

Romans 1:1-7

Sunday 2/10/2008

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,

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

And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:

To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, Father, we ask You today to come with us and help us to open up these Scriptures. Help us to learn the great truths here that You have for us. Lord, I know that there are many men and women in this room today that really want to build a relationship with You. I know, Father, that there are some here that really desire to be everything that they can be for You. Lord, I know that as a human being, even though I am a pastor of this church, I am severely limited in ever helping anybody get to that point. All I can do is point them in that direction. I can give them and offer them a few encouragements and lay out some things that they can begin to see. But, Lord, the real matter of that has to come between their own personal relationship with You and the commitment that they make in their heart that they are going to be and do what God wants them to do.

Lord, I pray we have a lot of young couples here today. We have a lot of single parents here today with kids that are in that age where the world is going to grab them up. Help us, Lord, to realize that we, as parents, have a tremendous responsibility. Let us, as a church, Lord, always be there to not only train the men and women that want to learn about God and the Word of God, but to always be in mind of the children, Lord, and the teenagers and all of those young adults that really are coming at a time in their life where they are faced with many, many issues that we need to be there and be their rock to hold them, Lord, in line with the Word of God. Bless us today. We thank You and give You the praise and the glory in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

I. The Three Levels of Bible Understanding

Last week, we looked at Romans 1:1, and I showed you how, when it comes to the Book of Romans—and this is really true of the whole Bible—God doesn't waste any space. He uses everything in there, and you could study the Book of Romans not only by the book itself, but basically, you could probably come down and break it down verse by verse in most cases. We

saw last week that when Paul opened this great book, which really deals with us as understanding the mindset of ministry through all of the different issues, he opened it up by giving us three areas in our lives that we need to have to be effective as a minister of Christ.

The first thing he said was, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ." We talked about your attitude about being a servant. Then he said, "called to be an apostle." We talked about how, if you are saved this morning, God has a calling for you. He has something that He wants you to do. The last thing we talked about is he said that he was "separated unto the gospel of God." We talked about the attitude that in Christianity, when you get saved, you can't just separate from the world, but you have to separate to something. You have to fill that gap and fill that void.

Romans 1:1 has always been an incredible verse to me. I saw it many, many, many years ago, and it has always been something that I have never forgotten. It is a great little verse if you want to use it for a devotion with your ball team at some point. Yet, it is a great sermon that you can just go on forever on those three points. What an impacting verse to open up the Book of Romans with.

Today, we are going to start in Romans 1:2, and we are going to come on down through here, and we are going to look at the rest of this. We are going to see how he opens up some great concepts here that we need to see and understand. We are going to continue on now and we will see how he lays this thing out.

Romans 1:1-2

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures.

Now, you want to look at and mark that "the gospel of God, which the gospel of God he had promised before by his prophets in the Holy Scripture." This verse is a great key to understanding a lot of things about the Bible.

When I look at the Bible, I look at the Bible as like a tall, majestic, superstructure building. You have everything from the ground level up is where the people work. There is a level to the Bible where you live. I have to make analogies that I can understand. So, when I think of the Bible and I think of the magnitude of the Bible, I put it in three concepts.

1. The first part would be the ground level where we all live. That is where we have to face the issues of life, and we all live life, and the Bible has the answers to that. That would be the first level of your Bible, the ground level.
2. Underneath the ground level, you would have the basement area, and a basement is where you store things. In the Bible concept, that would be where you memorize, where you get key concepts that help you on the ground level. When you store stuff in your basement, it is stuff that is related to life; you may just not need it at that particular point in time. Well, the Bible is that way, too. You have a level of life that you have to live your life, and you have to be able to store things that you learn about the Bible. So, in your house, when you have things that are pertaining to your life, but you do not need them right now, where do you put them?

You put them in storage. That is what we do with the Bible. We hide the Word of God in our heart. We do not use all of the Bible that we know every day of our life. So, we have it in storage that when we do need it, all we have to do is go down into the storage area and pick out what we have and then use it.

3. When I think of the Bible, I think of the Bible in those three levels: the living level, the ground level—that is where we live—the basement or the storage level of where you put the Word of God and hide it in your heart. Then, in a big building, in the big majestic buildings, skyscrapers, there is a level below the basement, and it is called the sub-level. Do you know what is in the sub-level of all the big buildings? Up in the offices, that is where they do all the work. That is where you have your computers. That is where you have your conference room. That is where you have your phones. That is where you have all of the multimedia stuff that you need to do the job. In the basement is where you store your records. You store your files. You store the things that you need. But in the sub-level, the level below the basement, that is where all the machinery exists that runs everything else in the building. That is where your generators are. That is where your power sources are. That is where your heating and air conditioning is. That is where all your phone systems come in. All your gas lines, all your water lines, everything that makes the rest of that building work comes into the sub-level. There lays the machinery that makes that building operate.

Now, I look at the Bible the same way. Some of you, bless your heart, some of you will come to a place in your life where you really grasp some principles of life, and you are going to be able to deal with the issues of life. Some of you are going to come to the place that you are going to be able to memorize verses. You are going to be good at working with people and in those levels of some of the limited counseling or the discipleship. You have good recall about things. But the real goal of every child of God, the real goal—and I am saying this because what we are going to look at today is the sub-level of the Bible. We are going to go down today where all the machinery is at. Very few of God's people ever get into this level.

You have heard me say many, many times that what you ought to do with the Word of God in your life is help you get to the point where you have—and you hear me use this term all the time—a working knowledge of the Bible. What does that mean? The working knowledge of the Bible means that you have a sub-level understanding of what really makes the Bible work. You are not just on a surface level. You are not just on the stories level. You are down now in the sub-level where the machinery is, and you understand what really makes the Bible work for you.

2 Timothy 3:15 talks about the fact that we are to be a workman. There is a level of the Bible that most of God's people never get to. There is a level in the Word of God that most of God's people never enter into. That is why most of their lives they deal with surface stuff, or they memorize their little verses, and they know concepts. You have heard me say it many, many times: there are a lot of people who know things about the Bible, but when I talk about knowing the Bible, I am talking about being in the sub-level. There are those people who know things about the Bible, and then there are people who know the Bible.

The difference to me is always this: it is the difference between being a real fireman and being a little child who just gets a fire hat and a toy fire truck. The difference is, when you look at it, you

would never ask the little kid to come put out a fire in your house. When your house is on fire, you want a real fireman. You do not want somebody who just plays with a fire truck and wears the hat. Unfortunately, that is the way most of God's people are. They never get to that level where they really become effective with the Word of God because they really do not understand the sub-level of the Bible and how it all works together.

When Paul begins to lay out in these verses what he is talking about, he is down in the sub-level. He is giving you today one of the I-beams of the Bible which the Bible is built on. He starts to open up one of the greatest concepts that you will probably never understand in your life as a Christian. You should, but we probably will not. Yet, at the same time, the practical application to what he is saying is so incredible that it is one of the greatest studies you will ever take. We are going to look at some things that are what I call the inside keys to a working relationship with the Bible.

When I look at someone, and people are asking me all the time, "What do you think about where I am at? How can I improve? Where am I at?" The bottom line is this: what I look for in a young man or a young lady is not necessarily how you live life, though that is important. I do not look at how well you memorize verses, though that is important. I look at this: if you are ever going to be truly effective in ministry, those things are the normal things. What you have got to get to is you have got to get to a sub-level of working and understanding how that Bible fits together and understand why things are the way they are in the Bible.

I do not know if this is making any sense to most of you or not, because I would not say that probably that, you know, I am trying to break this down so you can grasp it. But you are going to find that when you get into this level of the Word of God, this is what makes everything else in the Bible work.

II. The Jewish Rejection of Christ's First Coming

Have you ever asked yourself this question? I do not know if you ponder about things in the Bible or not. I ponder about things in the Bible all the time. I am a great "what if-er." I keep most of those things to myself because you do not want to get people to the point where they, you know, you can sit around all day and "what if" it. But the bottom line is this: have you ever asked yourself and ever stopped and thought why the Jews at the first coming of Christ rejected Him?

Did you ever just stop and think to yourself, here He was when He came? When He came, I mean, when you look at Romans 1:2 of that passage we just read, it says that the prophets preached about His coming. We could go through the Bible in many, many places, and we could find a promise of the coming seed. Have you ever just stopped and contemplated why the Jews, who were God's people, who have such an absolute rich history with God—I mean, they go all the way back to Exodus 12, the great miracles that God did with them down through all through the Bible—how in the world did the nation of Israel, who the Bible says in Romans 1:2, were promised by the prophets of what was going to come, how in the world did they miss Him?

Now, the standard teaching is this: if you went to a Bible college today someplace—and this is talking about 98.999%—if you would ask the average pastor today, or you would ask the average

Christian today, I guarantee you, if you would go into the next ten churches that you would find and you would say to them, "Why did the Jews, or what is the concept about the Jews of the first coming of Christ?" This is what you are taught: you are taught that the Jews in the Old Testament looked forward to the cross, and then you are taught that we, as New Testament Christians, look back to the cross. That is the standard interpretation you get about the nation of Israel and the first coming of Christ. They will tell you that the Jews in the Old Testament were looking forward to the cross, and we in the New Testament then look back to the cross.

Now, obviously, half of that is correct. We in the New Testament do look back to the cross. The reason for that is because now we have the Word of God, and we have everything that we need to know to have it in complete perspective, or as complete as we can have it. But the idea that the Jews in the Old Testament were looking forward to the cross is one of the most ridiculous, ludicrous concepts that I have ever heard anybody in my life. It just blows my mind how not only how ridiculous some people can make statements, but even more ridiculous is the people who do not even stop to think about what they are being told.

I am going to tell you something. A guy said to me one time, "Well, the Jews are looking forward to the cross, and we look back." I said, "Do you really believe the Jews were looking forward to the coming of Christ?" He said, "Absolutely." Then I said, "Then why are they missing?"

A guy told me one time we were talking about Genesis 6. You know, back there, the sons of God. I teach the Bible says the sons of God were angels, fallen angels that came down and cohabited. That is what the Bible teaches. Well, the standard teaching is that it was not angels. The standard teaching is that you have some godly line of Seth that is marrying some ungodly line of Cain. The guy said to me, "He said, 'Well, they were not angels back there.'" I said, "Well, who were they?" He says, "Well, that was the godly line of Seth marrying the ungodly line." I said, "You are telling me it was saved people marrying unsaved people?" He said, "Yeah, that is exactly what it is." I said, "Okay. Why didn't they get on the Ark?" He did not have an answer to that. You know why? There is no answer to that. That is, when a guy starts to talk like that, let me interpret for you what he is saying: "I do not have a clue about the Bible. I do not know anything about it. But I heard this one time, and this is as good as I can get to the closest I can get to the answer."

Let me tell you something. It was not a godly line of Seth marrying an ungodly line back there anymore than it was the Jews looking forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. If they were looking forward to His coming, then how in the world did they miss Him? Of course, the answer to this is where we begin to go down into the sub-level because he says in Romans 1:2:

Romans 1:1-3

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,

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

He says all that is in the Old Testament. Now, I want to begin to lay this out for you, and I am going to take my time with it because I know we have a lot of young Christians here today. But at least you will go out of here, maybe you will not grasp everything that I am going to talk about in the sub-level, but maybe you will at least get the parallel.

III. The Two Reasons Israel Missed Christ

Next, I want you to turn to 1 Peter 1. I want to begin to show you what Paul is talking about here because what Paul is saying is this: he is basically saying that the Old Testament prophets prophesied about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, we know at the first coming of Christ, the nation of Israel missed Him. What he is getting ready to show you and I are the two reasons why they missed Him. Then you take that historical reason of why they missed Him and you make the practical application to you and me that just as the Jew missed the first coming of Christ, don't you and I, as the body of Christ, miss the second coming of Christ, because the danger is there and it is already in place.

1 Peter 1:9-12

Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

Now, that is an incredible passage. Let me try to take that passage and break it down where everybody can understand it. He is saying in 1 Peter 1:9-10 very simply this: it says that the prophets testified of the grace that was going to come unto you and me in the Old Testament. Now that goes right along with Romans 1:2-3. This is what it said, and he says concerning the grace that should come to you and me. Now that is the body mystery. That is the church. That is you and I. That is the grace of God.

1 Peter 1:11 says—and this is our key here—that there are two things that were testified of in the Old Testament. In other words, what does he mean by that? Two things that the Old Testament prophets wrote about, and in these two things is found the answer not only to the answer of Christ being portrayed as the one that was going to come, but also why the nation of Israel missed it. We will destroy, obliterate, destroy forever the myth that the Old Testament saints were looking forward to the cross.

The two things that are testified in the Old Testament are:

4. The suffering of Christ. That is the first thing that is talked about in the Old Testament. Now, the suffering of Christ would have to do with the first coming of Christ and the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the first thing that is testified.
5. The glory of Christ. That would be His second coming and His establishing His kingdom when He comes back at the second coming of Christ.

Those two things in 1 Peter 1:11, when it says down there at the end of the verse, "when it testified beforehand the one sufferings of Christ" at the crucifixion, "and the glory that should follow." That is the second coming of Christ.

1 Peter 1:12 says it was never revealed unto them, the Old Testament nation of Israel, but rather it was given unto us, the church. 1 Peter 1:12 says, "now reported unto you," and of course, we know that was through Paul. Then he goes on and he says this: "the gospel of the Holy Ghost from heaven," and he says in 1 Peter 1:12 that that is talking about that when the Holy Ghost came down. Then the last part of that verse—and we do not have time to get into this, but boy, what an interesting thing this is—he says when he lays this whole thing out about the mystery back there and the sufferings of Christ and the glory, he says this: "which things the angels desire to look into."

Now that opens up all kinds of things. That is an incredible study, and all I can say to you is this right now, because if we get on that, we will never get anything else done. Let me just say this to you what that means so you do not go out of here with a total blank question mark in front of your eyeballs. The bottom line is this: obviously, there are things that the angels do not understand. Angels have spiritual bodies. They are spiritual beings. They have a spiritual body and they have a spiritual spirit, but they do not have souls. I am sure that the angels have a tough time understanding grace. I am sure they have a tough time understanding love. I am sure they have a tough time understanding all of the attributes that God has that is related to a man or a woman who has a soul. Why? Because angels do not have souls, and I am telling you that when they hear some of this stuff, they desire, they desire to look at you. I have always thought that was interesting. Here they are. They do not have the ability to understand everything that you and I have because they are created spiritual beings with a purpose. But here they are with a desire to know God's truth. Here you are with the Word of God, and you have no desire to know His truth. It is backwards in so many cases.

Like I said, we do not have time to get into that today, but just put that there for right now, and that is where it is at, and we can talk about that at a later date. But the real issue here is simply that in the Old Testament, the real issue that caused the nation of Israel to miss the first coming of Christ is the same issue or the same two issues that are going to cause many of you to miss the second coming of Christ.

Now, when I say that, let me clarify that I am not saying that you are all unsaved. I am not saying that if you miss the second coming of Christ, you are unsaved and you are going to die and go to hell. I am not talking about that. What I am talking about is that there is a reason for Christ coming that is very pertinent to your life and my life as a believer. We also know that all through that Bible, we are told to watch for the coming of the Lord.

I said it last week: God has a calling for you to do. If you are saved here this morning and you have been saved for more than five years and you have not actively pursued or identified that calling in your life, you are in trouble. I do not know what else to tell you. You are in trouble. You see a lot of God's people, a lot of movement in their lives, and they have no concept of the urgency of the time that we live in. A lot of God's people, somebody says, you know, we are talking about Christians that are just, they do not have a clue. I mean, they are nice people, but you certainly do not want to try to build a church with that kind of mindset. Their whole world is themselves. They do not get in. They do not give anything to God of their own life. It is all about them. It is all on their terms.

Somebody said to me one time, "He says, 'How do you look at people like that?'" I say, "You know, when I look at people like that, I look at people like that that were probably on the Titanic when it was sinking." There were people on the Titanic that were busy rearranging the chairs. You say, "What good did rearranging the chairs do on the Titanic?" It was going to sink. That is my point exactly. What good is it for you to waste your life with the little mundane things you do when the whole world is on the verge of dying and going to hell, and the whole world is coming to an end with Christ's return? You know what the problem is? We have no urgency. You know why we have no urgency? You have never developed the calling of God in your life. The calling of God to you is of no effect. You go busy doing what you want to do and going where you want to go and getting involved with all the things that you do that you just do not have time for the call of God. That is when I am talking about missing the second coming of Christ.

I am talking about there are the two greatest events in the history of the world. Two. Two. Two. The first one had to do with the first coming of Christ, and the other one has to do with the second coming of Christ. The first one was the greatest event in the world. It took place at the first coming of Christ, was the resurrection of Christ. Do you ever stop and analyze that the greatest time in the history of the world, nothing like it in the history of mankind, was the day Christ walked out of that tomb on His own? There is not another single event in the history of the world that changed the world, impacted the world, or shut the world in disarray more than the day that that rock rolled away and up from the grave He rose. When He walked out of that tomb, the whole world got changed.

You know what? The twelve men, the twelve men, the twelve men who had walked with Him, who had heard everything He said, the twelve men who were willing to go out and preach the kingdom, the twelve men that He chose, who followed Him for three years, heard everything He said, were not there to see it. Do you ever stop and analyze that the twelve men that He chose, by which after He ascended back to heaven, He was going to literally from the book of Acts change the face of planet Earth, were not even there? They missed the great event. You know what that tells me? It tells me that there is a second great event coming, and that great event is going to be the day He comes back as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. I will tell you something else you can kind of amen about if you are in the mood for it, and that is the fact that most of God's people are going to miss that. Will they be there? Yes, they will. Will they miss it in the sense of not going to heaven? No, they will not. But they will miss it in the sense of preparing themselves, understanding that you had a calling, and that calling was to prepare your life up

against that day. We are going to miss it. Israel missed it at the first coming of Christ, and for the same reason, you and I will miss it at the second coming of Christ.

Those two issues are simply this:

6. They rejected His Word.
7. They rejected the Spirit of holiness.

I want to use that term "Spirit of holiness," and we will come back and talk about that. But here is the problem now. This is sub-level. This is sub-level. This is where I am going to, most of you could follow it up to this point. Now I am going to lose you, but that is okay. You have got to get lost to get found, and you will surface someplace else. Do not worry if you have a problem coming.

Here is the bottom line in the Old Testament. Here is what God did, because God, when He wrote His Word, He wrote it in such a way that it is dependent on Him. See, the Bible is not dependent on your IQ. You can be the smartest man in the world, or be the dumbest person when it comes to the Bible. In fact, when it comes to the Bible, the greatest advantage you can have, the dumber you are, the better you are. I do not know of anything like that is true. I mean, if you want to be a doctor, you do not want to be a dumb doctor. You do not want to be in a professional field and be dumb. But when it comes to the Bible, which is not a professional field, by the way, the dumber you are, the better you are, because the more you get educated, the more you get educated out of your intelligence, and the more you get educated, the more you think you are smarter than God, and then you wind up doing exactly what the nation of Israel did. They rejected His Word, and once you reject His Word, the two are together, you have to reject the Spirit of holiness.

Now, what God did is this. God has a monkey wrench and an affinity not in this world, ladies and gentlemen. But here is what God did. God wrote a book that He knew that His Spirit was going to be the key of unlocking that book. So, you know what He did? He took the sufferings of Christ, crucifixion, first coming, and the glory of Christ, the glorification of said coming. In the Old Testament, He stuck those two right in the same passage. You know what the Jew had a tough time doing? They would read about the suffering, and then in the same passage, they would read about the glory. They would say to themselves, "Who is this talking about?" Because the Jews were looking for a king. They were looking for a king, and God tripped them up by putting the first coming of Christ in the exact same passages with the second coming of Christ. But God, knowing that this was the first coming and the second coming, it took the Spirit of God to show it to you.

IV. Old Testament Prophecies of Christ's Two Comings

I will show you some passages. We are going to run through the Bible now. So, you know, here we go.

Genesis 49:10-12

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:

His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.

Now, watch this. Here it is. This is what the Jew could not get. "Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine." Now you see your punctuation there; you have a semicolon. Look at the next part of the verse: "he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk." You know what you have? Where it talks about the ass's colt and tying it to a vine, that is Mark 11 and John 12. That is the first coming of Christ when He goes into Jerusalem on the triumphant Sunday, which we call Palm Sunday, when He rode in it, they laid down the palm leaves, they said Hosanna, and He rode in Jerusalem on the foal of an ass. That is the first coming. Then you have a punctuation, semicolon. You know what you have the rest? You have Isaiah 63, Revelation 19, and you have the second coming of Christ. You have the first coming and the second coming right smack dab in the same verse.

You know what threw them off? They knew nothing about the church age that separates the two. They were looking for a king to come. They were looking for His glory. But the Holy Spirit of God tripped them up just like He will trip you up. The Holy Spirit of God will keep you honest. You will play with me. You will play with your friends. You will play with the people that are discipling you. He will not be played with. The Jews thought they could play with Him, and He sticks that thing in there, and they break their neck. Then the same God who became the rock that Israel was built on, became a stumbling stone that they tripped over, and then became a smiting stone that smashed them at the end. If you cannot pick up the parallels of that, you are in trouble. You do not play with the Holy Spirit of God. When it comes to that Bible, it is not on your terms, it is on His terms. The Jews could never get that. Most of God's people could never get that. So you have down here in Genesis 49:10-11, the first part of the verse, "the binding of his foal unto the vine, the ass's colt," that is the first coming. Then you have the, "he washed his garments with wine and the blood of grapes." That is the second coming.

Turn over to Isaiah 61. I will show you another one. This is what separates the men from the boys in the Bible. This is what the difference is for somebody who just plays with fire trucks and wears a nice little red helmet and somebody that in this church helps put out fires.

Isaiah 61:1-2

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

You see what you have? Isaiah 61:1, you have the first coming. Isaiah 61:2, you have the second coming. Right in the same verse, or right in the same passage. If you could not see that, He could not turn that.

Look at, come back to Genesis 3:15, and I will show you a real killer. Now you talk about God switching it up.

Genesis 3:15

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman," talking to Satan. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed." Seed of the woman, that is Mary, Christ, and thy seed being the devil, the antichrist. Watch it. "It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." You see what you have there? You have a comma. "It shall bruise thy head, comma, thou shalt bruise his heel." The bruising of the head is the second coming of Christ. The bruising of the heel is the first coming of Christ. You see what He did there? He not only separated them, He reversed them.

Oh, poor Mel Gibson, when he wrote **Passion of the Christ**, if you watch the movie, he walked down there and he has Christ stepping on the head of that serpent. Why, you do not even know what discipline says. You need to go back to **Braveheart**. You need to go back to something that you do well. You do not do the Bible well. He did not step on the head of that serpent at the first coming of Christ, but He is going to break his head at the second coming. Now that is the problem that you had, that you could not see.

I will give you one more. I will give you one more. Isaiah 9:6-7. By the way, I am just going to give you three or four. There is a whole host of them. You want to find out what anybody in the Bible believes? If they are really sub-level, ask them to show you their list. Go ahead. Go ahead. You have my permission. Go out to any church you want to go out to. Go out to anybody, ask them, "Show me, show me your list of prophecies in the Old Testament, where the first and coming and second coming are put together. Show me that you really understand sub-level." Hey, if anybody has been in this church five years or more, go ask them. I mean, let us see where this is at. You are a leader. You are supposed to know the Bible. You walk around like you know the Bible. Let us just find out if you do. You are the Bible, folks. I told you. I should have done 2 Corinthians.

Isaiah 9:6-7

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Now look at this. This is incredible. Absolutely incredible. Isaiah 9:6. I am going to read it. Now we are going to come back and break it down. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." You have a colon. First coming of Christ. He came the first time as a child that was born, as a son. Look at the rest of that verse after the colon. "And the government shall be upon his shoulder." That is the second coming of Christ when He establishes the millennium. Then you have a colon. "And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Now you are under an eternity. By one verse, one verse. By the punctuation, He told you that a son and a child was going to be born, first coming. The government, millennium, was going to be upon His shoulder, second coming. And then the Everlasting Father, Revelation 21 and 22, by the order of the verse separated by the punctuation.

Now I know that the Old Testament Jews did not have punctuation in the Old Testament. They did not have it even set up the way that you and I have it set up. But that is not the point. The point is not whether we do or they do not. The point is, who showed somebody that? You think man just came up with that? No. You have the first coming and then the second coming and the millennium and then a reference to Revelation 21 and 22, reference to eternity, all in one verse separated by the punctuation of a colon. Now, how do you explain that? I am going to tell you something, ladies and gentlemen, when it comes to that book, that is what separates the men from the boys. The ability to work into the Bible on a sub-level where the machinery is. That concept powers everything throughout the Bible. That power, that concept we are talking about, is the main generator of the Bible that tells you why things are the way they are. I just gave you four, lots more. Ask the big boys. Find out who knows what. I mean, the idea that the Old Testament Jews looked forward to the cross is lunacy.

Now that is the key. That is the key. Because that is what the Jews could not do. They could not separate the first coming of Christ from the second coming of Christ, and there is a reason why they could not. Your Bible says in Romans 1:1-7 that God gave it to them through the prophets. Then how in the world did they miss the greatest event in history? Same way you and I are going to miss it.

V. The Role of Prophets and Holy Scriptures

The first answer to that question, and it is a three-part answer, was the prophets. You know who the prophets were in the Old Testament? The prophets were men that God sent to the religious leaders and the political leaders of Israel. Those men came down and they spoke God's Word in the ears of God's people. Those men came down as God's mouthpiece. That is why whenever the prophet says something that he is going to be from God, what does he always say? "Thus saith the Lord." Every time, if you find in there where a prophet says something without saying that, he is not God's prophet. You know why? Because "thus saith the Lord" was the authority by which he spoke. So you find prophets today that do not have an authority before they speak, you better watch what they say.

Now, the prophets were hated. If you are ever called to preach, you will find out the parallel of that. Because as a New Testament pastor today, the parallels between the prophets—even though they may have wore sackcloth and loin cloths and ate all kinds of gross stuff, and you and I live

in a house with nice clothes and drive around a car—the message is the same. In their day, the nation of Israel had apostatized, and they were called by God to tell them the bad news. Your job and my job in Christianity, which also has apostatized, is to break the bad news to God's people. You are wrong, you are blind, you are going to miss it. You know what? In either case, you are not going to be very popular. You are not going to be very popular.

The second issue was, and you see this in Romans 1:2, was the Holy Scriptures. The nation of Israel's number one problem is they keep getting rid of the Holy Scriptures. They kept dumping God's Word. If you find one thing characteristic to the nation of Israel in the Old Testament, it is that they just will not believe what God tells them they have to do. If there is any group of people that think they know more about God and can reinterpret what God has said to them and bring it out in their own world and their own life, that they can make it work for them, if there is any other body of people other than the nation of Israel, it is the church today.

You do not believe that Bible is holy. You do not believe that Bible is holy. You do not believe it is the Holy Scriptures. By the way, the Scriptures are never the original manuscripts. The original manuscripts were in Scripture. Timothy said over there, Paul said to Timothy, "from a child you have known the Holy Scripture." Timothy had the originals. It says back there in Romans 9:17, "that the Scripture said unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." You go back to that reference in the Old Testament, it was not the Scripture. You know who it was? It was God. God equates Himself with the Scriptures. Galatians 3:8 says, "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." The Scripture foreseeing. Well, to foresee is something that is alive. That is God. 2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Now, either you believe this book is holy or not. In the front of my Bible here, see what it says right there? It says, "The Holy Bible."

Now, why do not you just get honest this morning? Really? Why do not you? Come on, let us have a come to Jesus meeting today. Let us just get honest today. Let us just get honest. Everybody take that Bible, roll it up right there, and tear that page out. Oh? Did I hear an "oh"? Did I get an "oh"? No. Why not? If you are not willing to live what it says, you should have seen your faces when I said that. Some of you thought I would. I did that in a church one time, and I thought I lost half the crowd just like that until I came back with my statement. Some of you would just show up, that I would suggest that, but you would take what He wrote you and just trample it under your feet every day of your life. You think there is something wrong with me? Hey, if you do not believe it is holy, and you do not believe it is holy by saying you believe it is holy, you believe it is holy by doing what it says, then just rip that page out and make this like Tom Clancy's **Hunt for Red October**, the patent papers, **All Quiet on the Western Front**, **The Life and Times of Lizzie Borden**, who took an axe and gave her father forty whacks, and when the job was nicely done, she gave her mother forty-one. How many know who Lizzie Borden is? How many were alive when Lizzie Borden was alive? John Hill was. Born in the spirit of Lizzie Borden.

Hey, you know what? I have an NIV at home, and when I opened up the NIV in front of mine, you know what it says? It does not say "Holy Bible." It says "The NIV Study Bible." There are two things. One thing I like about, I found two things in life. I found a mistake in the King James Bible, and I found one truth in an NIV. The mistake I found in the King James Bible is at the very, very last chapter. Now, you have heard me preach all my life that I do not believe there are mistakes in the King James Bible. I found one. At the end of Revelation 22, it says, look, go ahead, I know you are all looking now. Okay, come on, let us all get in this. We will have a little minute. We will share time. We will have a little share time here. Go to the last page of your Bible, the last in Revelation 22. I found a mistake in the King James Bible. I never thought I would ever get up and preach this. I found a mistake in the King James Bible. You know what it is? Where it says "The End." That is a mistake. It is not the end. It is the beginning. That is a mistake. Of course, God did not put, you do not think God told him down there, "Put 'The End'," do you? Man did that. That is a mistake. It is not the end. In fact, in my study Bible, it is crossed out. I saw some of you already crossed it out. It could be, you know what I put in there? I crossed it and put, "No, the beginning." Now, that is the only mistake I ever found in the King James Bible. The only truth I ever found in an NIV is it is not the Holy Bible. I appreciate their honesty.

Now, I cannot say that every NIV you are going to find out, but the one I got is an NIV Study Bible, and they were more impressed of telling you who the guys were that wrote it and telling you that you could not take the notes out and copy them because they are copyrighted than they were about it being holy. I appreciate that because as far as I am concerned, there is only one Holy Bible. But the bottom line is this: do you really believe it is holy? Then why do you live the way you live? Why do you give God such little time in your life? If you, why do not you just get honest this morning? Come on. I am going to think more of you if you just rip the page up than I am of you leaving it in and living the life the way you live. Some of you have been saved five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, twenty years, and you do not know the sub-level yet, just take that page out. Just take it out. You know what? The Bible, if you have a really good Bible, if you have a really good Bible and you take that page out, it will not go to waste. I have known guys that rolled cigarettes in those things and smoked them because it has got the fine paper. It will be a use to you. See, some of you do not like that kind of talk, do you? No, but you like just having it all around your life and never reading it, do not you? See, I am telling you. That is us. That was the same problem Israel had. They had the Bible. Why, if you went up to the Jew and tried to tell him something, well, he had the law, he knew the law, he just did not live it. That was their first mistake.

VI. The Spirit of Holiness and Understanding Scripture

God has got a monkey wrench. Say it again. He has got a monkey wrench that will offend him, and there is nothing in this world. The second element was the Spirit of holiness. You see, the first one deals with your attitude toward God's Word. The second one deals with your relationship with the author of God's Word. I know lots of people who know the Bible and know it well. I do not know too many who have an intimacy with the author of it. The author was not God. The author was the Holy Spirit. Oh, I know, I know, I know, I know, I know, I know, I know, I know. You think that that is just a play on words. God the Father, God the Son, and God

the Holy Spirit. I know. You think that was just a cliché that God threw out that was snappy. Every one of those means something different. Yes, they are all one, but they all have three offices. God the Father has a particular role in your life. God the Son has a particular role in your life. And God the Holy Spirit has a particular role in your life. Do you really know Him? Are you intimate with Him? When you read your Bible, do you spend as much time talking to Him before you read His book as you do just barreling in and then saying, "Well, I do not understand this?"

You know how most people get to study, if they even pray at all before they read their Bible? I know why most of you do not pray before you read the Bible. You are busy. You are busy. You want to get right down to it. You are busy. You have places to go, people to see, things to do. So you are busy. You do not have time to spend twenty minutes talking to the author of the book, finding out where He is at, building that intimate relationship with Him that He might open up the book to you. No, no, no, no, no, no. You are just going to get right down in there to it.

You know how I know that probably 99% of you do not have what it takes with the Holy Spirit of God? I am leaving 1% just for you out there that maybe you are underground and I do not know you yet. 1 Peter 1:11, it called the Holy Spirit of God, "it." Why is it called an "it"? Why is it called an "it"? I thought it was a person. Why in 1 Peter 1 was the Holy Spirit of God, "it"? Some places you will find where it is called Holy Spirit. Some places it is called Holy Ghost. Why is the difference? Sometimes you will find Holy Spirit and a Holy H will be capitalized, the Spirit will not. Why is that? Sometimes it is called Spirit with a capital S. Sometimes it is called Spirit with a small s. Why is that? You are going to kid me, you are going to tell me you are sub-level. You may be subconscious, but you are not sub-level. You see, that is the difference between knowing the Bible and being a real fireman who puts out fires and somebody that just likes a little hat. By the way, it does not fit. You look goofy. A big person like you with a little goofy hat on like that. I think I hate about New Year's is the hats never fit. You ever notice that? I hate them. Nobody will ever go to a birthday party and you are, I am a big guy, and they give me a little cowboy hat about that big. We are supposed to be like we are adults now. Kind of reminds me of the Democrats and Republicans in the campaign. We used to do all those kind of shenanigans in junior high. "I am better than you. I know you are better than me. No, I am better than you. I am better than you. I am more experienced than you are. I know you are stupid. I am there." Man, we went through that in junior high, and that is who is going to run the country. Why do not you go down here and get a high school student, graduated top of his class, who spent three or four years in ROTC, put him in charge? Crazy.

But you put these little hats on, and you look goofy. Everybody walks around saying, "Well, it is okay to look goofy because it is a birthday party." In my mind, it is never okay to look goofy. I look goofy enough without adding to my goofiness. I do not need any help. Somebody puts on a little point, a little hats on. You look like a snow cone. It fell out of the truck. You walk around in life. "Oh, we are having a party. Oh, man, put on your nose. You could be a unicorn." I mean, it is, it is, it is, but that is what we do. That is the way God's people are. They play at being Christians. They think it is a party. They do. They walk around in little circles for ten, five, fifteen, twenty years. Some of you will fall into the same mode. You will be here five years, and you know what? It will just be another party to you. You will not know any more about God. You

will have no intimacy with the Holy Spirit of God. You will always be reliant on Thursday night or me or this or that for you to get your Bible from. You will never be able to sit down and see that thing because the key, my friend, is getting into the sub-level. The key is taking, and I know most of you have accepted the Bible is the Word of God. Your problem is, and my problem is, accepting the author in the intimacy that He wants to have the relationship with.

You know, you know, I am telling you the truth. You know I am. You may sit there all pious, and you may sit there like, "Well, he is not talking to me. He is talking to the person next to you." No, you know, deep down inside, you open that book, and you give God what is left of your life all the time. Then wonder why, "Why do I have problems?" I mean, other than you are an idiot. But you know what? I do not mean to talk that way, but I am going to tell you something. It is going to be a lot better you hearing it from me today than at the judgment seat of Christ when you hear it from Him. I told you being a prophet was not a popular job. The Holy Spirit of God is the great unknown person of the Trinity. How all three fit together in your life. We know the book, but do you know the author of the book? There is the problem.

One of the greatest verses God ever gave me, turn over to Luke 24. One of the greatest passages anywhere in all of the Bible, and certainly a key in both cases. Certainly a key in both cases. Certainly a key in both cases. One of the greatest verses in all the Bible for me as a child of God, as a student of the Bible. I do not put myself as a Bible scholar, never have, never will. I am a student of the Word of God.

Luke 24:44-46

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.

And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

Look at Luke 24:44. What a great passage. "And he said unto them, These are the words." Mark that. "These are the words. The words, the words which I speak unto you while I was yet with you. All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the Psalms." Look at that thing, "concerning me." You see that thing there again? He told you in Luke 24:44 that He wrote in the Old Testament the thing concerning Him. Now, how did the Jews miss that? Look at Luke 24:46. "And said unto them, Thus it is written." There it is again. Luke 24:44, "These are the words." Luke 24:46, "Thus it is written." Watch. "And thus it behoved Christ to suffer." And there it is, the sufferings of Christ. "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day." You see that thing there again in the Old Testament. It was written. It was written. These are the words.

What is the key? Luke 24:45. "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures." Let me tell you something, folks. If the Holy Spirit of God does not open that book to you, you are not going to get anything. That is what Israel failed. They rejected not only

the Word of God, but they rejected the Spirit of God. When you reject the Spirit of God, that is the only key you have to open to God's book because He is the author of that book. When you do not build a relationship with that, that is why some of you will be in this church if Jesus does not come back for another twenty years, and you will know no more about the Bible than you know right now. You will still be struggling with the same things in your life you were ten years ago. You will fiddle around. You know what you will be? You will be the best chair sitter-downer and the best hymnal putter-downer we have in this church. But when it comes to the sub-level of the Bible, you will never get in. You will never get in. It is not because you could not. It is because you are not willing to change what you have to change to get that relationship with the Holy Spirit of God. You want it the cheap way. You do not want to spend the time.

Some of you have your life so confused already. I mean, and so, you know what the Bible says? It says, "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." If I could take one word and paint it across the whole concept of the body of Christ today, it would be that one word: tangled. We are the most tangled people on the face of this planet. We are tangled in our relationships. We are tangled in our emotions. We are tangled in our finances. We are tangled in every aspect of our life. Because we are so tangled in this thing, we have to keep our head above water. We have absolutely no time to give God. Much less the Holy Spirit of God. That, my friend, is a tragedy. But that, my friend, is the truth. This was the problem that kept Israel from getting the truth on the first coming and the second coming of Christ. Two concepts: the Spirit of Holy Scriptures and the Spirit of Holiness. It is the same two aspects that are going to mess up the body of Christ.

VII. The Veil Over Israel's Heart

In the Old Testament, in Isaiah 6:9-12, listen to what he says:

Isaiah 6:9-12

And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

Make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate,

And the LORD have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.

That is God speaking to His own people. Isaiah takes place right before the captivity when Israel has clearly dumped what God said and dumped the Holy Spirit of God. It does it in there when you come to Matthew 12. When Christ presents Himself to the King of the Jews, in Matthew 12, you know what the Jews do? They equate the spirit by which Christ does the miracles that He does with the spirit of the devil. You know what God does? He slams it or shut. You know what He does? He says in Matthew 13:14-15, quoting back from Isaiah:

Matthew 13:14-15

And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

I know I am talking about the nation of Israel, but I am telling you that I could just as well be talking to the body of Christ today. The fact that you are sitting here this morning means absolutely nothing. You do not, this means you do not want me asking you where you were. It just means you do not want your family saying, "Well, why were not you at church Sunday?" You do not want your mother saying, "Well, we really missed you." So it is easier for you to come here and put on the act than it is to really just be here because you have some kind of intimacy going with God.

Paul makes reference to this. Turn over to 2 Corinthians 3. I will show it to you again. Paul makes reference to this in 2 Corinthians 3. This is sub-level. This is where the machinery of the Bible gets its power from. You have to know these concepts. This is not entry-level. This is not where you store. This is the sub-level. This is where the machinery of the Bible is that powers everything else that God does. These are the root basic Bible concepts.

2 Corinthians 3:13-17

And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face; that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil of the old testament untaken away; which veil is done away in Christ.

But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.

Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Look at 2 Corinthians 3:13. "And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end, which was abolished." See what that "end" is there? That "end" is the second coming of Christ. That is the end of the tribulation. You know what he just told you? He told me that Moses put a veil over his face because Israel could not see the end. Well, let us go on. "But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon them." Ah! Moses had it on his face. They put it on their heart. "Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that spirit where the Lord is, the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

Alright, inspirationally. Moses had been with God. In time, some of you are going to plug into God. In time, some of you are going to get to that point in your life where nothing else matters. Your job does not matter anymore. Would you get that? Because if I bend this over, I am going to

pop this out here. I had surgery yesterday. You want to see my scar? I have stitches. No, I am just laughing at it. But I am buttoning my shirt in front of all these people. You know what happens? When you see this and you put it all together, and you see what he is doing, when somebody in this church at some point is going to plug into God. When you plug into God and you build that intimacy with God, you know what is going to happen? You are going to be like Moses. Moses was up on a mountain with God. He had an intimate relationship with God. You know what everybody else was doing while he was up there? They were making golden calves. They were dancing naked around the fire. Naked. Baptist preachers call it naked. They were down there like animals, running all over the place, making golden images, doing all kinds of... He had been with God. When he came down from that mountain, you know what? Because he had been with God, he had associated with God. He came down like God. They are down there, you know, watching, having a big old fire, and they are roasting hot dogs and everything, and they are having the rock bands, and they are having a great time, just like some of the music you listen to. They are down there, you know, and they are all singing, and they are all dancing, and they are going to town, you know. All of a sudden somebody says, "What is that light?" That light is way up there in that mountain. "What is the light, anyhow? Oh, what is that light?" They are looking at that thing, and the band stops playing. All the beboppers stop bebopping. You have the light getting closer. Somebody said, "We need to call the sheriff. That is the UFO." And number seven, he says, "No, it is Moses." Oh, no. Moses walked into that camp. You know what the Bible says? It says they were afraid of him. You know why? Now, this was not the unsaved crowd. This is the people of God that were called out in Exodus 12, not just a couple of years ago. This is the great nation, by which all the other nations in the world are going to be blessed. The people of God were afraid of the man of God because he glowed with God, and they did not.

Now, there is a great lesson there because some of you, at some point in your life, I hope, are going to start that glow. You are going to plug in. I am telling you right now, when you do, the people who are still living with the idols are going to have a problem with you. Then you have two choices at that point. You can let that glow go, or you can just keep on glowing. But that is the inspirational application. The more you are with God, the more people are not going to appreciate it. Who are your peers? I am not talking about the world now. I am talking about God's people. There are some people in this church, I guarantee you. I do not know who you are, but you cannot help but being here. There are some people in the church that if somebody else gets ahead of them and does something more than they do or does it better, then you just growl down inside. Oh, you smile on the outside, but you are growling on the inside. You know why? Because you have idols in your life. You cannot stand the glow of somebody else.

Now, doctrinally, 2 Corinthians 3:15 says, "when they read the Old Testament today, the veil is on their heart." Moses is a type of Christ, and he is coming in the glory, but Israel cannot grasp it. Why? Because they dump God's Word and they dump the Spirit of God. Let me just say this to you. It is not called the Holy Spirit here. It is not called the Holy Ghost here, which it really should be. It is not called "it." It is not called capital H small s. It is called the Spirit of Holiness. You know why? Because the Spirit of Holiness to unlock the Word of God means you have to live a life of holiness by the Spirit of Holiness. That is another whole series right there, is not it? Another whole series. It means you cannot listen to the music you listen to, look at the things that

you look at, do the things that you do, and keep your foot in the world and one foot in with God. That is what it means. It means that you have got to make a separation. It means you have got to decide what you are going to do. It means that the nation of Israel, who was God's greatest people on the face of this planet, missed the first coming. Even their own twelve apostles, who were with Him day and night, ate with Him, slept with Him, walked with Him, talked with Him, walked Him in every mode. They missed it! Now, that is the issue, ladies and gentlemen. Christ all through the Old Testament, but they cannot see it. They cannot see it because, one, they rejected the book. They cannot see it because, two, God rejected, they rejected God's Spirit. You better get this. God only reveals His Word through His Spirit. It is a Spirit of holiness.

Romans 1:1-7 talks about the nation of Israel, but it is also you and I. You have got to realize and understand that in reality. You know what? I never... In reality. In reality. In reality. If God wanted to send or save a lot of time with the judgment seat of Christ, you know what He could do? Now, He is not going to do this. It is going to be more entailed to this. But if I was God, I would cut down on the time frame. You know what I would do? I would just get every Christian in the judgment seat of Christ, and I would have them to open their Bibles. I would walk by, and I would just see. "Let me see what an intimate relationship with My Spirit gave you about Me and My book that you wrote down." Really? Really? Really? Then God just sat down with you after looking at that, and, "Okay, well, you have a lot of notes in there. Wow, that either means one of two things. Either you had a relationship with Me, or you were good at listening to tapes. So now let us talk a little bit. Let us talk. You are My building. You are My temple." You know there were three levels of the temple back there with Solomon and Zerubbabel, do not you?

Alright, let us talk about it.

Surface level: How was your life? Who did you win to Christ? Who did you marry? Why did you marry him? How were you in church? What did you do there? What ministries were you in?

Sub-level, or basement level: What do you have stored? Give me that Bible. Quote me three verses about Me. Quote me five verses about eternal security. Give me three verses why you should not believe in tongues or can do their salvation. Give me the five, give me, there are 48 prophecies concerning Me in the Old Testament. Give me two of them.

Sub-level: Explain propitiation. Explain it.

Sub-level: Show me the difference between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven.

Sub-level: Show me what is going on here, why Israel missed the first coming.

Sub-level: Take it down where the machinery is. Show me the basic fundamental concept of grace throughout the whole Bible. Show it to me. No, you cannot use your Bible. Tell me about it.

You see, things that are in your heart, things that you have stored, you do not have to have a Bible to find them. They are there. You can find them because you live there. If I was to ask you where your running shoes were, does anybody have to say, "Well, I have got to go home and find them?" You know exactly where you put them. You know why? Because you wear them all the

time. Well, when you wear this all the time, it just kind of hangs out where it is always at. People are so stupid. They think I am stupid.

I am telling you, folks, the nation of Israel missed the greatest day on the face of this planet. God said down there, and Paul is telling, by comparison, Paul is showing us that the Jews missed the first coming, and we are going to miss the second coming because we are so busy doing our own thing. We are tangled, man. We are tangled. God says, "Let no man that warreth entangle himself." We are tangled. We cannot stay on point. We lose our focus. We just cannot stay on task. Yet the Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 5:1, "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you." As a church in the 21st century New Testament, Paul's warning is simple. You know what? Do not let happen to you what happened to the Jews. God wrote in His book things that were key to them to get His first coming, and because they rejected His Word and their spirit of holiness, they did not get them. God has got some things for you with the second coming of Christ, and God help you to see it today.

I guarantee you, ladies and gentlemen, when you get to that day, whatever you think is so important right now to keep you from giving your life to Him is going to go away like a shadow. I do not know how to impress that upon you. I do not know how to, being a prophet is a tough job, but I do not know how to impress it upon you. Whatever you are putting your eggs and all your basket on today is not going to be worth two hoots in hell when Christ comes back. They did not go to make a difference. He saved you and He called you. Some of you have ignored the call in your life for so long, but the good thing about God, you notice what He says after every one of those verses, He says, "But when they turn and come back to Me, I will heal them."

You know what? I do not care where you are at today. I do not care where you have come from. Maybe I preached this message today, and I just beat you senseless. That was not my purpose, but that might have been God's purpose, but that was not my purpose. My purpose was to get you to think. My purpose is to get you to understand, like Paul is trying to tell them back there that he is laying out to us, "Hey, look, they missed the greatest day in the history of the world, and we are about to miss the greatest second day in the history of the world and after the day He comes back because we are asleep." We are so busy with our lives and the mistakes and the bad decisions that have overwhelmed us, that we are tangled. Yet instead of just saying, "Hey, look, I am tangled, I am in a mess, I need to get out," we just walk on like we are Miss Spirituality and Mr. Bible. It all starts in here.

I am going to tell you something. I do not care who you are today. I do not care what condition you are in, saved or lost. God will take you whenever you decide to make your mind up to do what is wrong. He will wash away your past. I do not care what you have done, who you have done it with, how many times you messed it up, it does not matter. God is willing, like most Christians are not willing, to forgive you on the spot. He is willing to eradicate everything that you did against Him. Unlike most Christians, He is willing to eradicate it. He is willing to give you a fresh start today. He will never bring up again whatever you did dumb in the past. Boy, if He did, we would all be in trouble. He will give you a fresh start. He will give you everything you could ever want. From this point on, you can begin to make your life count. There is absolutely, absolutely no reason for you to wind up with the judgment seat of Christ and not get a

full sure reward other than you do not want to, other than who is more important in your life than God today, other than what is more important in your life than God today, other than your laziness, other than your dysfunctionality, other than your inability to just hear simple truths of God. That is where it is at. That is where it is at. I am telling you, it is not popular. People do not like to hear it. But you know what? I do not know what to tell you. The bottom line is this: being a prophet is not an easy job.

I figure this next year, we will lose about twenty people. Now, you know what? I think that is good. Now, do not let you, if you are a visitor here, I am not talking about you at all. I mean, you get a free shot. But you know what? There are people who have been around here now long enough that it is going to get turned up this year. I look at us as, you know, I look at a church like a fighter, like an athlete, Bible like it as a soldier. As a soldier, you have got to be able to keep yourself at a fighting weight. The thing you do not want to do as a church is you do not want to get extra pounds on in the fighting world. Slow you down. You know this church, you know my philosophy, anybody can have whatever they want of the God and the Bible. It is your choice, that is not mine. But I also know this. I know this has been a nice, easy place just to hide in the last four years. It has. All you young Christians that are in discipleship right now or what I said earlier, hey, that is fine. No problem. You know what? You get the same grace everybody else got when they came into this place. But I am going to tell you something. I am going to tell you something. Do not you think? Every time we get a big crowd, somebody said, "Boy, you are really growing, really growing." You know what? That can be a good thing and that can be a bad thing. Because the good side is we want to reach people. The good side is we want to minister to people. But the bad side is the bigger you get, just like anything else, the more fat comes on it. There is only one thing I know how to do: exercise. Right diet. Exercise.

We have got to take this church from a nice little lollipop nursery to AIT at Fort Benning, Georgia. We have got to harden you up now. We have got to get you some muscle on you, get some lean muscle on you, spiritually speaking. We have got to get to the point now where you do not take things personal. I mean, we can just be a nice church the rest of our lives. I told you, I told you, I mean, we were looking at the church building down there. They told us that we did this, egress and did this, whatever egress is. They said we could have a thousand people down there. I said, "You know what? We could stay there the rest of our lives." You know why? Because we will never have a thousand people in our church. I am happy about that. I am happy about that. I really am. Because you know what? When you get a thousand people, you are not going to tell me in the world we live in. I would rather have two hundred that are dedicated and want to do what is right than a thousand where you still have two hundred or eight hundred that do not. Do you want to, does anybody want to drag around eight hundred pounds behind you? I do not. Does anybody want to be shackled when you go out in the morning, you have two hundred pounds on your shoulders, dead weight, you have got to drag around all day long, get it in the car, get it out of the car. You have got to put it in the trunk. You have got to get to work. You have got to take it out. You cannot put in little dolly wheels on it. You have got to drag it along, you know, and just drag it along. Well, you know what? As a pastor, that is exactly what pastoring is sometimes. Again, I am not talking to you young Christian. You young Christian, you visitors here today, you know what? If you decide to do what is right and make it count, I

will give you everything you need. I will give you a Bible. I will give you this. I will give you that. You can have my time. I am not talking about that. So do not misunderstand. I am saying, you know what? It is time for some of us to get down into the sub-level. You have been around long enough now. You need to quit being dead weight because I am not going to carry you around anymore. I almost said I am not going to carry you around anymore. I am not going to. I am not going to. You know what? This church has to operate on the men and women that grow up and do not just pretend they are doing it, but actually do it. If this church is just like I said about your Bible, if it is not holy to you, just get honest. Tear the page out. Tear the Holy Bible out and just put it up there with *Tom Sawyer*. Put it up there with your sports books. Put it there in your philosophy books. Put it up there with all the other books you read. It does not mean anything in your life anyhow.

Bottom line is this, ladies and gentlemen, it is the Holy Scriptures. It was given by the Spirit of holiness. It takes those two concepts in your life to get that book opened up. If you are a young person here this morning and you are just a young, or you are an older person here this morning and you have never trusted Christ as your own personal Savior, that is where you start. Do not let my excitement about the Word of God or my loud tone intimidate you. I love you. I love this church, but I love God more. As God's prophet, I have to say what He wants me to say, because I would rather have you get mad at me and get it right here than stand there at the judgment seat of Christ and lose everything you have because I did not open my mouth. You may not like me now, but you will like me then. I do not know what else to tell you. I have said it from day one. We are either going to be a church or we are not. We are not going to be a club. We are not going to be a Boy Scouts. It is not going to be a fraternal order of police. It is not going to be a social thing. It is going to be an Elk's Club. It is going to be a New Testament Bible-believing local church. That is why we do not. I firmly made up my mind if we get this building down here, we are not putting a sign up. A sign costs us six, seven thousand dollars. You know what? That is beside the point. I am not putting a sign up because I have firmly believed that a sign just brings in riffraff. A sign brings people coming in and say, "Well, I was mad at the last pastor to see if I can get mad at you about something." Well, you know what? I will give you something to get mad about before you even get here. We will save all the expense. Save the emotion. You know what? I said a couple of weeks ago, you be the signs. The great thing about this church is that you are concerned about people. You are concerned about your family. You are concerned about your mothers, your dads, your sisters, your uncles, your brothers, your sisters. You are concerned about your cousins, your aunts, and your uncles. You are concerned about the people you work with. You are constantly telling people about the Lord, and God is using you. We do not need a sign. I have you. That is the way it is supposed to be. That is the way it will be. I am not saying I will not ever do it, but I am inclined right now that I do not ever care if I do. You know why? Because you are the heart of this church, and it comes down to you making up your mind what you are going to do and what you are going to be for God. Answering that call, recognizing that whatever you do in life, you know what? It is good, and it may pay the bills, but in the judgment seat of Christ, it is not going to be about that. It is going to be about what you did with your time left over and gave it to Him.

I took forty people working with me on a one-on-one. Put them into an institute situation which is going to hold their feet to the fire. I will kick their butts out so fast they will not know what hit them. We start at 6 o'clock. At 6 o'clock, the door is locked. You do not get in. Do not whine on the phone because I will turn it off. Do not go whine to your mom or dad because that is not going to do any good. It is going to be you are going to step up and do what is right or you are not. You know what I am going to do in this next year and a half? I am going to try to get a bunch of more people ready to go that when I am done with this crowd, I can start next year with another group. Getting you in the sub-level. Getting you where you have got to get the Bible is. You young Christians out there, you know what? You are being disciplined right now, or we are working with you right now, that is what we want to do. We want to get that basic concept into your life. We want to get those basic things working for you.

So if you are here this morning, whatever state you are in, maybe you are lost and you never trusted Christ as your own personal Savior. Maybe if you were to die right now, if you were to die right now, you do not know that you would go to hell. You know what? That is a terrible state to be in. Maybe you are here and you are saved, but your life has just been up and down for God knows how long. You know what? We can stop that today. If you want, I will help you. I will put whatever, whoever, whatever it takes in your life to help you get evened out with where you need to go with God. Maybe you have children that are struggling and you are a single parent. I do not care. We have them come in in all different arrangements. It does not matter. We are here to help you be everything God wants you to be. Do not let what happened to the nation of Israel happen to you. Do not miss the greatest day of His coming. Miss it in the sense, if you are lost, miss it in judgment. If you are saved, miss it at the judgment seat of Christ.