Essential Doctrines

You can't afford to be ignorant about them

A 30-Lesson Study by Keith Blades | Enjoy the Bible Ministries®

Study Overview & Lesson Summaries

About This Series

This series examines the doctrines the Apostle Paul, in our epistles for this dispensation of grace, marks as essential for members of the Church, the Body of Christ, to understand and appreciate. On at least six occasions in Romans to Philemon Paul introduces a doctrinal issue with "I would not have you ignorant, brethren" or a similar expression; each is a pet doctrine of the satanic policy of evil against us. Lessons 1–2 identify the six and the satanic warning attached to each. They are numbered and named: (1) Pauline authority and godly edification, Romans 1:13 (Lessons 3–6); (2) Israel and the mystery, Romans 11:25 (7–10); (3) godly sanctification, I Corinthians 10:1 (11–14); (4) spiritual gifts, I Corinthians 12:1 (15–22); (5) sufferings, II Corinthians 1:8 (23–26); (6) physical death, the rapture, and the Lord's Day, I Thessalonians 4:13 (27–30).

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Lesson Summaries

L1

Identifying the Six Essential Doctrines *"I would not have you ignorant" — Romans 1:13 to I Thessalonians 4:13*

What Makes a Doctrine Essential

- On at least six occasions in Romans to Philemon, Paul introduces a doctrinal issue with an expression similar to "I would not have you ignorant"; if Paul says you can't afford to be ignorant about it, that means they're essential
- They are essential because they are pet doctrines of the satanic policy of evil against us in this dispensation of grace; they produce great doctrinal corruption when they are successfully attacked and members of the Body of Christ are ignorant of the truth
- There's someone out there who wants you ignorant — the adversary himself — and if you're ignorant of it, he'll have his way with you
- Five times in the pastoral epistles Paul says something like this is a faithful saying, underscoring the essential nature of some things; the hope, time permitting, is to look at them at the end, though they won't be the focal point

Doctrines One and Two: Romans

- Romans 1:13 is read with its context, verses 1–15: Paul isn't simply saying he has not been avoiding them; his ministry was preaching the gospel so people become saints and also providing for their godly edification
- The first essential doctrine is Paul's authority as the apostle of the Gentiles and the godly edification God designed through members submitting to it — Pauline authority and godly edification
- Romans 11:25 winds down Romans 9, 10 and 11; the second essential doctrine is what God has done with Israel in view of having brought in the dispensation of grace — Israel and the mystery
- Getting Christians to misunderstand what God has done with Israel and think of themselves as spiritual Israelites is very common; whole systems of theology are based on a misunderstanding of this issue

Doctrines Three and Four: I Corinthians

- I Corinthians 10:1 is part of a doctrine running from chapter 8 to the end of chapter 10; with Israel's program set aside, there is still something in God's program with Israel we are to learn from
- Paul deals with what is called here, for now, a particular aspect of our

sanctification; Israel did not respond properly to their sanctification, and the Corinthians were doing much the same — the third doctrine, godly sanctification

- I Corinthians 12:1 leads off the three-chapter doctrine of spiritual gifts (chapters 12, 13 and 14); if you don't understand what God says about it, you're easily deceived by the satanic policy of evil's counterfeiting of spiritual gifts
- It almost seems that three of the six are really the "sugar sticks" Satan will assail the most; Paul talks more about satanic activity with spiritual gifts than with most of the others

Doctrine Five: Sufferings

- II Corinthians 1:8 begins with "for" and follows the first seven verses on the sufferings of Christ; this essential doctrine is named with the one word, sufferings
- Paul already dealt with another category in Romans 8, the sufferings of this present time; its fundamentals will be covered, though the focal point will be the sufferings of Christ

Doctrine Six and the Foundation

- I Thessalonians 4:13, carrying on into chapter 5, gives the sixth essential doctrine and its three major components — death, the rapture, and the Lord's day — all commonly attacked
- None of the six are in Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians; five are foundational doctrines to your edification, and ignorance or corruption in them is like a ball and chain on your leg

L2

The Value Satan Sees in Essential Doctrines *Ephesians 4:7–16 and the Satanic Warning with Each Doctrine*

Ephesians 4: Edification vs. Ignorance

- In Ephesians 4:7–16 Paul deals with the divine design and provision for growth and maturity; verse 13 sets forth God's design for your full education
- When Paul says "I would not have you ignorant, brethren", that's God saying it through Paul; in direct contrast to the value God has upon your edification, the adversary values your ignorance
- In verse 14 "children" is used in a bad sense: God wants you a perfect man, a fully educated adult son of God that He's made you to be in Christ; the deception's goal is to keep you a child

Romans 1:13 — "but was let hitherto"

- The Satanic warning with each doctrine is not a warning from Satan but from Paul — God through Paul — about Satanic desires in connection with these things
- In Romans 1:10–12 Paul speaks of getting them established — the first thing that takes place in edification — and of "the mutual faith both of you and me"
- Paul "was let hitherto" — hindered by someone who knew the value of establishment — the adversary, Satan himself; the first two essential doctrines comprise one half of your establishment
- In I Thessalonians 2 Satan hindered Paul getting back, because he saw value in the Thessalonians not getting established; the tempter saw the value in the foundational doctrines just as Paul did

Romans 11:25 and 16:17–20 — Advantage

- The expression “wise in your own conceits” is not God’s goal but the adversary’s; it is not just a fleshly tendency but an objective of the satanic policy of evil
- The adversary gets what Paul calls an advantage when his tactics succeed; all his devices are taught in Paul’s epistles, Romans to Philemon, and denominational business comes out of exploited advantages
- At the end of Romans Paul warns about the satanic policy of evil and sets forth the fundamentals of his tactics; the advantage he seeks is based on corruption of the doctrine you’ve learned

Counterfeit Sanctification and Gifts

- In I Corinthians 10 Israel preferred Satan’s method and form of sanctification rather than God’s; counterfeiting is Satan’s most successful method of operation, and counterfeits are only about 1% off
- Satan’s sanctification is the temptation in verse 13; you’ll think you’re real spiritual with it, but if you’re ignoring godly sanctification you’re going to be involved in satanic sanctification
- In I Corinthians 12:1–3, genuine gifts were in operation when Paul wrote, and he marks off when they end; ignorant of this doctrine, you will fall for the satanic counterfeits that continue after the real ones have left

Sufferings, the Lord’s Day, and the Package

- In II Corinthians 1:8 the particular sufferings are the sufferings of Christ; the adversary produced that trouble in Asia, and the way he’ll get you to respond as he wants is ignorance of the doctrine
- In II Thessalonians 2 the satanic policy of evil even counterfeited a letter from Paul, designed to produce doctrinal corruption on death, the rapture, and the Lord’s day
- All six are essential to God for our edification; the adversary needs to keep you ignorant about them or corrupt you in connection with them to keep you a child; Paul understood them as a package

L3

Mutual Faith with Our Apostle *Romans 1:1–15; I Thessalonians 2; Ephesians 3:1–9: Paul’s Special Gentile Apostleship*

The First of the Six Essential Doctrines

- This lesson begins examining the first of the six essential doctrines identified in the first two lessons, which is called Pauline Authority and Godly Edification
- Becoming that perfect man, that fully educated man, demands firm establishment in these essential doctrines; each one is a pet doctrine that Satan attacks
- The doctrine is recognizing Paul’s authority as the apostle of the Gentiles, our apostle, so we know where to go in the Bible to find God talking expressly to us and about us today
- The one thing the Adversary wants to stop is your edification; if he can’t stop it, he wants to corrupt it, so that you don’t honor and please the Lord in the details of your life

Romans 1:1–12: Paul’s Apostleship and God’s Purpose

- In the first five verses Paul sets forth his special Gentile apostleship; from

verse 6 down to verse 12 he sets forth God's designed purpose with saints today

- God's purpose, of which Paul is the means, is edification; the word isn't used here, but kin-type terminology is — establishment and mutual faith
- Paul sees that the issue is not simply the salvation of their soul; the issue is edification — educating the saints in the things God wants them to know
- Establishment lays a doctrinal foundation so you understand who you are in the plan and purpose of God; that is where the edification process begins
- The whole big picture is mutual faith between yourself and Paul — understanding and appreciating things as the apostle of the Gentiles himself did; that is what godly edifying comes down to

Romans 1:13–15: Paul's Obligation for Edification

- Paul's "but was let hitherto" is Satanic opposition; Paul purposed to come because he valued and esteemed their edification as God does
- Paul has an obligation to fulfill, and it is not just to preach the gospel: it is to give believers the doctrine to grow and mature by

I Thessalonians 2: Not the Gospel of God Only

- Imparting "our own souls" means imparting the body of doctrine resident in Paul's soul, the knowledge God committed to him — so they had the mutual faith
- The gospel is not being called second rate: it is the beginning, and you have to have it to begin; it takes godly edifying to walk worthy of God who has called you

Our Apostle, Sent to the Gentiles

- Edification in this dispensation of grace comes through the ministry of the apostle of the Gentiles and the body of doctrine set forth in his epistles, Romans through Philemon
- The Bible contains two plans and purposes of God — one with the nation Israel and one with the Body of Christ; they aren't the same and don't go on at the same time
- The real big distinctive separation was that Paul was sent out to the Gentiles in spite of Israel; God had set His program with Israel temporarily aside

L4

The Office, Not the Man: Our Chief *Romans 11:13; Romans 15:8–17; I Timothy 1:3–20: The Authority for Edification*

The Most Fundamental Essential Doctrine

- This first of the six essential doctrines is the most fundamental one of them all; growth to the perfect man status doesn't fully take place without it
- Vested in Paul and his ministry is the ability to accomplish what God has purposed with the members of the Body of Christ — godly edification — so that we can honor and glorify Him, especially now in the heavenly places
- That is not to say no edification takes place without this, but godly edification is not simply learning something from the Bible: it is learning what God says pertains to us, is about us and for us today

Romans 11:13 — The Office, Not the Man

- In "I magnify mine office" Paul declares who he is in the plan and purpose of God; the issue is the office, not the man — God put Paul in an office of

apostleship for us, as He had done with Moses to Israel

- The body of truth for our edification was deposited with Paul and comes out in his epistles, Romans to Philemon; if you are a Gentile, he is your apostle

Romans 15:8–17 — The Great Dispensational Change

- Paul says Jesus Christ was — not is — a minister of the circumcision, confirming the promises made unto the fathers; Paul is looking at time past
- Since He did not go to the Gentiles, a dispensation of Gentile grace wasn't in effect; the four passages Paul quotes describe Gentiles being dealt with by God once the kingdom is established
- Jesus Christ is not a minister of the circumcision now; He has brought in a dispensation of Gentile grace. Without understanding this you won't rightly divide the word of truth, and you'll misapply Scripture
- Paul is not boasting about himself for attention but magnifying his office; the offering up of the Gentiles is what is going on now, and acceptable means acceptable not to God, but to you

I Timothy 1:3–11 — Other Doctrine vs. Sound Doctrine

- Producing godly edifying was in jeopardy: other doctrines were being taught by those who did not rightly divide the Bible, teaching the law as if it were part of God's program for today
- You can be scriptural and be wrong; we are not under the law but under grace, and a member of the Body of Christ is a righteous man, the one for whom the law is not made
- The touchstone for sound doctrine is its alignment with the glorious gospel of the blessed God committed to the Apostle Paul

Our Chief and Pattern; Timothy's Example

- In "of whom I am chief" Paul speaks in the present tense: he is not saying he was the chief of sinners but is the chief of the ones saved by Christ — our chief, to be submitted to because of what comes through him
- The pattern that operated in Israel's program isn't designed to work in the dispensation of grace; the new pattern comes through Paul's ministry
- The Satanic policy of evil aims to produce shipwreck — not reaching the destination port, the perfect man; Hymenaeus and Alexander became propagators of it, and Paul by his authority delivered them unto Satan
- Timothy's godly edification came through acknowledging and submitting to Pauline authority and gaining the benefits of the doctrine committed to Paul

L5

Authority for Edification and the House of Doctrine

II Corinthians 10:1–8; 13:10; I Timothy 1:3; Proverbs 9: What Edification Is

Why This Doctrine Is Attacked

- The body of truth with the instructions, promises and doctrines God wants us to understand for our edification was deposited with Paul, who is resident in his epistles to us, Romans through Philemon
- God has not put His word to us today in a random manner; He used an epistolatory style of communication and arranged the doctrine in a particular order from Romans to Philemon
- Satan sees the primary value in this first essential doctrine, so it is greatly attacked; the last thing he wants you concerned with is godly edifying or making a big issue of doctrine

- The Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross not only to save you from the penalty of your sins but to provide for your godly edification

II Corinthians 10:3–7 — The War for Your Thinking

- Paul lets the Corinthians know they are involved in a war and have been taken prisoners of war; a stronghold is a fortress of opposition the adversary sets up against your edification
- The weapons are doctrinal — sound doctrine coming out of Paul's mouth; the battle is for what you are thinking, and the body of doctrine designed to bring "every thought to the obedience of Christ" was deposited with Paul

II Corinthians 10:8; 13:10 — Authority for Edification

- Verse 8 is the verse in view: Paul is not trying to tear them down but to build them up — "authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification"
- The Lord gave Paul the authority to produce edification in the members of the Body of Christ; it needs to be recognized and submitted to or it won't take place
- II Corinthians 13:10 states it again — the power the Lord gave Paul to edification; Romans 1 expresses the same issue, but not in stern, sharp terms, because the Romans weren't resisting it

Godly Edifying Which Is in Faith (I Timothy 1:3–4)

- The other doctrines in I Timothy 1 came from God's time-past program with Israel and weren't going to produce godly edifying
- Godly edifying describes God's goal for members of the Body of Christ; the reason you have Romans to Philemon is to produce godly edifying
- A local assembly that doesn't produce godly edifying isn't a local assembly in God's eyes

What Edification Is: A Building

- Edification, edifying and edifice come from the same concept — to build up, to construct, to build a building; not a physical building, but a building of knowledge within your inner man, your soul and spirit
- In Proverbs 9, in God's program with Israel, wisdom builds her house; edification isn't unique to this dispensation of grace, and though it is Israel talking, there are principles there of what edification is about
- The building materials are the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, deposited for this dispensation with Paul; the blueprint and materials are in Romans through Philemon, to build the house of doctrine and live in it and out of it
- Paul is called the master builder; this is Pauline authority for godly edification

L6

Godliness Is God-Likeness, Produced by Edification *Genesis 1; I Timothy 1, 6; Titus 1; I Corinthians 2–3, 15: Godly Edifying*

Godliness: A Self-Defining Word

- This is the last lesson on essential doctrine number one, which is entitled, out of Romans 1:13, Pauline Authority and Godly Edification; the aim is an appreciation for the word godliness
- There is a mystery aspect to godliness in this dispensation of grace, but no mystery to what godliness itself is: the ending of godly is the abbreviated form of the word like — godly means to be God-like
- We can't be God-like in the sense of being the creator, or omniscient,

omnipotent, omnipresent; it is being like God in accordance with the purpose God created man for

Genesis 1: Man Created a Godly Creature

- The word comes from Genesis 1: God created man to be a godly creature; when man sinned, he became ungodly
- The issue described first in God-likeness — not the only issue — is working with God in what He is doing, being a help meet for God
- Satan deceived the woman into thinking there was an aspect of God-likeness she didn't have and ought to want, though God had created them godly to begin with

Three Components, Produced by Edification

- Godliness is comprised of three components: thinking like God does from the knowledge God gives you, doing things God's way on the base of discernment from that knowledge, and laboring with God in what He is doing
- God began to edify Adam; the means to godliness is edification

Godly in the Dispensation of Gentile Grace

- God separated Abraham and his seed and began to educate Israel to be a godly people; they rebelled, and their opportunity for godliness would not come again until the Messiah came and a new covenant was established
- God has given the twice dead Gentiles, consigned over to ungodliness, the privilege of being godly as members of the Body of Christ — in a manner not even offered to Israel
- The truth deposited with Paul is the truth "which is after godliness"; you become godly by the edification process, and the adversary hates doctrine because godliness gets accomplished by doctrine
- You can be biblical and be ungodly; God doesn't want you thinking like He wanted Israel to think

Provisions and God's Order

- The hands-on provision is the word of truth as a whole and, in particular, its right division, acknowledging Romans to Philemon as the containment of the body of truth for your godliness
- The Holy Spirit took up residence within your body to illuminate your mind; being spiritual is being in tune with Him, not just possessing Him — the Corinthians possessed Him and were carnal
- At salvation your edification is nil — a babe in Christ; you go from Romans to Philemon: establishment to superstructure, milk to meat, babe to perfect man — and the perfect man is the godly man
- It is a shame when a member of the Body of Christ doesn't know what God wants them to know; this concludes the first essential doctrine in the series of six

L7

Essential Doctrine Number Two: Israel and the Mystery *Romans 11:25; Romans 9–11 Surveyed; I Timothy 1 and 4; Romans 16:17; Ephesians 4*

Essential Doctrine Number Two (Romans 11:25)

- Lesson 7 begins the second of the six essential doctrines: the issue of Israel and the mystery, identified from Romans 11:25
- You need to understand how the dispensation of grace affects and impacts God's program with the nation Israel, gone over particularly in Romans 9, 10

and 11

- Ignorance of this doctrine causes problems in Christianity today — even for those who understand the dispensation of grace; Paul's concern for them is "lest ye should be wise in your own conceits"
- The particular aspect focused on is a blindness in part that has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in

Anticipated Misunderstanding: Biblical, but Not Dispensational

- Paul deals with the doctrine knowing misunderstanding will be common; "God forbid" is used throughout the three chapters, and a policy of evil is designed to produce misunderstanding about what God has done with Israel
- Keith pictures the truth of what God has done sitting in the middle of a block of concrete of misunderstanding
- The Satanic policy of evil seeks doctrinal corruption so members of the Body of Christ do not grow and mature: to have you be biblical, but not dispensational — all wrapped up in Israel's program
- This was earlier called almost Satan's sugar stick doctrine; misunderstand what has happened to Israel and you will be enticed into doing things that come from Israel's program

Teachers of the Law and Doctrines of Devils (I Timothy 1 and 4)

- In I Timothy 1 the other doctrine Paul had in mind is taking the law from God's program with Israel into this dispensation of grace — what he calls vain jangling
- The law is the Word of God, but not the Word of God to us, for us and about us today in the dispensation of grace
- The doctrines of devils in I Timothy 4 are taking things from the Bible that do not pertain to this dispensation of grace and bringing them over to it — improper Bible handling

Isms and Schisms

- Many theological systems in Christianity today exist primarily because of failure to understand Israel and the mystery; the main issue distinguishing covenant theology is its anti-dispensational stand
- Keith names amillennialism, kingdom now and dominion theology, reconstructionism, Romanism, Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons; the disease is ignorance of the doctrine of Israel and the mystery

Divisions and Offenses vs. Knitting Together

- Those from the policy of evil produce divisions and offenses (Romans 16:17); corrupting the foundation of four cornerstones fragments the members of the Body of Christ
- Ephesians 4 ends with a knitting together, the exact opposite of what the policy of evil is after; unity comes by the communication of sound doctrine — doctrine unifies, service without sound doctrine divides

Wise in Your Own Conceits

- By Romans 11 you are doctrinally ninety-nine percent straightened out; that Paul deals with being wise in your own conceits twice, within two cornerstones, indicates a real problem — taken up next lesson

L8 Wise in Your Own Conceits: Knowing the Time *Romans 11:25; Proverbs 3 and 26; Romans 11–13; Romans 15; Ephesians 1*

A Common Problem amongst Grace Folks

- Being wise in your own conceits is a common problem among members of the Body of Christ who understand right division; at Romans 11:25 Paul emphasizes the essential nature of this aspect of the doctrine
- Paul sees the same problem again in Romans 12:16, in the fourth cornerstone; if you don't understand and operate on what he says, you will be wise in your own conceits

Conceit and Wisdom (Proverbs 3 and 26)

- It is a common potential fleshly problem dealt with a lot in Proverbs; Proverbs 26 brings it up three times in 16 verses
- Proverbs 3:5–6 is an interdispensational issue; being wise in your own eyes (verse 7) operates in opposition to trusting the Lord with all your heart
- Conceit is thinking more highly of yourself than you ought — not just pride, but thinking more capability for yourself and almost more right to things than you ought
- Wisdom is the application of knowledge to a situation; erroneous thinking about ourselves develops a bad form of wisdom, and out of it comes damaging conduct

Romans 11 and 12: Not Thinking Improperly about Ourselves

- Paul deals with not thinking improperly about ourselves in Romans 11 as believing Gentiles and in Romans 12 as members of the new creation
- For saints to grow up together and be knit together, you can't have saints wise in their own conceits; the biggest test of agape love is dealing with a weaker brother
- The wisdom that comes from conceited thinking is not God's wisdom but a fleshly wisdom the satanic policy of evil delights in; on the basis of it come divisions, offenses, intoleration of weaker brothers and an intoleration of Israel
- God's program with Israel is not over; through the olive trees Paul explains God's capacity to restore Israel to their original position

Knowing the Time

- This dispensation of grace isn't a permanent situation; you have to understand what Paul teaches here so that you have the proper viewpoint about the time you're living in
- Israel's program is temporarily set aside, not abolished, so you don't have the guarantee of another day; God could end this dispensation of grace any moment
- Four passages on the time are noted — Romans 13, I Corinthians 7, Ephesians 5, Colossians 4; Romans 9–11, especially chapter 11, makes you understand the time you have is precious

Learning from Israel's Program (Romans 15; Ephesians 1)

- Another detriment of being wise in your own conceits is failing to gain the benefits of understanding Israel's program; things "written aforetime" were "written for our learning" — not for our obedience
- We learn about the character and essence of God from Israel's program; one of the greatest areas of weakness amongst grace believers today is Israel's program
- You can't understand the dispensation of the fulness of times without Israel's program; there God has purposed Christ as the one imperial head over all

things in heaven and earth

L9

Accursed from Christ: Romans 9 and 10 Surveyed *Romans 9:1–5; Matthew 3; Acts 1–9; Romans 9:6–10:21*

Something Has Happened to Israel (Romans 9:1–5)

- In the first five verses of Romans 9 Paul sets forth that something has happened to Israel; in the first three he expresses his commiseration over it
- Being “accursed from Christ” is Israel’s situation in this dispensation of grace: a cutting off of Israel from God’s dealings
- To Paul God revealed a new dispensation of Gentile grace, the mystery of Christ, and the temporary suspension of His former program with the nation Israel

The Adoption and the Glory

- What God promised and covenanted is summarized by “the adoption, and the glory” — both go under one heading: the establishment of the kingdom of heaven on this earth
- Christ came to confirm the promises made unto the fathers as “a minister of the circumcision”; that is not what He is now, with the dispensation of grace in effect

The Kingdom at Hand

- John could say “at hand” because a series of time schedules had been given to Israel — a particular one to Daniel at the beginning of the 5th course of punishment
- By the time of the Messiah’s rejection, 98% of that time schedule had been fulfilled; in Mark 1 the Lord says it is fulfilled and the kingdom is at hand
- In Matthew 3 John gives an outline for the remainder of the program; the axe laid to the root shows how close it was
- Israel’s prescription for cleansing has three baptisms, outlined in Ezekiel 36; the second took place on the day of Pentecost, the third — the baptism of fire — is in the Lord’s day of wrath

The Extension of Mercy and Forbearance (Acts 1–7)

- Following the rejection of Christ, Israel was given an extension of mercy and forbearance — three honest opportunities in the opening seven chapters of Acts to change their mind
- After the third and final opportunity, Stephen sees the Son of Man no longer sitting but standing, in readiness to judge His people and begin His day of wrath

The Epoch-Making Event (Acts 9)

- In Acts 9 He leaves the Father’s right hand, confronts Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus and sits down again; Paul is raised up as a brand new apostle, not to replace Judas
- God cuts off His dealings with Israel, but not permanently, and turns to the Gentiles — putting Jew and Gentile at the same level and forming a new creation, the church: the mystery of Christ, kept hidden since before the world began

Romans 9:6–10:21: Anticipated Misunderstandings

- From Romans 9:6 Paul deals with anticipated misunderstandings in incremental steps; thinking God’s word took none effect is the foundation of

covenant theology

- God deals with us Gentiles today not on the basis of merit, but mercifully and graciously
- Romans 10 shows Israel responsible for their own stumbling: they heard, and they knew; they refused to believe

L10

God's Zeal for Israel's Fulness *Romans 11: Not Cast Away but Blinded; Provoke Them to Jealousy; Redeeming the Time*

The Special Aspect: God's Zeal for Israel's Fulness

- Lesson 10 is the final lesson on essential doctrine number two, focused on a special aspect of the doctrine in Romans 11
- God has not changed His mind: "the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance." The church, the Body of Christ, is for a secret purpose — not a replacement for His program with Israel
- Israel's fulness is yet to come, and God has a zeal for it; we need the same zeal for what He does today and will do when He resumes Israel's program

Not Cast Away, but Blinded (Romans 11:1–10)

- "Cast away" in verse 1 is cast away in the sense of disgust; the misunderstanding is that we in this dispensation of grace are in some manner or form the assumers and fulfillers of God's program
- This is called "spiritual larceny," based on ignorance of Romans 9, 10 and 11; the promises and covenants pertain to the remnant, not to you in the dispensation of grace
- God has not cast them away — He has blinded them, which is far different; while this dispensation of grace is in effect they will not see the fulfillment of His program with them

The Last Piece of Concrete: a Temporary Program

- From verse 11 down to verse 29 Paul makes sure we understand this dispensation of Gentile grace is only a temporary program — not that its results are temporary, or our membership in the Body of Christ

Provoke Them to Jealousy (Romans 11:11–15)

- Provoking Israel to jealousy shows she has not stumbled so as to be unable to get up again, and underscores that the things that belong to them are still theirs
- God would be unrighteous to provoke jealousy for something they never could have; He hasn't lost any of the zeal to give them what He has promised and covenanted with them
- If God had zeal for riches of the Gentiles through their fall, "how much more their fulness?" The riches don't reach their apex by the dispensation of grace

The Olive Tree and "all Israel shall be saved" (Romans 11:16–29)

- The firstfruit guaranteed the acceptance of the culmination: Israel's program started, has been suspended, and its culmination is yet to come; in the tree illustration the Lord Himself is the root
- Paul looks at Gentiles as a whole, not at anybody's personal salvation; boasting against the branches is beginning to develop that high-minded attitude, and you become wise in your own conceits
- "Fear" means a healthy fear for this dispensation of grace, recognizing it isn't

going to go on forever; it is natural for God to return to His program with Israel

- The blindness in part is only temporary; when the fulness of the Gentiles comes in, we are taken out of here and Israel's program resumes. Paul's "all Israel shall be saved" is the program salvation

The Sluggard and Redeeming the Time

- Being a sluggard is a common hallmark fruit of being wise in your own conceits; such a one won't fear or recognize that the cutting off could come at any moment
- Look at the time as something to be redeemed — bought up, purchased to God's honor and glory; you need to spend time in Romans 11 in particular and make sure you have God's attitude

L11

Godly Sanctification: Looking at It Like God Does *I Corinthians 10:1–6; Justification, Sanctification and Exaltation; the Liberty of Chapters 8–10*

The Third Essential Doctrine

- The third essential doctrine is called godly sanctification: a focus on our sanctified position in Christ, but especially on understanding and appreciating the goal of that position
- The issue confronts us in I Corinthians 10, but Paul has already talked about our sanctification in a great amount of detail before chapter 10, so we need to back up and appreciate the overall doctrinal issue

Israel's Sanctification Out of Egypt (I Corinthians 10:1–6)

- A baptism is a purification process that results in sanctification and a new identification; Israel was sanctified, set apart unto God for His use, and identified with Moses
- Paul's example concerns Israel's attitude toward their sanctification: they had a poor appreciation for it, and so hankered to re-involve themselves in things they had enjoyed
- It is called godly sanctification because we need to look at our sanctification like God does; Paul doesn't want the Corinthians ignorant that they are doing the very same kind of thing Israel did

Not Looking at Sanctification Like God Does

- Such a Christian succumbs to the lust of sin more and more frequently, lacks abhorrence for the course of this world Satan has charted, and fails to appreciate the liberty to be free from the dominion of sin and free to glorify God
- The Corinthians' ignorance produced a lack of zeal for reproving; they thought themselves real spiritual while being enticed back into what they had come out of

I Corinthians: Putting the Sanctified Position into Practice

- The whole epistle deals with problems Christians can have putting their sanctified position in Christ into practice; Paul understood the Corinthians' doctrine of sanctification had come under attack
- They were sanctified in Christ Jesus the moment they trusted Christ, yet that was the part of their identity in Christ they had the most problems with
- Every problem addressed is an inconsistency with their sanctification, its root traced back to a lack of understanding and appreciation for their sanctified position in Christ

Justification, Sanctification and Exaltation

- Our full position in Christ is composed of justification, sanctification and exaltation, and you learn them in order: sanctification won't make much sense until you understand justification
- Being made the righteousness of God is our justification; God also baptized us into Christ's death, burial and resurrection, and we got His identity for living unto God — our sanctified position in Christ
- You'll never really appreciate your exaltation with Christ if you're ignorant of your sanctification; that is one of the major reasons Satan wants that doctrine suppressed

The Liberty We've Been Given Being Sanctified

- The liberty is multifaceted and for something very special, but often misunderstood; eating things offered in sacrifice unto idols is a matter of our liberty in Christ
- God treats us as sons today, not as children under the tutoring governor principle of the law; as sons we have the freedom to make decisions with respect to the good, acceptable and perfect will of God
- Not thinking of the other realms of knowledge, the Corinthians' expression of liberty wasn't God-honoring; it was self-serving, which makes it cooperating with the policy of evil

L12

Dead to Sin, Alive unto God *Romans 6:1–13, 6:14, 7:1–6 and 6:19–23: The Fundamentals of Our Sanctified Position*

Godly Sanctification and the Adversary's Attack

- It is called godly sanctification, godlike sanctification: as sons we have the grand privilege of the freedom to glorify God by conducting ourselves like Him
- The main sphere of influence for the Church, the Body of Christ, is the heavenly places — not the only sphere; the doctrine of our exaltation motivates that impact, so the doctrine of sanctification in particular comes under attack
- Paul says we are made a spectacle unto the world, to angels and to men (I Corinthians 4:9): two realms that comprise the world, both supposed to see something

Sanctification: Our Relationship to God's Holiness

- Beginning in Romans 6, Paul teaches that justification and reconciliation are not the only things that happened when you trusted Christ; the second greatest thing God ever did to you, sanctification, took place at the same moment
- In the sanctified position your identity is not only righteousness but holiness; sanctification, saint, sanctify and holy all come from the same word

Romans 6:1–4: Dead to Sin

- If all God ever did was justify you, the answer to Romans 6:1 would be yes; walk and conduct pertain to sanctification and have no effect upon justification
- The moment you trusted Christ, the Holy Spirit baptized you into Christ's death, burial and resurrection, producing the functional death of sin's mastership in your mortal body; this is not water baptism
- Not knowing you are dead to sin, you'll think you can lose your justification if

you don't maintain proper conduct and behavior

Romans 6:5–13: Alive unto God

- Christ didn't die just to save you from the debt and penalty of your sins; He also gave you a sanctified position and the capacity to live unto God in the mortal body right now
- Romans 6:11: count, acknowledge, reckon being dead unto sin and alive unto God as your identity — the fundamental understanding of your sanctified position
- Sin hasn't been eradicated and the lusts are still there, but you don't have to obey them; you can yield your members as instruments of righteousness unto God

Not Under the Law, but Under Grace (Romans 6:14; 7:1–6)

- Our position in Christ will only be put into practice when we recognize we're under grace and God isn't dealing with us like He dealt with the nation Israel
- The law isn't designed to enable anybody to live unto God, but to show no one can by their flesh; God brought in a new system compatible with our position in Christ, called grace
- You were made dead to the law so you can bring forth fruit unto God (Romans 7:4); Romans 7:7–25 shows the wretched, impotent situation of trying to practice your position in Christ under the law

Fruit unto Holiness (Romans 6:19–23)

- The real jewel in the crown of sanctification is fruit unto holiness — a capacity you never possessed or could have possessed, but now possess
- Fruit unto holiness is your sanctification, and the end, everlasting life, is your justification; the law didn't give you that, grace did

L13

Zeal for Our Godly Sanctification *Romans 6–7; Galatians 2; Ephesians 2, 4 and 5; Philippians 1; Titus 2: Godliness Is Godlikeness*

The Focal Point: Zeal and Appreciation

- Only two lessons remain on this third essential doctrine, lessons 13 and 14; the zeal, appreciation, ambition and enthusiasm we ought to have is really the focal point in the doctrine of our godly sanctification
- The impact we make right now to God's honor and glory differs from that made throughout the ages to come, because it is made in the face of the principalities and powers in heavenly places
- Israel didn't appreciate their sanctification, lusted after evil things, and didn't appreciate their opportunity to honor God; their situation in Egypt was an example of the course for this world

Living unto God, No Longer unto the Adversary

- To put our position in Christ into practice we need to be under grace and not under the law system; what we have now is fruit unto holiness
- From Galatians 2, the purpose is that I might live unto God, and that is what our position in Christ is all about
- Before, the one we were living unto was the adversary, Satan himself, the prince of the power of the air; now God the Holy Spirit works in us to bring forth His fruit

Created in Christ Jesus unto Good Works (Ephesians 2 and 4)

- The baptism of the Holy Spirit did the working, and we were created in Christ Jesus unto good works — the same kind Christ would produce, since He is in us producing them
- The new man is after God: the goal is to be godlike, godly; the issue isn't don't lie, but put it away; we've been created in Christ to do what God does

Abhorrence: Darkness and Light (Ephesians 5)

- With the attitude you ought to have, you ought not want such things once named; that attitude comes from appreciating the grandeur of your position in Christ and recognizing the horror of what we used to be
- Not merely in darkness and now in the light: you were darkness, and now you're light in the Lord; that light is also designed to repudiate the adversary's course for this world
- This attitude comes out of appreciation for godly sanctification, and correcting fundamental flaws in not possessing that attitude is what I Corinthians 10 is all about

Unto the Glory of God; Zealous of Good Works

- The Philippians, on the other end of the spectrum from the Corinthians, understood that what they used to do was unto the glory and praise of the adversary
- In Titus 2 it is grace teaching us, not the law: He gave Himself to redeem us from all iniquity (our justification) and purify unto Himself (our sanctification); we ought to be zealous of good works

Godliness Is Godlikeness

- Godliness means God-likeness: think like God does, do things God's way, and labor with Him in what He's doing; the goal of edification is to produce godliness
- Godliness is not unique to this dispensation of grace; Peter, in God's program with Israel, talks about it as he deals with the remnant of Israel
- Our sanctification is godly sanctification because God set us apart unto Himself to put His divine nature on display; ungodliness puts Satan's nature on display

L14

Called unto Liberty to Live Godly *Galatians 5; I Corinthians 8, 9 and 10:1–14; Exodus 15–19; Ephesians 5*

Called unto Liberty (Galatians 5; Philippians 2)

- When God sanctifies, He provides liberty to do something for Him consistent with what He's doing; the reason He's given you the liberty is for you to live godly
- Agape love is a love of the mentality, not of the soul and the emotions; if the mind that was in Christ is in you, your conduct and behavior would put the divine nature on display

I Corinthians 8 and 9: Paul's Example

- The strong in the faith realized that an idol is nothing in the world, but lacked the understanding that their liberty is to put God's divine nature on display — which would give up that liberty for the weaker brother
- In chapter 9, all 27 verses, Paul makes an example out of himself: he was not putting himself under a legal system; he was putting the divine nature on display

- Agape love is giving up of yourself for the benefit of ones you value and esteem more than yourself; right now God is giving up of Himself in this dispensation of His long-suffering and grace

The Two Hallmark Features

- With “Moreover,” Paul brings in the other goal of our liberty after chapters 8 and 9: to repudiate participation in what we came out of and put on display our abhorrence for those things
- The two primary objectives of godly sanctification: put the divine nature on display, and repudiate former participation in the Satanic policy of evil and the course for this world — both to God’s honor and glory

Israel’s Sanctification Out of Egypt

- When Israel came out of Egypt, God sanctified them, baptized them unto Him and gave them identification with Moses as the redeemer and the deliverer
- In view of being redeemed they were to put the divine nature on display; in view of being delivered, repudiate what they had been delivered from
- From Exodus 15 to Mount Sinai in chapter 19, God gave Israel five trials educating them in His Jehovahness and grace and their godly sanctification; once they took the law contract, a complete change took place

Israel as Our Example (I Corinthians 10:5–14)

- Israel had a godly sanctification, but the edification of it didn’t take place with them; Paul is afraid the same thing is happening to the Corinthians
- The Corinthians were tempted, in the guise of superior spirituality, to show more pleasure with what they came out of than with what they now have; the temptation there is temptation to go back into what you came out of
- With a zeal for their godly sanctification and an abhorrence for the unfruitful works of darkness, they will flee from idolatry

Loving Our Godly Sanctification (Ephesians 5)

- Sanctification is by grace through faith just as justification is; God responds differently to us today than He did to Israel because He is dealing with us on the basis of grace
- Ephesians 5 says the same kind of things as I Corinthians 8, 9 and 10: works of darkness are fellowship with the adversary and unfruitful, and as light in the Lord we have the privilege of reproving them
- What was lacking with Israel ought not be lacking with us today in this dispensation of grace; we ought to love our godly sanctification

L15

Spiritual Gifts: You Can’t Afford to Be Ignorant *I Corinthians 12:1–3; Exodus 34:10; Psalm 74; Acts 2, 10–11: Signs Belong to Israel*

The Fourth of the Six Essential Doctrines

- This lesson begins the fourth of the six essential doctrines, the one dealing with spiritual gifts; the first three were Pauline authority and godly edification, Israel and the mystery, and godly sanctification out of I Corinthians 10
- It is not a verse-by-verse examination but a look at the main issues of the essential nature of the doctrine, and it may take longer to go through than the previous three

Why You Can’t Afford to Be Ignorant (I Corinthians 12:1–3)

- Counterfeit spiritual gifts were in operation in the church in Corinth without them even knowing it — they couldn’t tell the difference; if the Corinthians

were being deceived, anybody can be deceived

- You can't go by what you see or hear; ignorance of exactly what God says makes you an easy candidate for deception and really guarantees you will be deceived
- If you don't rightly divide the word of truth and keep God's program with Israel separate from this dispensation of grace, spiritual gifts will be confusing — and the adversary is the author of confusion
- Most of Paul's references to signs, wonders, miracles and spiritual phenomena for us today concern the adversary's counterfeits; God's use of spiritual phenomena in this dispensation was limited to a very short period and a very restricted reason

Signs Belong to Israel (Exodus 34:10; Psalm 74)

- 98 to 99% of all references to signs, wonders, miracles and spiritual phenomena are recorded in the portion of God's word dealing with His program with Israel
- In Exodus 34:10 God made a covenant with Israel for them to see Him working among them — the reason they wouldn't believe unless they saw signs and wonders; Israel is taught to walk by sight
- In Psalm 74:9 "our signs" is Israel claiming the right to something; Paul does not say the Jews want a sign — he says they require one

Tongues: Israel's Gift

- The gift of tongues is Israel's gift: it was the way they would carry out the administration of God's righteous rule once the kingdom was established, speaking in all the languages of the nations
- It is also the gift the satanic policy has chosen to counterfeit, because it is the easiest one to counterfeit and for people to fake on their own
- In Acts 2 the ones who benefit from the gifting are the members of the nation Israel, particularly the remnant; the gifting, signs and wonders are all Israel's

We Walk by Faith; Gentiles Given Israel's Gift

- Walking by sight was appropriate, natural and expected in God's program with Israel; the natural thing for us in this dispensation of grace is to "walk by faith, not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7)
- In Acts 10–11 what they were really astonished about was God giving a bunch of Gentiles their gift; Peter realized it wasn't natural according to the program, and though he didn't understand it, he wasn't going to withstand it
- Three things to understand before I Corinthians 12–14: right division and God's two programs; why God gave Gentiles spiritual gifts at the beginning of this dispensation; and that the adversary counterfeits the power of God in both
- Once a particular event identified in chapter 13 took place — in the lifetime of the Corinthians and of Paul — God would go out of the sign, wonder and miracle-working business, leaving only the adversary in it

L16

Satan Counterfeits the Power of God *I Corinthians 12:1–3: Dumb Idols and the Counterfeit Gift of Tongues*

The Most Devastating Ignorance

- Recap: 98 to 99% of Bible references to spiritual phenomena pertain to God's program with Israel, natural there because of the covenant in Exodus 34:10;

from God they are not a natural thing in this dispensation of grace

- Satan can counterfeit spiritual gifts with such deceptiveness that you cannot tell the difference by what you see; the only way to tell is sound doctrine, especially in I Corinthians 12, 13 and 14
- Paul sets this forth in the first three verses of chapter 12, before he even launches into the doctrine of spiritual gifts

Verse 2: Carried Away unto Dumb Idols

- "Dumb" does not mean stupid — the idols couldn't talk; worshipers were given to understand that God spoke through the idol by a human being, usually the priest, priestess or attendant
- "Carried away" is the same concept used of ecstasy; "even as ye were led" — they were led by the nose ring and led astray
- The satanic policy of evil produced genuine spiritual phenomena among the idol-worshiping Gentiles, and they all thought they were worshiping the true and living God
- Simon in Acts 8 produced spiritual phenomena by sorceries, and the Samaritans were convinced he was the great power of God; the same had gone on among the Gentiles since God delivered them over to Satan in Genesis 11

Counterfeits in Israel's Program

- Psalm 115 shows how heathen idolatry convinced the worshiper the idol actually spoke, by a phenomenon produced through the idol's attendant; Israel was given to understand that the individual had a familiar spirit
- In Deuteronomy 13 the sign or wonder actually comes to pass, designed to back up the man's message; such men are the children of Belial, Satan's own men
- Counterfeiting God's power is one of Satan's favorite things to do, both in God's program with Israel and in this dispensation of grace

Yet to Come When Israel's Program Resumes

- In Matthew 7 the people the Lord never knew were never saved in the kingdom program; prophesying, casting out devils and wonderful works in the Lord's name can be iniquity — you go by what the Word says, not by what you see
- Satan has not been stripped of his power to counterfeit; II Thessalonians 2 describes the working of Satan in the day of the Lord "with all power and signs and lying wonders"
- In Revelation 13 the beast gets his power from the dragon, Satan; fire from heaven, the sign of Jehovah to Israel, is counterfeited by Satan in the day of the Lord

Verse 3: The Counterfeit Gift of Tongues

- The Corinthians were being deceived again: the man claiming to speak by the Spirit of God and calling Jesus accursed was doing so by a counterfeit gift of tongues
- Tongues is the communication gift concerned with identifying the person of Jesus Christ as Lord — and an easy one to downright fake
- Once God is out of the spiritual phenomenon business, the only spiritual phenomena in this dispensation of grace will be the adversary's counterfeits

L17

Diversities of Gifts, Administrations and Operations *I Corinthians 12:4–27: The Role of Each Member of the Godhead*

Essential Doctrine Number Four

- This is essential doctrine number four, the doctrine of spiritual gifts Paul sets forth in I Corinthians 12, 13 and 14; two lessons have covered only the first three verses of chapter 12
- Without this doctrine a Christian will be victimized by the policy of evil — extreme confusion and uncertainty, or deception by seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, the goal of these counterfeit manifestations
- Even after God is out of the spiritual phenomenon business in this dispensation of grace, the counterfeits of the adversary proceed on

The Focus: Chapter 13

- The focus is especially the latter half of chapter 13, where Paul deals with the temporary nature of these manifestations of the Holy Spirit; they would cease in the very lifetime of the Corinthians
- At the end of Paul's ministry, the powers and capacities he himself had operated with were gone

Verses 4–6: Each Member of the Godhead

- Verses 4–6 set forth the role of each member of the Godhead: God the Holy Spirit (verse 4), God the Son (verse 5), God the Father (verse 6); verses 7–31 amplify those three issues
- The Holy Spirit is not operating as a maverick; the gifts fit the goal of a master plan God the Father drew up, and all of it is subservient to the operations He wants accomplished
- Operations are workings in accordance with a master plan to get specified objectives accomplished; the Holy Spirit didn't give a single gift that wasn't in line with meeting one of those operations

The Corinthians' Problem

- The Corinthians recognized diversity but not why there were diversities, or that some gifts had different roles; verses 28 and 31 give a ranking — some better, some the best
- In their thinking a gift with little, if any, function in the local assembly was being promoted as the best, and the policy of evil was taking advantage of their ignorance
- Most of all they lacked an appreciation for the diversities of operations of verse 6 — the biggest piece of information they were ignorant of, still troubling Christians

The Gifts and the Body (Verses 7–27)

- The same Spirit gave each gift: the word of wisdom (properly applying knowledge to a situation), the word of knowledge (insight, perception, critical discernment), faith, gifts of healing — the only gift always spoken of in the plural — prophecy and tongues
- The gifts are designed to function not independently but in a cooperative effort to serve the same Lord, like pieces of a puzzle that fit together
- In verses 12–27 Paul amplifies on the unit we are, the Body of Christ; verse 13 gives the mechanical means — the baptism of the Holy Spirit into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles

A More Excellent Way Coming

- Something more excellent than having any or all of these gifts was to be

provided; they were all temporary, and the one best operation was to be replaced by a much more excellent way

- The Corinthians are set forth as an example of what not to let happen; the adversary has counterfeited the less excellent way ever since the more excellent way arrived

L18

Ranking the Gifts by God's Operations *I Corinthians 12:28–31: Covet Earnestly the Best Gifts*

Diversities of Operations: The Focal Point

- In verses 28–31 the diversities of operations of God the Father, "which worketh all in all," become the focal point, and Paul ranks the gifts for the Corinthians
- As in the physical body — when the objective is to see, the eyes are the best member — the gifts are to be looked at from God's perspective, not from your own desire, as the Corinthians did
- A great number of the gifts served purposes that existed only for a very limited time at the beginning of this dispensation of grace

At Least Five Operations of God (Verse 28)

- Verse 28 gives a first, second, third, an 'after that' and a 'then' — at least five operations, ranked from best downward; listed straight down there are eight, but for now they are treated as five
- 1st: apostles, prophets and teachers — the communication of the Word of God, the first and foremost operation of God; by verse 31 these are the best gifts
- A local assembly is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3), designed first and foremost as a classroom for the communication of sound doctrine to edification
- 2nd: miracles — confirmation of God dealing with the Gentiles and the dispensation of Gentile grace being in effect; the gift functions with the evangelists, not in the local assembly
- 3rd: gifts of healings, kept distinct from miracles, confirming God turning from Israel; Israel's healings were signs that God had come to visit them, and God gave the capacity to produce them to some Gentiles
- 4th: helps and governments — local assembly orderliness, which becomes a big issue in the latter part of I Corinthians
- 5th: diversities of tongues — a final sign to unbelieving Israel, given at the beginning of the fifth course of punishment to testify His displeasure; it has no role in the church
- When tongues operates in a local assembly it produces disorder — exactly why Satan wants to counterfeit it so much

Covet Earnestly the Best Gifts

- All do not have these gifts; the only way it can function is for them not all to have them all, and in the local assembly to focus on the best — "covet earnestly the best gifts"
- That lets the local assembly get back to its focus: godly edification through the communication of God's word
- The Corinthians had the whole thing backwards: tongues, whose purpose had nothing to do with the local assembly, was considered the best, and the

satanic policy of evil was counterfeiting it in their midst

A More Excellent Way

- All these spiritual gifts are going to be done away, because some of the operations don't last throughout this dispensation of grace; for those that continue, a far better provision is coming in
- All 13 verses of chapter 13 amplify on it: the more excellent way is the completed written word of God

L19

A More Excellent Way: Charity Never Faileth *I Corinthians 12:31–13:10: The Gifts Done Away; That Which Is Perfect*

Counterfeits and the More Excellent Way

- God did have spiritual gifts and spiritual phenomena at the beginning of this dispensation of grace, but replaced what they did with what Paul calls "a more excellent way" (end of 12:31)
- The satanic policy of evil has always counterfeited the power of God; counterfeit gifts were already operating among the Corinthians, and in II Corinthians false apostles came doing signs, wonders and miracles
- Once the more excellent way arrived, all that is left is the counterfeiting by the satanic policy of evil

Five Operations; A Superior Replacement

- The five operations: communication of God's Word (apostles, prophets, teachers); confirmation of God dealing with the Gentiles (miracles); confirmation of God turning from Israel; local assembly orderliness (helps, governments); a final sign to unbelieving Israel (tongues)
- The gifts were a less excellent way; the completed written Word of God accomplishes all these in a superior manner, mainly because it is all resident within one handleable entity
- That is not to say the gifts were useless; but you ought to be more thankful for the completed written revelation than for any spiritual gift you could have possessed

The Most Excellent Ministry of the Holy Ghost (Verses 1–7)

- Chapter 13 is in two parts, verses 1–7 and 8–13; verses 1–7 deal with the most excellent ministry the Holy Spirit has, which exceeds the possession of any spiritual gift
- Paul compares the gifts to charity, the Greek agape — a mental love, not an emotional one: valuing and esteeming someone more than yourself, so you give of yourself for their benefit
- The most excellent ministry of the Holy Ghost is to teach you the charity of God — the fundamental concept for godliness: think like God, do things God's way, and labor with Him
- The first time Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit's ministry to you (Romans 5:5), it is shedding abroad God's love for you in your heart; you can't learn to love like God until you appreciate how much He values and esteems you
- Verses 4–7 display the charity of God — all displays of godliness — showing the Corinthians they had been missing the boat on this ministry, and yet they had all these gifts

Charity Never Faileth (Verse 8)

- "Charity never faileth" — as a well fails when it runs out; the Holy Ghost's

most excellent ministry of teaching the charity of God is never going to run out

- The changes in the word “another” in chapter 12 classify the gifts into three groups: the prophecy group will fail; the tongues group will cease — an abrupt stop tied to an event; the knowledge group will vanish away
- It is not just the three gifts named that end; their common denominator is that they would all be done away

That Which Is Perfect (Verses 9–10)

- “That which is perfect” is the antithesis of the partial knowledge of verse 9; it is neuter — not “He which is perfect,” not a person — and not the kingdom, which is God’s program with Israel
- It is the completed revelation from God in written form, the Bible, completed through the ministry of the Apostle Paul; since then the only spiritual gifts in operation have been counterfeits

L20

That Which Is Perfect Has Come *I Corinthians 13:11–13; Ephesians 1 and 4; Colossians 1–2; II Timothy 3–4*

Appreciating the More Excellent Way

- Essential doctrine number four continues: Paul underscores the naturalness of the less excellent way of spiritual gifts being replaced by the more excellent way of the completed written word of God
- Believers today are a lot better off than the Corinthians were, even with Paul in their midst; until they had the completed written word, they had to operate on a less excellent system
- From the time the more excellent way came, God has been out of the spiritual gift business — out of the spiritual phenomenon business in totality

Verses 11–13: Childish Things, Face to Face, What Abides

- Verse 11 is an illustrative analogy of mental growth from a child to a man; mental growth takes place on the base of knowledge, and the childish things were the spiritual gifts
- If a Christian longs for a spiritual gift, they are woefully weak in their edification
- The major realm of revelatory truth not yet given when Paul wrote to the Corinthians was the doctrine of our exaltation with Christ; when the completed revelation came with it, you are able to know yourself even as you are known
- Verse 13: the spiritual gifts done away; faith, hope and charity abide — not as gifts but as ministries of the Holy Ghost, the most excellent being education in the charity of God; not a single spiritual gift is mentioned

Ephesians: The Gifts in the Past Tense

- The gifts would be done away in the Corinthians’ own lifetime, so in Paul’s too; in Ephesians, written much later with Paul in prison, Paul testifies that that which is perfect has arrived
- Ephesians 4:11 says “he gave some” — past tense, not ‘he gives’; God wasn’t giving them anymore when Paul was writing Ephesians
- The goal is a perfect man — a fully educated man, the man of I Corinthians 13; keeping believers as children is not God’s goal but the adversary’s
- The doctrine of your exaltation in Christ gives the adversary the hardest time

among his principalities and powers; Keith calls “the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness” (Ephesians 4:14) magician terminology

Colossians and II Timothy: The Word of God Fulfilled

- Fulfill means fully fill: Paul in prison was fulfilling the Word of God (Colossians 1:24–25), and ‘fulfilled’ is the same word as ‘perfect’ in I Corinthians 13; it wasn’t the Apostle John who wrote the last of the Word of God
- The Corinthians knew the reality of the mystery; what is now made known is the riches of the glory of this mystery — Paul has that which is perfect and will present every man perfect
- Colossians 2:18–19 describes the satanic policy of evil talking about extra-biblical revelations and spiritual phenomena from angels
- “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God” is said in contrast to extra-biblical revelations
- Paul didn’t die until that which is perfect had come; God has not given a single spiritual gift since that which is perfect came

L21

The Gifts No Longer in Operation *Ephesians 4; I Timothy 3 and 5; II Timothy 4; I Corinthians 14 Begun*

The Last Two Lessons on the Fourth Doctrine

- These are the last two lessons on the fourth of the six essential doctrines, spiritual gifts; the passages confirm the gifts being done away, just like Paul said
- God’s Word is the superior way for accomplishing His operations, put on display especially in this dispensation of grace — to the angelic realm, and to Satan and his principalities, powers, mights and dominions
- Ceasing involves an event that stops a course of action: tongues was the final sign to unbelieving Israel, and once that event takes place, the gift of tongues ceases

Ephesians 4: “He Gave Some”

- Ephesians 4:7–16 deals with the fulness of God’s provision for the edification of the Body of Christ; the giving of the gifts for the communication of God’s Word is put in the past tense in verse 11
- Their role was getting God’s Word in completed written form, which He would preserve; the “till” of verse 13 tells how long they were given and what their role was
- The unity of the faith is not all the saints understanding the same thing; the passage says the gifts’ job is over, because the objective they were given for has been reached

Bishops Qualified by Edification (I Timothy 3; Titus 1)

- A spiritual gift was a supernaturally given capacity to instantaneously perform what the gift provided for, without study, experience or training
- In I Timothy 3 Paul does not speak of bishops as having a gift; if God were still giving the supernatural gift of pastor-teacher, there would be no need for such a passage
- A man is qualified not because God gave him a gift but because an edification process has taken place, beginning with a legitimate desire; Titus ordains elders on the same edificational qualifications

Healing Gone: Timothy, Trophimus, Luke

- "Lay hands suddenly" (I Timothy 5:22) concerns elders who sin — dealing with them in a judgmental manner, not giving anybody a gift; the very next verse shows another common gift is gone
- Timothy could not expect to be healed by a supernatural gift of healing: Paul couldn't do it, Timothy couldn't, and no one in Ephesus had the gift of healings
- Paul had to leave Trophimus sick — not for lack of faith; he couldn't heal him because the spiritual gift was gone
- Paul once never would have needed Luke's doctoring skills, but now he needs, values and esteems them; there is no miraculous deliverance like Acts 16

What Abides; I Corinthians 14 Begun

- Faith, hope and charity abide; in I Thessalonians 1 they are the three hallmark signs of proper response to the edification process and its three focal points
- Chapter 14 gives further corrective doctrine to stop the effects of the satanic policy of evil in their midst; God is not the author of the confusion, so either the Corinthians or the adversary is — they are cooperating with the adversary
- It is impossible for them all to legitimately speak in tongues, yet they all did — showing counterfeits, some faking it, and in cosmopolitan Corinth some who could naturally speak foreign languages

L22

Counterfeit Spiritual Phenomena Continuing On *I Corinthians 14; Acts 28; II Corinthians 11; Colossians 2; I and II Timothy*

The Final Lesson on Essential Doctrine Number Four

- This is the final lesson on essential doctrine number four, capping it off with the reality of counterfeit spiritual gifts and spiritual phenomena continuing on in this dispensation of grace by the satanic policy of evil

The Confusion behind I Corinthians 14

- God did not give tongues to every one of them, yet when they came together they all spoke in tongues — some downright faking it or emotionally working it up, some naturally speaking a second or third language
- 'Prophecy' is also used in chapter 14 in another sense: the saints as a whole taking what came through the one with the gift of prophet and dealing with it among themselves unto edification
- Verses 2–12 show the foolishness of speaking in an unknown tongue in the church and of not speaking to edification; a local church is a classroom for the communication of sound doctrine resulting in godly edification
- Those with the legitimate gift of tongues were not operating it in the local church; verses 26–40 show how to run things in the local assembly so as to stop giving place to the devil

Tongues: A Sign to Unbelieving Israel

- Paul spoke Hebrew, Greek and Latin by nature and also had the gift of tongues; by his own attitude he shows it is not designed to function in a local church
- Paul calls Isaiah part of "the law" because the law is God's program with Israel; "them that believe not" is unbelieving Israel
- God had one final sign to give Israel, expressing His displeasure and leaving

them without excuse — the gift of tongues; He had done that earlier when the fifth course of punishment began

- Three times, in the three Jewish population centers outside the land — Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13 and 14), Corinth (Acts 18) and Rome (Acts 28) — Paul gives unbelieving Israel an indictment from God, expressing His displeasure greater and greater
- From the moment Paul made the Acts 28 declaration, the gift of tongues ceased; God is out of the spiritual phenomenon business for the balance of this dispensation from the very time Paul's ministry concluded

Counterfeits in Paul's Epistles

- In II Corinthians 11 the false apostles were deceitful workers, and the adversary was counterfeiting the power of God with them; Satan's ministers are transformed as ministers of righteousness, not of evil and sin
- In this dispensation of grace Satan operates completely differently than in God's program with Israel; the first thing he is after is to corrupt the truth so spiritual edification can't take place
- Colossians 2:18–19 is counterfeit spiritual phenomena — angels, visions, extra-biblical revelations; angels don't manifest themselves in the dispensation of grace, not even Satan's angels
- The Holy Spirit speaks today through the completed written Word; Satan seduces by counterfeiting the power of God with signs, wonders and miracles, and Paul's remedy is putting the brethren in remembrance
- Old wives' fables are accounts about the supernatural in which someone is convinced of God's divine intervention; vain babblings are the continuation of the counterfeit gift of tongues

Shun It; Stick with the More Excellent Way

- The Spirit speaks in the word of truth, which you rightly divide (II Timothy 2:15); the counterfeit of the power of God will continue on — shun it, refuse it, avoid it, and stick with that which is perfect

L23

Not Deliverance, but Capacity to Endure *II Corinthians 1, 4, 12; Philippians 3; Colossians 1; II Thessalonians 1; II Timothy 1–2*

The Fifth of the Six Essential Doctrines

- Lesson 23 begins the fifth of the six essential doctrines; the fifth one has to do with sufferings, introduced by Paul's "we would not, brethren, have you ignorant" of the trouble in Asia (II Corinthians 1:8)
- The trouble and tribulation of verse 4 Paul defines in verse 5 as the sufferings of Christ

Why It Is an Essential Doctrine

- God wants us to look at sufferings differently in this dispensation of grace than Israel would have looked at them in God's program with them; and no one by nature wants to suffer
- It is one of the pet doctrines the satanic policy of evil likes to attack: Satan wants members of the Body of Christ to use their Bibles but put themselves back under Israel's program; there's a longing for us to look at sufferings and seek deliverance from them as Israel did

Not Deliverance, but Capacity to Endure

- In II Corinthians 1:8–10 there was an appreciation for the power of God, not

in delivering Paul from the suffering; the issue today isn't deliverance from sufferings, it's capacity to endure them

- The effectual working of the doctrine (verse 6) gives you the capacity to endure the same sufferings Paul went through — fundamentally different from how sufferings were looked upon in God's program with Israel
- You don't expect deliverance from them or not to suffer; God provides the more excellent issue of the capacity to endure them, to His honor and glory

Sufferings Work for Us (II Corinthians 4, 12)

- II Corinthians 4 is a major passage on what God is putting on display by letting us suffer: the excellency of the power of His Word
- Paul calls his affliction light — it "worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory"; that is the more-than-a-conqueror concept: what would naturally be looked upon as your enemy ends up assisting and benefiting you
- Paul besought the Lord thrice to have the thorn removed; the lesson is you don't need those things removed, for "my strength is made perfect in weakness" cannot be fulfilled if you are not weak

Rejoicing in Them; Two Categories

- In Philippians and Colossians Paul is not just enduring sufferings but asking for them and rejoicing in them; he wants to know Christ and "the fellowship of his sufferings," and that same rejoicing is held out for us
- Look at sufferings as God does: two categories — the sufferings of this present time, which are common to man, and the sufferings of Christ
- From Romans 8:18 Paul holds out no deliverance from the sufferings of this present time; God equips you to patiently endure — fortification of your inner man
- The Thessalonians learned the doctrine of II Corinthians; Timothy had been shunning the afflictions of the gospel, and the issue is endure, endure, endure (II Timothy 2:3)

The Goal: "the God of all comfort"

- The goal is that, instead of murmuring and complaining, you can say II Corinthians 1:3 in the midst of both kinds of sufferings; the Lord's provided for consolation to abound where the sufferings abound
- The doctrine that teaches you how to look at sufferings in this dispensation of grace is Romans to Philemon, and in particular II Corinthians, an epistle dedicated to this issue

L24

Two Categories of Suffering — and a Third *Romans 8; II Corinthians 1, 4; Deuteronomy 28; Leviticus 26; II Chronicles 7:14*

Why Sufferings Must Be Seen as God Sees Them

- The sufferings of Christ is really a privilege of God's grace — described as a gift later in Philippians, but a gift of God very few Christians ever seem to want
- Not rightly dividing, Christians look at sufferings from the perspective of God's program with Israel; in this dispensation of grace Satan wants a Christian to be biblical but not dispensational
- What we are taught about sufferings in this dispensation of grace is for the most part contrary and foreign to how things were in God's program with

Israel

Two Categories — and a Third

- There are two categories of suffering, two places from which sufferings can come; there is also a third, to be brought out later
- The sufferings of this present time (Romans 8:18) are common to the sin-cursed creation, produced by the bondage of corruption — sickness, disease, accident, crime; all creation experiences them
- The sufferings of Christ are a special category, produced by the satanic policy of evil and directed against the members of the church, the body of Christ — suffering for Jesus' sake (II Corinthians 1:5)
- As the lesson puts it, "actually, there's a third category": "You can suffer because of your own stupidity" — dealt with in connection with both categories, "not dealt with by Paul so much as a separate category"
- That category is a byproduct of failing to appreciate what you're taught about both; members of the body of Christ stupid enough not to receive God's education won't get the comfort

The Doctrinal Order in Romans 8

- Paul introduces the sufferings of Christ in Romans 8 but doesn't deal with it in detail; you understand the sufferings of this present time and the equipment to handle them first, then you can handle the other
- In Romans 8:35 Paul has a "who" in mind that operates through a bunch of "whats"; there is more of a hatred for you as a member of the body of Christ because of the mystery of Christ
- "This present time" has a dispensational connotation — present time, not past, not future — a reference to this dispensation of grace

Israel's Program: Both Categories Avoidable

- Under the law contract — an if-then performance contract — comply and Israel avoids sufferings of both categories; don't comply and they get both categories and even more (Deuteronomy 28)
- The courses of curses in Leviticus 26 aim to get Israel reformed, so they could go back to avoiding sufferings from either category

No Promise of Avoidance Today

- God holds out no promise today that we can avoid them; you are not to expect or request deliverance from the sufferings of this present time, and He's made no promise to curse you for not performing
- II Chronicles 7:14 pertains only to God's program with Israel: "my people" there is members of the nation of Israel, not of the church, the body of Christ

L25

Sufferings Banished Only in Israel's Program *Isaiah 11, 33, 65; Hebrews 6; Revelation 20–21; Romans 8:18–39*

The Two Categories and Israel's Program

- The two categories — the sufferings of this present time, common to man from the bondage of corruption, and the sufferings of Christ, suffering for the Lord's sake — apply in God's program with Israel also; Israel had the opportunity to avoid both
- Only through the fulfillment of God's program with Israel are the two categories banished — not in this dispensation of grace; this present time has suspended God's program with Israel

Isaiah: When the King Reigns

- Isaiah 11 describes Israel and the world when the Messiah, Israel's King, is reigning; both parts of the curse, Genesis 3 and the flood, are removed when the Lord establishes His kingdom
- Isaiah 33 — "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick" — addresses sicknesses as part of the bondage of corruption
- What is new about the new heavens and new earth is no more bondage of corruption and no more policy of evil against God's people; Isaiah 27 shows why the Adversary's gone, and then the sufferings associated with the policy are gone

The Powers of the World to Come

- Hebrews 6, written to the remnant of Israel, speaks of the powers of the world to come; they put on display that the two categories would be banished — that is why the Lord healed the sick
- Revelation 20:1–3 shows the banishment of the sufferings caused by Satan's plan and policy of evil; in Revelation 21 the two categories are gone — still yet to come, when Israel's program is resumed and fulfilled

Our Situation in the Dispensation of Grace

- We live in the dispensation of Gentile grace; God is suspending His program with Israel, not replacing it — the gifts and calling of God to Israel are still without repentance
- The sufferings of the bondage of corruption continue as your natural lot, with no promised deliverance no matter how you live; the satanic policy of evil works against you with an even greater hatred than for the remnant of Israel
- God has provided the capacity to be more than a conqueror and, through weakness, to honor and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ — a privilege Israel never had offered to them

The Effectual Working of God's Word

- An aspect of the subject is contained in every one of our epistles, Romans through Philemon, and II Corinthians, with 13 chapters, is dedicated to it
- The excellent power is God's Word operating within the inner man; the doctrines are designed to produce endurance to the honor and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then a desire for the fellowship of His sufferings and rejoicing in them

Romans 8:18–39

- Verses 18–34 are designed to handle the sufferings of this present time; verses 35–39 introduce the second category, the sufferings of Christ from the policy of evil
- The very first category of doctrine is the glory that is yours in view of who you are in Christ; "saved by hope" (verse 24) is being saved from being overcome by the bondage of corruption, not salvation from the penalty of sin (Romans 1–5)
- A second category of doctrine — the tranquilizing ministry of the Holy Ghost (verses 26–27) — enables patient endurance when you don't know what to pray for as you ought
- Verses 28–30 give the certainty of God's counsel; in verses 31–35 God's power, grace, justice and love are each for you

L26

The Excellency of the Power *Romans 8:35–39; II Corinthians 1, 4, 12; Ephesians 3*

Not Deliverance, but the Excellency of the Power

- In this final lesson on the fifth essential doctrine, the issue is not deliverance but capacity to endure, to God's honor and glory — the excellency of the power of God's Word operating within our souls and spirits
- We have the privilege of putting on display to the Adversary the superiority of God's wisdom and power — an effectual working to God's Word he never perceived; the power of God is not absent in this dispensation of grace

The Sufferings of Christ (Romans 8:35–39)

- The things in verse 35 are not common to man as natural results of the bondage of corruption; usually there is hatred behind them, especially peril, sword and persecution
- Paul quotes Psalm 44, a psalm about the remnant and what they will experience in the day of the Lord; the adversary hates us with a vehement hatred because of what the mystery of Christ and the new creation mean
- God's love toward you is not tied to the circumstances of your life; God's love for you is in Christ Jesus our Lord
- Being more than a conqueror — taking what the adversary throws at you and having it work for your benefit — is far better than ever being delivered

The God of All Comfort (II Corinthians 1)

- The entire epistle of II Corinthians is dedicated to providing doctrine so that as the sufferings of Christ abound, consolation abounds
- In verse 4, "any trouble" includes the sufferings of this present time, and even "that third category, which is a natural byproduct of ignoring the doctrine, which is your stupidity"; II Corinthians gives examples of the Corinthians suffering trouble for their stupidity
- Paul is not delivered from his sufferings; no suffering of Christ from the policy of evil will exceed what he experienced, and the category of doctrine he used in that most extreme situation worked

Treasure in Earthen Vessels (II Corinthians 4)

- The earthen vessels can easily be dashed, easily be broken, so that the excellency of the power of God is on display — His power operating in the inner man, something the angelic beings never understood could take place
- Paul realized God is not going to stop it; day by day the effectual working of God's Word renews the inner man

My Strength Is Made Perfect in Weakness (II Corinthians 12)

- The thorn was not one of the sufferings of this present time but "the messenger of Satan to buffet me"; the Lord demonstrated He is not doing things on the basis of Israel's program
- The excellency of His strength can only be made perfect, fully developed and put on display in weakness; verse 9 — "my strength is made perfect in weakness" — is the message that's to go back
- Paul moves from simply enduring to taking pleasure in them: "I take pleasure in infirmities"

The Power That Worketh in Us (Ephesians 3)

- Paul prays that the Ephesians would not cave in under the satanic policy of evil; the greatest display of God's power is the effectual working of His word within the soul and spirit, far superior to God putting His hand between you

and your problems

- These four hours are an introduction to the fundamentals of the doctrine of sufferings for this dispensation of grace; essential doctrine number six — physical death, the rapture, and the Lord's Day — follows

L27

Physical Death, the Rapture, and the Lord's Day *I Thessalonians 4:13 – 5:2: Essential Nature, Attacks, and Physical Death Defined*

The Sixth and Final Essential Doctrine

- This is the sixth occurrence of Paul's unique expression introducing an essential doctrine; the passage dealt with primarily is I Thessalonians 4:13 down through verse 11 of chapter 5, taken in four lessons
- Physical death, the rapture, and the Lord's Day are three issues "wrapped up into one package"; they are taken in the order they come in the passage

Three Issues in I Thessalonians 4–5

- "them which are asleep" are members of the church, the body of Christ, that have died; verse 17, being caught up to meet the Lord in the air, is the rapture concept
- "the times and the seasons" (5:1) concern the resumption of God's program with Israel and the coming of the day of the Lord; there is a coming of the Lord associated with both programs, and it is essential to keep them distinct
- The goal of the satanic policy of evil is not to get Christians to throw their Bibles away but to get them back in Israel's program

"that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope"

- The issue is not that you sorrow not — when physical death becomes an issue to a Christian, the sorrow is genuine — but that you sorrow not even as others that have no hope
- Without the doctrine a Christian has only human viewpoint, no different than an unbeliever, or a false doctrine producing worse results than ignorance; with it, the sorrow is mitigated by joy that overcomes it

The Blessed Hope Kept Blessed

- The doctrine makes sure our blessed hope, the rapture, is as blessed as God designed it to be; in Titus 2 the Lord's coming for us at the end of this dispensation is called the blessed hope
- Our looking is different from the looking the Lord speaks about in the gospel accounts; we are not watching the signs of the times or events on a time schedule

Commonly and Favorably Attacked

- This doctrine is, in the lesson's words, "commonly and favorably" attacked by the policy of evil; some Thessalonians were taken in by an extremely clever tactic — a counterfeit epistle of the Apostle Paul
- It was attacked in the churches in Ephesus — Hymenaeus and Philetus said the resurrection is past already — and at Corinth the doctrinal corruption began with the doctrine of physical death
- Successfully attacked, these doctrines act like a lever and a wedge; Keith says, "They're opposing themselves", and "you're your own worst enemy when you don't get yourself educated like God tells you to"

A Working Definition of Physical Death

- Any death is a separation from something that gives it life; physical death is

the body being without the spirit — when the soul and spirit separates from the body

- Peter, writing to the remnant of Israel, describes his own coming physical death as putting off his tabernacle — not a building or a tent, but his body
- The present body is fit for the soul; the body we will have in resurrection at the rapture is going to be fit for the spirit
- Physical death is not the soul and spirit ceasing to exist; it's the body that has no animation — the soul and spirit still does

L28

Absent from the Body, Present with the Lord *I Thessalonians 4:13–15; Luke 16; Psalm 16; II Corinthians 5; Philippians 1; I Corinthians 15*

"we which are alive *and* remain"

- This lesson and two more complete the sixth of the six essential doctrines, which begins with what takes place at physical death and proceeds to what takes place at the rapture
- "alive *and* remain" contrasts us with those who died in Christ: their body returned to the dust awaiting resurrection, but their soul and spirit didn't hang around here — they are not ghosts
- There is a particular place designated for the soul or spirit, depending on whether it is justified or not — and a dispensational thing to understand about where it has gone

Before the Cross: Luke 16

- This is no parable: the Lord cites two individuals the Pharisees knew; Lazarus was a justified man in God's program, while the rich man believed the Pharisaical doctrine
- Abraham's bosom is not the third heaven but a compartment down in hell in the heart of the earth; that lower part of the earth is divided into two sections, with a great gulf between them — the shaft of the pit
- Justified went to Abraham's bosom, unjustified to the torment section; either way the soul and spirit went someplace, with a form to it, reserved there until a resurrection
- This was all before the battle on the cross, before the spoils of the victory of Christ as Israel's Redeemer began to be experienced

Psalm 16: Not Left There

- When David died he went to the comfort section, Abraham's bosom, but knew he wouldn't be left there; his release from hell would be based on what the Holy One of Israel would do
- It is the body that sleeps in the grave waiting for resurrection, not the soul or spirit

At Home in the Body, Absent from the Lord (II Corinthians 5)

- When a member of the Body of Christ dies during this dispensation of grace, the soul and spirit goes to a destination commensurate with the spoils of that victory
- The earthly house being dissolved is what takes place at physical death; at the rapture resurrection we go from an earthly house to a heavenly house — a body fit to exist out there
- Right now we are at home in the body and absent from the Lord — where we are supposed to be; if physical death takes place before the rapture, the soul

and spirit goes present with the Lord

Paradise: a Locale in the Third Heaven

- In Philippians 1 Paul, his course just about over, speaks of the gain of death: the soul and spirit departs the body and this earth to be with Christ in the third heaven
- Paradise is not just another name for the third heaven but a particular locale in it — where a member of the Body of Christ goes at death

Reuniting and the Five Changes

- There will be a reuniting of soul, spirit and body, and of separated members of the Body of Christ, never to be separated again — far better than the original togetherness
- In I Corinthians 15 Paul breaks the changes into five categories; those alive when this dispensation ends get them without physical death; they include corruption to incorruption and the fifth, climactic change to a body fit for the heavenly place

L29

Our Mystery Resurrection and the Last Trump

I Thessalonians 4:14–18; I Corinthians 15:20–57; Jeremiah 25; Psalm 47: the Timing of the Resurrection

We Shall Not Prevent Them (I Thessalonians 4:14–17)

- The concern now is the timing of the resurrection: when the Lord returns for us, those who died in Christ throughout this dispensation of grace are resurrected at that time
- Not preventing them means we don't go ahead of them and get things in advance; without the resurrection we would get a glorified, immortal body before they did
- This coming and this resurrection are part of the revelation of the mystery committed to Paul, not found in the prophetic scriptures — so he says "by the word of the Lord", not "As it is written"

The Order of the Resurrections (I Corinthians 15:20–28)

- Because of evil communications affecting the Corinthians, Paul shows both the reality of the resurrection and a prescribed order of resurrections; Christ the firstfruits is the first
- "they that are Christ's at his coming" is not His coming at the end of this dispensation of grace, but at the end of the day of the Lord, when He establishes the kingdom
- Paul can't prove the resurrection by asking the Corinthians to find in the Scriptures a resurrection that isn't in their pages yet; he proves it must take place, or the Lord Jesus Christ can't fulfill the Davidic Covenant — and God would be shown a liar

"Behold, I shew you a mystery" (I Corinthians 15:50–57)

- Since corruption does not inherit incorruption, the body has to be changed; a resurrection of the dead in Christ has to take place for the inheritance to be ours
- What God hadn't spoken about was this dispensation of grace and a coming of Himself as He concludes it, with a resurrection; in "We shall not all sleep", "We" is not all men
- All of us in this dispensation of grace will partake of the fivefold changes, and

we get the same benefits promised to Israel from that redemptive work — death destroyed, the grave swallowed up in victory

"at the last trump"

- The last trump is not last in a series of trumps — a common mistake, going to the Book of the Revelation — but the announcement of the end
- We are the ones upon whom "the ends of the world are come"; this dispensation of grace was brought in against the backdrop of the readiness for the day of the Lord's wrath to begin
- When the Lord ends this dispensation of grace, He simultaneously announces the beginning of His day; the last trump is the end of His long-suffering and grace to the world

A Shout, the Archangel, the Trump of God

- The three concepts of I Thessalonians 4:16 are familiar in God's program with Israel and all tied to the Lord's day of wrath — not Sunday, but the day of the Lord
- Jeremiah 25:30 is the commencement of the Lord's day; it starts with a shout like a war cry and ends with that shout of victory (Psalm 47)

Comfort One Another

- Understanding these details is the primary comfort Paul gives to assuage grief; in grief and sorrow a wedge of contrary doctrine can easily be driven in, so have the sound doctrine settled beforehand

L30

Delivered from the Wrath to Come *I Thessalonians 5:1–11; II Thessalonians 2:1–8: No Need of the Times and the Seasons*

Delivered from the Wrath to Come

- By the Lord's coming for us we are delivered from the wrath to come: the dead in Christ resurrected, those alive and remaining changed and caught up together to meet the Lord in the air
- The end of this dispensation of grace and the beginning of the Lord's day, with the resumption of His program with Israel, are "simultaneous events"
- From the air the Lord conducts His day of wrath until He returns at its end, then physically takes up His residence on this earth and reigns as Israel's king in fulfillment of the Davidic covenant
- Every moment is a moment of grace; our conduct ought to reflect that long-suffering and grace could stop at any moment

"ye have no need that I write unto you"

- The topic is what takes place after the rapture: the resumption of God's program with Israel and the times and seasons of the Lord's Day — the fine details of the progression on the time schedule
- We have no need to be written unto because we are not going to be here; the times and seasons are written to the nation of Israel as a whole and particularly the remnant of Israel
- They are given provisions to make it through, places of protection and a course of action; being written to gives a calendar on which to recognize the progression of the Lord's day

Acts 1, Matthew 24 and the Revelation

- In Acts 1 they understood the program is the restoration of the kingdom, the

goal of the Lord's day; it was not for them to know the times or seasons

- In Matthew 24 the Lord takes Daniel 11 and 12 and sets forth the times and the seasons; the book of the Revelation sets them forth like a daily newspaper for the remnant of Israel

Children of the Day, Not Appointed to Wrath

- Paul contrasts the time in which we live with the time after we're gone; we are children of light belonging to the Lord and children of the day
- "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation" — deliverance from the wrath; Paul knows this doctrine is going to be attacked

Shaken in Mind (II Thessalonians 2:1–5)

- "our gathering together unto him" is the rapture, resurrection issue; contrary doctrine came in the guise that Paul was now teaching it, even through a counterfeit letter as from Paul
- The falling away is not a reference to the rapture; in Paul's day it applied first and foremost to a political falling away, out of which comes the revelation of the man of sin
- When Israel sees it, they'll know "the fifth installment, the fifth course of punishment is underway"; it is set forth in Daniel 11, and the Lord refers to the same things in Matthew 24

What Withholdeth: the Mystery of Iniquity

- Keith says "the mystery of iniquity is a reference to what's going on in this dispensation of grace": instead of the prophesied day of His wrath, God responds with long-suffering and grace and the formation of the one new man
- God is the one withholding, by what He is doing in forming the one new man; not until He takes him out of the way will the Lord deal with that other man — "until he be taken out of the way" is the rapture

Key Doctrinal Distinctions

Israel's Program vs. the Dispensation of Grace

The Bible contains two plans and purposes of God, one with the nation Israel and one with the new creation, the church, the body of Christ; they aren't the same, and they don't go on at the same time. Israel's program isn't abolished but temporarily set aside; Romans through Philemon is the portion of God's Word dealing with this dispensation of grace, and Hebrews through Revelation follows in connection with the resumption of Israel's program yet to come. We are not spiritual Israel nor the fulfiller of Israel's promises and covenants; the things written aforetime weren't written for our obedience, but we are supposed to learn.

Being Scriptural vs. Rightly Dividing

You can be scriptural and not produce godly edifying; you must rightly divide the word of truth and recognize that not everything in the Bible is about us today. The law is the Word of God, but not the Word of God to us, for us or about us today in the dispensation of grace. Godly edification begins with

recognizing where in the Bible we go to get it, our apostle, the Apostle Paul; the issue is the office, not the man.

Walking by Sight vs. Walking by Faith

On the basis of the covenant in Exodus 34:10, signs, wonders, miracles and spiritual phenomena were natural in God's program with Israel, and Israel was taught to walk by sight. The norm for this dispensation of grace is walking by faith, not by sight. Once God is out of it, the only spiritual phenomena produced in this dispensation of grace will be the adversary's counterfeits.

The Less Excellent Way vs. the More Excellent Way

The spiritual gifts are the less excellent way, replaced by the more excellent way of the completed written word of God. "That which is perfect" is neuter, not a person, and not the kingdom; it is the completed revelation from God in written form, the Bible, completed through the ministry of the Apostle Paul himself. From the moment Paul made the Acts 28 declaration the gift of tongues ceased, and God is out of the spiritual phenomenon business for the balance of this dispensation from the time Paul's ministry concluded. Faith, hope and charity abide, not as gifts but as ministries of the Holy Ghost.

Sufferings: Not Deliverance but Capacity to Endure

The issue today in this dispensation isn't deliverance from sufferings; it's capacity to endure them. Sufferings break into two categories: the sufferings of this present time, common to man from the bondage of corruption, and the sufferings of Christ, a special category produced by the policy of evil. As the teaching adds, "actually, there's a third category": "You can suffer because of your own stupidity," a category "not dealt with by Paul so much as a separate category"; later it is called "a natural byproduct of ignoring the doctrine." In God's program with Israel provision was there for both kinds of sufferings to be avoided or greatly minimized; God holds out no promise to us today that we can avoid them. Only through the fulfillment of God's program with Israel are the two categories of sufferings banished.

The Rapture vs. the Lord's Coming in Israel's Program

The rapture that ends this dispensation of grace is kept distinct from the Lord's return at the end of His day; rightly dividing, recognizing the two programs, is the key to keeping them distinct. The end of this dispensation of grace and the beginning of the Lord's day, with the resumption of His program with Israel, are simultaneous events. The last trump is not last in the sense of a series of trumps in the Book of the Revelation; it is the end of His long-suffering and grace to the world and the announcement that His day is beginning. By the Lord's coming for us we are delivered from the wrath to come; we will not be on the earth when the Lord's day of wrath is taking place. In II Thessalonians 2 God is the one withholding, by forming the one new man, and "until he be taken out of the way" is the reference to the rapture.

Justification vs. Sanctification

Justification is the identification in Christ that produces harmony between God's righteousness and His justice; sanctification is the identification in Christ that produces compatibility with God's holiness. Walk and conduct pertain to sanctification and have no effect upon justification. If the greatest thing God has done for you is justify you by grace through faith, the second greatest is to sanctify you by grace.

Key Scripture References

Exodus 34:10	God's covenant to do marvels among Israel: spiritual phenomena natural in Israel's program; Israel taught to walk by sight
Deuteronomy 28:1–14	Under the blessings of the law contract Israel could avoid the sufferings of the bondage of corruption and of the policy of evil
II Chronicles 7:14	Pertains only to God's program with Israel; "my people" is the nation of Israel, not the Body of Christ
Luke 16:19–26	Before the cross a justified man went to Abraham's bosom: not the third heaven but a compartment down in hell in the heart of the earth; that is not going on with us today
Acts 28:23–28	From the moment Paul made that declaration, the gift of tongues ceased
Romans 1:13	The first essential doctrine; "was let hitherto" is Satanic opposition
Romans 6:1–13	The fundamentals of our sanctified position in Christ; the baptism is not water baptism but puts you into Christ
Romans 8:18–23	The sufferings of this present time, common to all men under the bondage of corruption
Romans 8:35–39	Paul introduces the second category, the sufferings of Christ from the policy of evil
Romans 11:13	Not the man but the office: Paul declares the position he holds in the plan and purpose of God
Romans 11:25	Blindness in part is only temporary; when the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, we are taken out and Israel's program resumes
Romans 15:4	Things written aforetime: for our learning, not our obedience
I Corinthians 10:1–11	Paul makes an example of Israel in time past, written for our admonition in this dispensation of grace
I Corinthians 12:1–3	A man claiming to speak by the Spirit of God called Jesus accursed by a counterfeit gift of tongues
I Corinthians 12:28–31	At least five operations of God, ranked from best downward; and yet a more excellent way
I Corinthians 13:8–10	"That which is perfect": the completed revelation from God in written form, the Bible
I Corinthians 14:21–22	Tongues a sign to them that believe not: unbelieving Israel
I Corinthians 15:51–52	At the last trump the dead in Christ are raised incorruptible and we who are alive are changed
II Corinthians 1:4–8	The fifth essential doctrine: the trouble of verse 4 defined as the sufferings of Christ; capacity to endure, not deliverance
II Corinthians 5:6–8	Absent from the body, present with the Lord: a definition of physical death
II Corinthians 10:8	The Lord gave Paul authority to produce edification; it must be recognized

	and submitted to
II Corinthians 12:7–10	The thorn a messenger of Satan, not one of the sufferings of this present time; Christ's strength made perfect in weakness
Ephesians 4:11–14	"He gave" is past tense; the adversary's goal is to keep you a child
I Thessalonians 4:13–17	Sorrow not as others that have no hope; a resurrection and the rapture when the Lord returns
I Thessalonians 5:1–10	The times and seasons concern the day of the Lord; not appointed to wrath: deliverance from the wrath
II Thessalonians 2:6–7	God withholds by forming the one new man; "taken out of the way" is the rapture
I Timothy 1:3–4	Godly edifying is the subject matter; other doctrine, fables and endless genealogies minister questions rather than godly edifying