standing in Christ and your state in the world. One is your position and one is your practice.

The difference between "the standing" and "the state" of the believer is very important. Turn to Colossians and I will show it to you again. Compare Colossians 2:10 with 4:12 – "And ye are complete in him." When you are put into Christ, are you complete? You are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, right? Colossians 4:12 – "Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Do you see what he is talking about? You have this position in Christ and he says, "I want you to stand fast in it! Epaphras is labouring in your behalf so you can learn about what you have in Christ and stand in that and let that take root in your life and bear fruit." It is the difference between what we call "standing" and "state".

Well, that is important to notice because the way you bring your walk in line with the position that you have in Christ, and practice your position, is by focusing on it. Get outside of yourself and get into what God has made you. Set your affections on things above. When you do that, what happens? (You know that song *Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Look full in His wonderful face, And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, In the light of his glory and grace.*) You become consumed with Him, and then the activities of your life begin to go that way. The flow, the focus, the goal of your life becomes Him.

Ephesians 1:6,7 – "... accepted in the beloved. In whom (in Christ) we have redemption." Now when you are accepted in the beloved one, all alienation and all separation are gone. Your separation from God is over with. But more than that, you were alienated from the purpose and program of God, (Ephesians 2:11,12). But now in Christ Jesus you are made near (Ephesians 2:13). In verse 16, he reconciled us both unto God in one body. There is a dispensational acceptance, but there is also that personal, individual acceptance before God also. So, we are completely and totally accepted.

Look at Ephesians 3:12 – "In whom (the Lord Jesus Christ) we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." Isn't that wonderful? That is acceptance. You never have to fear God's wrath. You never have to fear God rejecting you. You never have to fear God giving a cold shoulder to you. You never have to fear God putting you out of the family or not talking to you as a loving accepting father. You never have to fear not getting access to him in your prayers because we have our access in Christ. We come in Him, therefore, we can come with confidence and boldness. Imagine you coming boldly, and I don't mean impertinently. That is not what he is talking about. He is not talking about coming sarcastically. You are never going to come in an impertinent, arrogant, kind of a way. He is just talking about having confidence of being accepted and coming before the God of heaven and earth. You would never come in an impertinent way, would you?

Would you ever walk up to the President of the United States and say, "Hi Ronnie, how you doing?" You know better than that.

Well, you know who God is, but you also know that he is a loving heavenly father; and you treat your father with respect because you love him. But you have boldness to come – you are not afraid to come. You have confidence because of Christ.

Now, you need to find out all that God has done for you in Christ, and then let that live in you. Ephesians 1:7 lists some of things you have in Christ – "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." He begins to focus on Christ

from here on down through verse 12, but the first thing he focuses on is redemption and forgiveness of sins.

You are familiar with the issue of redemption – Romans 3. We have gone over those passages in great detail. 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, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” We are justified freely by his grace through the redemption.

The word “redemption” means, “to deliver by completely paying the price”.

In the book of Ephesians, Paul assumes that you have been through Romans. He assumes that you have ‘Romans truth’ stored up in your soul and that you understand the issue of “redemption through his blood”. (It would do you well if you would go back through your notes in Romans 3 this week. Think back over what “redemption through his blood” means.) It has to do with the fact that God has completely paid the price and has set you free by paying the price, and the price being the blood of Christ. It refers to the sacrificial nature of his death – our redemption. To be redeemed means to be set free. The price has been paid. We are set free for that propitiatory sacrifice – that fully satisfied sacrifice of Christ at Calvary. That is where we have redemption, and that is a wonderful truth.

Ephesians 1:14 – “Which is the earnest of our inheritance (the Holy Spirit) until the redemption of the purchased possession.” The body of Christ is the purchased possession. You are the purchased possession. The redemption of the purchased possession is future; that is the future aspect of the redemption of our body that we studied about in the last lesson – going out (the adoption). That redemption of our body is assured; it is a sure thing. That is security, gentlemen. When he says in Ephesians 1:7, “In whom we have redemption”, we right now possess the freedom and the liberty, where over there it will be taken out.

Now, you are free from the law. You have been redeemed. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law. He said, “Stand fast in the liberty where Christ had made you free.” You have been redeemed from the law program, and he has put you under the grace program. You are free from Satan, translated out of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. You are free from the world; you have been delivered from the world, but you are also free from sin, personal individual sin. You do not have to sin anymore. People say, “Oh, you are a heretic!” I’m not! When you have an evil disposition, it is because you want to have one. You don’t have to have one. You have been redeemed! You have been set free because Jesus Christ paid the price!

Ephesians 1:7 – “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.” You not only have redemption through his blood, but you have the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of God’s grace.

Do you know where hostility comes from in people? I don’t know if you ever thought about that very much, but there are verses in the bible that tell you how to deal with anger. There are two ways that people deal with anger, and I am talking about anger within yourself. Anger is a natural emotion. When we study Ephesians 4, you will see that anger is an emotion that God gave you as a motivating factor. Anger is good and can be handled in a proper way; and if it is handled in a proper way, it is right and good and a fantastic motivating factor to help you become motivated to do things you ought to do.

There are a lot of instructions in the bible about how to handle other people’s anger that’s directed at you, but there are also a lot of instructions telling you how to handle your own anger.

There are two simple reactions to anger. One is to blow up, and the other is to clam up (repressive). Most people clam up and push it down inside, and the result is bitterness, resentment,

hostility and that kind of thing. You find yourself getting hostile and bitter and resentful, and the root of bitterness wells up in you.

Have you ever been in a situation where somebody did something to you, and it was just a little thing, and yet you just blew up all over them? Do you know why you do that? You build a damn there, and you start repressing the anger and the hostility, and the hurt. That comes from something happening to you that is an injustice. It was wrong, and it shouldn't have happened. Then you feel sorry for yourself, and you begin to claim your rights. You never get angry in a sinful way except when you exercise self-pity, and then your conscience smites you and now you are guilty. So, you repress that and you put it down, and pretty soon you have all this guilt, and repression, and bitterness, and hostility, and an unforgiving spirit, and all the rest. And that comes from handling anger in an improper way. You hold all that down, and it is like a kettle boiling with the lid jiggling, and you are hanging onto the handle trying to keep the lid from blowing off. Then pretty soon you have to blow up.

You say, "Well, I know what I'll do. I'll just go off where nobody can hear me and I'll scream and scream." Or, you blow up at somebody. But, you should take that anger, and use it as a motivating emotion that causes you to focus it the right way, which is to focus it at the problem, not at people. Focus your motivation and your energy at resolving the problem.

You say, "Well, how am I going to resolve all of that?" Ephesians 1:7 says that you have "the forgiveness of sins".

Unresolved guilt, which is just simply the improper handling of your sinful responses, is one of the greatest emotional drains you will ever experience. Most of the time, you will find out that the sins of your spirit go back to that issue. Wrath, and malice, and evil speaking, and resentment, and bitterness all go back to that unresolved guilt. Hebrews talks about that root of bitterness springing up in their hearts. All of those things come from that issue of the unresolved guilt— the improper handling of your sinful responses.

Now, you have other responses like covetousness and that kind of thing, but they are different.

You have forgiveness of sins, and the issue of forgiveness of sins allows you to take care of that unresolved guilt. You do not have to leave it unresolved, but you can deal with it because you realize that Jesus Christ died for that guilt. He said, "Blame me; I'm guilty!" And he died. So, do you know what you can do with all of those things? You can let them go! And when something happens to you, or when somebody does something to you and it is wrong and you get offended, you don't have to pity yourself, and you don't have to allow that sinful response of self-pity to dominate you. You can say, "Wait, I choose to be free from that, and I choose to live under grace, and I have been forgiven. Jesus Christ, (an objective demonstration), paid for that, and I choose not to live under it." That is freedom, and that is redemption, and that is why he said that we have redemption and forgiveness of sins. He has taken care of everything that's wrong with us.

In the dictionary, the definition of "forgiveness" is "to release without harboring resentment". Isn't that wonderful? I would say, "He doesn't hold it against me anymore." Do you understand? God has forgiven you.

How do you forgive other people? If you understand that God Almighty doesn't hold your sin against you anymore, (Ephesians 4:32 – "...forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."), can't you then understand how to forgive? If you understand that God doesn't hold your sin against you, can't you be motivated not to hold other people's sins against them? Focusing on Christ makes the difference.

Ephesians 1:7 – "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Notice that the forgiveness of sins is according to the riches of his grace.

Let's go back a minute - there are two sinful responses, claming up and blowing up. If you have to do one of them, then blow up! It is a wrong sinful response, but at least it lets the pressure off. You will be guilty about blowing up but then that is all you have to take care of. They are both wrong; they are both sinful; but it is better for you to blow up than to clam up. The guy that blows up might get a bad reputation, but he will never get an ulcer. But, you do not have to do either one. You can be angry and sin not.

When we get to Ephesians 4, we will see a fantastic issue over there of taking what God's done for you and allowing that to live in your life, in your relationship with others and with yourself.

Turn to Colossians 2 regarding the issue of "forgiveness of sins". Colossians 2:13 – "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." How many sins did God forgive you of when you trusted Christ? He forgave all of them.

When Christ died for your sins, how many of your sins were future? All of your sins were future. Do you understand that? When Christ died for your sins, you weren't even born yet. Every sin you ever committed was future, and Christ died for every one of them. When God forgave you, he forgave you all of your sins, not just all of your sins up to the time that you trusted Christ.

Some people have the idea that God forgave all of your past sins when you got saved, and now as a child of God, every time you sin God writes them down on a board and says, "Oh, he did it again!" Then you have to come along and beg God to forgive them, and then he erases them as you confess them. You think God will forgive your sins if you confess them, and if you don't confess them you won't get them forgiven. That is a bunch of nonsense! That is what's called a short account system of forgiveness meaning we should always be naming and confessing our sins so God will forgive them. How many of your sins did God say he for forgave? He forgave all of them. Are there any sins that he didn't forgive? If there is one sin that you failed to confess and it was not forgiven, what will happen to you when you get to the judgment seat of Christ? He will put you in hell.

How many sins did it take for Adam and Eve to get cast out of the garden? It took one sin, and that one sin that they committed wasn't near as big as most of the ones that you commit, was it? You don't think one of your sins will get you put out? You haven't thought very seriously about yourself, have you? God forgave all of our trespasses. We have complete, total, unreserved, unconditional forgiveness in Christ. On the basis of the riches of God's grace, he has forgiven us. Grace by its very nature is unconditional. If God forgave you according to the riches of his grace, it has to be unconditional forgiveness, or it isn't by grace.

Romans 4:6-8 – "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, *Saying*, Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." God refuses to even credit sin to our account. He is not up there writing our sins down to keep track of them. If you want to know the truth of it, he picked the whole board up and threw it out the window and got rid of the whole thing.

God refuses to credit sin to our account because if he were to put it to your account, he would have to put it to Christ's account because you are in Christ. And, he did put it to Christ's account one day at Calvary, and Christ paid for every bit of it.

Now, that does not mean that sin doesn't have an affect – "the wages of sin *is* death", so you die. You are a part of a fallen creation.

Galatians 6:7 – "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap". If you sow to the flesh, you will reap corruption.

But, you have absolute total forgiveness, and you can live as a forgiven person, and there are not any short account systems today. That short account system was part of the law. Israel had a short account system in her program when she was under the law. There was always another

sacrifice, and another year, and another Yom Kippur, (day of atonement), always another sacrifice to be made.

Hebrews 10:1 – “FOR the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.” They couldn’t get a perfect redemption.

Verse 2 – “For then would they not have ceased to be offered?” If they could have perfect forgiveness, they wouldn’t need to offer the sacrifices anymore. Continuing in verses 2-4 – “because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year. For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.” The thing wasn’t completely settled. All the sins were not forgiven. The guy would come along and commit some more sins and have to go out and offer the sacrifice, then he would commit some more sins and offer the sacrifice again. But, that system of short accounts has been replaced.

Hebrews 10:10-12 – “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.”

Verse 14 – “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” That short account system has been replaced by Christ’s perfect sacrifice, his finished work – accomplished redemption, total forgiveness.

Ephesians 4:32 – “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another.” Do you want to handle those sinful emotional responses that we mentioned awhile ago? Well, that’s how you do it. You say, “I’m free from those things! I choose not to be filled with bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and evil speaking. I choose to handle my anger and my sinful responses in the proper way. I choose to identify them as sin.” You say, “God save me from that!” You put it off.

Well, what is the Replacement Principle that we learned in Romans? You put off and put on (Ephesians 4:24). What do you put on in its place? Ephesians 4:32 – You put on kindness in place of anger, wrath, bitterness, clamour, and evil speaking. You choose to be tenderhearted, forgiving one another, (here’s the measure), even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

Does God hold a short account system and make you come to him and confess your sin before he forgives you? If that were so, you would wait for a person to apologize to you before you would forgive them.

But, that is not how it works. God forgave you on the basis of grace. He said, “I am not going to hold their sin against them.” That is total acceptance, and total forgiveness, and total freedom to deal with it. Our relationship is not threatened, but we are just able to deal with the problems knowing that the relationship is secure.

Now, when you talk about that, I know people say, “What about 1 John 1:9?” I realize that there are a lot of different opinions about this passage, and I am going to teach you what I have learned about it from the verses.

1 John 1:9 is often quoted out of context, out of its passage, out of its book, out of its dispensational setting to try to prove that a short account system is still in operation today. I want to say to you that that is a mishandling of the word of God. You cannot take 1 John 1:9 and deny Ephesians 1:7 or Romans 3, or Hebrews 10, or Colossians 2:13, and so forth.

1 John 1:9 – “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *oursins*, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Notice where the verse is – it’s in 1 John. 1 John is a part of the Hebrew epistles – Hebrews to Revelation. And they especially have to do with the period immediately prior to the Second Coming of Christ. 1 John fits that time schedule.

Read 1 John 2:18, 28; 3:2; 4:3. There are other verses, but I will just give you those.

You want to be sure that you notice what book you are reading. You are not reading a book that is giving doctrine to the body of Christ, but you are reading a book that is giving doctrine to Israel during a particular time in her history.

Now, even in 1 John, the forgiveness is complete and total. If you said 1 John is for today, it would not help you with 1 John 1:9, because even in 1 John the forgiveness is complete and total and absolute based on the finished work of Christ. 1 John 1:7 – “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” How many times can you be cleansed from all sin? You can be cleansed from all sin just once! If you had to do it twice, you didn’t get it for “all” the first time.

1 John 1:9 – “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *ours* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Do you see that? You can’t be cleansed from all unrighteousness but one time or else you were not cleansed from “all” unrighteousness the first time.

1 John 2:12 – “I write unto you, little children, (are little children saved people?), because your sins are forgiven you (why?) for his name’s sake.” Are the little children’s sins forgiven in 1 John? The verse says that they are “for his name’s sake” – because of what he has done. Their sins aren’t forgiven because they confess them, but they are forgiven because of Christ, because of his name.

Folks, if your sins are forgiven because you confess them, is that grace?

Let’s look at the context. 1 John 1 is dealing with the principle of the true fellowship with God, and he is exposing the counterfeit fellowship – the one that claims to be the true fellowship.

Do you remember the issue we studied about the apostate nation and then the true nation? There is the apostate Israel and then there is the righteous nation, the little flock. Well, John is writing and describing how to identify who is who, which one they are participants in. Are they in the true fellowship or are they in the apostate fellowship?

1 John 1:1-2 – “THAT which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.)” Notice we ... we ... we... you. Who is the “we”? Who handled Christ? The apostles did. To whom was he manifest? He was manifest to the 12 apostles. He said, “I am giving you our first hand experience with Christ, and we (the apostles) reported it to you.”

1 John 1:3 – “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, (it is a message from the 12), that ye also may have fellowship with us”, and be a part of what? (“Fear not little flock.”) Who is he talking about? He is talking about that little flock. He said, “We declared this to you so you can come and be a part of the little flock.” Continuing in verses 3-5 – “...and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”

You see the word “if” in verses 7, 9, and 10. He is setting forth a principle, and he is saying, “If this is true, then ‘this’.” He is contrasting some things.

1 John 1:6-7 – “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” If you say you have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, what are you? Do you really have fellowship with him? No, you are lost.

Compare 1 John 2:11 with 1 John 3:15.

1 John 2:11 – “But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.” Do you reckon that is a saved man or a lost man? If a man hates his brother, he walks in darkness. If we walk in darkness, we don’t have fellowship with God.

1 John 3:15 – “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.” If a man hates his brother and walks in darkness, he does not have eternal life.

What does “walking in darkness” indicate? It indicates that the man is lost, and that he does not have eternal life. Haven’t people been telling you for years that you can break fellowship with God, but you can’t break your relationship? They have been telling you that the issue of sin in your life means it will break fellowship but it won’t break relationship.

Listen to me! Read 1 Corinthians 1:9 – God has called us by the gospel into fellowship with his Son. The very purpose of the gospel is to establish a fellowship between God Almighty and a believer. The word “fellowship” means “that which you share in common”. To be in fellowship with God, just means to share his life and his righteousness. If you break that fellowship, you haven’t just broken a situation where he’ll talk to you, but you have broken a situation where you no longer share his life.

1 John 1:6 is the counterfeit fellowship; it is lost people. Verse 7 is the genuine fellowship; it is saved people. The issue is: where are you? Are you in darkness, or are you in the light? Are you lost, or are you saved? If you are saved, the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanses you.

Notice that the word “cleanse” is in the present tense. He is always cleansing you from all sin.

Take for example the prodigal son, (a type of the little flock), who returns to the father. The whole point of that was not the prodigal son, but the elder brother. The elder brother is a type of the Pharisees; he hates his younger brother who has returned. Do you follow that?

1 John 1:8 – “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” Some people were denying their old sin nature.

Verse 10 – “If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” Some people were denying their own personal sins. You can’t deny sin and be in fellowship with God.

The people that joined the little flock submitted to the baptism of John. They justified God by being baptized by John. What does Luke 7:30 say? “But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves.” They said, “We don’t have any sin; we’re not sinners!” They that be whole need not a physician. He said, “I didn’t come to call the righteous people who do not think they have any problems, but sinners to repentance.”

Do you see the contrast there – the attitude that the apostate nation has, (no sins, no problems), and what does the little flock say? If we confess our sins, what do they come to John doing? It is the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. They come to John (Matthew 3) confessing their sins. Do you remember that?

Somebody will say, “That is ‘exomologeo’ there, and this is ‘homologeo’ here, which are two different Greek words.” I say, “That is two different Greek words only in the sense of a preposition being added to it. Outwardly they came to John confessing and 1 John 1:9 doesn’t say anything about it being outward.” It is the same word. (You will have Greek scholars pull that on you sometimes.) The problem is that verse 9 is an invitation to come and be a participant in the true fellowship, come and get your sins forgiven once and for all.

Do you want to see how children have their forgiveness? Look at 1 John 2:1-2 – “MY little children, (now who’s he talking to?), these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins* of the whole world.” When a little child sins, what does he tell him to do? Should they go out and confess their sins? He says, “Remember that you have an advocate; remember that you have a payment; remember that you have a fully satisfied sacrifice of propitiation; remember you have forgiveness.”

Now, somebody says, “Well, wait a minute preacher! 1 John is talking about parental forgiveness!” Have you ever heard that? There is a difference between judicial forgiveness and parental forgiveness. That is true enough. There is a difference between coming before the judgment bar of a judge and standing before your daddy. That is true. But people say, on the basis of that, if your child offends you and sins against you, your fellowship is broken and things aren’t right until that child comes and asks forgiveness, right? Well, let me tell you something. I am a daddy; I have three kids, and I learned a few things about parenting from the word of God. I know that God requires me to forgive my children as God also for Christ’s sake hath forgiven me. I know that if I break fellowship with my children on the basis of something that they do, something that I disapprove of, and I refuse to forgive them unless they come and ask my forgiveness, I am wrong. If I put conditions up there and don’t do it on the basis of grace, I am not properly functioning as a parent, nor as a member of the body of Christ.

A body member is required to forgive other people on the basis of the way God forgave them in Christ, and that is absolutely unconditional on the basis of grace through the finished work of Christ. Isn’t that how he forgave you? Ephesians 1:7 –“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.” It is unconditional forgiveness!

Well, then don’t come along and add conditions to it! The basis of our forgiveness of others is the same as the basis of our forgiveness by God. Grace and love are by their very nature unconditional.

Now, the doctrine of total forgiveness does not mean that sin doesn’t make any difference in your life. We talked about that. Sin affects your best personal adjustment. It will destroy your testimony. It will cause you to reap the consequences of bad decisions. But listen, gentlemen, total forgiveness gives you the ability to do something that you could not do any other way, and that is to look at your sin and face it! You don’t have to cover it up because God has already dealt with it, therefore, you can deal with it. You can admit it, and acknowledge it, and identify it, and deal with it, and progress away from it. Why can you do that? You can do that because you are forgiven!

You don’t have to come to God as a daddy who is just waiting to whip you. Have you ever seen a kid come to his daddy when he knew his daddy was ready to whack him? I’ll tell you what you do in that situation. You let that kid know that you love him, and that you are his daddy, and that it doesn’t make any difference what he did. You are his daddy, and you are the one to call if there is trouble. Then do you know whom he will call? He will call you! Then, you go stand with him when there is trouble and you affirm that relationship. Then, do you know whom he will call when he is in trouble? He will call you. Do you know whom he will love? He will love you. Do you know whom he will want to please? He will want to please you.

Well, if a kid will do that for his daddy, what do you think a believer will do for his God? That’s it! Total forgiveness is a tremendous ‘motivator’ when it is properly understood and properly appreciated, and recognized that it is according to the riches of his grace.

Ephesians 1:7 – “In whom (the Lord Jesus Christ) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.” God set us free through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary.

I will point out to you again that the term “blood” in that verse is a reference to the sacrificial nature. It is sort of a “coin of the realm” term in the bible that describes the nature of his death, and it has to do with the fact that his death at Calvary was a sacrifice. It wasn’t that he just died, but he died for a specific purpose of paying the ransom for sin, paying your debt. He died as your kinsmen redeemer.

We studied those issues back in Romans 3.

He also provides forgiveness of sins for you – absolute, complete, total forgiveness. That is something that is wonderful to know about. God does not hold our sins against us any longer. The consequences of our sins have been sent away; they are completely gone as far as the justice of Almighty God is concerned. That doesn’t mean that sin doesn’t have consequences in your life and in the effects that it produces, and the activities, and your testimony and that kind of thing, but it means as far as the justice of God is concerned, it is no longer offended with you. And he says that the measure of it is according to the riches of his grace.

Now, those words “according to” are used a number of times in the book of Ephesians, and they refer to a measurement. Let’s say that I was downtown walking down the street panhandling because I didn’t have any money. I asked a man to give me five dollars, and the man is a millionaire with untold resources. Out of his wealth, he could give me five dollars. But if he gave me “according to” his wealth, (proportionately to his wealth), I would get more than five bucks. The point is that it is “according to the riches of his grace”. There’s that financial term in here again that I pointed out to you before. Paul uses those terms in these books. The “riches of his grace” means God wants you to know the wealth that is yours in Christ. He has blessed you according to the immeasurable, unfathomable riches of his amazing grace.

In Romans 5:20 he said, “But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” That shows you the security that you have in Christ. No matter how much sin abounds, what does grace do? It exceeds it; it meets the need and goes beyond. It abounds; it goes beyond the need – absolute security in Christ and in his grace. And, that is what you rest in, not what you did but what he has done for you.

Ephesians 1:8,9 – “Wherein (in his grace) he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.” I get to reading these things, and I will tell you that these verses give me the ‘heebie geebies’. I get excited when I read these verses because these things indicate that God has made us in Christ. He has made us a part of his inner circle, and he has revealed things to us and given us wisdom. He revealed his ultimate purpose to us. God has taken his genius and he’s revealed that to us, and he wants us to rejoice in it with him! In his grace, he has abounded toward us in all wisdom.

Knowledge and wisdom are different in that “knowledge” is “knowing something”, but “wisdom” is “knowledge plus the ability to use that knowledge to the best advantage”. And “prudence” is “insight, understanding”.

God has given us wisdom and prudence, (how?), “Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him” (Ephesians 1:9,10). God has taken the mystery, the secret of his

own genius, and he's laid it out here for us. He has made us a part of a special group of people, his inner circle, who have access; and we share the counsels of God.

In verse 11 he says that in Christ "also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." The phrases "the counsel of his own will", "his good pleasure which he purposed in Christ", and all those things are talking about the counsel and the wisdom and the will and the plan and the program of God. We have had the counsels of God opened up to us. Does that thrill you? That is what God's grace has done for you. You have special knowledge and wisdom that nobody else ever had in the bible.

Remember what wisdom and prudence are in Ephesians 1:8. Wisdom is knowledge plus the ability to use it to the best advantage. Have you ever heard of a prudent man? He has insight in the situation; he has insight and understanding of things, not just knowing something and not even just wisdom, but he has real insight to look to the heart of things. God has abounded to us in all wisdom. He has given us the ability, not just to know something but to take these things that we know and use them to the best advantage. Do you follow that? He has given you insight.

Look at 1 Corinthians concerning God making known to us the secret of his will, God taking us into his innermost circle and opening up his counsels to us and saying, "Hey fellows, this is what my plan is."

1 Corinthians 2:6,7 – "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." Now, you know where we are. We are back before the foundation of the world. Jesus dies on the cross and ascends into heaven, and then the Holy Spirit comes. The body of Christ is formed. We are dealing with a secret, with the mystery. He calls the body of Christ "the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world", (before he ever put man on the earth), unto our glory." Before the foundation of the world, God planned the dispensation of grace. He planned the formation of the body of Christ, and Paul says, "That is what we talk about".

1 Corinthians 2:6 – "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, (we don't preach human viewpoint), nor of the princes of this world." Well, what is he talking about there? The princes of this world are those principalities and powers that we will study about in Ephesians 1. He says, "We're not going on human viewpoint, and we're not preaching about wisdom that is involved in Satan's policy of evil." We studied about the fact that Satan had a wise plan. And Paul says, "We're not talking about the things that deal with the course of this world. Those things come to a big fat 'zip', but we speak the wisdom of God. We're going to tell you about God's wisdom in a mystery, a secret, even the hidden wisdom." (That's a good definition of mystery there.)

Continuing in 1 Corinthians 2:7,8 – "... which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: (he kept it hidden even from the principalities and powers) for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." That is why you know the secret was kept secret in ages past. It wasn't hinted at back in time past because had Satan known anything about what God was going to accomplish through the cross of Christ, Paul said that he would never have crucified him. He would never have entered into Judas; he would never have gone to that cross and done hand-to-hand combat seeking to slay God himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, in human form.

Satan danced a jig over that sealed tomb that night. He thought he won the victory; he thought he put him away; he thought he made him his captive hidden by the power of death. Had Satan known what God was doing in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, how "it" was going to be the very thing that defeated Satan's policy and plan and program, he would never have crucified Christ. That is why God kept it a secret not to be revealed until Paul.

1 Corinthians 2:9,10 – “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit.” Please notice: God has made it known to us. In time past ear couldn’t hear it and heart couldn’t search it out. They did not know it; eye didn’t perceive it. “The things which God hath prepared for them that love him” are doctrines, the doctrines about what God has done for us. These are doctrines that nobody ever saw, or heard of, or thought of before, but God has revealed them to us by his Spirit: “for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” What he is making known now goes into the deep inner counsels and recesses of God. You are dealing with heavy stuff now.

Listen, you study the book of Revelation, and you study Daniel, and you study the Prophets and all that business, and people say, “Boy, we’re getting deep stuff now!” No! No! No! That’s the easy stuff. He made that stuff known all along. He didn’t care what Satan knew about that.

He said, “I’ve got some deep things though. I will take you into my inner counsels in here, and I will give you some stuff, some real goodies, that have just now been made known.”

1 Corinthians 2:11,12 – “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” He is talking, again, about the doctrines, about the truths, about all that you have in Christ.

1 Corinthians 13-15 – “Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 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. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things.” A spiritual man can understand and discern everything “yet he himself is judged of no man.”

Verse 16 – “For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him?” “The mind of the Lord” is talking about the counsel and what God had in mind, his purposes. We say, “He’s a man of his own mind.” He is talking about the purposes, and the counsel, and the will of God.

What does the last part of that verse say? It says, “But we have the mind of Christ.” Do you understand what that means? When he says, “But we have the mind of Christ”, he is saying, “We know what God was thinking before the foundation of the world; we understand what Christ is thinking; we know what his thoughts are.” We have the counsels of God, the purpose, the plan, the thoughts of God himself opened up to us. Now, tell me that can’t control your life, or that can’t excite you?

Old Job back there in the first book ever written, with just a little bit of dim light, said, “I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary *food*” (Job 23:12). (And, you have the details of it laid out!) Job begged and said in Job 19:23, “Oh, that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!” He never even thought about a bible! And, you have a written book to carry around! Doesn’t that fascinate you, and control you, and excite you, and dominate you, and motivate you?

You stand up next to that book, and you want to make something out of yourself. You really do! Why would you stand up and talk about what you think ought to be talked about, when you can tell people what God says? Do you understand what I’m saying to you? When you take the word of God, and you begin to preach grace, and you preach the mystery, and you preach the truths and the wisdom of God that has been manifested today, how can human wisdom ever attract you again after you see that? How could you ever get in a pulpit and just teach verse after verse after verse, killing yourself teaching verses.

People think I’m nuts because I just go, go, go. They say, “You’re giving me too much!”
And I think *I’m just giving you so little!*

This stuff is fascinating to me! It is also humbling to think God has done all of that for us.

When Paul says, in 1 Corinthians 2:16, “For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ”, he is not talking about the fact that we instruct God. We don’t ask God what he thinks is being done, or he doesn’t come and ask us what we think ought to be done. But, he asks the question “who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him?” Then he says, “we have his mind.” We have the mutual counsel of God. We have such an intimacy with God that he has opened up his mind to us that we might know the very mystery of his will. How could you ever be interested in anything else after you see that? How could you ever want anything else to live in your life, and to dominate you, and to control you after you see that?

Ephesians 1:9 – “Having made known unto us the mystery of his will.” We have been instructed. Look at the blessings that you have. He said, “We are blessed with all spiritual blessings.” Then he starts in verse 3 and talks to you about being chosen in him. You have been given a special position, chosen out, especially given this position, a special status, as members of the body of Christ. You have been predestinated, and given adoption, and given acceptance, and given freedom, and given forgiveness. Now, you have been instructed. You have been given inside information about the very purpose of God Almighty.

Folks, that motivates me, and I appreciate that. I appreciate someone having such intimate contact with me that He will do that, and I don’t want to betray that confidence for anything and neither should you.

I want you to look at a couple of verses about wisdom and prudence. Ephesians 1:8,9 – “Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will.”

In Philippians 1:9, Paul is praying for mature believers. He is praying for ‘Ephesian-level’ saints, mature saints. “And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and *in* all judgment.” They already have abounding love, but he wants it to be super abounding love in knowledge and in all judgment. He is saying, “Look, I want your judgment, your discernment, your knowledge to be growing and abounding and just flowing out of you.” Why? Verse 10 – “That ye may approve things that are excellent; (there is wisdom and there is prudence) that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness.” Do you want to see wisdom and prudence? There it is! It is the ability to take knowledge and apply it, use it, to the best advantage. It is not just taking something that is “okay”, but it is getting the best out of it. That is prudence! That’s being able to look into a situation and discern the thing of greater value, and then do that. That’s what he’s talking about. He said, “I want you to have this capacity to think like God thinks, to have the mind of Christ, to walk in your sonship status, and to exercise that.”

Do you know where wisdom and prudence come from? They come from this book! They come from setting your mind on what God is doing and the purpose that God has in Christ and focusing on that. That is where wisdom and prudence come from. God does not just bore a hole and pump it into your head. He abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence having made known to us the mystery of his will. Well, where does he make it known? He makes it known in that book. So, if you are going to have that wisdom and prudence, where are you going to get it? You have it, so you need to appropriate it! Do you see that? It is yours to have, and to appropriate and to function with.

Colossians 1:9,10 – “For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” That is just a different way of saying “wisdom” and “prudence”. “Be filled with the knowledge of his will,” means to know what God’s will is, what his purpose is, what his counsel is, what he is doing. But, be filled with it in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. Don’t just know about it, but know it! Be on the inside. Set your mind on it so that you think the way God thinks, and

you can take that knowledge and use it to the best advantage in the details of your life. He wants you to be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; (why) "That ye might walk worthy." The only way to have a worthy walk is to have that information base that motivates you.

Colossians 2:2 – "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding." Do you know how rich, how wealthy, how wonderful it is to have the full assurance of understanding, to be able to understand what God is doing and how he operates, and how it all works in the world today? Do you understand how wonderful it is to know what the future is going to be like with the body of Christ in the ages to come, and what God's purpose is with the body of Christ? Do you know how comforting that is, and what assurance there is in that, that full assurance of understanding.

Continuing in verse 2 – "... to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ." Now, there are three mysteries listed in that verse.

All the new bibles change that verse and they say, "the mystery of God, which is Christ." I studied that verse and I thought *I wonder why they don't just leave it like it is*. So, I go and look at the commentaries, and I talk to preachers, and I find out why they don't just leave it like it is.

What is the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ? What is all that? So, I say to myself, "Richard if you are so smart and you believe that it is there, what is it?"

(Well, I'm glad I'm not teaching Colossians tonight because then we would spend the rest of the evening on this passage.)

There are three mysteries – the mystery of the Father, the mystery of God, and the mystery of Christ. There are three different programs and plans and issues there that sum up, (they all fit together into one glorious climax of a whole), all of the purposes of God centered in the Lord Jesus Christ. And that is why he says in Colossians 2:3, "In whom." He is talking about the mystery of God, the mystery of the Father, and the mystery of Christ – "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Do you know something folks? You've had all that stuff opened up to you. God has made known to you the mystery of his will. To me, it is fantastic to see that.

You will find that the mystery of God (Revelation 10) as the summation of the prophetic program. The mystery of Christ (Ephesians 3:4) is the issue of the church the body of Christ. The mystery of the Father is what we are going to read in Ephesians 1, and that is how he will take both the prophetic and the mystery program and place them together. He has one overriding purpose in his program with Israel and his program with the body of Christ. There are two distinct programs running along, and God says, "Wait a minute! Do you see all that stuff? Well, I have one other thing I want you to see. I want you to see how all of this works together and how I'm not just doing one thing here and then changing my mind and doing something else over there. I have an overall purpose that I am achieving, that I planned to achieve before the foundation of the world, and it has always been the thing that I am after."

Notice what it is – Ephesians 1:9,10. "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times (what is the mystery of his will, his purpose?) he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him." Do you see that? The mystery of God the Father's will has to do with the fact that he is going to gather together all things in one. He is going to head up all things under one head, and that head is the Lord Jesus Christ.

How will he do it? He will take all things on the earth and head them up under Christ, but also all things in heaven.

Now, how is he going to head up all things on the earth in Christ? You know that! Doesn't he have a kingdom nation, an earthly people to do that? Yes he does.

But now, he also has a heavenly people, a new man, a new creation, a different kind of humanity, (that never was even dreamed of before), to take his place in the positions in the heavenly places. They will reign in the heavenlies and establish the authority and the headship of Jesus Christ up there just like Israel will on the earth.

God the Father's will is to make everything, in the ages to come, centered in one thing, and that's his Son the Lord Jesus Christ. That is fantastic to me! That is something that God the Father has planned all along and something that we are given the privilege to understand, and to appreciate, and to be a part of.

Let's go back and look at Ephesians 1:9,10 carefully now. "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will." That "will" is the will of God the Father. You want to compare that with chapter 3 because there is a different issue in chapter 3.

Ephesians 3:3 – "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)." Now, you understand that the mystery of Christ, of course, is the body of Christ (verses 5,6). The church, the body of Christ, is the mystery of Christ.

In Ephesians 1:9, the mystery is the mystery of God the Father. Now, the mystery of the Father is the "big thing" where he is going to head up everything in heaven and earth in Christ.

The mystery of Christ is that through the death burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, God is going to produce the church, the body of Christ, a heavenly people, a new species of humanity, a new creation. They will be able to extend his authority in the heavenlies, in the ages to come. (They already knew about the earthly kingdom.)

The mystery of the Father is how he is going to accomplish all of it. The mystery of Christ focuses on the church the body of Christ, that which we are a part of. The mystery of Christ focuses on the dispensation of grace, but the mystery of the Father is a larger thing. You could say that it is the master plan. The mystery of the Father has to do with the master plan that the Father has for everything – the overall arching plan in the dispensation of the fulness of time to gather both issues back under the headship of Christ.

Ephesians 1:9 – "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself."

Well, if he purposed it in himself before the foundation of the world, that will match verse 4 – "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world."

It will match 3:11 – "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

God's original purpose was to populate an infinite universe with a people made in his own image that would be subject to Him as head, as Almighty Sovereign. He purposes that in Christ, and he is going to accomplish that in the dispensation of the fulness of times in the ages to come.

Notice that he calls it "the mystery" of his will. That means nobody would ever have guessed this purpose if it hadn't been revealed. A mystery is something that you wouldn't know about unless it was revealed to you.

Ephesians 3:20 says, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." You would not have even thought about this if he had not revealed it to you. There are a lot of things you wouldn't have thought about, and this is one of them. You would never even have dreamed about doing it this way if God had not revealed it in his word. And God has opened up his counsels and laid it out there for you and given it to you.

Can you understand how Ephesians takes you up into some high and lofty territory? Can you now understand why he started in Romans and laid the foundation, and made you become oriented

in how grace operates today? Do you understand the edification doctrines? He lays that foundation in Romans, and he lays those four foundation stones, those footings, so you are oriented to how God's grace has equipped you to operate as a member of the body of Christ.

Then in Ephesians, he begins to build a super structure and he says, "Look at this house God is building and look what he is going to do with it in the ages to come."

Ephesians 1:10 – "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him."

Now, let's look at something regarding the dispensation of the fulness of times. Verse 21 – "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." He is talking about the "but now". Then, when he talks about the "ages to come" (2:7) there is the millennium, the Great White Throne Judgment (the heaven and earth flee away). After that, there is a new earth and a new heaven out here wherein dwelleth righteousness. The dispensation of the fulness of time brings time to an end. It accomplishes the purpose of God in time, and it has to do with the millennium, and after that, the dispensation of the fulness of time.

Now, I don't know how long that is going to last. I do know some things about it though. Maybe I should say that I don't know much about it.

We talked one time about the nature of the universe, and I tried to show you some things about how the bible takes the tabernacle in the Old Testament and describes the shape and structure of the universe based on that pattern. There are things involved in that tabernacle that are patterns for the universe.

Leviticus 12 is a very interesting ordinance with regard to a woman that bears a man child. Leviticus 12:1 – "AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child: then she shall be unclean seven days; according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean." Now, this is a regulation by which Christ on the eighth day was circumcised (verse 3).

But, let's go back and read the passage thinking, not of an individual woman in Israel, but thinking of the woman as Israel. "If a woman (Israel) have conceived seed, and born a man child (Christ): then she shall be unclean seven days; according to the days of the separation." So, she will be unclean seven days.

Verse 3,4 – "And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days; she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled." Now, there is a seven-day period, and after that seven days something is supposed to happen. Then there is going to be another thirty-three day period, and that is a total of forty days. And, after the forty days, the purification process is over.

Now, there are a lot of things you can do with that. Let me try one on you. He put Adam and Eve in the garden. Then you have one day, two days, three days, four days and up shows life (Christ), then five days, six days, seven days, which would be 7,000 years.

We studied in the book of Matthew how those days in Genesis 1, (the creation days), match 7,000 years. You take a day for a 1,000 years and you can get 7,000 years in there.

Don't go get your calendar out and try to figure out where you are in it, because you can't figure it out. You are in about the 5600th year in the Jewish calendar. You are not fixing to come up on 7,000 or anything. If some dumb Gentile tried to figure it out, he would bust his fool neck and lose all his money to some son of Abraham and still be wrong. So, don't do it. It doesn't have anything to do with you anyway. The rapture could come any time.

But, there would be the seven days. Then what would that leave you out over here before that thing was up? That would leave you a 33,000-year period out over there to finish out the days of purification for the creation.

Now, that is the closest thing I know how to find anywhere in the bible with regard to a time element for the dispensation of the fulness of time.

Turn to Deuteronomy 7 and notice one interesting comparison. Deuteronomy 7:9– “Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he *is* God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations.” When God puts Israel back in that land, he says he is going to keep that covenant for a thousand generations.

Now, I understand that when you say “a thousand generations”, you are just saying that it is unending out there. But, it is interesting to me that a perfect generation in the bible is how long? How long was Jesus Christ on the earth? He was on the earth 33 years. He died at age 33. If you want a perfect generation, do you know what you would figure it as? Well, I would figure it as 33 years.

So, if he puts them in the kingdom and confirms that thing for a thousand generations, do you know long that is? It is just interesting that it matches.

Turn to 1 Corinthians 15 and notice something. Verse 24 – “Then *cometh* the end, (the end of the order of the resurrections that he’s talking about), when he (Christ) shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father.” Notice that Christ is going to reign for a period of time, and then he is going to deliver up the kingdom to God the Father. Continuing in verse 24 – “... when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.” In the Millennium Kingdom there will be an underground rebellion against Christ. When he sets up that kingdom, there is not going to be instantaneous submission to the authority all over the earth. There are things, (like in Zechariah 14), where he tells them that the nation that doesn’t come up and worship won’t get rain, and if they don’t come in, he’ll give them the pestilence. There is going to be a submitting and a judgment of the nations.

The judgment on Israel is in the tribulation, and then the judgment of the nations extends for the 1,000 years of that millennium. The Millennial Kingdom is a 1000 year judgment on the nations at the end of which there is a final rebellion. Then he comes back with his angry face at the Great White Throne Judgment, and the heavens and the earth flee away because of the wrath and justice of Almighty God coming to set things right. So, Christ is going to reign until he has put down all rule and all authority, that is until the last enemy is destroyed. And then he is going to deliver the kingdom up to the Father.

1 Corinthians 15:25-27 – “For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.”

(Remember “all things under his feet” because we are going to see it again in Ephesians.)

1 Corinthians 15:28 – “And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God (the triune God) may be all in all.” That means Jesus won’t be reigning over here by himself, but God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (the Godhead) will be all in all. In other words, Christ is going to come and he will be the instrument that puts down all rule and authority. Then after that is accomplished, he will exalt the Godhead, not just himself but God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit; and they will be victorious in all things. And the way that will be accomplished is through the instrumentality of Christ exercising authority and headship, and then it will be the triune God all in all.

Now, that last enemy that is destroyed there is death, and death and hell are cast into the lake of fire at the Great White Throne Judgment. So, evidently, if death is destroyed and cast into the lake

of fire, then there isn't any more dying after that. There is a process that goes on out there for a period of time, (perhaps, possibly, maybe 33,000 years), and there is a purification process of the race in a physical sense.

Revelation 22:1 – “AND he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” Do you see “the throne of God and of the Lamb”? They have equality in that thing; the triune God is the issue.

Verses 2-4 – “In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads.”

Notice that the tree of life is for the healing of the nations. You get a process of healing there that goes on for a period of time at which time eternity begins. Eternity is where you don't count time again.

All of that information that I just gave you is speculation. I do not teach that as doctrine that you should believe. I just mentioned it to you as something that you might want to consider thinking about. If you don't want to consider thinking about it, throw the notes away. I don't care.

Turn back to Ephesians 1:10 – “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him.” He is going to make everything center in Christ. That is the key for you to understand. He is going to gather all things together under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Look at verses 20-22 and notice something about all things being gathered together in one. He is talking about his mighty power. Verse 20 – “Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* ..” What things? Well, what are the things he is talking about in the context? It has to be verse 21 – the principalities and powers. He put all these principalities and powers “under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church” (verse 22).

Notice that verse 22 does not say that he is the head of the church. Look at it! It says that he is the head of those things to the church. Well, what does that mean? That means he is the head of the principalities and powers – to the church. His headship of the principalities and powers is for your advantage, my friend. It is to the advantage of the body of Christ that he is the head of all those things.

Well, what is the church? Verse 23 – “Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” Jesus Christ has been made the head of all these principalities and powers in heavenly places for the advantage of the body of Christ, and the body of Christ is his fulness. The body of Christ consists of those people whereby he is going to fill all those positions up there, and he is going to occupy those positions of rank and authority by putting you in them. That is a ‘head trip’.

Compare Colossians 1 with Ephesians 1:10.

In Ephesians 1:10 he says that he is going to gather together all things which are in heaven and which are in earth.

Can you quote Genesis 1:1 for me? “IN the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

Do you remember Mr. Stam's book The Twofold Purpose of God, where he says that there is a purpose in heaven and there is a purpose in earth? Years ago, that started me thinking. He said, “At the that cross there is a twofold purpose, one is the mystery purpose and one is the prophetic purpose.” One is the purpose that has to do with the heavens, and one is the purpose that has to do with the earth. And the cross, and the resurrection, and the ascension, and the coming of the Holy

Spirit, and everything Christ did back there had a purpose that had to do with the body of Christ and a purpose that had to do with the earth.

Here's another passage. They all tie together. Colossians 1:16 – “For by him (Christ) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth.” We are talking about Genesis 1:1 and Ephesians 1:10 and Ephesians 3:15 – heaven and earth. “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* (he is going to tell you what he's talking about) thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.” When God created the heaven and the earth back there, he made stations of rank and authority all through the universe. He established a government that covered the whole universe, the heaven and the earth, and he made them all for Christ. He made them all to function under his authority.

Then, there was a rebellion. Satan himself wanted to usurp those positions of rank and authority. And because of that rebellion, God placed man on the earth and told him to go out there and subdue the positions of rank and authority on the earth and win them back to him. He didn't say much about the heavens.

God has a restoration program for the earth through man that he put on the earth in Genesis 1 and 2, but he also has a reconciliation for the heavenly places through man that he is forming today in the church the body of Christ.

Colossians 1:17,18 – “And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church.” You knew he was the head of the church, didn't you? Ephesians says he is the head of all things. Colossians 1 says he is the head of the church, which is his body. Why is he the head of the church? Continuing in verse 18 – “... who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* (all those positions of rank and authority) he might have the preeminence.” God Almighty wants him to have the preeminence in every position of rank and authority whether it is in the heavenly places or whether it is down here on the earth.

He has Israel to give him the preeminence on the earth, and he has the church, the body of Christ, to give him the preeminence in the heavens. And the body of Christ was a secret purpose.

Had Satan know that his positions in the heavenly places were in jeopardy and that God was going to restore all of the universe back unto himself through the cross, he would never have crucified the Lord of glory. But, Satan didn't worry about it. Even if Jesus was resurrected, all he was going to do was restore Israel, and all Israel was ever going to get was the earth. And, even if Satan lost the earth, (which he didn't think he was going to lose), he had all the rest anyway.

Satan spent about 4,000 years dealing with man, and he knew man wasn't going to get very far off the ground. He saw people raised from the dead, and they couldn't get off the ground after they were raised. He saw saints die and go down in the center of the earth. They never left the earth. He never saw anybody go up into heaven until he saw the Lord Jesus do it. He saw angels do it, but he never saw man do it until he saw the Lord Jesus, but it was too late then. He was out of the grave, and the thing was accomplished.

But, God is forming a new kind of people, a new creation. He calls it in 2 Corinthians 5:17 “a new creature”. The word “creature” means “every living creation”. God is making a new creature today, a new man, a new kind of people to live in the heavenlies, and that's the way he will make Christ the head of everything.

Ephesians 1:9-11 – “Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”

I talked to you about “the mystery of the Father’s will” having to do with that large overall purpose that God has in bringing the heavens and the earth back under his authority and his headship by making the Lord Jesus Christ the head of all things. In verse 10, in the dispensation of the fulness of times he gathers together in one all things. That means he gathers all things together that are in heaven and in earth under one head, and that head is the Lord Jesus Christ.

We went over the “all things” in the last lesson, and I tried to show you that those “all things” in heaven and earth go back to Genesis 1:1 and Colossians.

The comparison passage is Colossians 1:16-20. It is very important that you understand this passage, so we will go through it. Then when we go back to Ephesians, you will see how it matches up.

The “all things” in Ephesians 1:10 is amplified in verses 21-22 as being the principalities, powers, might, and dominions, and every name that is named in the heavenly places.

Colossians 1:16 – “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.” Notice that the “all things” in that verse are identified as being thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers.

Now, you know what a throne is, right? It is a seat of governmental authority. A dominion is an area of governmental authority. A principality and a power are governmental authorities.

Romans 13:1 – “LET every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power (no governmental authority) but of God.” In other words, the ‘powers that be’ are ordained of God. God Almighty set up a system of governmental authority to control the universe. The universe is not left without order; it is not left without authority; it is not left without a system of government.

God established positions of rank and authority in government both on the earth and in the heavens. There are positions of rank and authority that you can see (on the earth), and there are positions of rank and authority that you can’t see (in the heavens).

Colossians 1:16 says that there are principalities and powers, positions of governmental authority, (thrones, dominions, powers).

Romans 13:2 – “Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God.” In other words, God established laws for the human race, these positions of rank and authority in government on the earth. When he established the universe, he set stations of rank and authority, (divine laws of establishment), out through the universe, and the earth is a part of that. So where we are is a part of the program and the system of governmental authority that God established.

In Colossians 1:16, Paul describes that governmental authority. He uses terms like that, and you look out and you see thrones, dominions, powers, and principalities.

Titus 3:1 – “PUT them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.” Well, what is a principality, and a power, and a magistrate? Those are governmental authorities. He is saying, “Be subject to the Mayor, and to the Governor, and to the President, and be ready to every good work.” The idea is positions of rank and authority in government.

Colossians 1:16 – Those positions of rank and authority are on the earth, (you can see them), and they are in the heavens, (you can't see them). But, you can understand what is in the heavens by looking around you and seeing what's on the earth. He uses terminology that you understand to describe the positions in the heavenly places. You understand how a principality, or a power, or a throne, or whatever, works on the earth. Well, then you can understand how it works in the heavenly places. You can understand the principle of its operation.

So, he is using terms that allow you to understand things in the heavens that you have never seen, places where you have never been. But, at least you can comprehend how they operate.

Colossians 1:16-18 – “For by him (by Christ) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.” Notice carefully, Jesus Christ is said to be the head of the body. He is the firstborn of all things. The reason he is said to be the head of the church, the body of Christ, is “that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.”

Now, look at verse 18 – “that in all *things*.” All what things? You have to look at the context. What does verse 16 tell you that “all things” are in the context? God Almighty created the earth, and on the earth he put positions of rank and authority. He created the heavens, and he put positions of rank and authority in the heavenly places. These positions of rank and authority all throughout the whole universe have been usurped from the authority and the headship of God Almighty.

Who is over the positions of rank and authority today? Who is the prince of the power of the air, the unseen up there? Satan is. Who is the prince of this world? Satan is. He is the god of this world. In Isaiah 14, he laid down a wise plan, a policy of revolt against the throne of God whereby he was going to take possession of the heaven and the earth. He said, “I'll be like the Most High.”

“Most High” is a name of God that describes God as the possessor of heaven and earth, not just owning it but having it under his authority, and his control, and his headship. Satan tries to usurp that, and he tries to get the angelic creation, and humankind down here, that God has placed there to run his government and his universe. He seeks to have them follow him, and he wins the allegiance of many of them in large measure.

So, the Lord Jesus Christ comes to provide a restoration of all of this. He has the nation Israel, his kingdom nation, his earthly people; and the purpose of the nation Israel is to restore the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ back over the planet earth through the instrumentality of a kingdom that God has given them. Jesus Christ will be their king, and through that nation, he will go out and he will restore his headship back over the earth.

By the way, in order to do that he'll divide the earth into twelve sections. Those twelve sections correspond with the twelve divisions in the heavenly places out there, hence there are twenty-four elders in Revelation 4. Those twenty-four elders are not types of Israel and the church and all that kind of business. They are twenty-four elders, and God had given each one a responsibility in the original creation to oversee and to represent each one of those twenty-four territories in the universe, before his throne, on the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north.

Folks, this is government, and this thing is real. Satan has instituted a program of rebellion against God. God has put into effect a restoration program, and he will restore his headship over the earth through the nation Israel. But, after he has the nation Israel, he says to Israel in Psalm 115 that the earth is mans and the heavens belong to the Lord.” And you know man. Could somebody like you, physically, get up to heaven? Not hardly.

The Lord Jesus Christ came and he died at Calvary so that the earth, the nation Israel, might receive her kingdom. One day, the Lord Jesus Christ will come back down to the earth and set up his

kingdom. He is going to cast Satan out, and he is going to bind him in the bottomless pit, and he is going to restore his headship over planet earth.

Now, if he has his headship back over the earth, that is wonderful and good, and that is exactly what he has intended to do, and he has been making that known in the prophetic program. But, there are those positions in the heavenly places up there that nobody down here will ever be able to get to. In order for the Lord Jesus Christ to have the preeminence in all of the positions of rank and authority, (not just on the earth but the ones in the heavenly places also), he has formed the church the body of Christ. And the body of Christ is a special group of people. It is not the prophetic program, but it is part of a mystery program. It is a secret purpose that God had, and the body of Christ is called “a new man”, a “new creature”. It is a new kind of human being, a new species of mankind being produced. It is a group of people who will be born from the dead.

Look at Colossians 1:18 again – “and he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead.” When you are firstborn from the dead, you are the first one; and if you are first, what does that imply? It implies that there will be some more. If there wasn’t going to be any more, you wouldn’t be the first, you would be the “only”. He is not the only one born from the dead, but he is the first one. He is the first in a line of people that are going to come after him – born from the dead just like he is (Colossians 1:18).

There is a new species of mankind being created here. And I say that, in the sense, that there is a natural body and there is a spiritual body – we now bear the image of the earthy, and we’re going to bear the image of the heavenly. It is more than just having a resurrection body that doesn’t die. It will be a body that will have the capacity to live in the positions of rank and authority in the heavenly places. You have a natural body, a body that has the capacity, right now, to function on this planet, (in this sphere), living as a part of this creation. But, at the rapture, you will have a spiritual body, a body with the capacity to live in the heavenly places, in those positions of rank and authority that you can’t even understand or even see now. You will be able to live and function and have the mastery over them because you will have the perfect mind of Christ – something that you have at your disposal through his word, by his Spirit, right now.

We talked earlier about the indirect influence of the Spirit of God that works indirectly through his word. In the ages to come, you will have a direct plug-in. That is not what you have today. Israel had a direct plug-in, but you do not have that today. But, you will have it in the ages to come, and that will be a wonderful day!

The ultimate reason for the formation of the church, the body of Christ, has to do with filling up those positions of rank and authority out there under one head; and that head is the Lord Jesus Christ. In the ages to come everything will be placed under his subjection.

Colossians 1:19 – “For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell.” The whole fulness of all these things – it pleased God for it to dwell in Christ.

Verse 20 – “And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself.”

Now, the Universalists say, “Everybody is going to get saved and be reconciled back to God. Even the devil is going to get reconciled back to God.” That is not true. That verse is talking about “all things”, and you have to look at the context. If you don’t understand that, look at the rest of the verse – “by him, *I say*, whether *they be things in earth*, or *things in heaven*.” That is a direct reference back to verse 16.

Verse 21 – “And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.”

I will tell you again: there are four reconciliations in your bible, in Paul’s Epistles, that you must understand.

- Individual Reconciliation – (Colossians 2:21) You, as an individual, are reconciled back to God from enemy status to sonship status.
- The Reconciliation of the World – The nation Israel is cast away. It is a dispensational reconciliation. The nation Israel is set aside and all of the world is in a position of equality before God.
- The Reconciliation “In One Body” – Jew and Gentile in one body.
- The Reconciliation of the System Back Under the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ – a future reconciliation of that system of governmental authority back under the headship of Christ. That takes place during the dispensation of the fulness of time.

Now, it is important that you understand those reconciliations. We talk about them, and we go over them; but when we do, we are dealing with some advanced issues of bible doctrine, sound doctrine, for today. You need to know that and understand it fully.

He is dealing with that in Ephesians. He is getting involved in these issues, and he is getting involved in the issue of headship.

Jesus Christ has a twofold headship. He is the head of the church, the body of Christ (Colossians 1:18). “And he is the head of the body ... that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.” Through the body, he will exercise headship over those positions up there. Colossians 2:10 – “And ye are complete in him, (Christ), which is the head of all principality and power.” Jesus Christ is the head of the universal government.

Look back at Ephesians 1 and notice that in verses 20-22. “Which (his mighty power) he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.” That verse says that he is the head, not of the church, but the head of all things – all these principalities, powers, mights, dominions, and every name that is named to the church. It is to the advantage of the church that he is the head of all those things.

Who is the church? Ephesians 1:23 – “Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” God the Father’s pleasure is that Christ be the fulness of all things. And the way he is going to fill up all those things in the heavenly places is through the instrumentality of the body of Christ. He is going to take out those angelic races of creatures up there and cast them down. He is going to take them out of the way, and he is going to put members of the church, the body of Christ, in those places.

Paul says, “Don’t you know that the saints will judge the world?” He says that you are going to judge angels. The nation Israel will be judging here on the earth, ruling and reigning for Him. And, we will be up there judging in the heavenly places, over the angelic creation itself, and through them over the whole universe. Now, that is some hope!

And, he says, “I am making known to you the mystery of my will. I am showing you the secret of all that I had in mind before the foundation of the world to be accomplished through the cross of Christ.” The mystery of God the Father’s will is to bring that whole system back under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ by virtue of his crosswork.

The mystery of Christ (Ephesians 3) has to do with the formation of the body of Christ – the instrument and the agency that he is going to use to accomplish his plan in the ages to come. When he says, in verse 1, that we are chosen in him before the foundation of the world, it is the body of Christ that is chosen before the foundation of the world for this purpose in the ages to come; and you are predestinated to the adoption of sons. You are predestinated to the position of the inheritance

that is yours in Christ. That is verse 11 – “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”

He had a counsel meeting and a purpose that the counsel of the godhead determined beforehand. The godhead had an eternal purpose to perform. It has to do with forming the body of Christ. It's done, and God Almighty is going to accomplish his purpose.

And we have an inheritance. Jesus Christ is the heir of all things. He has that inheritance that God Almighty gave him based upon his sonship and based upon the fact that God raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, and declared him to be his son. He gave him a sonship status by virtue of his crosswork that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow – things in heaven and things on the earth and under the earth. The whole creation is going to bow in subjection to the headship of Jesus Christ and his sonship, and you and I are going to share that inheritance because he has given us a position of “joint heirs” with him.

Now, if you don't think that is something folks, you just haven't thought about it very much! That is some position that God has given you! And the issue in the book of Ephesians is to deal with that inheritance, and that position, and that purpose and what God is going to accomplish through the church, the body of Christ.

The book of Romans tells you how you were made a member of the body, how the cross has taken care of that and given you a status before God, a sonship status, and has equipped you, right now on this planet, to live for his glory.

And Ephesians says, “Now, you see your sonship status and how you can walk? Well let me show you what he is going to accomplish in the ages to come.”

Ephesians 1:10 – “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ.” If they have to be gathered together, that implies that there has been a scattering. It implies that there is disorder among the “all things” today, and so there is. So, Christ is going to put everything in order and gather it all back together in an orderly fashion.

The end of verse 10 says, “*even* in him.” It is the design, the eternal purpose of God the Father to make everything center in Jesus Christ.

In Philippians 2:5-8, he tells you about the cross, Christ dying in shame and disgrace. Verses 9-11 – “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” It will be a great day!

So, we get our inheritance in Christ. We have obtained the inheritance due to our sharing his sonship status.

Ephesians 1:11 – “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated.” Notice that it says, “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance.” In other words, this is an additional blessing. Not only do we share his election, not only have we been predestinated, not only do we have the adoption of children, not only do we have acceptance, not only are we free and forgiven and instructed and been made part of the inner circle of God's counsel and will, but we have been enriched. We have been made rich and given an inheritance. He has given us all this wealth – also an heir of the universe. You are a joint heir with Christ, and Hebrews 1:2 says that he is heir of all things. That's pretty good! That is some status that God has given you. So, can't you act like that?

You go around acting like a moral pigmy and a spiritual pauper. Your God is the righteous God of heaven and earth. How dare you be anything less. How dare you act like a son of Adam.

Ephesians 1:11 – “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, (in Christ), being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own

will.” This inheritance is something that we have been predestinated to, and it has to do with adoption.

Ephesians 1:5 – “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself.” That adoption that we are predestinated to has to do with “the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of the body” (Romans 8:23). We already studied that. You receive your adoption at the rapture, and when you get your sonship status in reality, you have the proclamation of adoption. Then you get the inheritance – joint heirs with him in the ages to come. So, it has to do with that future glory that is ours in the ages to come.

In Ephesians 1:18, he calls it “the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.” That means God Almighty is going to inherit the universe out there. He has an inheritance that he is going to take possession of in you, and that is that universe out there.

Ephesians 1:11 – “... being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” Notice, the counsel, his will, the purpose of him who works, is talking about God’s sovereign free will, God’s volition. God has a program. He has a purpose, a plan, a work. We have a pre-planned salvation. The salvation that we are a part of is a salvation that God Almighty pre-planned in eternity past back there.

Now, verse 11 is sometimes misunderstood. Some people imply that everything that goes on in the world today is predetermined, prefixed, and is the absolute will that God in eternity past determined would happen. Some people read that verse like this – God in eternity past, in the counsel of his own will, determined everything that was going to happen; and nothing happens in time that God Almighty didn’t determine and predetermine and cause to happen. Not only that he foreknew it was going to happen, but he determined everything that happened. He purposed it all, and nothing happens that isn’t exactly what he wanted to happen. People will say, “Do you see that fly flying around the building? Well, God determined before the foundation of the world that that would happen, and there is nothing you can do about it.” And that is just a bunch of bunk! As soon as you say that God predetermined everything that was going to happen in this universe, and nothing happens except what he purposed would happen, and that he is working every detail out in the universe, and every single detail and decision that you make is something that God determined and that he is working in you after the counsel that he determined in the ages past, then you are saying that every time you sin, God’s sins. If that is true, who is responsible for your sin? God is. Let me tell you something – there isn’t anybody responsible for your sin except you. God never determined, planned, or purposed that you sin one time. God has made you a part of a total victory program over sin. If it had been his will for you to sin, he wouldn’t have done that. If that were the case, you would have been “in his will” all along, and he would never have rejected you.

The counsel of his will is not something that is irresistible and all pervasive. The counsel of God’s will is a description of God’s plan, and his purpose, and his program, and what he’s doing.

Somebody might say, “Does that mean everything else is left to chance?” Without that, it would be. But, folks, when God is working, it isn’t chance. You have a sinful creation, and God is at work with a restoration program.

Acts 20:27 – “For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.” Now, tell me something – did he tell them every detail about what they were going to have for lunch the day after tomorrow? Did he tell them anything about you and me in 1986 at Berean Bible Society studying the book of Acts and reading that passage? Well, if all the counsel of God encompasses every detail of life, wouldn’t he have had to do that?

The counsel of God is a description of God’s plan, and purpose, and work, and activity, and program. It is not a prefixed determination about every little detail that you are doing.

There are some theologians that want to box God up and make him a little ‘bitty’ thing and put him in their back pocket and sit on him, but you are not going to do that with the God of the bible.

Everything that happens in your life isn't something that God is responsible for. The brethren that say that God Almighty predetermined every detail in your life, and God is working according to the counsel of his will, have a good motive. They are trying to make God big. They are trying to make him so big that nothing can happen except what he determines is going to happen. But there is a big difference between God determining that you are going to sin and his being responsible for the sin because he fixed it so you couldn't do anything but sin. There is a big difference between that and God, in his free will and volition, setting up a system that gives you the ability to determine what your destiny is, and what you are going to do, and whether you are going to sin or not sin, and giving you an ability to have that liberty and freedom.

If God chose to set the system up that way, he is just as big as if he did it the other way. In fact, he is bigger if he didn't make you a robot than if he did. It doesn't take any genius to control a robot. You just set it on its course, and then you go to sleep, and it does what it's supposed to do. But, God Almighty is not that way. He knows all the possibilities, and he knows everything you would have done if you hadn't done what you did. He fixed it so that no matter what you choose to do, and no matter how you make it work out in your own mind, his word comes through right on the money. His plan works right on through, and he works what he does according to the thing he determined to do back there. He is going to do what he determined to do. That's important!

Turn to Luke 7. The counsel of his will is not irresistible. Luke 7:30 – “But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.” Did they resist and frustrate and reject the counsel of God? The verse says that they did. Then I know something! I know that when they refused to be baptized of John, that isn't what God determined they do before the foundation of the world, or they wouldn't have been rejecting the counsel of God. They would have been performing it. Do you see that?

The counsel of God is the program and the purpose that he had for the nation Israel, in that case. And these Pharisees, descendants of Abraham, (“For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel”), they didn't participate in the program and the purpose that God had for Israel. The purpose of God “according to election” stood. What was the purpose of God according to election? Romans 9:12 – “the elder shall serve the younger.” He was forming an agency through the nation Israel to serve him. He was forming a group of people who were going to accomplish his purpose, and these Pharisees wouldn't have a part of it, so they rejected the counsel of God against them, being not baptized of it.

I am trying to say to you that the issue of the counsel of God isn't what theologians try to tell you that it is. Now, I hate to keep harping about that, but I know you will run across it. In your ministry, you will hear people say the following, and you said it a thousand times yourself. You rode down the street and something happened – you got a flat tire, or you stumped your toe, or you did some foolish thing in life. Then you said, “I wonder why God let that happen. I wonder why God did that to me. I wonder why God put that across my path.” And all you are doing is just blowing smoke out the window when you say that. Your assumptions are that God has predetermined every individual event in creation.

He foreknew it all, and he fixed it so that he is so wise and omniscient and omnipotent that it doesn't make any difference which one of them come to pass, his word is going to come out right.

If you want to respond to the details of life that come your way according to the counsel of God, you get in that book. You respond to them on the basis of sound doctrine, not on the basis of superstitious heathenism that attributes every evil act in the world to God Almighty and goes out and tries to placate him by self-sacrifices. Do you understand that?

When someone is ill and we pray for them and ask for God's will to be done, we are praying that His purpose in the church, the body of Christ, will be accomplished and that the individual's participation in it will be accomplished. How is God going to heal the bodies of the church, the body

of Christ? He is going to heal them in the rapture, isn't he? Why would he heal them sooner? There isn't any reason. Is he going to validate his word? What verse is it going to validate? What verse is it going to make "more sure"?

Back in the kingdom program there were verses that said that when that kingdom comes in they are going to get a physical body on a physical earth in a physical planet racked with sickness, and my people are not going to be sick. I am the Lord God that healeth thee; you keep my commandments and I'll take your sickness away. He does it back here; he demonstrates that he's the one who will bring the kingdom in.

Well, what demonstration would there be like that today? There wouldn't be any. There is not a verse in Paul's Epistles that ever tells you that God is going to heal your physical body short of the rapture. When you pray for people, you don't need to pray that God would heal them and take their illness away. But, when you pray for them, you want to pray in line with how God prays. He doesn't pray *God make them well, or God keep them from poverty.*

God never promised to shield you, as a member of the body of Christ, from pain or poverty. He did promise to give you spiritual perception and to build real Christian character from his word resident in your soul. 2 Corinthians 4:16 – "... but though our outward man perish, yet the inner *man* is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory."

If you got your body healed, do you know what would happen? God would be stealing rewards from you at the judgment seat of Christ, and that doesn't make sense, does it? You know God would not do that to you.

Folks, the programs are different. The program in time past is one program, and now we have a different program. Our physical healing comes at the rapture when we get a new body that will be different from anything we ever saw before. And God, in the meantime, withdrew the healing program and replaced it with something far better because he takes even our bodily afflictions that we suffer now and rewards us for them in the heavenlies. He says, "We groan and travail in pain with creation until now." The reason the healing hasn't come is because the kingdom hasn't come. In order for him to extend the day of grace a little longer and for us to serve him, our outward flesh, our old man, begins to wear out and it experiences pain. It gets sick and it degenerates. The natural degeneration of sin and the natural consequences of sinful behavior and bad choices get you. He says, "But, you know I will take even that bodily suffering that you suffer just because I leave you here, and I will reward you for that at the rapture."

Do you know what that does? That changes all that stuff. You look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that aren't seen – heavenly things. Then all of the sudden you get a different perspective on all of that. Do you see how that changes? You get that mind of Christ, and you think like God thinks. It is a different kind of thing today.

Ephesians 1:11 – "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

By the way, if anybody gets sick today and doesn't die, can't he praise God for having mercy on him? He can because the wages of sin is death; and if you got what you deserved, you would die. When you get a cold, you ought to die from that cold. You ought not to get well. But, both the saved man and the lost man get well from a cold. Rain falls on the just and unjust alike today. Those are indiscriminate provisions that God has put in creation. And, you can thank God for his blessing; you can thank God for the flowers, and the food, and the blessings of living where you live, and for the blessings of life. You can thank God for your getting well. And that old unsaved man ought to thank God for it because every good and perfect gift comes from above; and if Satan had his way, you would all be dead.

So, God put those divine laws for the establishment of creation in the race into action, and you can thank God that they operate and work. You can thank God that righteousness exalts a nation. And you better be sure that sin is a reproach to any people, and it will destroy a nation. You will live to see that in the next fifty years, if you live that long. That's how God's principles reward and judge nations – the natural consequences of their actions.

Ephesians 1:12 – “That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.” That is the purpose for which we are made an inheritance – “that you should be to the praise of his glory.”

The end of the verse says, “who first trusted in Christ.” That is a verse that will be used on you from time to time to try to prove that the body of Christ began before Paul.

Romans 16:7 and Acts 26:18 are two verses that people try to use on you sometimes in conjunction with Ephesians 1:12,13 – “That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted.” In other words, these people trusted Christ, and then the Ephesians trusted Christ later on. Do you see that? People will say that “we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ” refers to the Acts 2 bunch. “In whom ye (Ephesians) also trusted”, and you all came in later on.

Romans 16:7 – “Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.” There is somebody that trusted Christ before Paul.

Acts 26:18 is part of Paul's commission from Christ on the road to Damascus. Christ tells Paul, *here's what I saved you for*: “To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” Paul gets saved on the road to Damascus, and Jesus tells Paul that he is going to send him out to some people, (the Gentiles), and they will obtain an inheritance – an “inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” In other words, these people that get saved under Paul's ministry are going to become heirs with some people that are sanctified when Paul gets saved. In other words, these are people that are saved before Paul gets saved, and the people after Paul become heirs with these saints that were saved before Paul – “that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified.” They are already here, then after Paul, these people get added into this group. So, they say that when the Holy Spirit came the day of Pentecost, the body of Christ began. It functions in there. It is not revealed until you come to Paul, and then you find out that people under Paul are made a part of something that was already there before Paul showed up. Now, that's pretty good, isn't it?

But, there are some problems with that that let you know it won't work. Go back to Ephesians 1.

I already talked to you about Romans 16:7, how that being in Christ is not synonymous with being in the body of Christ. That is a redemptive term, and everybody from Adam on, that gets saved, is in Christ 'redemptively'. Every saved person is in Christ. People in time past are in Christ, and people in the kingdom are in Christ. We looked at verse after verse about that. So, Romans 16:7 isn't any help.

Acts 26:18 – they received an “inheritance among them which are sanctified”. In other words, they received an inheritance and become part of the saints – the inheritance of the saints. The body of Christ received an inheritance among them which are sanctified over here. You get your inheritance at the rapture. Israel gets their inheritance in the kingdom. You have one head. Do you have an inheritance among them that are sanctified? You sure do! Do you see how that works? That is what the reference is to.

Now, you couldn't understand that reference until you get over to Ephesians because it isn't laid out. But listen, he doesn't have to explain everything to Paul to start with, and you know he

didn't. He didn't even tell him how they would get forgiveness of sins, just that they were going to get it. So, the "inheritance among them which are sanctified", (this whole thing out here), is one unit now under one head. Israel is his inheritance through which he inherits the earth, and the church, the body of Christ, is the inheritance through which he inherits the heavenly places. And, we have an "inheritance among them which are sanctified" indicates the oneness of the program in the ages to come.

Ephesians 1:12 – "That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ." Look at the "we" there. Was Paul one of the people who first trusted in Christ? Well, what does the verse say? The verse says that he was – "That we should be to the praise of his glory, who (we) first trusted in Christ." Then what is Ephesians talking about? Is it talking about somebody that trusted Christ before Paul or after Paul? It is talking about somebody who trusted Christ after Paul. He is talking about a bunch of people, and he says, "We trusted in Christ over here, and you guys trusted him later." He is not talking about somebody who trusted him before Paul. He is saying, "In whom we first trusted."

Paul was a pattern to them, which should hereafter believe on him, (trust Christ). There are some people at Ephesus, in Acts 19, that trust Christ, right? Paul spends two years with those people, preaching to them and teaching them in the school of Tyrannus. He ministers to those people for two years. They trusted Christ and got saved and established a church, and they are out witnessing; and the word of God goes all over Asia Minor from that assembly. They first trusted in Christ.

Now, there are some people at Ephesus who trusted Christ after those people did, after Paul left.

Ephesians 1:15 – "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints." He said, "After I heard about it." Did he hear about the people's salvation in Acts 19? He was a part of it, wasn't he? He spent years there with them. Well, here are some people that, later on, he kept in contact with them; and he heard about them getting saved.

Ephesians 1:12 – "That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also ..." He said, "We are all a part of the same thing. We got saved first, and now you guys are in it. Now we are all in one body." He is not talking about people back over yonder. You don't need to run over to Roman 16, and Acts 26, and Acts 20 and pick up a couple verses over there that you don't understand anyway, and try to make out like they fit Ephesians 1:12. They don't fit!

Ephesians 1:12 is talking about when Paul was there. He is not talking about the twelve apostles and all those dudes back yonder. He is talking about Paul, (who we first trusted Christ), Paul and the people that believed in Christ at Ephesus when he was there preaching to them. And now these Ephesians that he is writing to now, later on, got saved.

Ephesians 1:13,14 – "In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

Now, notice verse 13 – "In whom (in Christ) ye also *trusted*..." They trusted in Christ; they got saved. How do you get saved? You trust in Christ. That is a great gospel verse.

Continuing – "... after that ye heard the word of truth." You will never trust Christ until you first hear the word of the truth of the gospel.

"In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." First, you heard the word, then you believed the word. After you believed the word, then you were sealed by the Holy Spirit. Hear the word, believe the word, and then get sealed by the Holy Spirit.

“ ... in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.” Often times you hear people complain about the translation of that phrase “after that ye believed”. They say, “It should be in whom also when you believe, you were sealed.” Well, when he says “after that ye believed”, he’s not implying a long time lag as if at one time you believe, and then six months later you get sealed. That isn’t the issue at all. He is emphasizing the fact that the ‘sealing’ takes place on the basis of faith. You receive the Spirit of God on the basis of faith.

Galatians 3:2 – “This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” Which one? How did you receive the Spirit of God? You received it by the hearing of faith. You believe and after you believe, the Spirit of God comes in. That’s the issue there. There is not a second blessing, a second issue down the line, and the way you know that is Romans 8:9. The way you know it is not by retranslating your bible. The way you know it is by looking for another verse in your bible that will explain the doctrine for you.

Romans 8:9 – “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” He isn’t saved. Well, are you saved without the Spirit of God? Well, then when you hear the word and you believe and then you receive the Holy Spirit in response to your believing, do you reckon that you believe and then six weeks later you get the Holy Spirit? No, you don’t believe now, and then six weeks later get saved. The moment you believe God the Holy Spirit comes, in response to that believing faith, that saving faith, and he seals that believer.

There are five things that God the Holy Spirit does the instant you believe. He does it in response to your believing, and we will talk about that in the next lesson.

But, I want you to clearly see that the emphasis in the passage is on the fact that the sealing takes place on the basis of faith. The emphasis is on the cause of the sealing, not the time.

Again, that kicks theology right square in the teeth! And when it does, I just like to kick away.

If anybody comes along and tells you that you can’t believe unless God the Holy Spirit implants faith in your heart, you just listen and then stick your fingers in your ears real tight. Listen with your fingers in your ears until you are sure that they are talking about something else, and then pull them out because that is not what the book says. The bible says, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” It doesn’t say, “Get the Spirit, then believe, and then get saved”, because when you have the Spirit of God, you are saved, brother. If you have to be regenerated before you can believe, and you can’t get saved until after you believe, you have a preposterous situation. You have a guy that is regenerated, got eternal life imputed to him by God the Holy Spirit, and he isn’t saved.

Are you telling me that a person with eternal life can be a lost person? That’s what they tell you. And it won’t work, and it won’t meet demands of verses in your bible. So, you have to change your system to match the verses, not the verses to match your system.

Ephesians 1:13,14 – “In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

In the last lesson, we talked about that verse down to the issue about “after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.”

The verse says, “ ... after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.” The “word of truth” is the word rightly divided. The “gospel of your salvation” is the gospel of grace for today. And when you believe that, God the Father seals you with the holy Spirit of promise.

Now, you want to learn that there are five things that happened to you when you trusted Christ, five things that the Spirit of God did the instant that you trusted Christ as your Savior.

Do you remember when I pointed out to you, in the last lesson, that when he says, “after that ye believed, ye were sealed”, he is not talking about a time lag? But, he is emphasizing that the ‘sealing’ takes place on the basis of your faith. When you believe, God the Father seals you in response to your faith with that holy Spirit of promise.

Now there are five salvation ministries of the Holy Spirit, and they spell the word CRIBS. That helps you to remember what they are.

- C. You were circumcised (Colossians 2:11,12).
- R. You were regenerated (Titus 3:5 – the washing of regeneration by the Holy Spirit; that is what we call the new birth).
- I. You were indwelt – the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).
- B. You were baptized by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13, Romans 6, Colossians 2).
- S. You were sealed with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13, 4:30).

Now, with circumcision, the body (the sins of flesh) is cut off by the circumcision of Christ. You are set free from your old sin nature and its control and dominion. With regeneration, your dead spirit is given life. With indwelling, God the Holy Spirit comes in and indwells you. He takes up permanent residency inside of you as the empowering and enabling agency. The fact that you were baptized by the Spirit is important to you because that is the mechanics of positional truth. The way you get into Christ is this baptism of the Spirit. Then you have the sealing, which is for permanence.

The ‘sealer’ is God the Father. Notice it says, “ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.” It does not say you were sealed by the Holy Spirit, but with him. He is the seal.

The ‘sealer’ is God the Father. 2 Corinthians 1:21, 22 – “Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, *is* God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” God the Father seals us and gives us the earnest of the Spirit.

The Spirit is two things. He is the seal and the earnest.

Verse 21 – “Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ” is the baptism of the Spirit, putting you in Christ.

The part of that verse that says “and hath anointed us” is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Then you have the sealing of the Holy Spirit in verse 22, and God the Father is the one. God the Father baptizes you into Christ by using the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit – by the Spirit you are baptized. You are sealed, but not by the Spirit this time. It is with the Spirit. His presence is the seal.

So, the ‘sealer’ is God the Father, the ‘sealed one’ is the believer, and the ‘seal’ itself is the Holy Spirit himself; his presence is our seal.

Now, a “seal” in the bible represents about eight different things, and I am just going to list them for you, and you can study them out.

A seal represents or implies:

1. A Finished Transaction. You will see it used that way in Jeremiah 32:10. (You need the context of that passage in Jeremiah.)
2. Security. (Matthew 27:66, Revelation 20:3, Esther 8:8, Ephesians 4:30). Ephesians 4:30 will show you the doctrinal implications of the ‘sealing’.
3. Ownership. (Haggai 2:23).
4. Identification. Something is recognized by the mark of a seal. (Revelation 7:2-8, 2 Timothy 2:19).
5. Secrecy. (Daniel 12:9, Job 9:7, Isaiah 29:19, Colossians 3:3).
6. Obligation. It binds an obligation. (Nehemiah 9:8, 10:1). In Ephesians 4, he says, “Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed.” The sealing of the Holy Spirit implies obligation to him.
7. Authority. (1 Kings 21:8, Esther 3:12, Daniel 6:17).
8. Likeness. It leaves its impression. (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Now, those things imply what the seal does, and you are sealed by the Holy Spirit. The issue in being sealed with the Holy Spirit is all of those things listed above. God the Holy Spirit is your security. He is the guarantee that you are going to be preserved all the way to the rapture.

Look at Ephesians 4:30 – “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” That is eternal security. You are sealed by God the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption.

Now, that brings up what is in Ephesians 1:14 where the Spirit of God is not only the seal but as the seal, he is described as the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. That is a reference to the fact that Christ dies on the cross for our sins. Then he ascends up into heaven. The Holy Spirit comes. The fall of Israel takes place. The church the body of Christ is formed. When you trust Christ as your Saviour, God the Holy Spirit takes you, (a believing sinner), identifies you and places you in Christ. He seals you in Christ so that you cannot get out. You could kick and scream and holler and jump around, but you can’t get out of him. Even if you were to try to get out of him, you couldn’t because you are sealed with the Holy Spirit.

Did you ever watch someone making preserves? My wife used to do that down South. I remember the first time she ever put a water bath on the stove with put a bunch of fig preserves in it. You boil those things with a lid on it and all of the sudden they start popping. There is a vacuum. You boil them to get the vacuum, and then the lid pops. When they pop, they are sealed, which means you can take them out of that bath and cool them off. Then they are preserved. We call them fig preserves, or peach preserves, or strawberry preserves.

Now, they were sealed by my wife, but she wasn’t the seal. That jar lid was the seal.

Now, the Holy Spirit is the seal; and as the seal, he is the earnest of our inheritance.

Now, that word “earnest” means “a down payment”. If you go out to buy a house, you make a down payment. When you buy the house, there is a little place on the contract that asks for the amount of the earnest money. That is a 20th century financial term that anybody that buys and sells property in the state of Illinois knows all about.

You can read a commentary, and it will tell you that the word “earnest” is just an old archaic word that doesn’t mean anything, but that’s just because they don’t buy and sell property, I guess!

The Holy Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance. What do you do when you put earnest money down? You guarantee that you are going to finish the transaction, don't you? Don't you guarantee that you are going to show up at the closing with the rest of the money and close the deal? That is exactly what you are doing. You are putting up a certain amount of money, and then you will bring the rest of it at closing day, when all the paperwork is done.

Well, the Holy Spirit is the earnest. We are put in the body of Christ and the Holy Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, which is the day of redemption when Christ comes back and catches us up to be with him. He takes us out there and we receive our inheritance, not in prospect, but in reality.

You go out at the rapture. You go to the Judgment Seat of Christ, and then you are taken up to be presented before God the Father. And on the basis of the way Christ presents you from the Judgment Seat of Christ, God the Father assigns you your position of operation and gives you your working orders, (your functioning orders). He gives you the description of what you will do out there in the heavenly places.

Here you are in the body of Christ, and you function until the rapture. The thing that keeps you in the body of Christ, preserved, is God the Holy Spirit. He is also the earnest, the guarantee. You have him until then. He is the guarantee that you will go out at the rapture. That is security, folks! He is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. God the Holy Spirit is our seal, and he is the down payment of our future glory. That is why he is called the Spirit of adoption.

Adoption is "the placing his sons". You have been predestinated according to Ephesians 1:5. God saves you and puts you in Christ, and he predetermined that he was going to declare you publicly and openly before the universe as his full-grown sons. The adoption takes place at the day of redemption (Romans 8:23). The last part of the verse says, "... waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body." When you go out at the rapture, God Almighty redeems your body. He comes and takes your body, and the day of redemption takes place.

In the bible, the rapture is called the day of redemption. That is the redemption of the purchased possession. He comes back and he takes the purchased possession, the body of Christ, unto himself. When he does that, he gives you a new glorified body, and you share in his glorification that he has over here. You share in it there. And the guarantee of your sharing that is the Holy Spirit's presence.

God is not going to lose a part of himself, folks. He is not going to leave a part of himself, a part of the Holy Spirit, in Chicago when the rapture comes. He is going to take us all. He is permanently here guaranteeing that we are going to be out there when Christ comes. He is the down payment.

Romans 8:28-30 – "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Have you been glorified yet? The verse says that you have. It is past tense, isn't it? Well, you haven't got it yet, but it is as good as already having it. Do you know why? It's because of God the Holy Spirit. He is the down payment, and he is the earnest, the guarantee that it is going to be there. You don't have it yet, but you as good as have it! And the only reason you don't have it is because he is completing the body of Christ; and because he has to complete the body of Christ first, he delays his purpose in taking us out until the whole body is saved and ready to be raptured out. That last one gets in and out we go! Until then it is in prospect, and that Holy Spirit that we have, (the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ), is called the Spirit

of adoption. He is the one that guarantees our inheritance and the one that makes that a reality in our life is ours now making that future position that we will have out there a reality to us right now.

Romans 8:15 – “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” It is the Holy Spirit who enables us now to begin to claim our inheritance and enjoy our spiritual wealth. We can begin to claim all of the wealth and inheritance that we will have out there. We can begin to enjoy it and see it become a reality in our life now through the ministry of God the Holy Spirit. Hence, he is our down payment on the thing; he is the earnest; he is the first installment of what will be a reality out there. One of the functions of God the Holy Spirit is to make real to us that which will be ours in the ages to come.

We think ‘in time’, but God does not think ‘in time’. It is all done. He gives us God the Holy Spirit to make it real to us now – the Spirit of adoption.

Now, that is a great passage on eternal security, and you want to notice and remember that.

Turn back to Ephesians 1. In the first part of the chapter, he dealt with the spiritual possessions that we have in Christ and all these blessings. He talked to you about what God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit has provided for us. Now, he is going to pray. Ephesians 1:15 – “Wherefore, (because of all this above), I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.” Now, the rest of this chapter is a prayer. It is not really a prayer, but it is the contents of Paul’s prayer for the Ephesian saints.

There are two prayers in Ephesians. This is one of them, and the other one begins in Ephesians 3:14 and goes through the end of the chapter.

The one in chapter 1 is a prayer for the Ephesian’s spiritual perception, that they might fully realize the privileges and the prospects that are theirs in Christ. The one in chapter 3 is that they might practice the reality of those possessions in their daily lives.

So, in chapter one, you have a prayer for enlightenment and understanding. In chapter three, you have a prayer for empowerment and usefulness.

Ephesians 1:15,16 – “Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.” Those verses give some people problems where it says, “after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints.” People say, “Well, Paul spent three years there at Ephesus, warning them everyday and teaching them everyday. So, why didn’t he know about their salvation?”

Well, we talked about it in relationship to verse 12. It is obvious that Paul kept in touch with them and knew what was happening. It is obvious that Paul had a care for the churches. He hears about them, and he has watchcare over them. It is obvious, at least to me, that the people that he is writing this letter to are people that got saved after he left Ephesus. In other words, when he says in verses 12,13, “That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also *trusted*”, he is making a distinction. There were a group of people that got saved when he was there, and he had a big ministry. Paul did not know everybody. People from there went to Colossi, and the Colossians got saved, and Paul had never seen the Colossians. He did not necessarily personally know everybody. The ministry was too large. But, after he left, that ministry carried on. And now, evidently the great part of the Ephesian church were people that got saved after Paul left. Evidently, he writes this after the book of Acts, and a great multitude of people had gotten saved. Paul heard of their faith and their love for the saints. He heard of their functioning.

Notice when he says, “I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints.” Those are the two aspects of a full Christian life. Then, you have “hope” down in verse 18. Those three things (faith, hope, and charity) are the three things that make a full church. When a church is full of those things, it is full and vibrant.

Well, these people were fully functioning saints. When Paul left, they were pagans. And as pagans, they came to trust Christ as their Saviour. There was a great change that took place in their lives. They were now functioning as believers.

Ephesians 1:15 – “Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints.” Notice that it doesn't say, “Your love for the Lord Jesus, and your faith in the saints.” You don't put your faith in the saints. You put your faith in God. You love the saints, and when you go on the basis of grace motivation and love the saints, then you don't get disappointed in them. You love them, and love doesn't have blowouts. Love suffers long, and is kind, and is not puffed up, and those kinds of things.

If you want to see how love acts, read 1 Corinthians 13 and see what love ought to act like. That should be the way you love. Don't look at somebody else and say, “You need to love that guy.” You look at them and say, “I love both of you.” You don't put your faith in people. Don't ever put your faith in people, but put your faith in God. Love the saints and put your faith in Christ.

Ephesians 1:16 – “Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.” Paul thanks God for the saints at Ephesus, and he prays for them. As we go down through the chapter, you are going to see that he emphasizes spiritual perception and the development of real Christian character in his prayer. And he always does this. Paul does not pray for material things. He does not pray that they will have things that they don't have. He never prays that they will be well and healthy. Did you ever notice that?

You should listen to yourself sometime in your prayer life as you audibly pray or pray to yourself. One of the things you do is verbalize your thoughts. You make what you are saying accountable. You become accountable to your thoughts godward. You talk to the Father, and you hear yourself talking to Him, and he hears you, and you are accountable for what your mind is on about the things of the Lord. You watch yourself and see how often you pray for something physical. You ask God to move something over here and move it over there, move about six zeros off that bank account and put them on mine over here, and those kinds of things.

But, Paul never does that.

You say, “Can I do it?” You can tell God anything you want to tell him. He wants to hear everything you say.

We were talking the other night about a fellow in a congregation who was praying. Right in the middle he stopped and said, “And Father, if we have sinned, forgive us, forgive us, forgive us!” Do you know what that is? That is an unintelligent prayer. That is a dumb prayer. Do you know why it's dumb? It's dumb because you have already been forgiven. You don't want to stop right in the middle of a prayer and ask God to forgive you. You need to get saved so you can start your prayer right. When you get saved, you can pray; you're on praying ground then.

But, that man can ask God to forgive him. He's already been forgiven, but if he asks again, God doesn't get mad at him. Some of the brethren might, but God doesn't get mad at him. There is something supernatural about your prayers. God the Holy Spirit takes those things, and he adjusts them; and when they get to the throne room of God, they are okay. That is Romans 8.

But, it allows you to be accountable. God is not going to get mad at you. No matter how dumb, and stupid, and unintelligent your prayers are, God the Holy Spirit takes care of them when they get up there. He puts them in line with groanings and words.

But, when you pray those unintelligent prayers, do you know what happens? You verbalize your thoughts to godward, and all of the sudden you run across a verse that says, “I am forgiven”; and you say, “Wait a minute. I'm asking God to forgive me so there must be something wrong.” Do you see how that works? You can learn to pray in the Spirit by putting the sound doctrine in your heart, and then God the Holy Spirit takes that doctrine that is in your heart and confronts you when you verbalize your prayers. You are verbalizing your thoughts godward.

Or, maybe some of the brethren would hear you praying a dumb prayer like that and come up and put their arm around you and show you Colossians 2:13.

We pray *Oh God, heal this and that*. We pray for physical ‘healings’ and ask for this and that. And, it is okay to pray those things if you can understand that God never promised you any of that and that those are not intelligent prayers. God is not angry with you when you don’t pray intelligent prayers, but he wants you to bring your prayer life into conformity with the way he thinks. And when you do, you pray like Paul prays and those unintelligent prayers begin to go away. You begin to pray for spiritual perception and the development of real spiritual Christian character in yourself and in others on the basis of the doctrine.

Now notice what Paul says – how he prays and what he prays for. Ephesians 1:17 – “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.” Do you see what he is praying for? Ninety-nine percent of the fundamental preachers in this country pray *keep us from temptation; keep us standing true; give us wealth; get us through; pay the bills*. But you don’t find one out of a hundred that prays the prayer Paul prays in verse 17. You don’t find one out of a hundred that prays *Father I pray that you help my congregation that they might seek Pauline truth*.

When you guys begin your ministries and start to preach, pray for your people.

Paul said, “I am praying that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, (the glorious Father), may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.” He says, “I want you folks to know God, and I want Him to give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. I want you to be able to recognize his way, his will, his working. I want you to be able to apprehend and to appreciate what God is doing. I want Him to give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.”

When he says, “to give you”, he is not talking about God giving you the Holy Spirit. (You already have the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit seals you.) But, he is talking about giving it to you in the sense of being able to have an appreciation for what you have, having an apprehension of the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit in relationship to advanced mystery truth.

What is “the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him”? There are two ideas about that. One says that he is praying that God would open their eyes that they might have an attitude of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. The other side says that the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him is God the Holy Spirit, because it is God the Holy Spirit who is the spirit of wisdom, and it is God the Holy Spirit who reveals things.

Personally, I believe the latter of those. I believe that when he says, “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him”, he is referring to a function of God the Holy Spirit.

Now, I don’t require you to believe that, but that is what I believe; and there are four reasons that I believe it.

Number one, the Holy Spirit is called the spirit of wisdom (Isaiah 11:2).

Number two, the Holy Spirit is said to be the spirit of revelation (Ephesians 3:5 – the mystery is “revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.”

Number three, you will see that you have references to God the Father in verse 17, and you have a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ in verse 15, and if that is the Holy Spirit, you would have a reference to God the Holy Spirit. That would be a Trinitarian prayer. Paul has already mentioned God the Father in verse 3, and God the Son in verse 7, and God the Holy Spirit in verses 13 and 14. And, he does that repeatedly in the epistle.

Look at Ephesians 2:18 – “For through him (Christ) we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” Do you see the Trinity there? Over and over again, Paul puts the three of them together.

So, I personally believe that the spirit of wisdom and revelation is a reference to a ministry function of God the Holy Spirit.

Number four, where does enlightenment and illumination come from? Do they come from man's spirit or God the Holy Spirit? They come from God the Holy Spirit. You do not get wisdom and revelation from your spirit, but you get it from God the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:9-16, John 14, 16).

So, I personally believe that the reference there is the Holy Spirit. This prayer is Paul's prayer for Ephesian-level saints. He is praying that they would have an apprehension and an appreciation for the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit in relationship to the advanced mystery truth, just like the Romans had an appreciation for the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit in relationship to basic mystery truth.

Do you remember our diagram in Romans 16 where you had the foundation truth, which was "my gospel"? Then there was the advanced mystery truth, "the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the mystery program." And when you come to Ephesians, you get off of the foundation and move over into the advanced mystery truth. We are studying the issues here, and Paul is praying that the people at Ephesus, (and you people that read this book), would be properly oriented and appreciative of God the Holy Spirit's teaching ministry with regard to this advanced mystery truth that we have here.

Let me show you why he would pray that for them. Acts 20:27 – "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." Do you see that? I have not shunned to declare unto you everything God has given me. Paul is saying, (Acts 20 at Ephesus), "When I was down there with you people, I didn't hold back. I gave you everything I had about the counsels of God, about the program, and the purpose, and the will of God."

Now, look at Ephesians 1:9-11 – "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

In Ephesians 1:9-11, he says that he now made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his eternal counsel. In other words, there is an advancement in information. Paul has gotten some advanced information, now, in the book of Ephesians that brings to a conclusion the revelation of the mystery truth.

The book of Acts begins in about 33 AD and extends over to about 63 AD. In Acts 2, you have Pentecost. You run up to Acts 7 and then the fall of Israel takes place and the diminishing of Israel goes from Acts 7 to Acts 28. The book of Ephesians is written at the close of the book of Acts.

We have the Prison Epistles and what we call the Acts Epistles – Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, and Thessalonians. We call them the "Acts Epistles" because they were written in the Acts period.

And the Prison Epistles, (Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians), were written after the book of Acts.

Paul gets saved in Acts 9, and from that time onward, as Israel diminishes away, the Lord Jesus Christ reveals to Paul new information, mystery truth. That revelation begins to be given to Paul and that revelation covers a period of time. It does not come instantaneously. He comes to visions and revelations of the Lord between Acts 9 and Acts 28. And just as Israel is falling and diminishing away, so the mystery information is advancing. And just as Israel is going away and Israel's program is being set aside, so mystery truth is coming on the scene.

So, when you come to the end of the book of Acts, you not only have done away with the nation Israel as an entity before God, and as any issue before God, (as demonstrated in the book of Acts), but you also come into some advancement in truth, understanding, revelation. Paul has more

information over here because at the time he gets through the book of Ephesians, the completion of the mystery of the revelation has been given. He has some details about what God is going to accomplish with the body of Christ in the ages to come that he didn't have back in Acts 19 when he was with them.

He was there in Acts 19, but now, over here, he has some information about what God is going to do with the body of Christ. The body of Christ starts with Paul, and it goes over here.

In 1 Corinthians 13:10, he says, "But when that which is perfect come, then that which is in part shall be done away." The completion of mystery truth is here. Now we have advanced information about what God is going to do with the body of Christ in the ages to come that he didn't have back here.

Paul is praying for these Ephesian saints. He says, "I have some advanced information to tell you people. I have some information about the counsels of God that deals with the secret eternal purpose of God Almighty. And this stuff has been laid out, and it's fantastic, and I want you to perceive it! I want you to see it, and I am praying that God the Father will give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation. I am praying that you will be appreciative and apprehensive and understand the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit in relationship to this advanced truth just as you have in relationship to the basic truth." Paul is praying that they would go on as perfected saints into a thorough understanding of the advanced mystery truth, and by doing that "in the knowledge of him" (Ephesians 1:17).

In your bible, beside Ephesians 1:17, you should write down Philippians 3:10. Paul says, "That I may know him." Paul had been serving him for 35 years. But, Paul wants to know him more and more, and better and better.

Has it ever dawned on you that God Almighty is a person? God Almighty has a personality. He has a way of thinking, a way of acting, a way of planning, a way of reacting to situations. He has humor. He is a person. And Paul said, "I want you to know him." You understand what that would be, don't you? Paul wants you to get to know his personality – how he thinks. Paul says, "I want you to get to know how he reacts. I want you to get to know how he plans. I want you to get to know him so well that when you get into a certain situation in your life, you know exactly what he would think about those details."

Do you know how you do that? You get that advanced mystery truth down. You got the foundation (Romans). Now he says, "Come on! There are some things about what God is planning out there, and I want you to know him. He is a fantastic fellow. I want you to recognize his will, his working."

Ephesians 1:17,18 – "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened." In other words, I want you to be properly oriented to the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.

He says in verses 18 and 19, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe." Wisdom, revelation, knowledge, understanding, enlightenment, and knowledge are things that are important to Paul. And they are important to us because that is how you gain that stability and that usefulness.

Now in verses 18 and 19, he says “ ... that ye may know” three things:

1. The hope of his calling.
2. The riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.
3. The exceeding greatness of his power to usward.

Now, if you know those three things, you will get to know him. By knowing those things, you will come to know what he is planning.

The first one is “that ye may know what is the hope of his calling.” “His calling” is the hope that belongs to the calling that he gives to you. Nobody is calling him anywhere, but it is “his calling” that he has given to you.

What is the hope that belongs to the calling that he extended to us? What is the ultimate hope of our heavenly calling? That is what he is talking about.

In Ephesians 4:4 he says, “*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.*”

Titus 2:13 talks about that blessed hope and glorious appearing.

What is the hope associated with our calling up there? Well, there is a resurrection, isn't there? And there is immortality, isn't there? Isn't there a resurrection body (1 Corinthians 15)? That is quite a hope, isn't it? Well, he wants you to understand about that resurrection body. 1 Corinthians 15 is full of it.

There is an eternal inheritance in the heavenly places, isn't there? Colossians 1:5 – “For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.”

Colossians 3:4 – “When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” There is an eternal inheritance for us up there in the heavenly places.

That isn't all! Look at Philippians 3:20,21 – “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” Notice the last part of verse 21. We get this glorified body made like unto his body, and it is “according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

Do you know what the “all things” are in that verse? It's all those positions of rank and authority. The way he is going to subdue all those positions of rank and authority unto himself is by giving you a glorified body like unto his body, and you go out there as a perfect representation of Jesus Christ, and you fill up those positions of rank and authority. That is the hope of your calling. That is the ultimate fulfillment of the calling that we have, this high calling that we have in Christ Jesus. Now, that is quite a hope, isn't it?

Paul says, “Hey, I want you to understand that. I want you to understand what Jesus Christ is doing according to the mystery program; because when you do, you will get to know him better and better and better.”

EPH 301 – 11

Father, we thank you tonight for your word, and for the Lord Jesus Christ, and for the truths that are here. We pray you would make them as real to us as they are to you, and we give you the praise for that in Christ's name.

In the last lesson we got down through Ephesians 1:18, so let's begin reading in verse 15 to get the context, and then we will pick up in verse 18.

Ephesians 1:15-19 – “Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.”

I point out to you again that Paul is praying for these Ephesians that they might have an appreciation and an apprehension of the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit in relationship to the advanced mystery truth that he is laying down here.

He prays specifically about three issues.

1. That they might know the hope of his calling.
2. That they might know the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.
3. That they might know the exceeding greatness of his power, which he wrought in Christ, when he set him as the head of the heavenly government.

Those three issues carry you into the super-structure of the mystery program – what God is doing today and what God purposes to accomplish in the church, the body of Christ.

He is going to lay this information out in Ephesians. He is going to tell you about it in chapter one – praying about it and how he wants you to see these things. In chapter two, it's sort of like he says, “Here is one of the things he's going to do with you, but before he can do that, look at the predicament you were in. And he deals with your personal predicament and then with your dispensational predicament. And then in chapter three, he says, “Now, this wonderful thing that God is doing was a secret that was revealed to me, and I want you to see it because it is going to empower you.” And he prays for their empowerment in chapter three. Then he begins in chapter four and through the rest of the book describing how this truth, this understanding, this life of the body of Christ is to manifest itself in the local assembly. And he describes how that local assembly is to be a manifestation of God's purpose in the body of Christ and to be a living demonstration of God's eternal purpose through the ages. It is a marvelous thing as we get on over in the book of Ephesians how that is effective.

Someone mentioned to me that people tell him that they learned more about the practical life as believers, (how to handle the details of life as believers), from non-grace people than they have from grace people. That is only true if the grace believer didn't follow grace information.

You don't learn a lot from Baptists, or Methodists, or Presbyterians. I have been around those folks all my life.

That same fellow probably wouldn't have learned much anywhere he'd been.

And I realize that you can take grace information and teach it incorrectly. I know people that harp about speaking in tongues, and they get mad at people who speak in tongues. Yet, they use their tongue in such a vicious and vile way that they violate more Pauline admonitions than the 'tongue speaker' would. Do you understand what I'm talking about? That is a common thing. Grace people are human like everybody else, and they walk in the flesh on the wrong side of the thing just as much as anybody else. You don't know the grace message just because you know a couple little technicalities of doctrine. A lot of people that say they know the grace message don't know anything about it. And they never got that foundation in Romans laid in their heart, and in their soul, so they don't operate on the basis of it. Christ isn't formed in them; grace isn't the basis of their operation.

They are just a bunch of legalists, and they are just as bad as somebody would have ever been back under the law of Moses. And the issue is different performance systems, and they make up their own. They are worse than anybody would have been under the law of Moses, because under Moses' law they would have been following God's performance system. But, they are just following their own self-imposed expectations and performance systems today; and that is just as ungodly as anything could be, and please don't hang that on the grace message.

Now, I am not mad. I am just getting all that off my chest and out of my system for a minute.

But, you need to understand God's purpose for the body of Christ, and how that is going to work, and how it is to manifest itself in the local assembly in the issue of godliness; and we are going to see that in Ephesians.

Listen, it is marvelous! In Ephesians 1, Paul is praying that they would apprehend, that they would know. He talks about wisdom, revelation, knowledge, understanding, enlightening, knowing how important it is that they understand.

Look at Ephesians 5:16,17 – “Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. (use life for his glory) Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*.” The only way you can be delivered from your own natural foolishness is by being enlightened by God. Be not unwise. The only way you are going to be delivered from your own craziness is to have God's enlightenment; because if you don't have God's enlightenment, all you are going to do is develop some more craziness of your own.

Let's go back to Ephesians 1:18. Now, there are three issues here that describe, in a nutshell, the advanced mystery truths that Paul is interested in them understanding.

First, you have the hope of his calling. It is a hope that belongs to our calling and that is inspired by our calling. That hope has to do with the positions on high, in the ages to come, which we are going to occupy. The hope of his calling specifically has to do with the things that belong to us. First there is resurrection and immortality – a resurrected glorified body, an immortal body, a body that is perfectly transformed in the image of Christ. There is an eternal inheritance in the heavenly places. That is a fantastic thing. When he shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory. We will have a fantastic inheritance and ministry out there. And Paul says, “I want you to understand that there is something promised to you, and you need to grasp it.”

Second, you have “the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.” He is talking about his wealth, his riches, the splendor and riches that belong to these positions. He says, “I don't want you just to know that there are some positions out there, but I want you to see the wealth and the splendor and the riches that belong to all of that. I want you to see how wealthy God is going to be because of all that – his inheritance in the saints.

Turn to Hebrews 1:1 – “GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things.” Jesus Christ is the heir of all things, and just as the nation Israel is his inheritance through whom he will inherit the earth, and take possession of the earth, so it is that the body of Christ is his inheritance (Ephesians 1:18). The body of Christ is the mechanism, or the agency, whereby he is going to take possession of the heavenly places.

Turn back to the book of Deuteronomy. Israel is God's inheritance. Deuteronomy 4:20 – “But the LORD hath taken you, (Moses is talking about Israel), and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, *even* out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, *as ye are this day*.” The nation Israel was an inheritance, a people of inheritance for God.

1 Kings 8:53 – “For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, *to be* thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord GOD.”

Psalms 33:12 – “Blessed *is* the nation whose God *is* the LORD; *and* the people *whom* he hath chosen for his own inheritance.” Do you get the idea?

Isaiah 19:24,25 – “In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, *even* a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed *be* Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.”

Turn to 1 Kings 11 and notice that the issue of Israel being his inheritance has to do with the land of Canaan. 1 Kings 11:35,36 – “But I will take the kingdom out of his son’s hand, and will give it unto thee, *even* ten tribes. And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there.” God Almighty chose that land. He chose Jerusalem; he chose the land of Palestine as his, and he is going to take possession of that land through the people of Israel.

In Isaiah 65, he says that he is going to put Israel in the land and marry them to that land. They will never be removed or separated from the land again. And God is going to take possession of the earth through a kingdom, a kingdom that is vested, of course, in Christ. But it is a kingdom that belongs to the nation Israel, and they are going to be his inheritance. That is a term that is describing them as the people through whom he is going to take possession.

Well, it is that same way with the body of Christ. Turn back to Ephesians 1. The body of Christ is his inheritance. He is going to take possession of the heavenly places through the body of Christ. Ephesians 1:22 – God “hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” The Lord Jesus Christ is going to fill up the positions in the heavenly government up there with his saints.

Now, we have talked about that enough that you don’t need me to keep going over that and diagramming it to show it to you, right? You understand Colossians 1 and so forth.

Look at Ephesians 4:9,10 – “(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)” He is going to fill up the “all things”, (all those positions in the heavens), with the church, the body of Christ. That way Christ is going to be preeminent in all of the positions of rank and authority in the government of the universe, not just on the earth but in the heavenly places too.

In order for us to get out there, he makes a new creature, a new species of humanity. And when the body of Christ is raptured out and Christ the head comes back and we are joined together, then the one new man will be completed. We’ll go out there in the heavenly places and have glorified, immortal bodies that share the glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ. We’ll be perfectly transformed into his likeness and his image. And Paul says, “I want you to see the wealth, the riches, the splendor, the glory of all that. I don’t want you to miss that – what God is going to gain for himself through all of that.

There is one thing that I want you to notice in that regard. Go back to Ephesians 1:10 – “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him.” He is going to gather together “in one”. There is a oneness that God is going to affect in the creation.

Turn to Acts 20. That’s going to explain a couple of verses for you. God is going to take possession of a redeemed universe through his saints. Now all of the saints are not ‘body saints’. Some of the saints are ‘Israel saints’, ‘kingdom saints’. All of the saints are not ‘kingdom saints’, some of the saints are ‘body saints’. Do you understand? But, we are all part of his one kingdom. Do you got that straight in your mind? That is something that a lot of dispensationalists, a lot of grace people, never understand. They get all bent out of shape when you mention Christ as king today. If you sing a hymn that has “Christ as king” in it, some people get all bent out of shape. Well, if he is

not the head of the heavenly government and you are not a participant in it, brother, then you can't be an ambassador because an ambassador is a representative of a foreign head of state. So, he is the rightful king of the universe.

The term "headship" (head over the heavenly government) is a term that speaks of 'rulership'. The position that a king holds is the position of the head of a government. So, we are participants in his heavenly kingdom.

Now, that being true, we participate with the saints of the ages in that activity.

Acts 20:32 – "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." You have an inheritance with all them that are sanctified. Were the pentecostal, kingdom saints sanctified? Yes they were! Do you have an inheritance with them? Yes you have an inheritance among them. That's what the verse says. Therefore, you are going to be on the earth, right? You say, "No", but if you are going to have an inheritance among them, why aren't you going to be on the earth? It is because the whole thing is going to be one. Do you see that?

Turn to Acts 26:18. Christ is talking to Paul on the road to Damascus at his conversion about his commission. The verse says, "To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." When Paul got saved, were there people that were already sanctified by faith in Christ? Paul and his converts are going to receive an inheritance among those people, right? That's what the verse says.

Do you see how somebody could take that passage and try to demonstrate to you that the body of Christ began before Paul, or that the body of Christ will be on the earth in the kingdom and that kind of thing? The answer to that is an understanding of Ephesians 2:19, of how God has made us one with the saints of all the ages. That does not mean that we cease to be the body of Christ, and they cease to be Israel. It has nothing to do with that at all. It has to do with the fact that we are all participants in one purpose, and that one purpose is that inheritance that he is going to have for himself and take possession of through the saints.

Ephesians 2:19 – "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God." We are in the 'body wing' and they are in the 'kingdom wing', but we're all fellowcitizens. We are one with the saints of all the ages. And it is the body of Christ that completes the household.

Some people will use those verses to put the twelve apostles in the body, but if those verses are used for that, you have to start the body before Paul because those saints are already there before Paul. So, that's where you would have a problem with that.

Turn back to Ephesians 1. We don't have to go down through this passage in real detail because we have been down through it time and again now. Verse 19 – "And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe." This is the third thing that he wants you to know.

First, he wants you to know the hope of his calling. Second, he wants you to know the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. He wants you to see the riches of his glory in his inheritance in the saints, all this wonderful splendor and wealth and riches that will belong to him because they are involved in those positions.

Ephesians 1:19 – "And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe." That is a reference to the power that actually transforms the hope into the actual possession of the inheritance. He says, "I want you to understand this power that is going to take this thing that you are hoping for out there, and it is going to transform it into a reality."

Paul says, "And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe." Now, he uses five synonyms for "power" down through this passage to describe the power. He uses the

word “power”, the word “working”, the word “mighty”, again the word “power”, and then “what he wrought in Christ”.

“And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*.” In other words, the demonstration of this is that Jesus Christ dies at Calvary; God raises him from the dead; then he ascends up into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High. At that time, God declares “this is my son, this day have I begotten thee”. Jesus Christ receives the inheritance by way of adoption.

Remember when we studied that in Hebrews 1? Please shake your heads yes! Fellows, I am going to say this to you again. I expect you to remember those things because I remember them; and if I can remember them, you can remember them. You don’t have nearly as much to remember as I do. I remember things that you never even heard me say. All you have to remember are the few little things that you hear me say. You don’t have to worry about all the other things that I don’t say. And I have to remember all of them! And if I can remember it, you can remember it, right?

That passage in Hebrews 1 is important because it tells you when and how Christ received his inheritance, and it tells you what that inheritance is, and that you and I participate in that inheritance. It doesn’t just belong to Israel. We have a participation in that glorification, and in that immortality, and in that angelic subjection, and in that kingdom, (that everlasting, eternal, universal kingdom), and in the new heavens and the new earth, and all the other things he lists there as part of his inheritance as he inherits all things. He says, “I want you to understand the power, and the authority, and the might, and the performance ability that is involved when he set you there. And at this point Jesus Christ is declared to be the heir of all things.

Continuing in Ephesians 1:20,21 – “...when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named.” That is all those positions of rank and authority in the government – far above all those positions.

Verse 22 – “And hath put all *things* (all those positions) under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body.” Notice once again, that the verse does not say that it made him to be head of the church, the body of Christ.

If you haven’t already, write down beside that verse in your bible, Colossians 2:10. Ephesians 1:22 says that he is “the head over all *things* to the church.” It doesn’t say he is the head of the church. Colossians 2:10 says, “And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.” That’s what that verse is saying – he is the head over the heavenly government. When he set all things under his feet, he made everything subject to him. Every position of rank and authority is placed underneath the subjection of the Lord Jesus Christ. That’s what “putting things under your feet” means; it means you put it in subjection to him. 1 Corinthians 15 is used that way. When he put everything in subjection to him, he made him the head over the heavenly government.

Now, he is the head of the church, the body of Christ (Colossians 1:18) that in all these positions of rank and authority he might have the preeminence. He’s made the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. He is the head over the body, but he is much more also. He is the head over all the heavenly government.

Paul says, “I want you to understand that, and I want you to understand the issue about how Satan hates that; and he hates the body of Christ because we are the ones who will go up to the heavenlies and take his positions from him.” We will occupy his positions, and he doesn’t appreciate that one bit. Our warfare is about those issues. And Paul says, “I want you to perceive this, and I want you to see this great power that is yours according to his mighty power when he accomplished all of these things.” It helps us to appreciate the power involved here. It is not the power of a raging storm, or lightning, or creation, or the Red Sea, or miracles, but the issue is Christ being seated as

the head of the heavenly government. He raised him from the dead, from a death that would have sunk the world to hell, as the songwriter wrote. And he didn't just raise him, but he set him up here in an exalted position and made him heir of all things. And he said that it was for your advantage that he did it.

Do you see Ephesians 1:22 – "...and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church"? It is to your advantage that he is that way, because he is going to use us to fill up all those positions of rank and authority out there.

Ephesians 2:1 – "AND you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins." In chapter 2, he begins to show the operation of this power that he talked about in the believer. But notice what chapter 2 says – "you *hath he quickened*". You people who are members of the body of Christ, who he is going to do all this fantastic destiny with, "you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins."

Verses 2,3 – "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." You were in a predicament, weren't you? Here are these people that God is going to use to reconcile the heavenly places themselves, and what is their position? Are they wonderful, godly people seeking to please God and walking according to his purpose? If he was going to use you people, he had a problem. You had a personal predicament; you were dead in trespasses and sins. You were dominated by Satan. You were children of disobedience. You were depraved, and driven by the old sin nature. You were doomed – a child of wrath. You were in a mess! You do not qualify personally, or individually.

But that isn't all. Look at Ephesians 2:11 – "Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh." You not only, personally, didn't qualify; but if you personally, individually, could have qualified, dispensationally you didn't qualify. Do you understand? You have two problems. You are dead in sin and in the uncircumcision of your flesh. Colossians 2:13 summarizes Ephesians 2 by saying, "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh." You are dead in sins – your own personal predicament individually and also in the uncircumcision of your flesh dispensationally. You had no place before God; you were an outcast. The great middle wall of partition separated you.

So, what does he do? Through the cross, the Lord Jesus Christ takes care of the barrier, the problem of your sin, your allegiance to Satan and his program. You were a participant in Satan's program. Do you understand that? You were a willing participant in Satan's kingdom. And Christ comes down here, and he takes a bunch of people out of Satan's kingdom and makes them saints – participants in His kingdom. And then he does these wonderful things for them. That is fantastic!

Do you know what that magnifies? It magnifies grace! It exalts grace! And besides that, it exalts the magnificent wisdom of God.

Do you remember Romans 3 – the redemption that's in Christ magnifies grace. Then in Romans 4, we found out God could give eternal life to everyone who has perfect righteousness. So now that you have perfect righteousness, can he give you eternal life? Well, whom did he promise eternal life to? He promised it to Abraham and his seed. Were you a part of Abraham and his seed? We had a dispensational disadvantage, didn't we? But, do you remember how we found in Romans 4 that God, in his wisdom, foreknew what he was going to do in forming the body of Christ so he justified Abraham in a special and unique manner so that you and I could be included. Do you see that? The dispensation of grace magnifies the grace and the matchless wisdom of Almighty God.

Ephesians 3:9,10 – "And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent,

(here's why he wants everybody to see the mystery), that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." Do you know what happens? The wisdom of God is manifested.

Now go back to Ephesians 2, and let's look at the personal predicament; and then we'll look at the dispensational predicament, the positional predicament, and how his wisdom and grace resolve both of them.

Somebody called Ephesians 2:1-10 "The Believer's Biography". And that is exactly what happens, because in the first three verses, you have your past. Then in verses 4-10, you have your present. You have your predicament and then you have the provision and transformation God gives for you in Christ.

Ephesians 2:1 – AND you *hath he quickened.*" He made you people, (members of the body of Christ), alive. Who were you? You "were dead in trespasses and sins. Number one, you are dead in trespasses and sins.

Verse 2 – "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Well, then you are not only dead in trespasses and sins, but you are disobedient. Why are you disobedient? You are disobedient because you are subject to Satan. You are dominated by the working, and the will, of Satan.

Verse 3 – "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh."

Notice – the world (verse 2), Satan (verse 2), and the flesh (verse 3). Those are the three great enemies – the world, the flesh, and the devil. And you are a jolly participant with all of it. Verse 3 says that you are driven by the old sin nature; you are depraved. Not only that, but you are "by nature the children of wrath". You are doomed.

Now, let's go back to verse 1 and work down. Number one, you are dead in trespasses and sins. Well what does that mean? How is it that we were dead in trespasses and sins? Notice verse 1 – "who were dead in trespasses and sins". "Trespasses" is "a violation of the law". You violate the law. "Sin" is "to miss the mark". That's where you're dead – you are dead by violating the law and by missing the mark.

Ephesians 2:2 – "Wherein in time past ye walked." Notice the activity involved. How is it that you are dead? You are dead by trespasses, sins, walking "according to the course of this world". Verse 3 – "our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of our flesh." Do you see how all of those things describe action? Well, then I know something. I know that being dead in trespasses and sins does not mean the cessation of activity. Being spiritually dead does not mean that you are spiritually inactive, does it? Aren't the unbelievers in the passage said to have quite an active life in the spirit world? Doesn't it say that they walk "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience"? Isn't there spiritual activity going on in an unsaved man? But it isn't God's activity (spirit has a small "s" not a capital "S").

The word "death" is a synonym for separation. And when it says that you are dead in trespasses and sins, it doesn't mean that you are not spiritually operative and moving. It doesn't mean that there is spiritual annihilation and lack of activity. You are not dead like a body is dead and doesn't move and feel and act. Obviously, the death, in the passage, is not the annihilation and is not cessation of activity. That is important to remember because you will run into people that will talk about spiritual death as though it is the cessation of activity and responsiveness. And it is not that!

Ephesians 4:17 is another verse that defines it for you. "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind." He is saying, "Don't be a believer that walks like an unbeliever." He is going to describe to you what reversionism

is here. He is going to describe what it is like to walk like an unbeliever. Verse 18 – “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God.” Would you call that spiritual death? I would! Spiritual death is to be separated from the life of God.

Gentlemen, when you talk about spiritual death, you have to be real careful not to excuse man from responsibility.

The first part of the word “responsible” is “response”. If you are not able to respond, then you are not able to be responsible. You have to be careful about that. An unsaved man does have the capability to operate on a spiritual level. In the passage he does; he clearly does in verse 2. An unsaved man’s spirit lives and functions and operates, but it is cut off from God. It is cut off from the life of God.

“Dead in trespasses and sins” is a description of the unsaved man’s condition, not his capabilities or capacities, but his condition. He is dead, and when you are dead, you are beyond hope. You are not sick but possibly can get better. When you are dead, there isn’t any hope for you, and that’s the idea there.

Now, people are worse off than other people some days. Did you ever notice that?

If you want something that will preach, I will give you an outline that will preach. Jesus went to three funerals – Lazarus, Jairus’ daughter, and the widow’s son in the city of Nain.

They told Jesus that Jairus’ daughter was dead, and he said, “No she isn’t.” And they laughed him to scorn. She was still warm; she still had the flush about her cheeks. She was still limber; she was still beautiful. She hardly appeared to have death’s touch on her.

There are a lot of folks that you are going to meet that are lost, dead, beyond hope, but they don’t look like they’re dead. They look pretty good. You say, “They’re dead. No, they’re not.” You can’t decide.

Then there’s the widow’s son. They have him decked out, and he is already still. They are taking him to put him in the ground. There are some folks that are already stiff, and pasty looking with the look of death on them. It is obvious.

Then you go to Lazarus, and what’s happening with him? He is vile and repulsive and offensive. He’s already corrupted.

Some are more soft than others, but it doesn’t make any difference how they appear – if you’re dead, you’re dead.

Aman said, “Die young and have a pretty corpse.” Well, you are still dead. When you are dead, there isn’t any hope, and that is the issue in death.

When you are dead in trespasses and sins, the issue is that you are in this condition, and you do not have any hope. That’s spiritual death.

Now there are five kinds of death:

1. Physical death – physical death is your soul departing from your body – separation (2 Corinthians 5:8, Philipians 1:21, Genesis 35:18, James 2:26 – the body without the spirit is dead).
2. Spiritual death – a person who is separated from God in time (Ephesians 2:1, 4:17; Romans 5:12).
3. Second death – separation from God in eternity (Revelation 20:12-15, 21:8).
4. Positional death – when you die with Christ at Calvary (Romans 6:3-7; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 2:12, 3:3).
5. Functional death – Abraham didn’t consider the deadness of Sarah’s womb. Her ability to produce children was dead, functionally dead (Romans 4:19). There’s a believer not functioning. He is acting like an unsaved person (Ephesians 5:14). There is another

example of being functionally dead, not operating. If you live in sin, you are not operating like a believer (1 Timothy 5:8). Then you have the verse that says, "faith without works is dead". It isn't operating (James 2:17).

You want to be able to distinguish between those five deaths in your bible.

We were reading some time ago in the Ambassadorship Class about death, and we were talking about reversionism. Well, that is functional death. Every time you read those things, you are not talking about spiritual death. You are not talking about the same kind of death.

Now, the death in Ephesians 2:1 is spiritual death, separation from God in time.

On a separate sheet of properly headed paper answer the following questions. Use complete sentences where appropriate.

1. Explain what it means to be “accepted in the beloved”.
2. How does Ephesians 1:7 assume the reader has laid the Roman’s foundation?
3. Define forgiveness and explain how daily sins are to be dealt with in the lives of believers.
4. Explain 1 John 1:9, “parental forgiveness” and the relation of each to the believer today.
5. The revelation of the mystery of the Father’s will (1:9) gives the believer insight into His ultimate purpose and genius. Explain this mystery.
6. Identify the “all things” of 1:10 and explain how their being “gathered together in Christ” does not teach universalism.
7. To what is “the counsel of His own will” in 1:11 a reference?
8. The phrase “after that ye believed, ye were sealed” in 1:13 teaches us that there is a time gap between believing and being sealed. True or False?
9. Identify the sealer, the sealed and the seal of 1:13.
10. Explain the function of a seal and the doctrine it represents.
11. How is it that the Holy Spirit is called the “earnest of our inheritance”?
12. The prayer in Ephesians 1:15-23 is for empowerment; the prayer in 3:14-21 is for enlightenment. True or False?
13. What is “the hope of His calling”?
14. What is “the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints”?
15. What is “the exceeding greatness of His power”?
16. Explain the governmental organization represented by the terms of 1:21.
17. What headship is ascribed to Christ in 1:22 and how is it to ultimately be accomplished?
18. What relation does Colossians 1:16-20 have to Ephesians 1:19-23? Explain.
19. To be “dead in sins and trespasses” means the lost sinner is totally incapable of responding to God. True or False?

20. Identify and explain the five types of death found in Scripture.

In Ephesians 2, Paul begins to describe the people who make up the body of Christ. He told you about the fantastic positions that you will have, and the inheritance in the heavenly places, and how the body of Christ is going to be the fulness of him that filleth all in all. And now he is going to describe our predicament, individually, in the first ten verses and then our position, dispensationally, in the last half of the chapter. He will describe how God's wisdom and grace have resolved both problems with our individual alienation and our dispensational alienation, and how we've been set aside. He will show you how God has provided reconciliation for us in every respect.

Ephesians 2:1 – "AND you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins." Now we talked about the fact that you were spiritually dead – you were dead in sins and trespasses. Your spirit was alienated from the life of God.

Verse 2 – "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world." In other words, before you got saved you walked in trespasses and sins, which were according to the course of this world. The last half of the verse says, "according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Not only were you dead in sins and trespasses, but you were also disobedient. You were subject to Satan. You were dominated by the will, and the working, of Satan. You were dead, and now he says that you were dominated by Satan, by his will, by his working. You were a disobedient people. In fact he says "the children of disobedience."

The beginning of the verse says, "Wherein in time past ye walked." It is important to notice, in that verse, that spiritual death does not mean that the spirit doesn't operate, because you are walking and doing all of these things in the passage. You are following, you are walking, you are disobedient, and you are fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and so forth. Spiritual death is a description of being separated from God.

Please remember those five kinds of death, because I guarantee you will see them on the test. They are important!

Spiritual death means to be separated from God in time. The second death means to be separated from God in eternity. Spiritual death can be remedied by getting saved and being reconciled to God in time. The second death can never be remedied.

Verse 2 – "Wherein (in trespasses and sins) in time past ye walked." Your walk, and your activity, and your lifestyle, and the culture in which you live was "according to the course of this world". The "course of this world" is a reference to the world system. The world system is directed by Satan. The verse says, "...ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air." In other words, the course of this world operates in line with the desires of the prince of the power of the air.

Now, the course of this world is directed by Satan. Satan is called the prince of the power of the air. What is that a reference to? What is he talking about? The "air" is a bible way of talking about the invisible realm, the realm that you cannot see with your eyes.

Luke 8:4,5 – "And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable: A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it."

Now, he interprets the parable. Verses 11,12 – "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved."

Notice verse 5. Who takes away the seed out of their hearts? It's the fowls of the air. Who is "the fowls of the air" determined to be in verse 12? It is the devil. He is the prince of the power of the air.

By the way, birds, in the bible, are types of devils. They are used over and over as types of devils.

Alfred Hitchcock put out a movie called The Birds. Did you ever see that? Don't act like you're too young to see that! If you watch TV on Saturday nights, you will see it before long.

People, that book in your hand is the greatest scientific textbook on types and symbols that's ever been produced. And if you do not understand something, if you keep reading that book long enough, you'll find out why it's the way it is.

Anyway, when he talks about the prince of the power of the air, it is a familiar bible term referring to the invisible realm and the domain of Satan. Satan has taken over the prince of the power of the air. He has taken over as the head.

What is a prince? Isn't a prince a governmental official? Isn't he a top fellow in a government? John 14:30 – "Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." Who is the prince of this world that is coming to him? It's Satan.

John 12:31 – "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." The prince of this world is Satan. He is the prince of the power of the air. He is the head in the invisible realm, and that is the issue with us. Over there in the kingdom program, the issue is the planet. With us, the issue is not the earth, but it is the principalities and powers in heavenly places.

Colossians 1:16 – "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers." The thrones and dominions and principalities and powers in the invisible realm, as well as in the visible realm, belong to Satan and are under his headship today. He usurped the headship of the government, (of the universe), and he is the head of the invisible government as well as the visible government.

Ephesians 6:12 – "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*." Today, those positions of rank and authority in the heavenly places up there are under the authority and control of the Adversary.

Now, we have been over this, and I trust we don't have to go back over it again tonight.

Satan has a policy of evil that he developed when he fell. God made him "the anointed cherub that covers" (Ezekiel 28:14). God made him perfect in beauty, and he was lifted up by his beauty and pride. The sin of pride brought his downfall. And when he fell, he developed a wise plan. He developed a plan of revolt against God.

Isaiah 14:12-15 shows that Satan's sin was pride, but his pride led him to develop a plan of revolt, a coup d'état, if you want to call it that. It was a plan whereby he was going to take the throne of God away from him. And he went out and made merchandise of that plan among all the principalities and powers, the upper echelon of the government of the universe. Ezekiel says, "the merchandise of his traffick, and many perished." He went out and he sold these people on the idea of making him like the most high, exalting him above God. He goes out and gathers up these angelic creatures to be a part of his government and his revolt, and there's been a usurpation of the positions of the government of the universe.

The Lord Jesus Christ has come. Ephesians 1:22 – God exalts Christ and sits him at his own right hand "far above all principality, and power ... And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church." God Almighty, through the crucifixion, and the resurrection, and exaltation of Christ, has declared that Jesus Christ is going to be the head of the heavenly government. He's made Christ the head of the government of the universe, and he is going to gather back all of those positions, in the invisible realm up there, through the body of Christ.

So he says, "By the way, you people, (members of the body of Christ), do you know who you are? You are a bunch of people that were dead, separated from God, and he has reconciled you through the blood of his son. Not only that, you weren't just dead, but you also used to be the

subjects of Satan's kingdom." And he is going to use people that were the subject of Satan, part of his government, walking dumbly, and disobediently in line with Satan in the course of this world.

The course of this world has a reference to the plan, and the world's system is that vehicle whereby Satan's administration of his government takes place. It is the way that his philosophy, and his plan, and his program is executed in the universe. And there we were – willing participants in it. God says, "You're the ones that I am going use to reconcile all of those positions."

Can you understand how God's grace is going to be set on demonstration? He's going to use somebody like you. Who were you? You were dead and totally separated from God. You were dominated by Satan. You were a part of his working and his program; and God reached in there, and by his grace, saved you and made you a trophy of grace. That is what Paul is getting at here.

Ephesians 2:2 – "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." The word "course" is like a river. It flows like a river, like the current that's running through the system. And the world's system is just a manifestation, and expression, and philosophy of Satan. It is the channel through which his program is developed.

In Galatians 1:4, he calls it "this present evil world". The world system is inherently evil, and it will be that way until the Lord Jesus Christ takes it over. And the reason it is that way is because of the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience is the combined system that Satan has, which consists of Satan and all of his combined subordinate demonic accomplices.

Notice that it says, "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience". I have said it to you before, and I am going to say it to you again, "The genius of unsaved men is satanically inspired." Every unsaved person is demon possessed. It is important that you understand how demon activity works today because every unsaved person is demonically possessed.

Do you remember that when the demonic activity took place under the kingdom program in Matthew 12, it manifested exactly what the dispensational situation was at that time? You had the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. He begins to preach at the beginning of his earthly ministry and preaches until his crucifixion, let's say. Then he is crucified and he goes away, and the Holy Spirit comes back. In Matthew 12, he is describing what is going on in the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. In his earthly ministry, he sends his people out; and he says, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand". They are talking about the kingdom of heaven that will be on the earth. They are talking about his kingdom being established on this planet, him coming as the King of kings, Messiah King, and Redeemer of Israel. That's the issue all through the earthly ministry of Christ.

Matthew 12:22 – "Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw." He cast out the devil, and he heals the man. Verses 23,24 – "And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard *it*, they said, This *fellow* doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils." They get in a big argument about Jesus being sent by the devil to do what he does.

Verses 25-28 – "And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast *them* out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." The issue has to do with the demonic possession of those Israelites during Christ's earthly ministry. The reason Satan was coming in and possessing those Israelites was so his kingdom could stand. The way Satan's kingdom stood against Israel was by taking Israel and possessing them and keeping them in a condition whereby God Almighty could not use them to restore his authority over the planet.

As long as he kept Israel in an unclean condition, God could not and would not use them to bring in that kingdom. Jesus said, "If I come and I cast the devil out of Israel."

By the way, Zechariah 13 says that, in that kingdom, he'll cast out the unclean spirit from the land and from the people. What's he doing? He's doing, in His earthly ministry, what the kingdom will do for the nation.

Do you know the reason and the purpose for the physical possession of people, and the exorcism, the casting out of demons during the earthly ministry of Christ? It was exactly in line with the program of God in effect, and in order, at that time looking forward to the kingdom.

Now, the nation Israel fell, and God set them aside, and he formed the church, the body of Christ. This thing is a mystery. God gives the information to the apostle Paul, and it is something that was not known before. It is a break in the prophetic program. God set the nation Israel aside and started a new program, and he is no longer forming a physical nation to bring in a physical kingdom, but he is forming a spiritual body that he will take out into the heavenly places and restore the heavenly kingdom.

There might be a bunch of dumb preachers around this country, and around the world, and around town, and in our midst that don't know what God is doing, but you better believe one thing – the devil knows it!

I was in the midst of a whole bunch of good preachers, (men that forgot more about the bible than I will ever know), and a fellow asked the head man, "Who do you know that knows the bible better than anybody else in the state of Alabama?" He looked at him and didn't bat an eye, and said, "The devil does."

If anybody ever asked me that question, do you know what I would tell him or her? I would tell them the same thing. Do you know why? It's because it is the dying truth. The devil knows that book; he knows what God is doing.

There are people that think God is operating under the law program today, but you don't want to make that kind of mistake; because if you do, you will never know how God is operating in the dispensation of grace. You need to understand that every unsaved person you meet is demon possessed, and you need to understand that demonic possession in the dispensation of grace is not like it was in time past. The way Satan possesses people today is through doctrine. Get that in your mind and don't forget it!

1 Timothy 4:1 – "NOW the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, (a saved person departs from the faith; he apostatizes ... how?), giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." A seducing spirit comes along and preaches to that person. Have you ever heard a spirit preach? The answer is "no"! Who preaches? Preachers and men preach. The "seducing spirits" in that verse is talking about preachers.

In 1 John 4:1 – "BELOVED, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." Read that passage carefully instead of just running through it. That passage is talking about preachers. It is not talking about some poor fellow sitting on a stump acting a little peculiar, and you going up and grabbing him and saying, "Confess", and all that kind of baloney that you hear about people doing. That doesn't have anything to do with what God is doing now or over yonder in the future. Nobody, now, or in the tribulation, has to go up to somebody and address a demon inside of him or her and ask him to confess something that that person, by the will of their own choice, (exercising their own volition), couldn't do.

When we study in the Ambassadorship class, you will see how people can get so far into reversionism that you get some of those peculiar and abnormal situations that people always point to. But, do you know something? That thing in 1 John 4:1 is talking about preachers, and prophets. Read the passage! You have seducing spirits teaching doctrines of devils. You have a bunch of

preachers running around seducing the saints by teaching doctrines that reflect the Satanic Policy of Evil against the body of Christ.

You say, "Oh, they wouldn't do that, would they?" Well, I will show you in a minute that they would do that.

Do you know how demon possession takes place today? It takes place through doctrine. It does not take place by a demon grabbing somebody and making that person's hand reach for a knife to stab somebody. You read that nonsense every now and then, or you see it on the TV, but that is just some murderer trying to get away with what he's doing. He wants to shift the blame and avoid responsibility. That is what he's doing, and I hope you understand where that comes from.

Christian people do the same thing. They do not want to be responsible for who they are or what they are, so they just shift the blame and try to make somebody else responsible. A believer can get in reversion just like an unbeliever, and a believer can act just like an unsaved man. That's what it is about, and that is what demon activity does.

Now, no believer is ever going to be possessed of a devil like the people in time past were. But, a believer can be seduced by somebody teaching doctrines of devils – doctrine that puts forth the program of philosophy and the religious system. A believer can get caught in Satan's trap, and his snare, and he can be spoiled.

Notice an unsaved man in 2 Corinthians 4:3 – "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." There is one thing about the gospel, folks, it is a set of doctrine. You believe in the heart that form of doctrine, which is delivered to you. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (verses 3,4). Do you know what he blinds? Doesn't it say that he blinds "the minds"? Do you know how you blind people's minds? You blind their thinking mechanism. Did he make them where they couldn't think? No, they can think, but he comes along and gives them some false doctrine to believe.

Look at 2 Corinthians 11 and I'll show it to you. Verse 3 – "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty." Have you been studying about the serpent beguiling Eve through his subtilty? Haven't we been talking about that in Genesis 3 in another class? He said, "I fear, lest your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." It is a mental attitude sin. Do you see that?

Verse 4 – "For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted." Somebody comes up and says, "Jesus said" Well, you better ask them, "Which Jesus?" Somebody says, "Well, the gospel says ..." You better ask them, "What gospel?" Somebody says, "I got the Spirit". You better say, "Which spirit; which one?" You better be careful.

Just because you are out there preaching in the name of Jesus and all that stuff, don't think there is not a lot of tom foolery going on out there in the world in the name of Jesus. But, it's the wrong Jesus.

There's a verse (Deuteronomy 32:31) that says, "For their rock *is* not as our Rock." That's it! In 1 Corinthians 10, our Rock is Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:13 – "For such (people that do what is in verses 3 and 4) *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ." They don't come in saying that the devil sent them, but they say that Christ or God sent them.

Verse 14 – "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." They come in preaching righteousness and telling you that you should do good works. They minister self-righteousness, and they damn people to hell by telling them that they need to do good works.

The only thing that God will accept to save a man is the work of Christ at Calvary.

2 Thessalonians 2:9 – “*Even him*, (the Anti-Christ), whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.” The guy comes in with a bunch of religious activity that validates his claims. They are false in the sense that God didn’t send them.

Verses 10-12 – “And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” Those people are lost because they are caught up in a lie. And God sends them a strong delusion and gives them what they want. They have some bad doctrine in there. They believe a lie!

Now, I don’t want to just belabor the thing, so go back to Ephesians. My point to you is something you have to remember today. When you deal with unsaved people, you are dealing with people that are demon possessed, not like they were in time past, but demon possessed as they are in the dispensation of grace meaning the doctrines of devils has possessed their minds.

You have to take the light of the gospel of Christ, the truth of God, and shine that in there. And the way you dispel false doctrine is with true doctrine. The way he dispelled Satan’s kingdom in times past, and destroyed it, was by casting out the possession of the Nation. In the dispensation of grace, it is by the ministry of the word of God.

Ephesians 2 – You are dead (verse 1), you are dominated by the will and working of Satan (verse 2), and now he says that you are also driven by the old sin nature (verse 3).

Ephesians 2:3 – “Among whom also (the children of disobedience) we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” We were depraved. We all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. We were just driven by a totally desire-oriented life. We were doing what we wanted to do, when we wanted to do it, and the way we wanted to do it. And, that is all that counted, right? You know that is a fact about yourself, don’t you? Well, that is what he is talking about – being totally depraved. It is Genesis 3:6 all over again, in you, so you don’t have to blame it on Adam.

When he talks about “the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh” that is “the sins of the flesh” – overt, outward activities. Then he says, “and of the mind” and that is “mental attitude sins” – pride, vanity, arrogance, self-will, covetousness, independence, irritability. Those are the two sides of the old sin nature – the overt, outward things and the mental attitude sins. You have the sins (desires) of the flesh and of the mind.

Then it says in verse 3 “and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” We were doomed! Look at Ephesians 5:6 – “Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things, (horrible heinous sins and the people that commit them are listed in verses 3,4,5), cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.” Do you see that? Do you know what happens because of sin? God’s judgment comes because of sin. Sin is a terrible, awful, dastardly, doomed thing. God Almighty is going to destroy it and get it out of his universe. And we were by nature the children of wrath – doomed. That is not harsh, and it’s not an arbitrary, capricious, unkind statement made by God, but that is the way you came into the world. You “by nature” were that way – doomed!

There is a verse in Titus 3 that I get a kick out of because it is so true of who we are. Titus 3:3 – “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another.” Doesn’t that just describe the way you were? I hope that doesn’t describe the way you still are. Unfortunately a lot of believers haven’t gotten very far from that.

Verse 4 – “But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared.” Then he goes on down and tells you about getting saved by grace through faith plus nothing.

Do you know how we behaved? We were foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, doing whatever we wanted to do, living in malice and envy, mad and angry and jealous of everybody else, and hateful, and hating one another. We were hateful to each other, and we hated everybody that was hateful to us. It was just crazy. It was just sin – totally irrational.

And Paul says, “This is who you were!”

Zechariah 3:2 talks about “a brand plucked out of the fire”. You were more like a 2x4 burnt in two, just as crisp as a cinder.

Ephesians 2:3 – “...and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” You were “by nature” the children of wrath. You weren’t a helpless victim. You are the children of wrath because of who and what you are by nature. You are not sick.

Folks, you must understand that unsaved people are not sick; they are sinners. People say, “That’s a sick activity!” It might make you sick, but the reason that people do those things is because they are sinners.

As soon as you say that something is a sickness, you say that you are helpless to do anything about it. I would never want an activity that I performed to be a sickness. I would always want it to be a sin, because if it’s a sickness, I am a helpless victim; but if it’s a sin, I can be responsible for it. And if I can be responsible for it, I can change it.

What does the world do? They avoid responsibility and shift the blame over here and say, “I’m sick!” I am not a drunk; I’m sick. I am not a dope addict; I’m sick. I am not a pervert; I’m sick. I am not a whoremonger and an adulteress; I’m sick. I am not a person with an evil nasty hateful disposition; I’m sick. I’m not a person with a deceptive sneaky thieving disposition; I’m sick. I’m not a person with an irritable angry spirit; I just have emotional problems. You sure do, but you will never get any victory over them until you are responsible.

People, the word responsible means ‘responsible’. If you are responsible, you are able to respond. And if you are able to respond, you are responsible. You can’t have one without the other. The greatest thing that will ever happen is for folks to realize that they are what they are because of who they are, and therefore they are accountable, and therefore they can do something about it.

Look what God does about it. By yourself, you could not do a thing, could you? Your nature was doomed – dead in sins, dominated by Satan, driven by the lusts of the flesh, by the old sin nature.

Circle the first two words in Ephesians 2:4 – “But God”. You need to get real familiar with the “but God” verses in the bible – “But God remembered Noah”, “But God revealed unto us”, “But God commended his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners”, “But God be thanked”. You were in a predicament, but thanks be to God. That brings Him into action.

“But” is a conjunction of contrast. There is an emphatic break – this is the way it was, but God did something about it and changed the whole thing.

Ephesians 2:4 – “But God, who is rich in mercy” – there are infinite resources of mercy for the vilest of sinners. God is “rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us.” It all comes out of the love of God.

Romans 5:8 – “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Ephesians 2:4 – “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;).” Mr. O’Hair used to say that the three great bywords of this age are great love, great mercy, and great grace. And those are the verses that demonstrate it to be true.

It says, “But God, who is rich in mercy” – infinite mercy. Nobody is ever so far away that he can’t reach them, and nobody is ever so vile that he can’t touch them.

Then it says, “...for his great love wherewith he love us.”

God's love and his mercy and his grace combined to raise a fallen race;
His hand is ready 'er we call, held out for forgiveness for all;
It was love that paid the price on the cross of Calvary;
It was grace, redeeming grace that paid the ransom full and free.

That's it! Even when we were dead in sins, that's who we were. That is how helpless and hopeless we were. God has made us alive together with Christ, and that is the answer. Salvation is just us bringing all that we have, all of the nothingness, and laying it aside and trusting all of his love, his mercy, and his grace. He has quickeneth us together with Christ, by grace are ye saved. That's grace – not our work, but it is all his work. Jesus died and was buried and rose again for us.

Ephesians 2:5 – “Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved).” Notice the converse now. He told you some things up there about what your personal predicament was in verses 1-3. Now he is going to give you the other side – God's provision and God's answer to the problem.

Number one, he quickens us together with Christ. We are “made alive” with Christ. “Quickening” is “the imparting of God's life, being made alive”. It is called the “new birth”. John 3:6 is a verse that describes the new birth – “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” That which is born of the Spirit (capital S) is spirit. Your dead spirit is born; it has life given to it by God's Spirit. Eternal life is imputed to you and implanted in you. It is given to you when you trust Christ. That is the imparting of eternal life. That's God's life being given to you.

Titus 3:5 calls it “the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” God the Holy Spirit cleanses us by regenerating us and giving us a live spirit, giving life to our dead spirit.

Ephesians 2:5 says, “...hath quickened us together with Christ.” Notice that it doesn't say, “...hath quickened us together in Christ.” The reference is to our identification with him when he died for us at Calvary and was raised again there. The dominion of sin and death is broken, so now who has the dominion? Christ does. We are dead to sin that we might be alive unto God.

Do you know what grace is – by grace are ye saved? Write down 2 Corinthians 8:9 beside Ephesians 2:8 in your bible. 2 Corinthians 8:9 – “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” That is grace, and that is the grace whereby ye are saved (Ephesians 2:5).

Ephesians 2:6 – “And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus.” You are identified with the Lord Jesus Christ totally and completely in everything he did. When you become a member of the body of Christ, that means that everything that belongs to him belongs to you and everything he did, you did. You were crucified with him, you die with him on Calvary, then you're buried and then you're quickened. You come back to life with him.

Now, when Jesus is in the tomb, he comes back to life. He is quickened, but then he is raised out of that tomb. He is raised out of that tomb as a visible demonstration that he is alive. Could he have lived forever in that tomb and never come out? He's God and he could have lived in there forever and been alive and well, and nobody would have ever seen him. Therefore, nobody would have ever known that he was alive. Didn't they seal the door? But, he came forth. He was raised from the dead. He came up out of the tomb. He came visibly forth from the grave in order to demonstrate the forgiveness. But, you know he came out visibly. God gave him life, but he also gave him freedom from bondage, and he went free!

Ephesians 2:6 – “...and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus.” That is back in Ephesians 1:20,21. He goes up and is seated at the right hand of the Father on high, the Majesty

on High, and is appointed heir of all things. And we are seated together with him, at the Father's right hand up there, as participants together with him in his heavenly government.

Notice that it says that we are seated together "in Christ". Now he doesn't say, "with Christ", but he says, "in Christ". We are not with him right now; we are not up there. Some day we will be caught up forever to be with him. While we are still here though, how does God see us? He sees us "in him". We are seated "together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus."

God did all this – took us and gave us a complete and total salvation package, all completely and totally accomplished. Why? Verse 7 – "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Folks, when the body of Christ is completed, it is going to be a perfect representative and representation of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is going to be the fulness of God on public display, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

God is forming the body of Christ today, and he will come back and get it; and when the body is united with the Head, the one new man is going to be completed. The one new man will be brought together with it's Head; and the one new man, for the first time, will be a completed entity. They will go out in the heavenly places and represent him and show forth the exceeding riches of his grace and his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. That is divine favor! And it all centers in him.

Ephesians 2:7 – "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us, (What kind of kindness? You just read it in verse 6 – look at you and then look what he does.), through Christ Jesus." It all centers in him, and that is why it's grace. And that's why he says what he does in verses 8-10. It all centers in Christ, and it all centers in his grace.

These are probably three of the most familiar verses among bible believers anywhere. Verses 8-10 – "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." It is God's grace and not human merit that must have all the praise.

I read those verses and I hardly know what to say to you about them when I teach down through the passage, because they are so clear, and they speak so simply for themselves.

By grace, by God's grace, are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves. Salvation is not "of you", but it is "of God". It is the gift of God.

And by the way, the gift of God, in the verse, is "Not of works, lest any man should boast." The gift of God, in the bible, is always salvation. It is never faith! In these passages, it is salvation and not faith.

Romans 6:23 – "The gift of God *is* eternal life."

Romans 5:15-18 – The gift of God in those verses is the gift of righteousness; it is the gift of life.

John 4:10 – The gift of God, again, is salvation.

There aren't any verses in the bible that say, "The gift of God is faith". There is a theological system that says that, but the gift of God, in the passage, is salvation by grace through faith plus nothing. Faith is a gift of God in the providential sense. Had Christ not come, had the word of God not been made available, had you not heard the word of God, you would never have had faith to believe that Christ died for your sins because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. You, by yourself, would never have figured out this Good News Program; and you, by your faith, would never have been able to generate faith in that because you would never have heard the message. But, when the life-giving message of the gospel came to you, then you trusted it, and that salvation that it provides is God's gift to you.

So faith is the gift in a providential sense, an indirect sense, simply because everything that you have comes from God. But, the idea that God implants faith down in someone's heart is

incorrect. The idea that he first regenerates them and puts faith in their hearts, and then they can believe and get saved, is a theological doctrine that is not taught in the passage.

Sometimes people try to make it say that their faith is the gift of God, but the gift of God is not of yourself and not of works. Faith would never be of works. Faith is the opposite of works; faith is not a work. There is no way faith could be a work. There is no reason he would say, "It is not of works" if he is talking about faith, because Romans 5 clearly tells you that faith is not a work. So, salvation would not be of works.

Ephesians 2:10 – "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." By bringing our lives into line with the position that we have in Christ, with the privileges and the blessings and his purpose, we are his workmanship. We are something that God is creating, and we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works that God before ordained that we should walk in them.

Folks, he foreordained that we would walk in certain ways. He foreordained you to behave, and to do good works, and to live a life that is well pleasing to him. That is what he marked the believers out for, and that is the way your should work.

The reason God chose believers wasn't so you could go out and live anyway you want to. God marked out members of the body of Christ for a certain type of lifestyle, a certain type of living, a certain way to live, and a certain way to behave. And he said, "That's the way we should walk in him." We are obligated to do it by who we are.

You say, "By what obligation?" It's by the obligation of love, the obligation of grace, and the obligation of gratitude.

Notice that it doesn't say, "We must walk in them." It says, "We should." The word is in the subjunctive mood, meaning maybe you will and maybe you won't, but you should. It comes back to the matter of you choosing to do it. God saved you and thoroughly and totally equipped you to do it. Now, you are obligated to do it; you ought to do it. Gratitude and love will constrain you to do it, but you have to choose to do it. There is not a time when you don't do it that you are excusable for not doing it. But, you have to choose to do it. That is the opportunity God gives us to respond to him the way he determined for us to walk, and to behave, and to live, and to walk worthy of the calling that he's given us, and to do it by grace through faith.

Our God and Father, we thank you again tonight for the Lord Jesus Christ and for the privilege that is ours to be yours and to have the opportunity to serve you. It is far greater an opportunity and a privilege than we could ever fathom ourselves being in. We certainly feel like Paul – less than the least of all saints. Having this, God, given to us, we look to thee to teach us, to instruct us, and to use us. So, we pray tonight that these things would be things that would edify us. And I pray that they would be things that would prepare these men for the days ahead. And we pray and ask it in the Savior's name.

Now we have studied the first ten verses in Ephesians 2, and I want to point out the division, in the chapter, to you once again. The first ten verses describe the believer's biography – the personal predicament that you and I were in. He talked to you about what God is going to do. He prayed for them that they would understand who God is and to know him – his plan, his power, the positions that he has in the ages to come for the body of Christ. Then he says that this body, that he is going to use in the heavenlies to do all of these wonderful things, is you! Look at you! Do you see who you are?

What's the body of Christ going to do? It is just going to exalt grace. Why? It will exalt grace because of who you are and what it took to get you into that exalted position that he's going to put you in. The body of Christ demonstrates the wisdom and the grace of God as nothing else in all creation ever will or can.

You were dead in sins and trespasses – that's the personal predicament you were in. Another way to put it is that you were lost – death is the issue in verses 1 –10 and how God has provided for your personal predicament through his grace.

Remember the first 10 verses deal with the time past on a personal basis in your life and what God has done to change that.

Beginning in verse 11, he deals with the dispensational problem that you faced. You were not only personally dead in sins, but you were also disadvantaged, and at the disadvantage, of being separated from God because you were a Gentile. You had a personal problem, and you also had a dispensational problem. And he begins, in verse 11, to deal with the dispensational issue.

Now, I want you to look at Colossians 2:13 because it summarizes the second chapter of the book of Ephesians in two phrases. Colossians 2:13 – “And you, being dead in your sins (that's Ephesians 2:1-10) and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.” Do you see the two things? Dead in sins is Ephesians 2:1-10, which is your personal situation. Dead in the uncircumcision of your flesh is your positional problem, which is Ephesians 2:11-22.

So, in one verse, and in just two little phrases, Paul summarizes what it takes him to say in 22 verses in Ephesians because, in Ephesians, he is amplifying who you are and how God's grace has reconciled and changed all of these things for you.

It is important for you to remember that beginning in Ephesians 2:11, we are dealing with the dispensational issues.

Now, there are three issues in the passage. First, in verses 11 and 12, you have the issue of separation, the alienation. Then in verses 13-18, you have the issue of reconciliation. Then in verses 19-22, you have the issue of unification, (unity, oneness).

Again, let me say to you that I purposely try not to give you a lot of outlines of passages. I said this to you when we were studying Romans. Some of you have asked me why I don't give you outlines of chapters and that kind of thing. While you are studying through, explore the book. The reason I want you to study that book is not because you are going to agree with everything in it, but

because you learn to read the scriptures and get the flow and the mental thought of the flow of the book. Do you see how those books have movements and flows to them? Well, I want you to get that. I try to point out those things to you.

In this passage here, you are going to see how he moves from separation and alienation to reconciliation, and then he summarizes it at the end with the great oneness. And I am trying to point those things out to you.

But, the reason I do not give you fancy little outlines is not because I can't do it. I used to do a lot of that during the first ten years of my preaching. I did an awful lot of that. But, as I pastored and since then, I have learned that when you teach outlines like that to men like you, you have to be careful.

If I were to hear you 5 years from now, you might be teaching that outline that I gave you. And that would break my heart to think that that outline made the rounds. Do you understand what I'm saying?

You tend to get oriented to thinking that the verse only says what that outline says about it. And every time you make an outline, and you use some kind of phonetic alliteration like "alienation, reconciliation, unification" (with the "ion" on the end), do you know what happens? It is good for memory aides, but do you know what people remember? They remember your goofy outline, and they tend not to remember the truth that was communicated. And I want you men to get the truths.

Now, when you're preaching and teaching, in your ministry, I will be real happy if I can disappear out of it. If you will learn the passages and learn the doctrine in the passages, then you can make your own outline to fit different occasions.

But I got to the place, in my own ministry (preaching at the Rescue Mission for years and pastoring for 3 or 4 years), where something dawned on me. While I was reading through some passages, and studying, I began to see some things in the passage that I hadn't seen before. And I sat down and said, "Why didn't I see something that simple, and precious, and obvious before?" Then it dawned on me that the reason was because I had been reading that passage thinking about it on the basis of an outline that a man gave me one time. And that outline about the passage really didn't fit the flow of the passage at all.

Do you remember COLD SOAP? The preaching and teaching situation determines a lot of what you are doing.

So, I am doing it (not giving you outlines) with malice and intent ahead of time – thoughtfully and purposely doing what I am doing. I don't want you to be disappointed because you are not getting a whole book of outlines. If you want a book of outlines, I have ten of them in my office, and I will give them to you. Or, I can tell you where to buy them, and you'll get some of the snappiest outlines you ever saw. They will give you all kinds of ideas.

But, the important thing is to know the doctrine. You have to understand it so you then have something to preach.

And let me emphasize to you, again, (especially to those of you who are preaching some), study to study to know, and preach out of the overflow. Don't just study to preach!

Now, I know, right now, you are in school, and that's a cheap thing to say to you because you have to study to keep up your grades and keep up your position. And right now, some of you have ministries where you have to preach and teach a couple times a week, and that gets heavy. And it's okay to preach and teach things that you are studying in class. Why are you studying them? Aren't you studying them to learn them, to know them, so you can go teach somebody else? It's okay to do that.

My point to you is to begin not to do all of your studying just to preach. A lot of men think they have to study fifteen hours a week getting the Sunday morning message ready and fifteen hours a week getting the Sunday night message ready. And then they don't have any time to get the

Wednesday night message because there are other little things to do. And so far, their hours total 50 hours a week.

I'm not suggesting that you shouldn't study, but I am suggesting that you should study a minimum of twenty hours a week, not to preach, but to know. Right now, you should be studying to know your lessons. If you do that, you will find out that you can preach out of the overflow.

Now that's enough of the lecture. We have plenty other things to do, but I wanted to remind you about that. I especially wanted to remind you about that while I was giving you a snappy little outline.

Ephesians 2:11-13 – “Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” Obviously, you see the tense change there. There is a “time past”, and there's a “but now”. There are things that were true of you that are not longer true, and there are things that are now true of you that are different. There is obviously a time change there.

I point out to you, as we rightly divide the word, there is a time in the bible called time past. And I'm not going to spend a lot of time in that passage drawing this little chart again for you, because I do it all the time. But, you have Paul's mentality about the dispensational issues and how they've changed in the “but now” section.

Now, there are three time periods – time past, but now, and then in verse 7, he talks about some ages to come.

In Romans 5, Paul gives you another view of his dispensational understanding, and he divides these three divisions down a little more finely. He talks about from Adam to Moses, then from Moses to Christ (not Christ on earth, but Christ in Paul's ministry). Now, Adam to Moses is called promise. We call it the dispensation of promise (Galatians 3). Moses to Christ is called the law. Then you have the dispensation of grace, which is but now. So, you have time past divided into two sections – Adam to Moses (promise) and Moses to Christ (law). Then you have Christ's heavenly ministry through Paul (the dispensation of grace). Then, in the future, you have the kingdom program, and after that, you have the dispensation of the fulness of times. So, you have five dispensations there. And if you want to go back and call the Garden of Eden a dispensation, you would call that innocence.

Scofield divides it up like this – innocence, conscience, human government, and promise. But conscience is a system of perception. It is not a system of rules. A dispensation is a system of a particular set of instructions given for man's obedience. Human government is not a dispensation; it is one of the divine institutions for the establishment of the race. (Do you remember our studies in Romans 13?) So, those two things are really something other than dispensational issues. Human government is in effect in every dispensation. It is one of the four divine institutions that God established in Genesis when he put man on the earth in order to establish mankind and protect mankind in the earth.

Now, in Genesis 3, the issue was the promise. Genesis 3:15 – He gave them the promise.

It is easier just to follow Paul's mentality – Adam to Moses, and call it promise like he does; Moses to Christ, and call it law; Christ to the rapture, and call it grace; and then the kingdom and the dispensation of the fulness of time out in the future. So, that is the easier way to divide up the dispensations.

And, this passage, in Ephesians 2, takes just the general overview. He is not really looking back so much before Abraham.

Now notice the issue of alienation in verses 11 and 12. He deals with this in two ways. In verse 11, he gives you social and racial divisions; and in verse 12, he gives you the spiritual and religious divisions.

Ephesians 2:11 – “Wherefore, remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, (this is a racial issue here – something you are by nature, it is part of who you are), who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands.” There is a division between people in time past. There are two groups of people – one group is called the Circumcision and one group is called the Uncircumcision. Now can you get any different than that – circumcision and uncircumcision? One is and one isn't. It is real simple, modern, American English.

You hear all this stuff about how these new bibles are supposedly translated in “easier to read English”. One of them will speak American one of these days, and everybody will throw it in the garbage can because Americans do not speak very well.

In Ephesians 2:11, there is one word that is repeated twice that really emphasizes that verse – “who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision”. These dudes call each other names! They are mad at each other. There's enmity between them. There's hatred between them. They despise one another. They don't love each other. They have contempt for each other. And if you don't believe that, you haven't thought about it very much. The Jew has absolute total contempt for the Gentile and the Gentile returns the favor.

Write down 1 Samuel 17:26 next to Ephesians 2:11 in your bible. In 1 Samuel 17:26, old David goes out there and looks out yonder at Goliath, and he talks about this “uncircumcised dog”. Well, you know he wasn't complimenting him when he said that. You understand that, don't you?

Turn to John 18:35, and see if you think old Pilate was being kind when he said this. “Pilate answered, Am I a Jew?” Do you think Pilate was trying to butter him up when he said that? Can't you just hear the contempt roll off his tongue? “I'm not a Jew, man!”

Look at Acts 16:20 and you'll see the same kind of thing. “And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city.” Do you see that? The Jew despised the Gentile, and the Gentile returned the favor in spades. They did not like each other.

So, there is enmity, hatred, hostility, and contempt (socially and racially) between the Gentile and the Jew. And that's a problem for you and me as Gentiles. Do you know why? Ephesians 2:12 – “That at that time ye were without Christ, (well why were they without Christ?), being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.” Do you see why it's a problem for the hatred and the division to be there? It's because one of those groups is advantaged and the other one isn't.

People are always talking about superiority. Do you realize that there is racial superiority in the word of God? Do you know who it is? Well, it isn't us! It's Israel! And the reason that national, racial, social superiority exists is because of a spiritual and religious superiority that God gave them. The Lord Jesus Christ belongs to those people. And as a Gentile, and in the flesh, and on the basis of who you are by nature, you are cut off because of the spiritual division and distinction that God has made between the Jews and the Gentiles.

Now, the most basic fundamental characteristic of time past is that distinction between the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision. (I guarantee you will see that on a test!) Paul is looking back there to that promise made to Abraham, and he is talking about that middle wall of partition that's been raised up between the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision. For Paul, when you talk about time past, the most basic issue that is being raised is where that promise is, and it is in Abraham's seed.

Look at the passage – “That at that time ye were without Christ.” They had no title rights to the messianic expectations of Israel. The Gentiles had no right to go up and stand on legal ground with Israel and say, “Jesus Christ belongs to us” because he didn't belong to them.

Why were they without Christ? Continuing in Ephesians 2:12 – “...being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” What a statement! They are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. The word “alien” means “a people without the rights of a citizen”. And they were aliens – people without the rights of citizenship.

How could the Uncircumcision obtain citizenship? The answer is in the commonwealth, in the nation of Israel. And they didn't have any rights in the nation Israel.

Turn to the book of Deuteronomy. God made a separation. Deuteronomy 7:6 – “For thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that *are* upon the face of the earth.” God Almighty chose the nation Israel, the Circumcision, to be a special people above everybody else on the earth. That is not talking about physically towering 7' or 8' tall people looking down on 4'6" people, but it is talking about spiritual privilege and position.

Look at Exodus 19:5,6 – “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” What is God doing with those people back there? He is developing a kingdom of priests. The issue with those people is the kingdom. A kingdom has to have a king. The king will be God and Israel will be a kingdom of priests, an holy nation, a nation set apart to God. Well, they are special people, and God Almighty separated them unto himself to be a special people.

Turn to Deuteronomy 4:7. Moses asked of him and this is what the nations can look at Israel and say. “For what nation *is there so great*, who *hath* God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God *is* in all *things that we call upon him for?*” People, there wasn't but one nation on the face of the earth that God held relationships with in time past. And it wasn't America! And it wasn't Germany! And it wasn't Ethiopia! And it wasn't India or China! Do you know who it was? It was those people right there – Israel. They were a special group of people.

And our problem, in time past, was that we were aliens. We did not have any rights in that group of people. We were cut off. We were strangers from the covenants of promise.

God made covenants in time past. A “covenant” is “a written contract, a legal document”. He made promises to those people through written, legal contracts. God contractually obligated himself to Israel to do things.

He never contractually obligated himself to do anything for you. Do you see that?

Well, then Israel has some advantages and we don't; so we're in trouble! We have a problem.

You need to take a piece of paper sometimes and on the right side of it take Ephesians 2:11,12 and write down all the details – without God, without hope, aliens, strangers, etc. Then you want to take Romans 9:4,5 on the left side of the paper and write the details down.

Watch what Paul says. Romans 9:4,5 – “Who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service *of God*, and the promises; Whose *are* the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.” Well look how rich they are, and look at all the advantages they have! They have the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the promises, the service of God, the law, the written word of God, the fathers (the patriarchs), and they have Christ!

Ephesians 2:12 says that we were without Christ. That is a problem! Do you know why? The promises of God center in Jesus Christ and, without him, there's no salvation for anybody. We're in trouble folks! Do you see the alienation, and the division, and the separation there? Well, that's what he's dealing with.

Ephesians 2:12 – “That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without

God in the world.” You didn’t have any claim. It all belonged to Israel, and you didn’t have anything that God ever promised you.

He says, “having no hope.” Hope is a confidence based on a creditable promise. You didn’t have any hope because God never gave you any promise, and without a promise, you couldn’t have a hope.

Now somebody will say, “Wait a minute preacher! Couldn’t Gentiles get saved in time past?” Well, could they? Yes, they could! But, did they get saved because God promised to save them? No, God made no covenant with the Uncircumcision. He made the covenant with the Circumcision. And God’s covenant to Israel was that if some of the Gentiles came up to join the ranks of Israel, then they could get in. Do you understand that?

Even in the millennium, the kingdom, when the salvation of God goes out to the nations of the earth, (and it’s the day of the great worldwide salvation), the salvation of the Gentiles is based on promises God made to Israel. The kingdom, where Gentile worldwide salvation is a reality, is the result God’s promise. What did God tell Abraham? “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” That is the promise God gave to Abraham. And when the nations of the earth are blessed out here, it will be in fulfillment of the promise that he made, the written agreement that he made with the nation Israel in time past.

And folks, you and I as Gentiles don’t match. We don’t meet it, and we don’t get in!

Isaiah 56:6,7 indicates that a Gentile can come and join the ranks of Israel and cease to be a Gentile (become a proselyte).

Esther 8:7 says that they became Jews.

Acts 2:10 talks about proselytes – come up and join the ranks of Israel and partake of the covenant by becoming circumcised, by moving from the ranks of the Gentiles to the ranks of Israel. But, the basis of it is the promise made to Israel.

He didn’t shut the door to the Gentiles. He just said, “If you stay in the ranks of the Gentiles, you can’t do it; you have to join the ranks of Israel.” Do you see that? It’s separation.

Isaiah 61:4-6 and Isaiah 60:1-3 are very clear – even when the Gentiles are subject in the kingdom, it is based on the promises that God gave to Israel.

Turn back to Ephesians 2:12 – “...strangers from the covenants of promise, (the promise God made to Abraham), having no hope, and without God in the world.” Well, that is some statement! I read that and marvel at it! Without God is bad enough, but to say that you are without God in the world is to make the thing so dark that you can’t even have any light in it.

Do you know what you just read about the world in Ephesians 2:2? If you are without God, that is lost; but to be without God in the world is to be totally victimized by Satan’s Policy of Evil. You are without God in the world and Satan’s Policy of Evil has complete total sway over you – darkness. You are given up to walk in the old ways and so forth – an idol-worshipping heathen.

1 Thessalonians 4:5 is talking about how they should walk. “Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God.” That’s it!

Galatians 4:8 – “Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.” The Gentiles have their own gods. The Gentile’s problem is not that God wouldn’t talk to them, but the problem was that they wouldn’t talk to him. Do you remember Romans 1? The separation is the result of the Gentile’s own choosing back there in Genesis, and God giving them up to walk in their own ways. Don’t forget Romans 1.

Now, the reason I emphasize this to you is because it is important! Ephesians 2:13 says “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh.” Now, you are not “made near” by joining ranks with Israel, but you are made near because Israel comes down to the Gentiles and God gives them up. He gave the Gentiles up, and now he gives Israel up, and Israel falls.

If you can locate where that division is, then you have “time past”. When you are studying your bible and you can locate that division, and you are finding books and verses in your bible where that division exists, you know you are in “time past”. When you find books and verses where there is no division, you have “but now”.

Let me show you. We talked a minute ago about knowing things and then believing it. Well, this is where the rubber hits the road and the fur hits the fan. Matthew 10:5,6 – “These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Are the division and the distinction there? Yes, and therefore I know what I have. I know that when I am reading the book of Matthew, it fits in “time past”. You can also look at Matthew 15:24.

Turn to Luke 19:9,10 – (he’s talking to Zacchaeus) “And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

You’ve heard people at the Rescue Mission and at Mission Conferences quote verse 10 all your life, but you never heard one of them quote verse 9, right? Do you know why? It’s because he said that the lost that he came to save are the lost sons of Abraham. Oh, that would dampen the Rescue Mission Meeting real quickly! Do you know why? It’s because Jews and Gentiles do not get along down at the Mission, just like they don’t get along anywhere else.

Look at John 12. You say, “The book of John talks about the world!” Yes, it does. John 12:20-22 – “And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.” Notice, Philip tells Andrew and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. Verse 23 – “And Jesus answered them, saying ...” Who did he answer? He answered Andrew and Philip. Do you know what he did? He ignored the Greeks. He never spoke with them. You can read that passage until you are bug-eyed. He never said one word to those Gentiles.

Now, how would you like it if you came here and started talking to me and I just ignored you? So you send somebody over here to get me, and I just start talking to him or her, but I don’t acknowledge you. (I am guilty of ignoring things that go on around me, but that’s because I am concentrating on something else.) But, I am talking about you sending me a message, and tapping me on the shoulder saying, “I want to see you.” And I just ignore you and treat you like you aren’t there. Do you reckon that would be courteous, or kind? Do you reckon that I would be interested in talking to you? You would get the message soon enough, wouldn’t you?

Well, that’s what Jesus is doing. And, do you know what you have? You have a division.

Turn to Acts 2. This is important, folks! The books from Matthew to John are in time past. The crucifixion takes place, Christ ascends into heaven, the Holy Spirit comes and everybody says, “Okay the dispensation of grace has begun!” “But now” is here, right? Wrong! Acts 2:14 – “But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of ~~Judea~~ Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem ...” Verse 22 – “Ye men of Israel ...” Verse 36 – “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly ...” Isn’t that something? Any Gentiles that would have been there wouldn’t have been listening to him, would they? Do you know whom he is talking to? He says, “I’m not talking to you birds, but I’m talking to you guys. I’m not talking to you birds; I’m talking to you brethren.”

Acts 3:25 – “Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you.” That’s pretty clear, isn’t it?

Acts 11:19 – “Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.” They are still preaching to “none but unto the Jews only.”

Do you know where you have to go in your bible to find verses that don't make any distinctions? You better not run over there to Acts 1-7. You have to go to Romans through Philemon in your bible, (the Pauline Epistles – but now), before you find that distinction gone.

And when you get over to the book of Hebrews, do you know what Hebrews does? Hebrews lays that distinction back on you! The body of Christ will be caught up in the air with Christ. Read Hebrews to Revelation, and you'll find that distinction is back again in those books. Do you know what you have? You can locate 'time past' by the distinction being there. You can locate 'but now' by the distinction not being there. And when the distinction is gone again, you know you lost that and have gone into whatever is next. That is an important division.

Go back to Ephesians 2 because I want you to see something in verses 13 and 14 that most people miss. I don't want you to miss it! Verses 11 and 12 are talking about the dispensational alienation. Verses 13-18 begin to talk about reconciliation. The reconciliation that he talks about is in two parts. Verses 13-15 are talking about a dispensational reconciliation. Verses 16-18 are talking about the reconciliation in the body of Christ.

Look at Ephesians 2:13 – “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” How were they far off? They were far off dispensationally, right? How are they made near? They are made near dispensationally by the blood of Christ.

Verse 14 – “For he is our peace, who hath made both one.” How did he make them both one? It wasn't in the body of Christ, because all the Gentiles and all the Jews who had the distinction removed between them are not all in the body of Christ, are they?

There are four kinds of reconciliations in Paul's epistles:

1. A dispensational reconciliation.
2. An individual reconciliation.
3. A universal reconciliation of all the system – heaven and earth.
4. The reconciliation into the body of Christ.

The dispensational reconciliation is called the reconciliation of the world. Romans 11:15 – “For if the casting away of them *be* the reconciling of the world, what *shall* the receiving of *them be*, but life from the dead?”

When Israel fell, did all the Gentiles get eternal life? You know better than that; that's crazy! Reconciliation does not have anything to do with getting eternal life. That is not the issue! “Reconciliation” means, “to change the status, to bring together again”. Israel is cast away, now Israel and the Gentiles are both in unbelief. Now the world has been reconciled. How? It's because the distinction is gone. Now, does anybody have any privilege over the other regarding salvation?

He is saying, “You that once were far off, you now are made near.” Now there is 'a nearness'. Now there is a dispensational reconciliation – Romans 11:15, 2 Corinthians 5:18,19.

I told you when we studied Romans that you must understand those reconciliations, or you will never get through these things.

Ephesians 2:13-15 doesn't have anything to do with individual reconciliation back to God, and getting eternal life and justification and righteousness, and being in the body of Christ. Those verses have to do with the dispensational distinctions in verses 11 and 12 being done away with.

Verses 14,15 – “For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances.” Why did he do that? Why did he break down the dispensational distinction? Well, what does the verse say? It says that he did it so he could create “one new man, so making peace” not just dispensationally but individually. Do you see that?

Now you will hear people teach that passage until you are blue in the face, and nine out of ten of them won't get that out of the passage. But, I want you to see it because if don't understand it to be that way, you'll wind up getting everybody saved, and it won't work.

There isn't any sense in not recognizing what he is saying. All you have to do is understand the difference between those four different reconciliations, and two of them are here in this passage. The word isn't used down through there, but that is not the point, the doctrine is.

The first one is the distinction, the separation, and the alienation. The dispensational alienation, in verses 11 and 12, is done away with. And now, the entire world stands on an equal footing before God, and all of the world can be saved. But, in time past they couldn't.

Then, in verses 16-18, the believers, (the believing Jew and the believing Gentile), are placed together in the body of Christ – the reconciliation into one body.

Ephesians 1:13 – “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” People say, “It says ‘in Christ’ and ‘by the blood’, so it has to be believers.”

I keep telling you that that term “in Christ” is a redemptive term. If that verse is saying that in Christ everybody that was far off is now made nigh, that won't work. Weren't there some Gentiles in time past that didn't get in Christ? Sure there were. Were they far off? Yes, they were. Are they far off now? No, they aren't. Is the word of faith nigh unto them? Isn't the opportunity given to them without any distinction? Doesn't Paul have a totally unrestricted apostleship and ministry to go to all men without distinction today? They can get saved quick as a Jew can today. They couldn't in time past, but they can today. There is no more distinction. They are one. They are all on the same level today – both of them with no hope except in the gospel. The hope is in Christ.

2 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; To wit, that God was in Christ, (that's the cross, the blood of Christ), reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” Folks, forget about the church, the body of Christ and being reconciled in it. The basis of the dispensation of grace and the way that God could produce the dispensation of grace itself is that cross.

Do you understand that in the prophetic program the cross is the source of enmity and hatred between God and man? Do you remember what God said his response is going to be because of man's crucifixion of his Son? Sit here until I make your enemies your footstool; I'll speak to them in my wrath. Do you remember what Paul says God's attitude towards the world is today? It is grace and peace not judgment and war. The only way God Almighty can send out his grace is by the cross. The basis of it all is the cross.

Where does all grace come from? What is the definition of grace? It's all that God is free to do for you through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Don't you forget that, or I'll disown that I ever knew you!

Ephesians 2:13 – “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh.” There is a oneness, a total equality. All men stand before God today on the same basis.

Verse 14 – “For he is our peace, who hath made both one.” And that oneness is that they both stand here on an equal basis, both able to be individually reconciled back to God and thereby placed into the body of Christ when they exercise faith.

“For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments

contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace.” He made peace, he made both one, he broke down the middle wall of partition, and he abolished all the religious ordinances. Why? So that he then could form the church, the body of Christ. Do you know why he initiated the dispensation of grace and removed all those obstacles? He did it so he could form that ‘one new man’.

Verse 16 – “And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross.” Please don’t miss the issue that “being one”, in verse 14, has to do with that dispensational equality. Verse 16 is when you get into the “one body”.

Now, the details of that dispensational change are given down in verses 19-22 – “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners.” Where did you read about strangers and foreigners? You read it in verse 12. What is true in verse 12 is no longer true. Continuing “... but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” What a change being in the body of Christ makes on our position.

Ephesians 2:1-10 describe our personal condition as being dead (lost) in sins. Verses 11-22 describe our position as disadvantaged Gentiles, the disadvantage of being separated.

Verses 11 and 12 describe that separation, the alienation. Verses 13-18 describe the reconciliation that is in operation today. Verses 19-22 describe the unification of the purposes and the programs of God.

Verses 11-22 are dispensational in nature, while the first 10 verses are personal in nature. Don't fail to observe the distinction between the first 10 verses and the last 12 verses in the context of the personal condition and then the dispensational position.

Ephesians 2:11-13 – “Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

We talked about those verses in the last lesson; and I tried to show you that there is a distinction between what Paul calls ‘time past’ and what he calls ‘but now’. It is a distinction between the Circumcision on the one hand and the Uncircumcision on the other hand. There is a group of people called the Circumcision, and that is Israel; and there is a group of people called the Uncircumcision, and that is the Gentiles. The basic characteristic of time past is that distinction.

Therefore, I can locate the books of the bible that are in time past. Matthew to John are in time past because that distinction is there.

The crucifixion of Christ takes place, followed by his resurrection and ascension into heaven. The Holy Spirit comes. That distinction is in, at least, the first seven chapters of Acts. That distinction is still in existence. Then the fall of Israel takes place in chapter 7, and the diminishing of Israel takes place from chapters 7 to 28. And then you have Paul's epistles where that distinction is done away with.

So, when you are looking at the issue of rightly dividing the word of truth, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and the first section of the book of Acts will fit in ‘time past’. Then you will have the Pauline Epistles (Romans through Philemon), which is the ‘but now’. Then you have the Hebrew Epistles in the future where the distinction, once again, manifests itself.

So, you want to be sure that you recognize the importance of the passage in helping you to locate and rightly divide ‘time past’ and ‘but now’.

Now, I want you to go on with me tonight in verses 13 and 14, and notice carefully these issues about the dispensational change that is taking place here.

Ephesians 2:13-15 – “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh (near) by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both (Jew and Gentile) one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, (hatred, hostility), *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace.”

Now, he says, “ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh.” There has been a dispensational change here. It is not an individual issue about “you” who once were lost are now saved; or “you” who once were separated and alienated from God are now reconciled to God, and now you are all saved people. But, rather, it is a dispensational change, and he gives you the details of the change in verses 19-22. In those verses, he describes the position of nearness, and so forth – that you are no more strangers and foreigners and so forth.

But, my point to you is that you have to remember that there are four different types of reconciliations in Paul's epistles.

First is individual, personal reconciliation. You individually, personally, have your status changed from a child of the devil to a child of God, from an enemy of God to a friend of God.

Second, is the world is reconciled to God. The world, in time past, was estranged and alienated from God, because Israel was God's people, and the Gentiles were not. But, the world is now reconciled to God. Romans 11:15 says that the casting away of Israel resulted in the reconciling of the world. And today there is a reconciliation of the world.

2 Corinthians 5:18,19 – God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. That does not mean the world is saved, but the world's condition, their position before God, has been changed from that of alienated and 'unsavable' and untouchable to that of having the opportunity of hearing the gospel on an equal basis.

That reconciliation is the reconciliation that is being dealt with in Ephesians 2:13,14 and the first of part of verse 15. When he talks about "you that are far off are made near", he is not talking about you far off Gentiles in time past are now all saved people; because that isn't true, is it? No! He is talking about that dispensational change that has taken place where he has removed the middle wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles, and the Gentiles are no longer cut off. He has removed the distinction, and now there is no difference between Jew and Gentile as far as God is concerned. The ground is level at the foot of the cross. (If you ever heard that expression, you heard a Pauline expression.) That is exactly what he is talking about.

Ephesians 2:13 – "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off ..." That is past tense (were). Back in time past you were far off, but now you are nigh. All the people that were far off are now near. Their position changed. You are made nigh "by the blood of Christ". God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. The basis upon which the dispensation of grace operates is the blood of Christ. The basis upon which the reconciliation of the world, and the extension of grace rather than wrath, operates is the blood of Christ. The reason God can extend grace today rather than wrath is because of the blood of Christ, the cross.

In Ephesians 2:16, he says, "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." What did the cross do in the prophetic program? The cross was the reason for the wrath of God, the hatred and the enmity in the prophetic program. Isn't that right?

In the dispensation of grace, the cross slays (does away with) the wrath and provides grace for a world of guilty undeserving sinners.

Ephesians 2:13 – "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Notice verse 17 – "And (Christ) came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." Do you see that past tense issue there? In time past, the Gentiles were far off, and Israel was nigh.

When we studied through Matthew, I pointed out to you, in Matthew 8, that every time Jesus Christ helped a Gentile, he did it from afar off. He did it from a distance. Why? It is a dispensational issue. He is distinguishing, and describing and pointing out what the situation was there.

Now, people will use Ephesians 2:13 and 2:17 to try to trip you up. Verse 13 – "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh." Verse 17 – "And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." People will use those verses on you sometimes to try to prove that the body of Christ began in Acts 2.

Isaiah 57:19 – "I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to *him that is far off*, and to *him that is near*, saith the LORD; and I will heal him." Now, when you look at the commentaries, they will tell you Paul is quoting that passage (Acts 2). It is very doubtful that he is quoting it, but that is what they say he is doing.

Well, who is “*him that is far off*”? That is Israel out among the Gentiles. And “*him that is near*” is Israel still there in the land. But, most of the commentaries take that and make that “far off” to be the Gentiles, but, obviously, it isn’t. He has never said, “peace, peace” to the Gentiles there.

Here is another verse that people use on you. Acts 2:39 – “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.” They will say, “See, that’s the promises to the Gentiles.” Now what is the answer to that? Daniel 9:7 is obviously the reference. Are there any Gentiles being talked to in Acts 2? Are there any Gentiles in Acts 2 that have a promise? Doesn’t that verse say, “For the promise is unto you?” Well, look at Acts 3:25,26 and see who the promises belong to. Don’t they belong to Israel?

Look back at Ephesians 2:14 – “For he is our peace, who hath made both (Jew and Gentile) one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.” Do you see any of that in Acts 2? You don’t! The “our” there is Jew and Gentile.

He is saying, “to you Jews here and to all of your children that are far off” (like Isaiah 57).

So, Daniel 9:7 is the cross-reference on Acts 2:38. So, don’t let somebody trip you up there.

John 11:52 – “And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.” Again, that is Israel that is scattered – James 1:1, 1 Peter 1.

So, you want to know where some of those verses are and what is going on there.

Ephesians 2:14,15 – “For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace.” The reason that he has broken down the middle wall of partition, and the reason he has taken away the enmity and the hostility between the Jews and Gentiles is so that, of the two, he can create the one new man. He, dispensationally, breaks down the barrier and, dispensationally, makes peace so that he can create the one new man, the church, the body of Christ in the dispensation of grace.

“For he is our peace.” He is the one who is our peace. He alone is our peace. “For he (emphatic) is our peace, who hath made both one.” Now in order to explain how he is the peace, he gives you some things in verses 14 and 15.

And, you want to remember that he is talking dispensationally here until he gets down to verse 16.

“For he is our peace, who hath made both one, (Jew and Gentile on an equal basis, no difference), and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*.” He made us both one by taking that middle wall (the division) and doing away with it. How did he do that? “Having abolished in his flesh (the cross) the enmity, (hostility, hatred – where did it come from?), *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances.”

Now, you are familiar with the middle wall of partition. We talked about it before. The middle wall of partition was a division that was caused by the status of Israel in time past. In time past, God gave a special position to the nation Israel, and God made a division between Jew and Gentile.

I trust I do not need to go over that with you in this lesson. I trust you understand that God made that division.

But, the nation Israel took that God-ordained division between them and the nations, and they allowed the fact that they were kin to Adam, also, to cause enmity and hostility and hatred to develop between them and the Gentiles. If a Jew had ever done what a Jew should have done, he would always have been a Universalist. He should always have looked out to the Gentiles and said, “We are the channel of blessing of God to the nations. We’re not the ‘end in ourselves’, but we’re the channel through which the blessing of God will go out to the nations of earth. So let us be who God called us to be.

But, they did just what we do today. They didn't function on the basis of who God made them to be any better than the believer, today, functions on the basis of who God made them to be.

But, you want to understand what is going on. Rather than being a blessing, through their pride and arrogance, they developed a wall of their own. And, when Paul refers to the middle wall of partition, it is because they actually had a wall that they had built around the temple. It was a four-foot high marble slab. There is a picture of it in the [International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#). And there is a little inscription on it that says, "No Gentiles are to go past this little fence; and any of you that do will be guilty of your own death; because you will get killed when you do, and it's your own fault". (Now, I am paraphrasing.)

But they have pieces of this little marble fence that they excavated, and the pieces are kept in the British Museum in England.

They actually built that marble fence to keep the Gentiles out. And that middle wall of partition, and the hostility associated with it, was something!

Notice in Acts 21 that the apostle Paul almost got killed because the Jews thought he brought a Gentile past that middle wall of partition. Acts 21:27,28 – "And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all *men* every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place." So, they think that he brought a bunch of Gentiles into the temple, inside of that middle wall of partition.

Verses 29,30 – "(For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.) And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut." They took him out and shut the door so he couldn't get back in. And they went forth to kill him. They are mad at the guy. It was a serious infraction if you were to take a Gentile beyond that little marble screen and into the temple. There was tremendous hostility, and it was symbolized by that middle wall of partition.

Now, in the bible, the middle wall of partition is not that little screen. The middle wall of partition that God built has to do with the separation that he made between the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision. He calls Abraham out (Genesis 12); he gives him the sign of circumcision (Genesis 17), and he makes them a separate people in the earth.

Look at Ephesians 2:15 – "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances." God adds the law to Israel, and the law makes the middle wall of partition strong. It makes it clear.

Read Deuteronomy 4:5-10, Leviticus 20:22-25, and Ezekiel 44:23. You will see that the priests were instructed to teach the differences, in time past, to the people. Those distinctions, that law, makes that middle wall of partition a strong entity. And Israel had that law, and the Gentiles didn't have it. And the law said, "You are different. Go show your difference!". And it made that thing strong, and it codified and legally established that difference.

So, Christ comes and does what? He says, "I am going to make peace between you guys. How am I going to do it? Well, I am going to do away with your special status, and I am going to take that middle wall of partition out of the way. And, I am going to abolish the thing that makes it strong – the law of commandments in ordinances. I am going to take away all the things that made you different."

Please notice the word "abolish" in Ephesians 2:15. He nullified them; he did away with them; he took them out of the way; he rendered them completely inoperative. When you abolish something, you just bust it to smithereens. It is gone, isn't it?

Ephesians 2:15 – “Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances.” Notice that the word “abolished” is in past tense.

Verse 14 is past tense – “hath broken down the middle wall.”

These are things that are already true and have already been accomplished when the book of Ephesians was written. This is not new truth that is now being accomplished. This is something that has already been accomplished.

The dispensation of grace did not just begin when the book of Ephesians was written. It began back there with Paul, and it is something that is being realized. There are no differences in the dispensation of grace. The middle wall being broken down is obvious to you in the book of Romans. It is obvious in the book of Corinthians. It is obvious in the book of Galatians.

Ephesians 2:14 – “For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace.” The Lord Jesus Christ has nullified, abolished, the law. The law no longer holds sway. The law system is no longer the system. The law was in time past, and the law was after the cross and in the beginning of Acts, and the law will be in the kingdom, but the law is not the issue in the dispensation of grace. The Old Testament is in time past; the New Testament is in the kingdom – the law being written in their hearts, the law being the righteous requirement. But, Christ is the end of those things. Christ has taken the law of commandments contained in ordinances and abolished it. Christ has abolished all of the religious ordinances. Do you get that? Jesus Christ abolished all religious ordinances.

Religious ordinances are not the program today. Now, I don't care if you have seven ordinances or two ordinances. Do you know how many ordinances there are today? There are none! I don't care if you are a Catholic and you say that there are seven, or if you are a Protestant and you say that there are just two ordinances today. Christ abolished all of them! That is not the program for today.

Colossians 2:14 – “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, (how?), nailing it to his cross.” In his flesh, he abolished the law. What did he do? He nailed it to his cross. It is dead!

Verses 15-17 – “*And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: Which are a shadow of things to come.” Religious ordinances are not the program for today.

Colossians 2:20-22 – “Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?” Do you know who teaches religious ordinances today? God doesn't! Men teach religious ordinances! You want to remember that! That is why it is important to discuss, and to point out, and to maintain the liberty from the religious ceremonies and ordinances of the past.

Colossians 2:16 – “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: Which are a shadow of things to come.” Notice that it doesn't say, “Which were a shadow of things to come.” These ordinances back here under law taught those people doctrine about something that was to come. Here we are in the present, the book of Colossians, doctrine for today, and these things back here are, right now, a shadow of things to come.

Do you know what you are going to find? If you study Ezekiel 44-47, you will find meat, drink, new moon, and sabbath days. Read Ezekiel 45:17, and Isaiah 66:23, and you will find that those things mentioned in that passage are things that will, once again, be operative in the kingdom when

that distinction is put up again. Those religious ordinances will be operating in the kingdom, but they will no longer be operating on the basis of the Old Covenant. In the kingdom, they will be performed as memorials to the crosswork of Christ. The ceremonial correctness and so forth will go back during the kingdom.

Colossians 2:17 is a verse most people never notice. The law, as well as the prophets, prophesy of that kingdom. Jesus said, "I have not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but I have come to fulfill them." And the way he will fulfill the law, (things the law pictured ahead of time), and the way he will fulfill the prophets is by setting up that kingdom. And the things that the law typified, back in time past, will be a reality.

There is something I want you to notice about what he says about taking away the law. Ephesians 2:15 – "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances." The issue about the law being set aside and done away with (Galatians 4 and 5) is a piece of information about that Old Covenant being fulfilled in Christ, and having its end, and so forth.

That is some information that is a particular part of the revelation that is given to the apostle Paul. There is something very important for you to understand about that information.

Turn to Hebrews 9 and notice that that information also affects the nation Israel. Hebrews 9:8,9 – "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which *was* a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience." In other words, the guy in time past came to the tabernacle, and the sacrifices that he offered couldn't take away sin and give him a clear standing before God.

Hebrews 9:10 – "*Which stood* only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed *on them* until the time of reformation." Carnal ordinances are just some physical things that they were doing.

Verse 11-15 – "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*. For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

When the Lord Jesus Christ died at Calvary, he died and shed the blood of the new testament. And the blood that he shed paid for the transgressions under the old testament, and it did away with the old testament. It gave the mechanism whereby the old testament could be replaced with a new testament, a new covenant, one which would completely and totally forgive sins. The old covenant, in time past, had all of these things that they did that could not take away sin. They were only vehicles whereby a man could express his faith.

God worked on a forbearance system. (Do you remember Romans 3:25?) God worked on a forbearance system, in time past, knowing that Calvary was coming. He forbore; he gave them an extension of time for the payment of a debt. Knowing that Calvary was coming, God would see their faith and honor their faith in lieu of the blood of Christ and justify those people.

But where do you learn about that? You learn about that from Paul.

The new covenant is different from every other covenant that God ever made in two respects. Number one, the new covenant is "all spiritual" (Jeremiah 31:31-34 is where it is listed in the old testament.) There are no legal stipulations; there is no land; there is no throne. It is "all spiritual", and

it is the 'enablement' whereby the nation Israel is going to be able to receive the blessings under the other covenants that God gave them.

God told Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." What seed of Israel is going to be a blessing to anybody? Isn't the seed of Israel also the seed of Adam? Well, can one son of Adam be a blessing to another son of Adam? He doesn't have anything to give him. So, how is it that the nation Israel can ever become a blessing to the nations? Well, the nation Israel in Christ can be a blessing, can't they?

So, the new covenant is the mechanism. He says that Christ will bless them with the spiritual blessings of the new covenant, which will enable them then to go out and be the blessing to the nations.

There's the Palestinian covenant to get the land – he says you do this, this, and this and you get the land. When will they ever do this, this, and this and get the land? There is not but one way. God comes in the person of Christ and does for the nation Israel what the nation would never be able to do for itself. He provides the "enablement" for that nation to receive all those covenants and promises and blessings.

The new covenant is special in another way. It is the only covenant that God promised to make before he made it. (He just came and made them all the other covenants.) But, he promised to make the new covenant. Then he made it at Calvary. It will be fulfilled in the kingdom. He promised it in time past (Jeremiah 31). Christ shed his blood. It's the blood of the new testament. And, it won't be fulfilled until the kingdom.

You say, "Well, why in the world did he do all of that?" Why did he promise it, shed the blood, and then wait until the kingdom to fulfill it? He did it that way because without the revelation of the mystery committed to Paul, the new covenant could never be a reality. Why? What is the cross? It is the blood of the new covenant. This mystery, (the revelation given to Paul), is the revelation of all that was accomplished by that cross. If you want to understand all that the blood of Christ accomplished, where do you go first in the bible? You go to Paul first. Paul is given a revelation, and it's his revelation that completes their understanding of their program as well as the fact that it tells us about our program.

In 2 Corinthians 3:6, he says that God "hath made us able ministers of the new testament", the new covenant. And he calls himself an able minister of the new testament because he was the "revelator" of what made the fulfillment of that new testament possible. It was Paul that was given the information that was the manifestation of all that the cross had accomplished; and you would not understand without Paul's revelation. Think now in the context of Romans 3:21-26. You would not understand how God, in his forbearance, was just in forgiving sins in time past. You wouldn't understand how the blood of Christ can take away all the sins and so forth. The book of Hebrews itself is written in the light of the truths revealed to Paul. And without Paul's revelation, you wouldn't be able to say what the book of Hebrews says about the fact that he took the old covenant away that he might put the new covenant in place.

So, it is important that you understand when Paul says that Christ "abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances", that Paul's information is information that affects not only us, but all those carnal ordinances are done away with. And now, the manifestation of the blood of Christ, and all that is accomplished through that blood, and the reality of what all these things, in time past, pointed to will be in the kingdom. In the kingdom, they will no longer offer sacrifices for sins, in the sense that they offered them back in time past. In the kingdom, they will offer them as memorials.

Did the sacrifices in time past take away sin? No, they did not, and they won't take away sin in the kingdom either. But, what will be the difference? In time past, when they sacrificed an animal, did they know it pointed to Calvary? No, they did not have any idea about that? They did not know

what was taking away their sin. They did not know how it was accomplished. In the kingdom, will they know those things? Yes, they will because of Paul's revelation about the finished work and all that God has done there.

Go back to Ephesians 2:15 – "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace." Christ has abolished the religious ordinances. They are not the issue today so we do not have any religious ordinances to keep today.

Now why did he do it? Continuing in verse 15 – "...for to make in himself of twain (of two) one new man, so making peace." The one new man is the body of Christ – Jew and Gentile on an equal basis placed into the one body, the one body being a new man, a new type of mankind.

2 Corinthians 5:16,17 – "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more. Therefore (since the distinction is gone) if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." There is a new program going on folks. Today, there is a new creature.

The word "creature" means, "all living creation". God is producing a new living creation now, a new man, a new species of human beings.

Colossians 1:18 – "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, (Christ is the beginning), the firstborn from the dead." Jesus Christ died at Calvary. When he died at Calvary, God raised him from the dead. When he came up from the dead, God said that he is the first born from the dead. Then, he spent some time on earth before his ascension.

Do you know the difference between being the "only begotten" and the "first begotten"? If you are the only one, is there any other one? If you are the first one, are there some more? There have to be or the word "first" wouldn't mean anything. The firstborn from the dead means the first one born from the dead with a resurrection body in a line of people that will be born from the dead just like him.

Romans 8:29 – "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." At the rapture of the church (the body of Christ) Christ comes back and receives the church unto himself. The head of the body comes and receives this body, and when we are united at the rapture that one new man is completed – the head of the body eternally joined together in reality.

And a new type of mankind has been created who will inhabit the heavenly places in the ages to come, and that is the issue. That is the reason God breaks down the middle wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles. He changes the dispensational structure in "but now" and puts Israel on an equal basis, and he does away with the advantage that they had in time past, and he reconciles them together through the blood of Christ. He reconciles the believing Jew and Gentile together in one body, one spiritual organism. He takes the two and makes one new man so making peace.

Ephesians 2:16,17 – "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." That is absolute total equality in the church, the body of Christ. That is the reconciliation in the body.

Ephesians 2:13-15 is the dispensational reconciliation. Verse 16 is being reconciled unto God in one body. That is being placed together in that body of Christ, a spiritual unit of believers wherein there is absolute total spiritual equality – everybody blessed equally in Christ.

Verse 16 – "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."

Again, I say to you, in the mystery program, the cross slays the enmity. In the prophetic program, in the Old Testament, the cross was the creator, the maker, of enmity (Psalm 2 and 110). But there is a change in the program – the dispensation of grace begins.

Verse 16 – “And that he might reconcile both unto God.” The word “reconciliation” means “to bring together again”. “And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross.” That “one body” is the body of Christ (Galatians 3:27,28; Ephesians 3:6; and so forth).

He did it “by the cross”. Ephesians 2:16 is a verse that people will use on you to try to demonstrate that the body of Christ began at Calvary. People will say, “If Jesus Christ, by the cross, has reconciled Jew and Gentile together in one body, then that is where the body of Christ began – right here at Calvary.” Do you see how they get that?

I have had people, time and again, explain Ephesians 2:16 to me in that way. “And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross”, and they say, “Therefore, that’s when it started!”

What does it say? It says, “by the cross”. There is a difference between the word “how” and the word “when”. There is a difference between the instrument by which something is accomplished and the time that it is done.

I will give you an illustration. John 1:17 – “For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” How was the law given? It was given by Moses. How was grace given? It was given by Christ.

Well, let me ask you something. When was the law given? That verse won’t help you with that, will it? Was it given when Moses was a baby in the bulrushes? Was it given when he was 40 years old, when he went out there to deliver Israel, and they rejected him? Was it given 40 years later when he was 80 years old and came and delivered them? No, it wasn’t given until he took them out of Egypt and crossed the Red Sea out in the wilderness. Then he went up on the mountain, and God gave it to him. Do you see that? How it came does not tell you when it came! And, the same is true of grace!

Now, you think about what people are saying when they conclude that the body of Christ began at the cross. Where was Jesus Christ three days after the cross? He was in the heart of the earth. You have the body of Christ beginning before the resurrection. Folks, that is just laughable! You have the body of Christ beginning even before the Holy Spirit, (who baptizes Jew and Gentile into one body), comes.

No, you don’t need to do that kind of thing. The body of Christ begins when God began it (with Paul). But, the instrument, the provision, is the cross. If you say it began at the cross, you might as well just go back over yonder to Adam unless you begin it where God says that he begins it.

Student’s question: When you take the mystery out of there, and the old testament prophets looked forward to the kingdom, wasn’t that in light of the Messiah, but not necessarily the cross? They didn’t know about the cross even with Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22, right?

Richard’s answer: They understand it. Look at 1 Peter 1:9-11 – “Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *yoursouls*. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the *grace that should come* unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” They don’t understand what the sufferings are, and they don’t understand the time references about it, even though they gave the prophecies.

Student’s response: But they knew about the Messiah because it was based on them getting the kingdom.

www.GraceGospel.eu

Richard's response: Yes.

Ephesians 2:13-15 – “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace.”

Notice and remember that the middle wall of partition has been broken down. The middle wall of partition is the division that is caused by the separate status of the nation Israel. There is a division – a middle wall of partition is raised up, the Circumcision on one hand and the Uncircumcision on the other hand. It starts in Genesis 12. God makes covenants with Abraham, and he formalizes it with the sign of circumcision. Then the enmity, (hatred, hostility), in Ephesians 2:15, that develops between the two camps is found in the law of commandments contained in ordinances. The law came along and fortified the division, and that law resulted in a tremendous hostility being produced between Israel and the nations round about them. But, Christ has come and he made peace. He has broken down the middle wall of partition. He has taken away the separate status of Israel and the nations, and he has reconciled the world. He has placed the world on one continuous even plane before God. The reason that he did it is that he might make one new man of the twain (the Jew and Gentile).

Verse 16 – “And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.” That is the *reconciliation into one body* – the formation of the church, the body of Christ.

Verse 17 – “And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.” He has broken down the spiritual wall in verse 13; he made them nigh. He has broken down the legal wall in verses 14 and 15, and he has also broken down the physical wall in verses 16 and 17. So, there is an absolute complete oneness. The enmity is gone – “having slain the enmity thereby.” So, he comes and preaches “peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.” Peace is proclaimed. The enmity is gone, so he can preach the gospel to both.

Again, there are two types of reconciliations in the passage. In verses 13-15, he is talking about the *dispensational reconciliation* – the reconciling of the world, the distinction between Jew and Gentile being done away with. Then he talks about the *reconciliation into the church the body of Christ* in verse 16. And it is important to keep those two things separated.

There are a couple of things in the passage that I would like for you to notice before we move on, especially about verse 15. In verse 15 he says, “Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances.” You will occasionally run into a viewpoint about that verse that I probably should make a comment about. Some of the “Acts 28 brethren” maintain that “the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances” is a reference to the decrees that were given in Acts 15 after the Jewish Conference, rather than that being the law of Moses.

Turn to Acts 15. Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem and met with the church there. They had the big conclave about the position of the Gentile believers.

Acts 15:22 – It pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, that they would write letters (verse 23) to the Gentiles and tell them (verses 24,25) that people went out from Jerusalem and tell them that they had to keep the law of Moses, but we didn’t send them.

Verses 27-29 – “We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell *you* the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from

things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.”

So, when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch. When they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle. That epistle that is written (verses 23-29) is the decree, (the joint communiqué), that was put out at the end of the Jerusalem Conference.

(It is like when our President attends a Summit Meeting and at the end they put out a joint communiqué, a joint statement.)

Well, here is the official statement from the conference. They take that and deliver it to the Gentiles.

Look at Acts 16:4. Paul is now going out on his apostolic journey. “And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.” Now that is the verse that a “28’er” will use to demonstrate that the decrees, the things that were decided upon in the Jerusalem Meeting, are ordinances. They were things that were ordained of the apostles and elders for the Gentile churches to observe. And they will take Acts 16:4 and push that and say that the commandments contained in ordinances are really these commandments and not the law of Moses. They say that, in Ephesians 2, that legal system that the Jerusalem church imposed on the Gentiles is now being done away after Acts 28.

Now, that probably sounds a little wild to some of you to start with. It is a different kind of a system, and you have to get the mentality that goes before it in order to understand it. But, once you get their mentality, it still doesn't make a lot of sense because it sort of defies words.

Gentlemen, there is a thing in teaching where you can teach and teach and teach, but if the words you say do not make sense and don't add up, thinking people will not agree with you. When you do a lot of talking and sticking verses together, but none of it ever comes out to a rational conclusion, thinking people will not agree with you. You can make big broad statements and unthinking people, or reckless people, will follow that bold and broad statement you make and go with it. But, statements like that basically just appeal to ignorance and to a lack of understanding.

A lot of flashy people come along and put a bunch of verses together and say, “Boy, aren't we getting something?”

But, you back off and say, “What do you have?”

And they don't understand.

I was teaching at a meeting, not too long ago, in the southern part of the country. After the meeting, one of these brethren came up and wanted to show me how the thing began in Acts 28. So we started talking about some things and he was giving me verse after verse saying that the Gentiles in Galatia are not Gentiles in Ephesians, and he went on and on and on. We were going back and forth and back and forth about different things. He kept talking about the promise— the book of Acts, the dispensation of promise.

I finally stopped him and asked him one real simple question, “What is the main issue in the promise?” We were in Romans 4:13 where it says, “For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world.” So, I said, “Tell me how is Abraham going to be the heir of world?”

Do you remember when we went over those things? The central ingredient of the promise of Abraham being the heir of world is eternal life. Abraham is dead! If Abraham was going to be heir of the world, he had to be resurrected. He had to have eternal life. That is the main issue there. That is the promise. That is the basic heart issue of the promise.

Well, I asked this boy, “Do you have eternal life?”

He said, “Yes.”

I said, "Then you have what was promised to Abraham. How did you get it?"

That dear boy just went off the wall.

I told him and I'm telling you, "Somebody taught you a bunch of stuff, but you never thought through what you had been hearing." And I tell you that about everything – think through what I teach and what anybody else teaches you.

And the Acts 28 thing is the same way. People make a basic false assumption and then try to put everything else into that false assumption. They assume that Acts 28 marks the beginning of something new.

When we get around to studying the book of Acts, you will see something interesting. Convince yourself of it, and just sit down and read the book of Acts. The departures from the old program to the new program, (from the kingdom program to the mystery program), always come in the middle of the book of Acts with the raising up of the apostle Paul. The departures do not come in Acts 2, and they do not wait until Acts 28. Are you with me? When you find where the departures begin, you will find that they do not begin in Acts 2, and they do not begin in Acts 28. They have already taken place. They begin with the raising up of the ministry of the apostle Paul. That is a rule that you will find will always work. If I ask you a question about Acts 28 that you can't answer, it doesn't negate those rules, that system, that thing that just works every time.

Let me show you. Turn to Ephesians 2 and Galatians 5.

What is the basic characteristic of *Time Past* in Ephesians 2:11,12? It is the distinction between the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision. Was there an advantage in time past of being in the Circumcision and a disadvantage of being in the Uncircumcision? Well, if you are in *Time Past*, the distinction is there, the advantage is there. But the advantage is not there anymore in the *But Now*, right?

The book of Galatians is probably the first book Paul ever wrote; and if it wasn't the first, it was one of the first.

Galatians 5:6 – "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision." Is there any advantage to being in the Circumcision or in the Uncircumcision? When Paul wrote the book of Galatians, *Time Past* was over with. That's before Acts 28. The departure begins before chapter 28.

Galatians 6:15 – "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." The religious status doesn't make any difference, but it did before whether you were in Christ or not. It made a difference in *Time Past*, but it doesn't now. Therefore I know the book of Galatians fits in the *But Now* section. The dispensational distinctions are gone. The doctrinal distinctions are gone.

Romans 10:12 – "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek." Was there a difference in *Time Past*? There was! Is there now? The verse says that there isn't.

Romans 3:29 – "*Is he* the God of the Jews only? *is he* not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also." If he was still dealing exclusively with the nation Israel, he couldn't say that, could he?

The place where the departure comes is always with Paul's ministry. None of those verses that I just read to you would work in Acts 2. None of them wait until Acts 28 to be true. They begin with Paul. They are truth that you learn in Paul's Acts ministry.

Now folks, the normal condition for the church, the body of Christ in its entirety doesn't arrive until after Acts 28. The diminishing of Israel does not end until Acts 28, but it begins far before. And God introduces a new program – the *But Now* section. And he introduces it as the other moves away. There is a true transition moving from one into the other. It is not an instant change from one to the other. Acts 28 marks an ending, not a beginning and that explains the quick abrupt ending to the book of Acts.

Paul is up at Jerusalem (Acts 21:20). James tells him in the last part of verse 20, "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law."

Acts 21:23,24 – "Do therefore this (take the vow) that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave *their* heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but *that* thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law." They want him to do the ordinances of the commandments.

Verse 25 – "As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written *and* concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from *things* offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication." Now does that sound like they put the Gentiles under the law or under a law of any kind? They didn't put the Gentiles under the law. That decree, that letter that they wrote, those things they decided did not put the Gentiles under a law program. It did not put them under any legal requirements, and it is obvious that they didn't do that from the passage. They are not telling the Gentiles to observe the law.

Look at Galatians 2 where Paul is recounting his meeting in Jerusalem. He says in verse 3 that he took Titus being a Greek, and he wasn't compelled to be circumcised. They did not put the Gentiles under the law. They did not require Titus to keep the circumcision distinction in effect in order for him to be a saved man. They recognized the advance in the program and the breaking down of that middle wall – that distinction.

Galatians 2:4,5 – "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." Do you think Paul would have allowed those people to put the Gentiles under a law system in light of that?

What does he tell them in chapter 5? Galatians 5:1 – "STAND fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

Didn't you read over there in Romans 7 where he said, "You are dead to the law; you are delivered from the law; don't function under the law"? If he had consented and the apostles had placed the Gentiles under commandments contained in ordinances, (religious ceremonial observances of a legalistic nature), how in the world did he write those things like he wrote in the book of Galatians? It wouldn't happen, folks.

If that were the case, you would have to say in Acts 15 that Paul consented to the Gentiles being put under commandments contained in ordinances. Then when he wrote Galatians and Romans, he repudiated what they were saying. So, even if you said that, you can't wait until Ephesians 2 to get rid of them. You have to get rid of them in Galatians and Romans. Do you see that?

But, you will run into that teaching along the way, and you need to know about it. I guarantee you will see it somewhere, and you need to understand that that stuff is just people taking verses and using them without a real clear understanding of what is going on. You can get verses mixed up! You know you can do that.

You must remember that in the transition of the book of Acts, the departure always comes, not in Acts 2, not in Acts 28, but in the middle. And I don't care what subject you want to discuss, that's where the departure comes. That is where it has its beginnings.

Now, Pastor Watson used to tell a story about a guy running across a field, and there was a bull chasing him. And the bull was just about to get him with his horns. But, there was a tree out in the middle of the field, so he ran over to the tree and saw that it was hollow. So, he jumped in, and that bull was running around that tree just snorting and pulling at the ground. But all of the sudden

that man came out of that tree running across the field with that bull after him again. There was an old farmer standing at the fence looking out, and the guy finally got over there and jumped the fence. Then the farmer went over to him while the guy was lying on the ground panting and trying to catch his breath.

The farmer said, "Mister why didn't you just stay in the tree? You were safe."

The guy looked up at him and said, "There was a bear in the tree!"

(Well, neither Acts 2 with the bull chasing you in the field, or Acts 28 with the bear in the tree are safe positions to hold. So, you need to just stay in the field running for dear life!)

Okay, let's go back and start in Ephesians 2:17 now. He is talking about Christ. "And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, (the Gentiles), and to them that were nigh (Israel). Notice the past tense again there. Christ came and preached peace. Well, when did he come and preach peace?

Well, look over at Ephesians 4:20,21 – "But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus." Were the Ephesians taught by Christ? The verse says that they were. Did they hear him? The verse says that they did. "If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him." Did they ever see him in the flesh? No, they did not. Well, if he wasn't there, how did they hear him, and how did he teach them? It was through Paul and through his word. Christ came and preached. How did he come and preach? He came and preached through Paul; he came and preached through his word. He is not here, but he left his word, and he left his thinking, and he left his message. He is the message. He established a system whereby doctrine is communicated, and he is the doctrine that is communicated. And more appropriately, in the passage, he was in Paul. When they heard Paul, they heard Christ. When they heard Paul's message, they heard Christ. Paul is not here today, but his message is here.

When you preach the message, do you know who they hear? You are an "ambassador for Christ, as thou God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead." You are his official representative. When you speak, you speak his word. You represent him in an official capacity! And that is something that is precious!

Ephesians 2:17 – "And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." Don't let someone take that verse and use it on you and say, "See that's what he was doing back before the gospels." You can go back to Matthew 10 and 15, John 4 and 12, and so forth and demonstrate that that is not what he was doing.

Ephesians 2:18 – "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." That is one of the great verses in the book about the Trinitarian ministry. Do you see the Trinity again? "For through him (Jesus) we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

Look at Ephesians 3:12 regarding the word "access" in verse 18. "In whom (in Christ) we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him."

Romans 5:2 – "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand."

"Access" is the idea of "a conscious approaching unto something". You are consciously coming to something.

Who do you have access to in Ephesians 2:18? "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." Do you realize that through the Lord Jesus Christ you have an access, a conscious approaching, an audience with God the Father? Has it ever struck you that what's happening today in the formation of the church, the body of Christ, is giving you a divine audience with the God of heaven and earth? He has called us into his fellowship through the gospel, and that is fantastic! It is through him; it is through Christ.

Ephesians 3:12 says, "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him" (by his faithfulness).

Ephesians 1:6,7 – “...wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood.” We stand there in the presence of God the Father on the grounds of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. There isn't any other way to get there.

Now, do you think that verse might preach? I think it might.

Notice the rest of it. Ephesians 2:18 – “For through him (on the basis of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ) we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” It is the work of the Holy Spirit to make God real to us. It is the work of the God the Holy Spirit on the basis of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ to take you by the hand and introduce you to God the Father. That is why he is called the “Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15). That is why he prayed over there in Ephesians 1:17 “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.” He said, “I want you to know him!”

God the Holy Spirit, based on the finished work of Christ, takes us in to the very presence of God. He opens up the counsels, and the mind, and the personality of God, and he shows us how God thinks and how God reacts. He causes us to get to know him intimately.

Well, how does the Spirit of God do that? He does it through the book. That is why I say to you that the word of God never works apart from the spirit of God, and the spirit of God never works apart from the word of God.

And, Ephesians 2:18, stuck right in the middle of everything, demonstrates a tremendous truth about what God is doing today as he forms the church, the body of Christ.

Now we will move down into the last section of the chapter. We have been through separation (verses 11 and 12), the two types of reconciliation (verses 13-18), and now we have unification. It is the new position that we have in Christ.

Ephesians 2:19 begins with “Now therefore.”

“But now” in verses 13 – 18 tells you how the change came about. The alienation and separation in verses 11 and 12 has all been changed.

Now, he is going to tell you what the change is in verses 19-21 – your new position. “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners.” Where did you read that before? Where did you find out that you were strangers and foreigners? You found that out in verse 12 – “ye were ...aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.” That is a foreigner. But, you are no longer a stranger, an alien. Verse 12 also says that “ye were ... strangers from the covenants of promise.” But, you are no longer in that former estranged separated situation.

Well, what are you? Notice that he doesn't say that you are Israel. Here is what your new position is – “but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” You have a citizenship. Before, you were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. You were separated from the rights of citizens. Now, you are fellow (equal, sharing) citizens. Now you have a citizenship.

Who are you citizens with? You are citizens with the saints.

Colossians 1:13 – “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son.” Does a kingdom have citizens? Are you in the kingdom of his dear Son? You have citizenship.

Turn to 2 Timothy 4. I talked to you about this fact right here when we went through Romans 4. This is something that grace believers do not want to acknowledge a lot of times – that God has made us citizens. If you are citizens, you have to be members of a political entity, and that's what a kingdom is.

2 Timothy 4:18 – “And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve *me* unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.” You are made citizens of

his heavenly kingdom. Where is your citizenship? It is in the heavenly places, and you don't need Philippians 3:20 retranslated to demonstrate that.

Let me say something to you about Philippians 3:20 – “For our conversation is in heaven.” The old English word “conversation” meant “a manner of life”. The Greek word is the word “politeuma”. Do you see our word “politics” in that? Well, people will do this to you all the time – they look for a translation of a verse that fits what they want the verse to say, and they grab it. But, you don't have to do that! When a Greek used the word “politeuma”, he wasn't talking about politics, and he wasn't talking about citizenship in the sense that your voters registration is in a certain city. It was a word that was used to describe people who were citizens of free cities.

Do you know what a free city was back then? They had certain cities that they called “free cities”. That city was left under its own control, and its own politics and so forth, as long as they paid tribute. They didn't have procurators and Roman people hanging over the thing all the time. When Paul said, “I'm a free born Roman”, he meant that he was a citizen of a free city, the city of Tarsus. Tarsus was a free city. Those cities had special status because they were special.

You know what it is to be a “Chicagoan”. What do you mean when you say, “He's from Chicago?” You mean that he has a certain kind of lifestyle, right? If you say, “He's from Los Angeles”, you mean that he has a certain kind of lifestyle. It's the same thing if you say, “He's from New York, or he's from down South”. You have a certain kind of a difference in lifestyle.

Well, that is what the Greeks meant when they said “politeuma”. This guy has a character, and a flavor, and a lifestyle that matches this particular city. In other words, it is more than just citizenship. His lifestyle reflected where he came from.

Hence, in Philippians 3:20, he is talking about more than just having your citizenship in heaven. Notice that verses 18 and 19 are in parenthesis, so you need to read verse 17 and then skip the parenthesis and read verse 20. “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.” Mark people that walked like Paul walked. Verse 20 says “For our conversation ...” (our manner of walking). It is more than just where we register to vote or where we live, but it is our manner of living is in heaven. We live like people who belong to that place. That is what he is saying in Philippians. Mark people that walk like I do because I walk like I belong up yonder!

Now, that is not just saying that we are on the register of glory, and we are going there when we die. That is not the idea in Philippians 3.

Now, go back to Ephesians 2:19 – “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints.” In other words, you are citizens of his heavenly kingdom “and of the household of God.” You are fellowcitizens with all the saints; you are all a part of God's kingdom, and you are also a part of the household of God.

This thing about the household of God is fascinating. Look at Ephesians 3:15 – “Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.” Did you know that God had a whole family? Notice where they are – “in heaven and earth”. You are a part of the family. You have been made one with the saints of all the ages. You are a part of the whole family of God, which is in heaven and on earth.

Now, that is not talking about people who died and went to heaven and people that are still living here on earth. Every commentary that you read will tell you that, but that is not what it's talking about at all.

Don't you remember Ephesians 1:9,10? “Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him.” What is that talking about? Isn't that talking about that overall program of God to gather together under the headship of Jesus Christ everything in heaven and in earth?

Colossians 1:16 talks about the positions of rank and authority in heaven and in earth.

Eph 3:15 talks about “the whole family in heaven and earth”.

There are two branches of one family. There are two branches of one kingdom. That’s what he is talking about here. You are the heavenly branch, and Israel is the earthly branch. There is just one kingdom, and there is just one family; and you and I have been made a part of that one kingdom and a part of that one family. We are not the earthly family, and we are not in the earthly kingdom; but we are in the heavenly kingdom. We are the “heavenly branch” of the family.

Ephesians 2:20 – “And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*.” Now, that verse gives people a lot of problems, but notice what he says starting in verse 19. You are “fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.” What is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets? The household of God is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Please understand that! It is not just the body of Christ that is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, but it is the whole household of God built on the foundation.

Now, let’s look at “the foundation of the apostles and prophets”. Obviously the apostles and prophets themselves are not the issue. We are going to assume that nobody is built on Peter, or Bartholomew, or Paul, or Barnabas, or whomever else you want to name as the apostles and prophets. The men are not the issue, but the function is the issue. The reference is to their ministry. They laid a foundation for the household of God. The foundation is the doctrine that was taught by the apostles and prophets, which is Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.

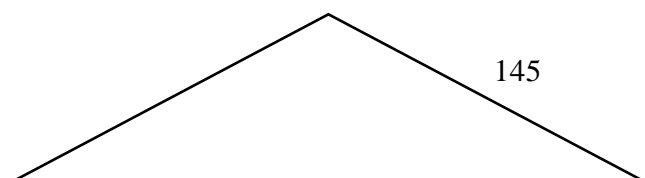
Now the cornerstone is the key position in the foundation. When they laid a foundation, the first thing they laid was the cornerstone, and every wall or line of the foundation found its origin and direction from that cornerstone. It is the thing that laid out all the lines and the walls. Everything in the building found its origin in that cornerstone.

Well, the cornerstone is Christ. Read 1 Corinthians 3:10,11 and 1 Peter 2:3-7. Those two passages will demonstrate to you that both Paul and Peter understood that they, individually, were not the foundation. Jesus Christ is the foundation. It is the foundation of the apostles and prophets meaning it is the doctrine they laid down about the Lord Jesus Christ. The foundation is Jesus Christ revealed through the ministries of the apostles. The household of God is built on the foundation of Jesus Christ as revealed through the ministries, through the doctrine, taught by the apostles and prophets. Jesus Christ is the foundation, and there is not any doubt about that. He is the foundation for the house.

1 Corinthians 3:11 – “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” That is it – he is the foundation; he is the precious stone; he is the living stone; he is the sure stone; he is the foundation stone laid in Zion (1 Peter). He is it!

But, you’re also built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, meaning that the apostles and prophets give you some information about Jesus Christ that is the basis upon which the house is built.

There is a two-fold division in the house. One is the earthly, the family of God on earth. And one is the family of God in heaven. The family of God on earth is true Israel, the Israel of God. The other is the church, the body of Christ. The family of God on earth has a head apostle by the name of Peter and the twelve are with him. The family of God in heaven has a head apostle by the name of Paul. The earthly ministry presents Jesus Christ according to Matthew 16:18. The heavenly ministry presents him according to the apostle Paul’s revelation – the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery. It is the foundation that Paul lays.



Earth	Heaven
Israel	The Body of Christ
Peter	Paul
Matthew 16:18	Romans 16:25
The Kingdom	The Mystery
<i>Apostles & Prophets</i>	<i>Apostles & Prophets</i>
CHRIST	

Instead of 1 Corinthians 3, maybe I should say Romans 16:25, or 2 Timothy 2:8. “Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel” (2 Timothy 2:8).

1 Corinthians 3:10 – “According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation.”

There is a difference in the way that Jesus Christ is viewed.

In Matthew 16:15-18 he is talking to his disciples. “He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God (you’re the Messiah). And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock (this foundation stone) I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” What is the foundation that he is going to build his church on? Is it Peter? It isn’t the man Peter, is it? It is the confession that Peter just made about who Jesus Christ was. Who is he? He is the Messiah. This is Messiah’s church over here. This is the kingdom church and Jesus Christ is preached as the Christ, the son of the living God. And the foundation for being in that church is to believe that Jesus is the Messiah (John 20:30,31).

1 Corinthians 3:10,11 – “According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” Paul comes along and he lays the foundation. He lays the foundation at Corinth, but he also lays one for the church the body of Christ. The foundation that he lays is Jesus Christ, not preached according to the kingdom prophetic program, but preached according to the mystery. But the foundation is the same.

Now, you are a part of the household of God. The family of God lives in the house. There are two branches of the family – the heavenly and the earthly (Ephesians 3:15). But, there is one foundation.

Do you remember when we studied about the gospel? I used the same illustration to show you that there are terms about the gospel like *the gospel of Christ, the gospel of God, the gospel of peace*. They were terms that referred to the gospel in the sense of the good news, in the sense that it was the foundation issue of Christ. Then there were some gospel terms like *the gospel of the kingdom, the gospel of circumcision* that referred just to Israel, and just to the nation Israel’s program.

Then there are some other gospels – Paul's *my gospel, the gospel of grace* and so forth, and they refer just to the gospel of the uncircumcision. They refer just to Paul's message.

Then there are some that are common to both, and that is the issue here. It is a duplex.

Turn back to Ephesians 2:19 – “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the he saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*.” Now who are the apostles and prophets? That is the question that everybody wants to know.

There are two possibilities. Number one, it could be the twelve apostles. If that's what it is, that's what I drew on the left side of the house. The prophets of course are the new testament prophets.

Number two, if it is not the twelve, then look at Ephesians 4:8-11 – “Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.” Jesus Christ dies at Calvary, and goes down and is resurrected and ascends up on high. The verse says that when he ascends up on high, then he gave gifts to men.

Some of the gifts are in Ephesians 4:11 – “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets.” The twelve apostles were made apostles back before the cross. These men were given the gift of apostles after his ascension. Do you see that? Ephesians 4:11 refers to apostles and prophets that are given after his resurrection and after his ascension.

So, the possibility is that the apostles in chapter 2 are not the twelve apostles, but the apostles after the resurrection and the ascension. If that is true, when he talks about you being “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets”, just refer to the right side of the house (above), the mystery issue.

But, the context in Ephesians 2 tends to be describing the whole household. If it is doing that, you can refer to the entire house as drawn above.

So, you can believe that it is just the right side of the house, or just the left side of the house, or both. I will let you decide which way you want to do that, but those are the possibilities.

You can be in Christ according to prophecy and in Christ according to mystery. You can be in Christ before Paul or with him.

The foundation is Christ, but the issue about Christ is the doctrine that the apostles and prophets teach you about him, whether it is in the prophetic program or the mystery program. They lay down the doctrine about him, which is the foundation for the household of God.

Father we thank you for this great epistle in the word of God, for this book that carries us up into the very mind and plans and counsels of the Godhead. We pray as we study it that we might be mindful that it is your word, and that it is your word to us. We pray and ask it in Christ's name.

Ephesians 2:19-21 – “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; In whom (in Christ) all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom (in the Lord) ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

Now, let's look at a few things about this new position that we have in Christ in the dispensation of grace.

Number one, we are made “fellowcitizens with the saints”. Our citizenship is in his heavenly kingdom. We are citizens of the heavenly places. We are participants in his heavenly kingdom. And, again, I emphasize to you the fact that we are a part of the overall program that God has to bring the universe back under his authority. We are a part of the household of God. We have been made part of the family of God, one with the saints of all the ages. We are still the body of Christ, and they are still Israel, but there is unity in the purpose and program of God.

Sometimes grace people, dispensationalists, get the body of Christ stuck on one side and Israel stuck on the other side; and they think it's a sin that there is anything related, that God would have one purpose that encompassed all of it. But, I think you understand how that comes about.

Number two, we are “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets”. Notice, again, that it is the household, not just the body of Christ, but the household of God that is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

Ephesians 2:20,21 – “And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.” This household is fitly framed together by the Lord, and this building that we are a part of is fitly framed together. It all fits together snugly. It is not an unstable thing that is going to fall down, or something that an earthquake is going to shake; but it snugly, securely fits together. There is perfect unity in God's plan, and in his purpose, and in his building program. There is a perfect oneness in it.

It is fitly framed together, and it grows unto an holy temple in the Lord. For something to grow, it has to be organic. It has to be living. Something that is not living cannot grow. This temple is a living organism; it is a living thing. The temple grows as new members, as new parts, are added to it.

For example, Solomon built a temple. Do you remember how he did that? Well, that's a great illustration of how the temple of the body of Christ, that we are a part of, grows.

1 Kings 6:7 describes Solomon, and it says that they hewed out the stone and rocks and everything. They did everything at the quarry. When they brought those stones up and set them in place, there was no sound of the craftsmen working on the site. It was just as though that temple just quietly, silently grew. You did not hear the sounds of human instrumentality hewing out the stone. That was done in another place and brought to the site and erected.

That is an illustration of how the temple, today, grows. It doesn't grow by the noisy organizational machinery. Members are not added to it by denominational demonstrations and so forth. But, it is just the quiet working of God that causes his church to grow. As members are added to it, this building grows. As living members are placed into it, it grows.

Notice what it is called – “an holy temple in the Lord.” Not only are we fellowcitizens with the saints, and not only are we of the household of God (made part of the family of God), and not only are we built on the foundation, but we are also the temple of the Lord.

Now do you know what a temple is? Look at Ephesians 2:22 – “In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” A temple is a shrine where God lives. You understand that. He is describing this temple, the habitation of God.

God, in the verse, is the triune God. You and I, the body of Christ, this household, are the temple of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. God the Father dwells in the believer (Ephesians 4:6). Christ dwells in the believer (Romans 8:10, Colossians 1:27). And of course you know that the Holy Spirit dwells in the believer.

Now how are we made the habitation of God, the triune Godhead dwelling in the believer? You are made the habitation of God “through the Spirit”, by virtue of the Spirit of God. That is the issue of the trinity. By virtue of the Spirit of God dwelling in you, the triune God, (the spirit of the Father, the spirit of the Son, and the Spirit himself), dwells within us. We are the habitation, the living place, of God himself.

A temple is something that the people at Ephesus would understand. And, a Jew would understand it because he understood the issue of the temple back in the Old Testament. At Ephesus, the Gentiles would understand it because remember in Acts 19, where you read about the great goddess Diana and her temple in Ephesus? So, they understood the issue of a temple.

When he talks about the habitation of God through the Spirit, you must understand that he is not talking about a temple where God can dwell in order to confine God. Paul says in Acts 17 that God doesn't dwell in temples made with men's hands, meaning you can't confine him to a building that men build. So, when he dwells in us, he is not confined. He is not dwelling in us to confine himself to our bodies. But with a temple, God dwells there for what purpose? He dwells there to manifest himself, to make himself known.

God said to Israel, “I dwell on the mercy seat. If you want to come and see me, come up to the mercy seat.” God who is unlimited by time and space chose to manifest his presence in a certain geographic place.

But, in the dispensation of grace today God reveals himself and manifests himself, through the temple of the church, the body of Christ.

Turn to 1 Corinthians 6 and 1 Timothy 3. I want you to notice how these things are used. There is something real important here for you to notice in connection with the importance and the ministry of the local assembly, the local church.

1 Corinthians 6:19,20 – “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.” He is talking about the individual member of the body of Christ having his body as the dwelling place of God Almighty. When you walk around, you carry God's presence around with you. But, it is not there to confine him and limit him so that he is here and not over there. Rather, his presence is here so he can manifest himself to you and fellowship with you, but it is also to manifest himself to others.

Do you remember that verse is 1 Timothy 3:16? “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.”

2 Corinthians 4:10 – “Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.”

Galatians 2:20 – “...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.” It's not me, but it's Christ. It's his life.

1 Corinthians 6:19,20 is a reference to the individual believer. The individual believer is the temple of God. His body is God's temple, God's dwelling place.

But, 1 Corinthians 3:16,17 is a reference to the local church also being the temple of God. Not only is your individual body a temple; but also as the body of Christ gathers itself together in a local assembly, in a geographic manifestation of the church, the body of Christ, then that local assembly is a manifestation. It is a place where God's life is manifested because that is where his people are and that is where his word is in operation – in their midst.

1 Corinthians 3:16 – “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” He is describing the group, the Corinthian assembly, the group of believers at Corinth.

Verse 17 – “If any man (if any man among your group) defile the temple of God, (if he messes up the group by bringing dishonor and reproach on the group), him (the individual) shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye (collective, plural) are.” Do you see that? You people there at Corinth, this local assembly, is the temple of God. If a man, an individual, in that assembly defiles (with bad doctrine, bad service) that assembly, (the temple), God will deal with him and destroy him because the temple is holy. He is not talking about God destroying the temple. God is preserving the temple! He is talking about the assembly, taking the individual out of that assembly.

Now, how does that come about? 1 Corinthians 5 gives you an example of excommunication, delivering him over to the destruction of the flesh.

In 1 Corinthians 11, the assembly judges those people that are not worthy to partake of the supper, and so on and so forth.

The point is not how that comes about. The point I am trying to make to you is the issue of the assembly being the temple, and the assembly manifesting the presence, and the life, and the characteristics of God because that is where his word is working among his people. And the way God manifests himself today, the way God is made real and tangible to people today, is through his word working in the church, the body of Christ.

The way God is made real to you and to me and to others, the way he is made manifest is not by watching him pick up a rock and move it across the street. If that happened, you wouldn't know if God Almighty did it or not. Dumb thoughtless Gentiles think that just because something supernatural happens, God had to do it. Unintelligent believers often think that.

How would you know if it was God Almighty or not? You go to his word. You have an objective standard. He tells you whether he did it or whether he didn't. It's in black and white.

How does God work today? He works on the basis of grace. The principle of his operation is grace. The mechanics of his operation is his word, and his word is ministered through the church, the body of Christ. His word works through the body, and that is how God works today.

Do you understand why the local church is critically important? It is important because the primary vehicle through which God works today, through which God is going to be manifested to the world today, is the local church. So, when you are establishing a local church, and when you are involved in the work of the local church, you are involved in something critically important in the world today. So, don't go at it like it is just a political organization. Don't go at it like it's just something else that we do. Go at it with a wholehearted determination and commitment that this is what God is doing, and be involved in it that way. You need that local church.

How can you function as a member of the body of Christ if you don't have other members of the body around you? Cut your finger off and put it on the table and see how good it works! It has to be in living connection with the rest of you. We are talking about the manifestation of this thing. We are talking about God building a temple, and the temple in which he is manifested is the church, the body of Christ. If God ordained it to be gathered together, how are you going to see the body of Christ?

Now, if you go back to the book of Ephesians, you will find that Paul focuses on the lofty goal of the body of Christ in chapter 3. God's purpose in the body of Christ is to manifest forth his marvelous wisdom.

Then in Ephesians 4-6 he turns and focuses on the local assembly.

I've heard people teach Ephesians for years, but I have yet to hear anybody communicate how important the local church is in the book of Ephesians. He tells you all about this wonderful position that you have in Christ and the marvelous magnificent display of God's wisdom. Then he says, "Do you see all that? It is supposed to be manifested – God manifested right there in the local assembly." Then, he shows you how, in that assembly, it is to be manifested in the world. It's a fantastic thing!

Ephesians 2:21,22 – "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." There is an absolute total unity among believers. We don't always act like it. We don't always find ourselves in a position where that unity can be put into practice because of erring brethren. We are not always where we can put it into practice because of geographic location. But, God has provided vehicles where we can gather ourselves together and have that manifested.

So, the local assembly is important in carrying out the proper functioning of the one body of Christ as a whole. And without the ministry of the local church, the church the body of Christ cannot and does not properly practice its position and doesn't operate properly as a body.

Now let's move on to chapter 3. Ephesians 3:1 – "FOR this cause (for the cause of building the saints together, for the cause of building up this great temple in the Lord, for the cause of having God reveal himself through the church the body of Christ) I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles." And then he begins a digression. In verses 2-13, it is sort of a digression of thought.

Look at verse 1 – "FOR this cause I Paul..."

Look at verse 14 – "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father ..."

Do you see how he starts over again? Between verses 2 and 14, you have a digression of thought in which Paul focuses on the goal of the church, the body of Christ. And, that goal is to declare God's marvelous wisdom before all creatures (verses 9-12).

I guess we, as grace believers, probably deal with verses 1-9 more than any other single passage outside of Romans 3, because in these verses Paul deals with the issue of this mystery, this secret. The reason he is doing it is because this secret manifests the wisdom of God. It is the manifestation of the manifold wisdom of God. And we will see that as we study 1 Corinthians 2:6-9 in the lessons to come.

But, he talks about the mystery being kept secret and about the mystery being revealed to him. He says, "My desire is for everybody to see this because the manifold wisdom of God is manifested in this mystery, in these unsearchable riches of Christ."

Let's start in Ephesians 3:1 again and go down through the chapter as far as we can in this lesson. "FOR this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles." Notice he is the prisoner of Jesus Christ. But wasn't he really the prisoner of Rome? Has that expression "the prisoner of Jesus Christ" ever stuck out to you? Paul doesn't say that he is the prisoner of Rome. He doesn't say that he is the prisoner of the Jews. He was though because they were the ones who laid the charge against them. And notice that he doesn't say, "I am a prisoner for Jesus Christ." What does he say? He says, "I am the prisoner of Jesus Christ." Jesus Christ has me in jail for you Gentiles.

Now, why in world would he say something like that? Well, some people say it is because now he is in jail to get the revelation for the Gentiles. But that won't work.

Turn to Acts 22:17-21. Paul being a prisoner for the Gentiles and being the minister of Jesus Christ for the Gentiles is nothing new.

Somebody once asked the question, “When did Paul learn about the fall of Israel?” Think about it for a minute.

Romans 11:15 – “For if the casting away of them *be* the reconciling of the world, what *shall* the receiving of *them be*, but life from the dead?” What is necessary for the reconciling of the world (the dispensation of grace) to begin? The casting away of Israel is necessary. When Israel is cast away, the world is reconciled. The purpose of their casting away is the reconciling of the world. The fall of Israel brings salvation to the Gentiles. The dispensation of grace cannot begin before the setting aside of Israel, the casting away of Israel.

So, when does Paul know about the fall of Israel? When does he know that the middle wall of partition is coming down? Acts 22:17 – Paul is giving an account of his conversion. It takes place in Acts 9, but he is giving an account of it in Acts 22. Acts 22:17,18 – “And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.” The Lord Jesus Christ tells Paul, in Acts 9, that the nation Israel will not receive his testimony concerning him. Christ recognizes that the decision of Israel in Acts 7 was final. And there is no testimony going to be given to them in Jerusalem.

Do you know when Paul found out about the fall of Israel? He found out about it right there. He knew about it in Acts 9. You don’t see Paul, in his ministry, going out with the assumption and the hope from this point onward that he will get the nation Israel back into their program, and this is just days after his conversion.

You may be thinking, “If that’s true, then what’s all this other stuff about Paul’s concern for Israel?” Turn to Acts 18 and notice how Paul constantly kept going back to Jerusalem. Acts 18:21 – “But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.” He said, “I have to go to Jerusalem to keep this feast!”

Turn to Acts 20:16 – “For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, (he wanted to get there quick), if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.” Paul is trying to get up to Jerusalem.

Do you remember Romans 9:3 when Paul said, “For I could wish that myself were accursed (cut off) from Christ (and all my blessings) for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” He said, “My heart’s desire and prayer for Israel is that they might be saved.” Romans 10:2 – “For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”

Paul’s sins against the Judean saints (persecuting them) weighed heavily on his conscience all of his life. He was a Jew, and he always had a heart for Israel. His heart kept going back to them, and going back to them, and going back to them. And on his last trip back there, God interrupted it. God interrupted the trip and had him arrested, and finally had him imprisoned and took him over to Rome as a prisoner.

When Paul says, in Ephesians 3:1, “I am a prisoner of Jesus Christ”, he recognized what was going on. He recognized that Jesus Christ had shut him up, and he did it because of his purpose in Paul for the nations. So, Paul is recognizing this Gentile position that he has been given as the apostle of the Gentiles, and it has been given to him by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 3:2-5 – “If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to youward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.”

Now, that passage is an absolute rebuke to the church today. That passage says that the dispensation of the grace of God has been made known, this secret has been revealed, and it has been understandable for 1900 years.

How many people have you ever heard preach about it? Turn the radio or television on and listen. Then you tell me how many people you hear on the television everyday talking about the mystery revealed to Paul by Christ for you and for me today. Tell me how many of them you hear talking about grace and exalting the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. You won't hear many of them talking about that. You will hear one everyone now and then, but is it the dominant theme of the church? Should it be?

Paul says, "You guys have heard this, haven't you?" When he says, "If ye have heard of the dispensation of grace", that is not "if" as in "maybe you have and maybe you haven't". But, it is "if" in the sense that "I know you did". It is the challenge. You know they heard it.

Ephesians 1:13 says, "In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation."

Ephesians 2:17 – "And came and preached peace to you."

Ephesians 4:20,21 – "But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him."

They have heard!

Acts 19:10 says, "...so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word."

So in Ephesians 3:2 when Paul says, "If ye have heard", there is no doubt that they heard. He is saying, "Hey, you guys know about this mystery." He is challenging them with it.

Well, it is a challenge today, and it is a rebuke, and it is an indication of the failure of the church, the body of Christ under grace. And, it needs to be an instruction to you. Down through history there have always been men and women just like yourselves, saints just like you, who have stood for the truths that we understand. They stood for the finished work of Christ; they stood for the church, the body of Christ; they stood for Pauline truth. They have been there, and they appear on the pages of church history right where you will appear, but outside the mainstream.

When God set aside the prophetic program with the post-resurrection commission and the signs and the kingdom program, Satan picked them up! He set his counterfeit Jewish program aside, and he picked up that thing which God set aside, and his program went into a mystery form. Just like the mystery program comes in, his program goes into a mystery form, the mystery of Babylon the great. It picks up all those things and it takes the head of the twelve apostles as its head. Deuteronomy says, "Their rock is not our Rock", and it is speaking about Israel in the tribulation. And on and on it goes.

The mass, that part of it that rules over the kingdoms of the world, (Revelation 17), the machinery that controls the people that write history and all of those kinds of things, the educational systems and so forth, shut you out. And that's okay.

Somebody asked one of Martin Luther's followers, "Where was your religion before Martin Luther?"

And the guy said, "The same place your face is before you wash it, behind the dirt." And that's a fact; that's true.

Somebody asked one of John Wesley's followers, "Where was your religion before John Wesley?"

And he said, "One place yours can never be found and mine is always found, in the bible and in the bible alone." Isn't that what counts? Yes!

You can go back and get little snatches of saints down through history who believe like you. You'll say, "That's my brother; that's my kinfolk; that's my people." But, you don't see us represented in a mass of the church today. I don't want those people in the mass today to be said to be my

representatives – the National Council, the World Council and all that business. It is a God-forsaken, ecclesiastical, morgue out there, and that's all that it is.

Well, he is rebuking these Ephesians, and it fits today.

Ephesians 3:2 – “If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to youward.” Notice that expression, “the dispensation of the grace of God.” Boy, that's a good bible term. I like that word dispensation. Don't replace it with “administration” and “economy”, but give me the word “dispensation”. I don't care if it's a long word. I deserve to have a \$2.69 word every now and then, don't I?

The Greek word for dispensation is “oikonomia”. “Oikos” is “house”, and “nomos” is “law or rule”. So you have “house rule”. The English word “economy” is a direct descendant of the Greek word “oikonomia”. This word comes into middle French and then into Latin and then into English. Our English word “economy” is the word for “oikonomia”; it is the same word. And they simply mean “the rules by which a house is operated, or the rules by which a system is operated”.

When we talk about our economic system, we are talking about the economy. When you talk to an economist about the economy, you are talking about the rules that are in operation, in the system out there, that makes things go.

Now, turn to Luke 12 and let me show you how this word is used in another context to give you an idea of what it means. Luke 12:41,42 – “Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all? And the Lord said, “Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom *his* lord shall make ruler over his household, to give *them their* portion of meat in due season?” Now, that word “steward” is the Greek word “oikonomos”. It is spelled a little different; it ends in “mos” in order to make the steward out of it. It is a different form of speech, but it is the same difference. It is the same root word.

The steward is the person. His stewardship, his job, his responsibility is the word “oikonomia”, or dispensation. The steward is the economist, the person, and his job is “economy”.

Now, what is his job in Luke 12:42? Who is he? He is the ruler over the household. He is the man that follows the house laws. What is his job? What is his responsibility? It is “to give *them their* portion of meat in due season.”

Now, brother, I never read a definition for a dispensationalist any better than that anywhere in the bible. Give them their portion of meat in due season. A faithful wise steward takes the meat that the master of the house has provided for the people in the house, and he gives it to them at the proper time and in a proper way, fully cooked, set out, and ready to go. That's good, isn't it? Can you see “dispensationalism” in there? It is not a smorgasbord of mixing it all up and just giving you goulash. It is not taking chocolate pudding and mixing it with English peas and then pouring it all over roast beef. I like all those things rightly divided, but I don't want them all mixed together.

Do you see what that steward is supposed to do? The steward is the person, and he has a stewardship, a dispensational responsibility. The verb “dispense” means “to give out”. Isn't that what the steward is doing? He is giving them their portion of meat in due season. His job, his responsibility is the dispensation. “Dispense” means “to give out”, and the noun, “dispensation”, is “that which is given out” – the meat. The meat is the word of God. If you are a dispensationalist, you give out meat. You don't just give out milk, but you give out meat, and you give it out rightly divided.

The steward is a manager of a house. His responsibility, his job, is the management. A steward is an administrator. The dispensation is his administration.

Now, let me give you a theological definition of dispensation. I have been showing you how the word is used in the bible, but let me give you a proper definition of the word dispensation, not the etymology of the word, but the definition that we use in bible study. A dispensation is a particular program that God administers or dispenses. It is the portion of meat for the house. Remember that verse in Luke 12 – it is the meat that is given out in the house.

Now, the dispensation of the grace of God, the particular program that God administers today, is called the program of grace. And Ephesians 3:2 says that it is given to Paul to youward. It is given by Christ to Paul to give to you and to me. It is the portion of meat that the Father has given for us today.

Now, you understand that there are a number of dispensations in the bible. The one in which we live is the dispensation of grace.

By the way, dispensation is a good old bible word. It is used several times (1 Corinthians 9:17, Ephesians 1:10, Colossians 1:25).

Notice Ephesians 3:2,3 again. "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to youward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery."

There are two things that I want you to notice.

Number one, the apostle Paul is the initiator of the grace of God to the Gentiles. John the Baptist, or the Lord Jesus Christ, or the Old Testament prophets did not come to the Gentiles. They came to Israel, and the ministry that they were going to have to the Gentiles was through Israel getting their blessing – the Gentiles gaining mercy from Israel receiving her blessing. Paul initiates God's grace going to the Gentiles.

Now, I don't need to demonstrate that for you. You understand that it clearly states that there, and that is why this passage is important. He talks about "How that by revelation he made known unto me (Christ made known unto me) the mystery (the secret)." Who was the secret made known to? It was made known to Paul. Ephesians 3:5 – "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, (other men before Paul), as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." That is why that passage is so important.

Now, I don't believe that I need to demonstrate all of that to you at this late stage in this training class. If I do, then I'm in trouble! But, I want you to see that, and I want you to know that this passage is important in demonstrating that.

Number two, I want you to notice that *the dispensation of grace is the mystery*. Ephesians 3:2 – "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to youward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery (the dispensation of grace)." He said, "You heard about this dispensation that was given to me; you've heard how that he made known to me the mystery."

Look at those verses, and you will see that *the dispensation of grace* in verse 2 is the same thing as *the mystery* in verse 3. Do you see that? "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to youward: (what is it?) How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery." What was given to Paul? What was revealed to Paul? "The thing given to him" and "the thing revealed to him" have to be the same thing. One time he calls it *the dispensation of grace* and the next time he calls it *the mystery*. The dispensation of grace and the mystery are the same thing. The dispensation of grace is the mystery!

Folks, where, before Paul, can you point to in the word of God to demonstrate the dispensation of grace – this particular program that God is administering today? Was it a secret or was it not? Sure it was a secret! What is the secret? This program that God is administering today is the secret – what God is doing today was a secret. Well, the dispensation of grace is God's program for today.

I say that to you for this reason: I want you to see that because too many people have too small a view of what the dispensation of grace is or what the mystery is. It is all one great body of truth. The mystery is not one little piece of information that was revealed to Paul. When he says, "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery", he is talking about the whole gamut of what was given to him. The whole of the dispensation of grace, and the entire program involved in it, is the mystery.

Now, some people try to sectionalize it and cut it up; but when they do that, they wind up having problems.

I will give you an example of what I'm talking about. Charles Baker wrote a book titled Understanding the Body of Christ, and it is an exposition of Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. Now, I am not giving you this example just to disagree with Mr. Baker, although I find myself doing just that on just about page of this book; but I am giving you this example because I want to warn you about this kind of doctrine in our midst. He teaches something in this book that is so unbelievable to me that I did not believe it when I first read it. He writes, "*We need to place more emphasis on the truth of the mystery showing the difference between the gospel of salvation and the mystery. Paul preached salvation according to the scripture, (1 Corinthians 15:3,4), but he preached the mystery according to a special revelation given to him by Jesus Christ personally from heaven.*"

Now wait a minute. Doesn't 1 Corinthians 15:3 say, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures?" Who did he receive that from?

Listen to me! In the last issue of Truth Magazine put out by Grace Bible College, (and today is January 7, 1986), a 1984 graduate of Grace Bible College wrote an article, and he says that Paul received that message in 1 Corinthians 15:3 from the twelve apostles.

Now, I don't believe that, and I don't think the scripture will bear that out.

I don't care what kind of exegeses you do with Greek Lexicons; it doesn't help a bit.

In Galatians 1:11, Paul says, "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me (the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15 wherein you stand, that I delivered to you, by which you are saved) is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

I was taught it directly by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, what about the statement that Paul preached salvation according to the scriptures? Gentlemen, we have been over that until I am blue in the face about it.

Romans 1:1-3 – "PAUL, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." It talks about the Lord Jesus Christ coming, and his death, and his resurrection. The capstone of divine revelation about the Son of God, (and his provisions at Calvary), was given to the apostle Paul. The Old Testament talked about it, and promised his coming, and promised a redeemer, and told him he was going to die and do these things. Then, Paul comes along and he takes away all the shadows, and he puts the floodlight of revelation on the cross. He puts the capstone of divine revelation on the crosswork.

Now listen! If something is a capstone, it is the last revelation in the progressive revelation. Was that revelation known before it was given? It couldn't have been known or the revelation would not have been progressive. If they already know what Paul was going to tell them, then it was there all along, or somebody else got it! If they didn't know it, was it a mystery?

A six-year-old kid with a pea brain could figure this thing out folks! Paul is given information that is a secret – "but now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested." He explains how God sent him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood declaring at this time his righteousness for the remission of sins. He explains their program and our program in relationship to the fact that the blood of Jesus Christ and his finished work at Calvary is what makes all of it possible.

Now they knew the blood was coming. They knew about His blood being shed, but they did not know all of the ramifications of it! That's why Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:5-7, "For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle ... of the Gentiles." Do

you see that? Paul is the due time testifier with the “now time” revelation of all that was accomplished at Calvary.

And this business of trying to dissect between the two and saying that the mystery is nothing but the information about the body of Christ is nonsense. Was the body of Christ ever thought about in *time past*? No, it was not! Was it a secret? Yes, it was a secret. Paul is given information about this dispensation – this particular program that God has in effect today. Paul comes along with a capstone of divine revelation about some things – the secret of the gospel, the mystery of the gospel. The secret of all God’s good news is the cross – Calvary. Who tells you that? Paul tells you that.

Where do you find Peter telling you that information? You don’t! You don’t even find Peter telling you that in 1 Peter. It is still Israel in 1 Peter, but with Paul it is “all men”, and it is finished, and it is accomplished.

Then he says, “Not only that, but he is also taking people today through faith in this gospel and forming a body of believers out here that you never even dreamed about or thought about. It was totally unknown!”

So, some of this information provides a capstone for divine revelation. Some of it has to do with some things that were totally and completely unknown, undreamed of, and unheard of, not even thought about. It is all a part of one great message.

And for some people to go around and say that Peter and the twelve preached the doctrine found in Romans 3 about the finished work of Jesus Christ is to deny the gospel committed to the apostle Paul. And if that is what you believe, you might as well go back and be an Acts 2 man and make a good living for your efforts! You won’t make a living preaching the grace message, and you are not preaching the grace message if you are preaching it like that.

I am not mad at anybody, but I am telling you, gentlemen, that in the days ahead you will have to face that particular issue. You are going to find tremendous confusion in the minds of people about that. You need to give clear instruction about it, and then stand your ground about the distinctiveness of the gospel of the grace of God in the dispensation of the grace of God – the mystery that we are involved in today.

It is one great message that God has committed unto our trust today.

**EPH 301 – 18
(Test)**

On a separate sheet of properly headed paper answer the following questions using complete sentences where appropriate.

1. Explain what is referred to as “the course of this world”.
2. Who is “the prince of the power of the air”? To what is “the air” a reference?
3. All unsaved people are demon possessed which means that even their creative genius is satanically inspired. True or False?
4. Just how does “the spirit” of Satan “now work in the children of disobedience”?
5. How does Ephesians 2:3 indicate that when we were lost we were driven by a desire-oriented life?
6. In the title “children of wrath”, to what is wrath a reference?
7. What does it mean to be “quickened together with Christ”?
8. How is it that we have been “raised” together with Him?
9. What does it mean to be “seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”?
10. The future destiny of the Body of Christ is outlined in Ephesians 2:7.
True or False?
11. In Ephesians 2:8,9, what is “the gift of God”?
12. What relationship do “good works” have to salvation?
13. Ephesians 2:1-10 details the Gentiles personal predicament and 2:11 details their dispensational position. True or False?
14. What is the thrust of the word “called” in Ephesians 2:11?
15. Why were the Gentiles “without Christ” (Ephesians 2:12)?
16. What is the basic characteristic of time past?
17. Explain the dispensational change indicated in Ephesians 2:13.
18. Demonstrate that the “far off” of Ephesians 2:13 is not the same as that of Acts 2:39.
19. How was this “far off” status demonstrated in the earthly ministry of Christ?

20. What is “the middle wall of partition”?
21. The “oneness” of Ephesians 2:13,14 is dispensational in nature and not a reference to the “oneness” of the Body of Christ. True or False?
22. What is the present status of the law and religious ordinances?
23. Identify “the one new man” of Ephesians 2:15.
24. Explain the two-fold reconciliation set forth in Ephesians 2:16.
25. Ephesians 2:16 explains when the reconciliation into the Body of Christ took place. True or False?
26. How is Christ now preaching peace to both Jews and Gentiles?
27. Explain the function of each member of the trinity in Ephesians 2:18.
28. Ephesians 2:19-22 indicates that the separation of verse 12 has been removed today. True or False?
29. How is it that the Body of Christ is a part of “the household of God”?
30. What is built on the foundation of Ephesians 2:20?
31. To what is “the foundation of the apostles and prophets” a reference?
32. Who are the apostles and prophets of Ephesians 2:20?
33. Why does Paul refer to himself as the prisoner of Jesus Christ rather than a prisoner for Him?
34. The dispensation of grace is the mystery. True or False?
35. Define the term dispensation. Use scripture please.

www.GraceGospel.eu