

I. Introduction to Romans and its Structure

We are back to Romans chapter 9, and we are going to look at another set of verses today. As we are coming down through there, you remember I told you when we started the book of Romans, I felt like our church is right there now, that you are ready for a book like Romans.

The book of Romans, if you even follow it in the order of the books of the New Testament, basically shows you its importance. You have Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which basically are books that transition you from the Old Testament into the New Testament. Then you have the book of Acts, and the book of Acts basically brings you from the nation of Israel into the Gentile church, which you and I are part of.

Once that transition is complete, God put into your New Testament the book of Romans. The book of Romans is the book that defines for you and for me everything that you and I believe. It is the book that lays itself out in an amazing way. I told you when we started that most people, when they read the book of Romans, they think it is a very hard book and a very confusing book. It is really not.

A lot of it has to do, as we have talked about before, with the way Paul wrote it. He writes it like a legal document because what we are reading in Romans is basically what I call the Constitution of our Christianity. If you have ever in school had to memorize the Constitution or the Declaration of Independence, you know how hard that is because of the style of writing that it is presented in. It is no different from the book of Romans, which is the doctrine on which everything that we believe is based.

One of the things, if you remember, that helped you is I showed you how the book itself is broken down into four sections.

1. Romans 1-3 really form the historical section. It tells you where we are coming from.
2. Chapters 4-8 deal with the doctrinal section. It teaches us what we are to believe based on the fact that Christ has now come and died and rose again and went back to heaven and established the church.
3. The next section, and that is the section that we are in right now, is the section called the Prophetic section. That is chapters 9, 10, and 11. That section deals with God's viewpoint for the nation of Israel, clearly showing you and I in the church God's perspective that He is not finished with the nation of Israel yet, and those are very important passages.
4. I think probably the last section, which we call the Practical section, runs from chapter 12 through chapter 16. I think of all the things that we are going to do in the book of Romans, and it will take us quite a while to get here, but when we get to the last practical section, you are going to understand how this whole thing goes together. What he does is he puts it all in perspective of because of what we are, what we now have as the church, how we are supposed to conduct ourselves, and he goes through every aspect of our personal walk with the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. Romans 9:6-8 and Israel's Partial Blindness

Now I want to begin reading in Romans chapter 9, and we are going to be in verses 6-8 today, another little section here, and this is a very important section. I think it really opens up one of the greatest keys in the Bible, and I think you are going to see it today as we come down through it.

Here is what he says, verse 6:

Romans 9:6-8

Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect: for they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

Now Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You. We thank You for the Word of God that You have given us today. Thank You for those that have come out to hear it. We pray now, Father, that You will take this time and open up our hearts. We thank You for the men and women in this church that love You and love this church and love the Word of God and are an active, vital part of this ministry and everything that we do that holds this together. They are the glue that holds this work of God together, and we thank You for that. Enrich us today, give us a little bit more understanding about You and Your Word, and we will thank You and praise You for all You do for us in Jesus' name and for His sake we ask it. Amen.

Now as we read this passage, here is Romans at its best. It says, "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect: for they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." What in the world is he talking about? "Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children: but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are of the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God." That is confusing. That is Romans at its best right there.

But when you put it in a proper context, and that is what we are going to do today, you want to first of all remember that when you come to chapters 9, 10, and 11, he is specifically focusing on God's dealing with the nation of Israel.

- In chapter 9, we are going to see that he lays out and shows us how Israel got into the problem and the mess that they got in.
- In chapter 10, he is going to show us because of the fact that Israel did not do what was right with God, God took the gospel and gave it to the Gentiles.
- Then in chapter 11, he is going to show us that in spite of that, God is not finished with the Jew, and He is going to at some point in time restore the nation of Israel back to its proper place.

That is the key to this whole section here of the context, and we want to remember that. You remember that in Romans 9:4-5, I told you and showed you the eight things that they forgot, that Israel forgot, that led them to the path of destruction, and we went through those. Romans 9:1-5 has shown us the basic problem that they had: they forgot all that God had done for them, and now they are in a mess. The point he is making in Romans 9:6-8 is very important to understand our overall context.

Now what we are going to do this morning is we are going to kind of break this down. Let us look at Romans 9:6 again. Here is what he said, "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect." Let me explain that concept. What he is saying is this: Israel is in a mess, and God has temporarily put the nation of Israel on the back burner and then went to the Gentiles. But what he is saying is this: the Word of God had some effect on the nation of Israel. In other words, some Jews got saved.

You are going to find in Jesus' time guys like Nicodemus, guys like the twelve apostles. You are going to find that there were people, Joseph of Arimathea, you are going to find that there were men and women in the New Testament who actually believed on Christ. The Word of God did have an effect on them. Down through history, you will find that Jews got saved, and when they got saved, they became part of the body of Christ. They were not in total blindness. You are going to find even today that you find people who are Jews who trust Christ as their own personal Savior. So what he is saying in Romans 9:6 is simply this: "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect." It did have an effect on some of the Jews.

Then he says in the next verse, he says, at the bottom of Romans 9:6, "for they are not all Israel, which are of Israel. Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children. But in Isaac shall thy seed be called." What is he saying there? He is saying that when you come down through this, he is saying, "neither because they are all the seed of Abraham are they children. But in Isaac shall thy seed be called." He said, just because that once you got saved, you are no longer part of the nation of Israel. This is one of the greatest passages in the Bible that is laid out in Colossians 3 and 1 Corinthians 12 about the body of Christ.

What he is simply saying here is this: the nation of Israel had the Word of God. They rejected all of the things that God gave them, and God put them into captivity and turned His attention to the Gentiles. But the Word of God, which as a nation had no effect on the nation of Israel, some of the Jews in spite of that got saved. What he is saying here is the fact that once they got saved, now they are no longer part of Israel; they are part of the body of Christ. That is what he is saying in Romans 9:6: "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." Why? Because some of them got saved, and now they are in the body of Christ, they are part of the church; they are not part of the nation of Israel anymore. That is how that system works, and that is very vital to see and understand.

Then he says in Romans 9:7, "Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children. But in Isaac shall thy seed be called." What he is saying there is that a Jew that does not get saved is still a Jew, and his seed goes back through Isaac to Abraham, and he is a Jew in that sense. But once a Jew got saved, once he trusted Christ, once the Word of God had an effect on

him and he got saved, then he is no longer a Jew. Just as when you were born, you were born a Gentile. But once you and I got saved, we are no longer a Gentile. You know why? Because the Bible says that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile. Once you got saved, you became a Christian.

That sets up the whole premise for the Christian life. You see, I live in America, I have an American passport, but in actuality, I am not an American. I am an American by birth, but I am a Christian by a spiritual new birth. When I got that spiritual new birth, the Bible says this world is not my home anymore. I am in this world, but I am not of this world anymore. The Bible says that my citizenship is now up in heaven. When you understand that concept, you understand the beginning of the concept of your life given to Christ and your walk with the Lord, and in time, the ministry God has for you.

I am neither a Democrat nor a Republican. I am a Christian. The moment I get up and I say I am a Democrat, then I have lost credibility to preach the gospel to the Republicans. The moment I get up and say I am a Republican, then the Democrats will not listen to my message. I am neither one. I am a Christian. My citizenship is up in heaven. I live in this world, but I am not of this world. In fact, the Bible says in the book of Colossians that once I got saved, once you got saved, now I am an ambassador to this world. I am an ambassador back to this world. My job is not to get caught up in all the stuff that goes on. My business is doing God's business in this world. My business is telling everybody that there is one who can save you and set you free. I am here to tell you that there is one, no matter where you are at in life, no matter what struggles that you have, there is one that will set you free. He is neither a Democrat nor a Republican.

III. The Church Age and God's Plan for Israel

Now look at Romans 9:8, and here it comes: "That is, they which are of the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." There it is, children of the flesh. It is a Jew that has been born into the nation of Israel, and he is a child by birth into the nation of Israel.

"Children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." You know what I just told you there? Just what I told you. Just as when I got saved, I am no longer an American, I am no longer a Gentile, I am now a Christian, though I may live in America, I now have the freedom to do whatever God wants me to do because I have been set free from this world. He is saying that the Word of God had an effect on some of the Jews, and it had an effect that they got saved, and when they got saved, they were no longer part of Israel. They were no longer children of the flesh as far as the lineage of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Now they are children of God, and he makes a distinction between the children of God and the children of promise.

- The children of God would be born-again people who have now been saved and are in the body of Christ.
- The children of the promise would be the Jews that never got saved that are still looking forward to the promises given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

When you understand how these things lay out, you see how easy this all really is. All we have to do is set a context, and when you have a context, everything falls into place. You want to remember, when it comes to these three chapters, and I think you have got to have this in the back of your mind all the time, when it comes to Romans 9, 10, and 11, you can never forget you are dealing with the chapters that God is showing us His intention and His plan for the nation of Israel. Those three chapters let us on the inside of what God is going to do with the nation of Israel while He is dealing with you and me in the church age and not fully having the attention on the nation of Israel.

I told you this, and we want to turn over to Romans 11:25-28. This is a key passage in understanding all three of these chapters. We looked at it once earlier on, but we have got to look at it again. We will probably look at it several more times before we are done with these three chapters. But you have got to view everything in these three chapters from these four verses right here.

Look at Romans 11:25. This is Paul speaking now to you and me, the church.

Romans 11:25-28

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

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

For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.

Now, here is what he is saying here, and this is how it all goes together. He is saying, first of all, to you and me, brethren, he says, "I do not want you to be ignorant of this, because if you as a Gentile, if you as a Christian become ignorant of this aspect of God dealing with the nation of Israel, you are going to become arrogant because you are going to think that God is actually finished with the Jew." Like many churches teach today, which is totally wrong, they teach that the church has taken the place of the nation of Israel. Some of you basic Bible kids who were here last in June on that Saturday morning, you already know more about God dealing with Israel just from the short time that we talked that morning because I showed you God's viewpoint of the nation of Israel and the church and showed you how they played into the overall plan. We are going to develop that theme as we go through.

But what he is saying here is he says, "Do not get wise in your own conceits as a Gentile or as the body of Christ, because God is not finished with Israel." Look what he says: "He says that blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in." That is exactly what he just told you in Romans. He says the Word of God did have an effect on some of them. The majority of the nation of Israel is blind; they cannot see spiritually. But in spite of that,

some Jews get saved. So he is telling you here that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles come in.

We know the fullness of the Gentiles is the rapture of the church. We know, if you know anything about your Bible, that in the Old Testament God does everything through the nation of Israel. They follow the apostasy. He sends them His Son at the first coming of Christ. They crucify Him, and they stay in apostasy. So then God turns His attention to the Gentiles, and He sends Paul in, who starts the concept of the church. From that point on, we are in the church age, and men and women have to come to a saving knowledge of Christ to be part of that church. Once they get into that church, that church carries on until the rapture of the church. The rapture of the church is the fullness of the Gentiles. When that takes place, rapture takes place, we are out of here, then what does God do? God turns His attention back to the nation of Israel. That is why He has a tribulation period, to bring that Jew back. That is what he is saying.

He is saying that the nation of Israel as a nation turned their back and went into apostasy, and they had spiritual blindness. But he said not all of them, because the Word of God did have an effect on some. Some Jews get saved. If you stay in this business long enough and you witness to enough people, you will win Jewish people to the Lord. But what he is saying is that once you become saved, whether you are Jew or Gentile, now you become a Christian, and you are in the body of Christ. He makes that, that is why he is going back with the seed of Abraham, and he is talking about the children of God and of the flesh and of the lineage and all of those things that he is talking about.

Romans 11:26 says, "that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in and so all Israel shall be saved." There it is. Now this is why Romans 9, 10, and 11 are the prophetic chapters, just talking about in the future. All Israel is going to be saved, and that is going to take place at the second coming of Christ, if you know that. "There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, that is Jesus Christ, and shall turn away the ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."

"As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the Father's sake." What is he saying? Here is what he is saying. Here is what he wants you and I to understand. He is basically saying this: the nation of Israel is in blindness, spiritual blindness. They cannot find Christ anywhere. Their religion is absolutely in a total wrecked state of apostasy. But not all Jews were in that apostasy. Some of them actually got saved, and the ones that got saved then become the children of God. They are no longer the children of the promise because they are not of Israel anymore. Now they are part of the church. That is what he is saying.

Then he is saying to you and me, "But you need to understand something. I am not finished with the nation of Israel. Blindness in part, spiritual blindness, has happened to the nation of Israel until the rapture of the church. Then I am going to get the church out, you and me, up we go, and then I am going to bring Israel back." He says you need to understand that right now, and here is what he is basically saying: right now, the Jew is our enemy. You know, if you go over to Jerusalem or you talk to a really orthodox Jew, every time you say the name Jesus, he will turn

his head and spit. They totally reject the Messiah that God gave them. They are totally against everything about the New Testament and Jesus. Basically right now, they are your enemy.

But what he is saying there is this: "I am writing all this to you so you understand what I am doing with the Jew, and I am telling you, you let them be your enemy, that is okay, but you never become their enemy." Now how do you do that? Because I understand what God is doing with them. I understand how that they were God's people in the Old Testament. God gave them everything. God gave them David. God gave them Solomon. They got the promise of the Promised Land through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I watched how God formulated the nation of Israel, brought that nation to its glory, brought them to the highest point in their life, and then watched the devil come in and destroy them, and then finally God put them into captivity.

I watched God through the Bible send His own Son down to them and say, "Here is your Messiah," and then they killed Him. God said, "Well, I am going to put you on the back burner of My big oven, but I am not going to throw you out." What He did then is He turned His attention to the Gentiles. He got an old Jew by the name of Paul, Saul, who got his name changed to Paul, and then He said, "I want you to take the gospel to the Gentiles and start My concept of the church." That is what Paul did. Right now we are living in a time period where we are almost at the end of the church age. It has been going on now for almost 2,000 years. We are at the end of it. We are almost there for the rapture of the church to take us out of here. When that happens, God is going to pull out His church, and then He is going to say, "I have not forgotten about My people, the nation of Israel," and then He brings them back.

What he is saying here is this: you and I need to understand that. You and I need to realize that, as he says it so eloquently here, he says this: "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes. But as touching the election," what does that mean? The election of the fact that they are God's chosen people. He says, "Make sure they do not become your enemy." That is one of the greatest lessons that we can learn. That blindness in part is what he is talking about in Romans 9:6-8. The Word of God did have an effect on some of them. They did get saved; therefore, they are Jews by birth, but now they are Christians in one body. I was a Gentile by birth, and now I am a new creature in Christ Jesus. Old things are passed away. All things become new, and now I am a Christian. I am in this world, but I am not of this world. I do not get caught up in the things of this world. I do not let it pull me off my focus of what my job as a Christian is. I am an ambassador. I have no political alignment. I have no alignment other than the gospel of Jesus Christ to every creature. That is what a Christian's job should be, and it comes when you understand these great concepts.

IV. Understanding the Gospels: Israel's Spiritual Condition

Now this passage is one of the greatest keys in your Bible of putting in context the gospels. How many times have we read the gospels? Did you ever ask yourself this question? You realize that in the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, all they are are one story after another. You realize when you get into the book of Acts, there are no more stories. When you get into Paul's writings, there are no stories. When you read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, it is all there is of stories. There is a story of Nicodemus. There is a story of blind men. There is a story of demon-

possessed people. There is a story about women, diseased, and little kids dead, and young men dying. There is a story of all—it is one story after another. When you get into Paul's writings, there are no stories. You ever ask yourself why?

I am going to show you this morning, based on this passage, one of the greatest keys to unlock Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John so you will better understand what you are reading. Remember what our Bible Basic class was all about? I told you that we all have two problems when it comes to the Bible. I have it too. Maybe mine is on a higher level, but I have the same problem. We all have the two basic problems when we read the Bible. I tell people—people tell me all the time, "Well, I read the Bible, but, boy, after a while, my mind starts wandering, and I start thinking about this and thinking about that," and they feel bad about that. I am not sure you should feel bad about that because I think that many times when we read the Bible, nobody has ever sat down and basically said, "This is what you look for when you read the Bible."

Reading the Bible without knowing what to look for—how many of you would be just riveted to reading the telephone book? I mean, you realize your Bible is not as thick as your telephone book, but how many of you would just say, "Oh, I cannot wait to get home today"? Why? "Because I am into M's." Powerful stuff. Why, we would be bored in a second, reading down all those names and all those addresses that mean absolutely nothing. That is the same way that most of God's people read the Bible.

I told you when we started, two problems we all have:

5. When you read the Bible, you do not know what to look for. Why would you not get bored?
6. The second problem we have, when you do see something, you do not know what to do with it.

Those two things alone will kill you. They will just wreck your whole Bible time because you cannot—and then what happens is you feel bad because you think, "Well, this is God's book. It is a holy book. And I am a Christian. I am God's child. Why cannot I see things? There must be something wrong with me." Well, there is probably nothing wrong with you, other than the fact that nobody ever sat down and taught you, "When you read your Bible, this is what you look for."

You know what I am going to do today? In the few minutes I have left? In the six hours I have left? Oh, you know this is a six-hour Sunday. You know what I am going to do for you? I am going to unlock Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John for you, based on what I just gave you today. You will not be able to stay up with this. So you know what? If you are a visitor here today, you get a free tape because you will never keep up with this because I have got to move. I am telling you, I am going to show you today. I am going to unlock. What I am about to show you today is worth \$100 trillion in gold bullion. I am not kidding you. I am not kidding. I will tell you something else: you could not find five preachers out there in this city today that know what I am talking about, and I am going to show you why here in a minute.

Things like this that I give you, hey, it is what separates the men from the boys when it comes to the Bible. It has nothing to do with me. It is things like that I was taught by the old Philadelphian

preachers that really still believed the Bible, that loved the Bible, that that Bible was everything to them. It is not like I am so smart that I sit down and figure all this thing out. Today, I was as dumb as the newest young Christian ever was when I started. You know what somebody did? He took me aside and he showed me the same things I am showing you. This is what Paul said when he said, "The things I have given to you," he said to Timothy, "the same you commit to faithful men." I have no key on this, but I am telling you, you have got to get where the Word of God is taught. You have got to get where you can get this stuff. Otherwise, you are going to go through your whole life just reading your Bible and trying to figure it out.

Well, you are here this morning. I can guarantee you one thing. If you pay attention this morning, you may not get the rest of the Bible. Maybe you will not come back. Maybe you will not come to the Bible class. Maybe I will never see you again. Maybe somebody will get mad and leave. I hope so. I mean, I know. I mean, I do not mean that. The bottom line is, you will have Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John down today. Remember again when you read these things and these stories and say, "I wonder what that is all about." I am going to fix it for you. I am going to fix it for you. I am going to fix it for you.

Turn over to Mark chapter 8. Now I want to turn to these, and I want you to read them because you have got to see them. I am going to put this thing together. You need to go back and put these in your Bible. I would like to do every one of them. If I ever wrote another book, and I probably will not because I do not have time, but if I ever wrote another book, I wrote *How to Study the Bible*, which if you are a visitor here today and you want one, I will give you one of those just for being here today. It has already sold well under a million copies. You are going to have one. If I ever wrote another book, I would write a book on the great keys that unlock the Bible. It would probably be 20 volumes, but I would go through and I would give you things just like what I am going to give you today. I wish I had time to do every one of these in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. I do not. I just have time to do what Kyle did the other night with the great pyramid: just whet your appetite. Just whet your appetite.

V. Mark 8: The Blind Man of Bethsaida

Now look at Mark 8:22. Now here is where we start. We saw in Romans 8-9, then I took you to Romans 11 and showed you that we saw blindness in part. We saw that. We saw what the Bible says. The Word of God was of some effect. We understand that now. Now let me show you. Let me show you what you have got. This is worth a billion dollars if you can grab it. I want to show you the most incredible key to your Bible as far as Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Now watch this story.

Mark 8:22-25

And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.

And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.

After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

Now you read that story in the Bible, and you say to yourself, "Wow, that is a nice little story, but why is it in there? What does it really mean?" There has got to be more to this story when I am reading these stories in here. There has got to be more. Do you know what you have? How many of you here today, when I read that, how many of you have already got it figured out where I am going? Just raise your hand. Anybody? One, two, three, four, five, six, a few of you? Good. All right. Well, let me bring the rest of you up to speed here.

You know what you have got? We just read blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles come in. Blindness in part. Here is a man who is blind. This man is blind. When he meets Jesus the first time, Jesus spits in his eyes, and then he says, "Look up." He says, "What do you see?" He says, "Well, I see, I do not see very clearly, I see men walking around like trees." Then God touched him the second time, and he saw every man clearly.

You know what you have got there? That man is a picture of the nation of Israel. He is blind. The first time God touches him, he sees a little bit. He is only blind in part. The second time Jesus touches him, the second coming of Christ, he sees every man clearly. See what you have got?

So what I am about to tell you is this, and I am going to show you some examples: every story in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, every story about every man, every woman, every child, every circumstance, every story in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John will illustrate for you some way, some shape, some form, the nation of Israel and their spiritual condition. You write that in your Bible. I am going to show you here in a minute. You write that in your Bible. You get that in the back of your mind that when you start reading Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and you come upon a story, you already know that that story is a story that is in there that illustrates Israel's condition when Christ comes to them. You are going to automatically know now what you are reading, why you are reading it, and putting it into the context of that book.

When Christ comes to the nation of Israel the first time, they are blindness in part. So the first time he touches that guy, he cannot see real clearly. He sees people like trees. Then the second time he touches him, he sees every man clearly. What is the word in that passage? What is the key word there? What is the key word in that passage? Restored. When you find the word "made whole," when you find the word "restored," when you find the phrase "a certain man," "a certain woman," "a certain this," "a certain that," it is always going to bring you to that point where what you have is a picture of Israel's spiritual condition.

In Mark 8:23, he has partial sight, a picture of the first coming of Christ when he is touched by Jesus. At the second time Jesus has touched him, second coming, he sees clearly and he is restored. These two passages set the context for every example of God dealing or the healing of a man or a woman or whatever situation it is you find in the gospels. All of them represent Israel's spiritual condition, and the healing represents them being restored when God makes them whole again. You never want to forget that. Every time you find one, you want to read that.

That does not stop there. We do not have time to get into this today. That is a great key, but then they open up other doors which are greater keys. You know what he says? One little phrase, "I saw men walking around like trees." One of the things you are going to learn about the Bible if you stick around long enough or you stay in the Bible is that everything he says means something. The writer of the Bible just did not say, "Well, I see man because trees are upright and trees have, you know, that they are that he just said that." No, no, no. Everything in the Bible is there. The Bible was not written by man. The Bible was written by God. God put it in there.

"I see men walking around like trees." You know why? Another great key. In the Bible, men are likened to trees. When you want to find out your ancestry, do you not search out your family? Somebody said, "She is so ugly she fell out of the ugly tree, and I think she hit every limb on the way down." Trees have limbs. You have limbs. You know that your body is made up of cells. You know the tree is made up of cells. You know the body cells in your body completely transform themselves in every seven years, and then in a tree, those cells transform themselves every seven years. That is not the best part. He told you that, but then when you go through the Bible in Psalms 1, it says, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and he shall be like a what? Tree." See? Men are like trees. You want to understand the Antichrist? You study trees because he is likened to a great bay tree in the Old Testament. Christ is called the tree of righteousness. It opens up tremendous keys. Obviously, we do not have time to get into that today, but I am showing you what this is.

VI. Mark 5: Jairus's Daughter

Let me show you another one. Turn over to Mark chapter 5. Now here it is again. Mark 5:35. Now here is another story. Now let us watch this story. I wish we had time to do them all. We do not, but once I show you what to look for, your whole perspective of the New Testament will change.

Mark 5:35-42

While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?

As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.

And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.

And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.

And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.

And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.

And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment.

And he charged them straightly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

Now there is another one. Now notice the key words in here, Mark 5:35 and Mark 5:38. "House," as in house of Israel. Notice it is a ruler of the synagogue, a ruler of Israel. This little daughter, go back to the Old Testament sometime and study the daughters of Israel. This little daughter has died, a picture of Israel's spiritual death. Christ shows up, and when Christ shows up, he raises her from the dead. Notice what is the point to it. Notice why did we have to know that she is twelve years old? I will tell you why, because there are twelve tribes in the nation of Israel in apostasy. That is why. See how that thing works? See how that thing works? Every place you go, every story in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, when you are reading it, look for those things. She is twelve years old. What is the point? Why do I need to know that? Because she is a picture of the deadness, spiritually, of the nation of Israel. Now when Christ shows up, he raises her from the dead, and she comes back to life. You know what that is a picture of? You find that back in Ezekiel 36, 37, and 38. A picture of Israel's spiritual deadness and then coming alive at the second coming of Christ. That is what is prophesied in Ezekiel 36 and 37, the valley of dry bones, where God puts them back together, and yet they are not alive, and then he breathes the breath of life on them, and they become alive. That is what she pictures. That is what she pictures.

Now I am going to show you a key here. Maybe this will not mean nothing to you, but brother, you want something that really explains a lot of things in churches, with pastors, with people, Christians, why they do not get the Bible. I am going to show you why. One of the greatest, most powerful passages anywhere in the Bible of why men, God's people, do not get the Bible. Let me read it back through you again. Mark 5:37, "And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John." Now the first thing you have got to ask yourself is, if there are 12 apostles, how come only Peter, James, and John get to see this great miracle? You realize that when you study the 12 apostles, you will find that most of the time great things are done, only three of them are there, Peter, James, and John. There is a reason for that. Peter, James, and John represent something for us that most people do not understand.

But I want you to see this. Let us read on down here. Mark 5:38, "And when he come up to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly." And when he was come in, he said to them, "Why make ye this ado, and weep? The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." Mark 5:40, "And they laughed him to scorn."

Now, you want to understand death in the Bible? I do not have time to get into it this morning. You want to understand what happens when you die as a Christian? Do you want to realize and grasp the reality of what happens when you die? How you make it from here to there? You want to understand the concept of leaving time in the portals of time and stepping into eternity where

there is no time? You want to grasp the concept of how it all works? You have got the key right here. You see, when we look at death, we look at it as a permanent thing. When God looks at death for a Christian, He looks at it as sleep. He is not using some nice little metaphor to give you some kind of an allegorical idea about it. He says, "She is not dead, she sleepeth." He just gave you one of the greatest keys in the Bible that we can take from there, and I could walk you systematically through the Bible and show you exactly what happens the moment you die, step out of this body, and how you get where you are going.

But what did they do? They laughed him to scorn. That is what many, many preachers do today. That is what many, many Christians do today when they read their Bible and they see something in there they do not understand. We are so arrogant that we think that when we read the Bible, if we cannot understand it, there must be something wrong with it. There is nothing wrong with the Bible. What is wrong is us. How many times I have heard some scholar get up there and correct the Bible? Like God made a mistake when He wrote it. Like this word should not be in there. I heard a guy get up one time and talk for 40 minutes why the last 16 verses of Mark should not be in your Bible. I heard a guy get up and take 1 John 5:6-7, the greatest verses in the Bible that talk about and lay out and establish the concept of a trinity. You know what his whole thesis was? "Should not be in your Bible." What? God made a mistake and you caught it? What arrogance we have as human beings that we think that we can correct.

Now I do not know where you are at with the Bible, but I believe that when God wrote a Bible, it is unlike any other book the world has ever seen. I believe it is all the Bible from beginning to end. I do not believe there is one mistake in it. I do not believe that there is one error in it. I do not believe that some scribal error who was writing something in the middle of the night got blurry eyed and put a zero when it should have been a one. I believe that was the holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit of God. We talk a lot about inspiration. Inspiration. Well, the Word of God is inspired. The Word of God is inspired. So what? What good is it if God inspired it one time if He was not God enough to preserve it? I believe He inspired it, and I believe He preserved it, and I believe I have got every word that He wants me to have. I believe that.

I believe just like they, I believe when he spoke and he said, "What is the big deal? She is not dead, she is sleeping." He was giving them one of the greatest keys. Just like they laughed him to scorn, when you get up and teach some of the great keys out of this book that are absolutely just unlocks great truth, you get laughed at. Now you want to know why those guys never get anything out of the Bible? You know why they have got to run around in little circles and get it from somebody else or get it on the internet? You know there are pastors in the city that all they do, hey, I have been in this business for almost 40 years, man. You know there are pastors that get their sermons, just get them off the internet. You realize there is a place you can go on the internet where you can find some really great sermons and you can just tickle your people's ears and your people will think you really know the Bible until you hold a Thursday night Bible study and let them ask you questions about the Bible. I am not telling what those websites are because I get my sermons out of there.

Now here is the deal, and this is a great thing, not only is she a type of the nation of Israel that she is going through, he just gave me one of the greatest keys that unlocks death for a Christian. This is why Paul says, "O death, where is thy sting?" Because for you and me there is no death. It is sleep. But he walked in and gave one of the greatest doctrinal statements on death and dying for a child of God, and they laughed at him. You know what he did? Read the rest of that verse. He put them out of the house. He put them out. He said, "If you do not believe what I said, you are not going to see what I am going to do." You know why these guys cannot get anything when they laugh at that book, make fun of that book, try to get that book? You know why they cannot get the stuff that some of you basic young Christians have? You know why? God put them out of the house. Shut the door of Revelation, He is not giving them anything.

The Bible is the only book in the history of the world that because it was not written by man and it was written by God, the basis of you getting anything out of it is solely one thing. It is not your, people think you have got to be educated. No, no. Truth of the matter is the dumber you are, the better God wants you. God, what happens when you get intelligent, you get educated beyond your intelligence and you start to question God. Hey, I believe in higher education, man, I am with you through the eighth grade, I am with you. The only reason I did not go any farther because I was 21 when I got out of the eighth grade. I was in the fifth grade so long the kids brought me the apple, they thought I was the teacher.

But I am telling you, you want to be a doctor, please go to medical school. You want to be a nurse, please go to medical school. Where is my new nurse out here? Where is she at? I know she is here someplace. Where is she at? Congratulations. She passed her bar exam today, not her bar exam. She is now a full fledged nurse. Congratulations. Yeah, give her a round of applause. Ushers come on forward, let us take up an offering for us. I am telling you, you are going to be a doctor, get all the education you can. You are going to be a lawyer, get all the education you can. You are going to be an engineer, build building, get all the calculus you can get your hands on. You are going to be something out there in the corporate world, you are going to be a whatever, get all, you cannot. You are going to be a Christian and learn the Bible. I do not know how to tell you this, it just kind of rubs you the wrong way. I know it does. Stay as dumb as you are. Do not let anybody ever talk you out of the book God wrote you.

One time, one time the disciples who had been with Jesus now for a number of times, remember them, the big professional guys who were always with the Lord Jesus walking around wherever he went. The people would come up and they would say, "Oh, you with him?" "Yes, I am with him." "Which one are you?" "Well, I am really the number one guy, but you do not want to tell these other guys around here, you know, I am closest to him. I really like to see him. Okay. You come to the right guy, I have got you back, man. You come to me, I will talk to you. I can get you. I know him. We are just like that, man. We can get you there." They got professional. They got big time.

One time a bunch of little kids came to him. Remember that story? A bunch of little kids. Kids are dirty. Kids play in the dirt. I was watching some of you kids go up to the other kids last night and throw dirt in their face. They are already wet and they turned into mud. Kids play in the dirt, they eat dirt. Kids can be getting great. You get them out there for an hour or so, they get dirty

filthy. That is the way they work. They have always been kids. So here they are. Here are the apostles, clean white robes. These little kids coming up and, "Get away." "Well, we want to see Jesus. We want to." They did not want them little kids to get to Jesus because now the ministry had got so important. Now the 12 apostles, and I do not know how many times he takes them aside. You know when he put them in the ship and left them out there in the middle of the sea and they are all out there. You know why he did that? The Bible tells you he did that because their hearts were hardened. Hey, let me tell you something. If 12 men could walk with Jesus every day, eat with him, sit with him every day and hang out with him and just be with him and their hearts could get hardened to the ministry. My God, people, what can happen to us? We do not stay in that book.

Little kids come up and they said, "We want to be part of him. We want to be with him." They said, "Oh no, you cannot see him. This is an adult ministry. He is really busy. He does not have time for little kids. Man, we are out there, we are raising, we are up, we are on stopping deaf ears, raising dead people, giving eyesight back to the blind. We have got a full thing with a big bus that is just coming in with big Jesus banners on the side. We are going to be out of here in 20 minutes. We do not have time." You know what Jesus said? He said, "Stop it." And this is another great key. This is just as good as "she is sleeping." You know what he said? He said, "Except you come to me as a little child, you have no part of me." He did not say, "Except you come to me as a PhD, postal digger." Somebody said, "I have got a BA, a bunch of applesauce. I have got an MA, more applesauce. I have got a PhD, piled higher and deeper applesauce." That is all it is. He did not say, "In case you have got a degree, you come to me." He said, "In case you have spent many, many years in seminary and you can come to me." He said, "Except as you come as a little child." I do not care if you are 50, 60, 70, 80. Do not ever lose the status with God of just coming as a little child. A little child will believe whatever you tell them.

I was driving back from Ohio. This is why I slobber when I preach. I am just a six year old kid. We drove back from Ohio, and I could not remember, I could not forget how years and years ago when my little girls were just babies and they were sitting in the back and we were driving real early in the morning and we were coming through Ohio. Ohio is notorious for state highway patrol getting you. We drove from Missouri, all through Missouri, all through Illinois, all through Indiana, probably saw two cop cars. We got to the Ohio line between Ohio and Canton, which is about 200 and some miles. We must have saw 50 state highway patrol. They were everywhere. The mosquitoes were not as bad as the highway patrol was. I could not think of that morning we were driving home and Barb was asleep on the side and I was driving. It was early in the morning and I am kind of tired and Kelly woke up and Maddie was there and this guy drove by us. What did I say? It was funny.

Anyway, we were driving along and they were in the little car chairs. He goes by us in a big Lincoln Continental and obviously it is six o'clock in the morning and he has got his seat back. He is laying back in the seat and he has got his, probably got two fingers on the steering wheel and he just kind of enjoyed and probably listened to back then, boy, I do not know, Led Zeppelin, funky whoever, and he is just driving. We are driving along and he comes up right alongside of us for a little while, and then he just moved on ahead and the kid looked over and they said,

"Daddy, Daddy, that man is asleep. That man is asleep. He is going to run off the road and hit us." I said, "No." So I am thinking, "What is early in the morning?" So I said, "No, he is not asleep. He has got one of them new cars that you can sleep while you drive." "Do we, Daddy? Do we, Daddy? Do we, Daddy?" "Yeah." "Does he, Daddy?" "Yeah." I said, "Oh yeah." "This is why do not we get one of those cars?" I said, "Well, maybe we went online." She said, "Tell me about it. Tell me." Oh, they were so excited. Barb is still, and we are driving down there and he had these big curb feelers out. You know how he put, you used to have curb feelers out, do you not? I said, "You see those things coming off the deal?" I said, "Those are sensors. You see that white line paint on, oh, I was going to it." I said, "You see that white paint on the side road? There are sensors in there. When he gets too far to the left or right, it automatically brings you back over." I said, "Now you see those little things in the back there by the trunk?" I said, "Those are the heat sensors that pick up when you get too close to a car and back, and it backs you off, pulls you over, and it has got some on the front. Now you can sit going, turn all that stuff on, and just go to sleep right there and just drive when you wake up where you want to be." Oh, they were so excited. They wanted one of those cars. I did too, but at that time, they are yelling and screaming, and my wife wakes up, and now I am in trouble. See? Because she thinks I am lying to the kids. I said, "Well, you are the one that let them think there is Santa Claus out there. Do not tell them how me." I said, "Who was out there? When a couple of Aprils ago, we saw it in a rabbit humming around the backyard." You said, "Oh, girl, there is the Easter Bunny." I said, "Yeah, the neighbor shot him." So, she wakes up, and they are all excited and Barb is mad at me.

But my point is this. Those kids would believe whatever I tell them. They were not educated enough yet to know the sophistication of automobiles and figure it all out. They just had a father who they trusted and believed. Whatever I told them was okay with them, and they did not look at that point in their life for a higher authority to override what dad had said to them. That is the way you ought to be with God. You do not ever look for a higher authority to override what He says. He says she is sleepeth. They laughed him to scorn. You know what he did? Put him out of the house. Nothing will get you out of the house of revelation and the house of learning faster than scoffing and scorching at what God wrote in His Word. I believe it all. I believe it all. I think it is places like this that men laugh at that are the keys. They are the keys. Remember Psalms 1 says, "Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

VII. Matthew 9: The Woman with the Issue of Blood

I will show you another one. Matthew chapter 9. I have got kind of a frog in my throat this morning. I got high on those cigars. Just kill me. I am just kidding. Matthew 9:20-22. Now here is a great one. Here is another one. It has just got a key to it. I wish I had time to get on all these today, but we do not. But we do it. This will be great stuff for Thursday night. You want to find out more, you can come and ask.

Matthew 9:20-22

And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment:

For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

Now I want you to notice here that this woman has an issue of blood. Her disease was in her blood. Leviticus 11 says the life of the flesh is in your blood. Three times you find where she is made whole. Once in Matthew 9:21 and two times in Matthew 9:22. Israel has a blood issue. Issues Israel is in the flesh from the fall of Adam. Their blood got poisoned, and the life of their flesh is in their blood. So here is a woman that has a disease in her blood. Twelve years. Twelve tribes of the nation of Israel.

I would be less than a preacher if I did not give you this. We do not have time to get into it, but it is an incredible key. Think of Matthew 9:22. "And she was made whole from that very, made whole from that hour." You know in Matthew 20, I do not know if you know it or not. You have five places in your Bible that show you when Paul said of the times and the seasons, "I have no need to write unto you." He was talking about that you and I as a child of God, I do not know the exact proximity of when Christ is coming back. You know Christ coming back in the nation of Israel, being restored, is also likened to a woman in travail, going to have a baby. Most of you women have had children here. You older ladies that are married, you have had children, and you know that when you have a child, you conceive a child, you go to the doctor, he gives you a due date. The exception proves the rule. Most women never hit their due date. When a doctor said, "Well, you are going to have the baby on March 12th," you know what? You probably do not have it on March 12th. You may go a week before, a week after, you may, who knows? But normally you never have the baby on the date that the doctor says it is due. But ladies and gentlemen, you know, you know physiologically when you better not stray too far from home. You know that it is getting close. You know that you may not make your due date, but you know that, man, it is coming. I am not going to go out jogging, I am not going to run a 5K, I am going to stay home, keep my feet up, and I am just, I get some contractions, but it is not real yet. You know when it is getting close. I do not think probably, hardly one out of a thousand women hit their due date. But every woman knows when it is getting close.

You know what? You will never know the day and the hour is coming. But I can tell you right now, it is getting close. That baby is almost ready to be delivered! That man child, the Lord Jesus Christ. She says she was made whole from that very hour. There are five ways you know the approximate time. Five systems in your Bible. One of them is an hour system. You do not have to turn to it, but in Matthew 20:1-8, you have got a story, another story. That story is about workers going into a field to work for the Lord Jesus. Someone goes in at six in the morning, and the workday is a 12 hour day. 12 hours, imagine that. They go in at six o'clock in the morning and they work at six at night, 12 hours. The Bible says he sends some workers in early in the morning, that would be early in Acts. He says he sends some of the workers into the field to do the harvest about the third hour, sends some more in the sixth hour, sends some more in the ninth hour, sends the last workers in on the eleventh hour, and then he comes back at the twelfth hour.

You know in Washington, D.C. right now, there is a natural research group that is researching the end of the world, and they have what they call a doomsday clock. A doomsday clock is a time that is built on a 24 hour system, and the world is going to end at 12 o'clock midnight. Their whole clock system is built on the world event that is going on in the world. They are not even a Christian group. On a doomsday clock, they have it 10 to 12, 10 minutes left, and they are unsaved. It is no accident that he sends some in early in the morning and then he sends some the third hour, the sixth hour, the ninth hour, and then he sends the last workers in the eleventh hour. You ask the average pastor, the average child of God, to explain that back there for you and take those 12 hours and break it down into how many hours, how many years make an hour so you can figure the things out. He could not do it if his life depended on it. You know why every child of God ought to do it? You know why? You should be able to do it in time. Maybe you cannot now because you are not there yet, but in time you should be. I will tell you why. Because he told us in Romans that we are to understand God dealing with the nation of Israel. That hour is one of the systems that God shows you and me about His coming.

You know when the eleventh hour started? Oh, let me tell you something. Look down to Armageddon. I have told you before in the great prophecy in Matthew 24 about Israel becoming a nation and how God is going to restore them. I showed you before and showed you how the whole system works its way out. You can learn from that exactly where we are at. You begin to realize and understand that God is doing the last things that He is trying to get done before He comes back. We are at the end. The church is in a mess. The world is in a mess. The country is in a mess. Everything is in a mess. Israel is in a mess. What we need is somebody to come down and straighten it all out. The only problem is the wrong guy is coming first, but then the good guy is coming later.

Almost 2,000 years, 1,900 years anyhow. Israel without a nation. Israel was without a nation. They had no land. They had nothing that they called home. They were vagabonds on this earth. As long as everybody looked at and studied nations and ethnic groups, they said they are out of the land. They will never be back. Lo and behold, in 1948, the fig tree budded and God brought the nation of Israel back together and fulfilled the prophecy in Matthew 24. But that is not where the 11th hour started. At the end of World War I, England had won. World War I. A year before that, General Allenby had kicked the Muslims out of Jerusalem. Now the greatest nation on the planet at that particular point that had the Word of God and was responsible for the greatest missionary movement the world had ever seen now held the city of Jerusalem.

During World War I, there was a Jewish man by the name of Weizmann. Believe it or not, Weizmann took old potatoes and some other scraplings and some other little components, and he designed a smokeless gunpowder that really enhanced the British army to the place and was attributed to a lot to the victory they had over the Axis forces in World War I. It was at that time that England was still a Bible-believing nation for the most part. Many of those old Anglican guys believed the Bible and loved God and were saved. A guy by the name of Lord Balfour stood up in British Parliament, and he declared that the land belonged to the nation of Israel. In fact, he opened up a King James Bible and read several passages that talked about the land belonged to them. He put forth a declaration called the Balfour Declaration that would give the land back to

the Jew. Ladies and gentlemen, that started your 11th hour. On God's prophetic clock, if it is all over at 12 o'clock, we are at 11:54 right now. The last workers, the 11th hour, started in 1918. God made it so clear if anybody is paying attention because the Balfour Declaration, put out by Lord Balfour in 1918, was signed on the 11th hour, on the 11th day of November, the 11th month, just 11 months to the day that Lord Allenby entered Jerusalem on November 11th, 1917. The Balfour Declaration kicked off the last hour before he comes back.

You say, "Now, how do you get that? How do you know that?" A while back, I told you something. I did not give them to you because I was going to wait and see if anybody would ask on Thursday night who really cared. But I told you there are seven stewardships that you are to be a steward of in the New Testament, that you and I as Christians, there are seven things we are to have stewardship over. Seven things we are to be a steward. One of them is the nation of Israel. You better watch Israel. We are in the 11th hour. You get that from a story about a little woman here who just touched him and was made whole, and she was made whole from that hour.

Every demon possessed man in the Bible. Every demon possessed woman. Mary Magdalene, who was cast out seven devils. She is cast out in Luke 8:2. You are going to go back and you are going to find in Proverbs 6:16 six things that God hates. You will find those six things matched up in Matthew 12 to the seven unclean spirits. The Bible says in Proverbs there are six things that God hates. Yea, the seventh makes an abomination, making the seventh. Those seven things that the devil hates make up the seven personalities of the Antichrist, which were the seven unclean spirits in the man in Matthew 12 and the seven unclean spirits kicked out of Mary Magdalene, who is the type of the nation of Israel. She got restored when she met Christ. Every story you go to, every story you go to.

In Luke 1:5-7, we have got the story of Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. You know there are seven women in your Bible. There are seven women in your Bible that are barren women. In other words, they cannot have children. Elizabeth is the last one. Come to the Old Testament, there are six more. Those seven women picture the nation of Israel who is barren. Every one of those women at one point in their life after being barren give birth to a child, a man child who is one of the 21 types of Christ in the Bible. That child is a great leader in the nation of Israel. Every one of those women represent the nation of Israel. Elizabeth is the last one. She is barren, and then she has a child, and that child represents Christ. Picture the nation of Israel.

Now I am going to give you my last one here, and then I am going to be done, but this is my favorite. This is my favorite. John chapter 5. I wish I had time to do them all. I have got more on here I am not going to get to because I just, you know what, you have got to pick and choose, man. John chapter 5, oh this is my favorite. This is my favorite one. This is my favorite one for two reasons. I am going to give you the first reason. This is a great message to preach. If you are a young guy here and you want to get a firecracker of a message that you can just wail into and wade into them and smite and hip and thigh and preach the pain off the wall, this is where you go. This is easy. This is one of my first messages that I ever preached. But we are going to look at it from Israel's standpoint first.

John 5:1-9

After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

Now, the second reason I love this so much is because this is one of the greatest places in the Bible, not only to preach. This is one of the greatest stories in the Bible that illustrates Israel's condition. That is not the second reason why I like it. I like it because almost every pastor that you ask will tell you, this story should not be in your Bible. You see, they do not know, they do not know what to do with it. Because the story is so out of character for the rest of the things that Jesus has taken place. When you are not a little child anymore, and you are educated beyond your intelligence, when you do not understand something, obviously it could not be you, so it has to be the Bible. So we get out of it. We just get it out of here. The reason for it is the fact that the newer manuscripts, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, it is not found in. It is true, it is not found in the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, but your King James Bible is not after the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, your King James Bible is after the Greek Textus Receptus, and it is in that one. See? That is why I like, I like it because I found over the years that where the scholarly world tells me that it should not be there, and they make fun of it, and laugh at it, and scoff at it, and say it should not be there, it is usually one of the greatest keys of something in the Bible you are ever going to find. They cannot see it, you know why? God put them out of the house. Out of the house. Out of their mind too, but that is another message.

Now look at this. I think personally this is one of the greatest, easiest messages to preach. Powerful! Now look at this. Notice the four things, the four issues this man has. This is a picture of where the nation of Israel is spiritually.

7. The first thing it is, they are impotent. That means they are powerless. If a nation was ever powerless, it is the nation of Israel.
8. Then the second thing that says about them is that they are blind. That is spiritual blindness.
9. The third thing is the fact that they are halt. That means as a nation they have no walk with God. Halt means that you cannot walk. They have no power with God. They are spiritually blind with God. They have no walk with God.
10. The fourth thing he says is that he is withered. That would tell us that they have no work for God. That is Israel's condition.

Now the story goes, and this is what they have a problem with, the story goes that every while they laid around this porch, this pool in Bethesda, that every year an angel came down and troubled the waters. When they troubled the waters, the first one that got in got healed, and everybody else did not make it. They have a problem with that because they cannot understand an angel coming out. I have even heard some pastors try to say that it was a demonic angel that came down. You know, it was the demonic angel that told you that. Why cannot we put it together? Why cannot we understand that water in the Bible is a picture of the Word of God? Why cannot we grasp the great truth that water in the Bible is a picture of the Holy Spirit of God? Why cannot we see that this man and all these folks that are laying around this pool, that is the picture of the Word of God and the water, are powerless, are blind, they are halt, they are maimed, they have all kinds of infirmities, and the water they have, the Word of God, the Holy Spirit is right in their midst. But because they are powerless, because they are withered, because they are lame, they cannot get in.

When that angel comes down, no problem for me. Acts 7:54 says that the Old Testament law was given by the disposition of angels. God used angels all through the Old Testament. Somebody said, "Wow, you know, I mean, I do not, hey, the Bible says how long?" John 5:5, "And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years." Deuteronomy 2:14 says when the nation of Israel came out of the land, I know what we teach, we teach it in the generality, they wandered for 40 years, do we not? But if you go to Deuteronomy 2:14, you will find the first two years, they are moving their way around, and God does not count their wandering till after that. Deuteronomy 2:14 says that they wandered for 38 years, the man's age. Nothing like a Bible to clear up a seminary education. Notice he is made whole on the Sabbath day. That is a picture of the millennial reign of Christ. That is when Christ comes back.

VIII. The Inadequacy of the Old Testament and the Sufficiency of Christ

You see, this story illustrates the whole problem. You boys and girls in institute, we are in the book of Hebrews right now. I told you in the book of Hebrews that the book of Hebrews is a great book because it contrasts the Old Testament from the New Testament. It basically shows you that the Old Testament was insufficient. The Old Testament could not fix man's problems. The very best they could do is bring an offering of a bull or a goat, but the Bible told us in Hebrews that that could never wash away anybody's sin. What he does in the book of Hebrews is chapter by chapter, he goes through and he shows you the Old Testament priest, and then he

compares the New Testament priest of Christ and shows you that one is better. He shows you the Old Testament sacrifice, then he shows you that the New Testament sacrifice Christ was better. He basically through Hebrews shows you what the Old Testament did and how inefficient it was. It could not fix man's sin problem. It could only be temporary cover, but the lambs and the bulls and the goats could only temporarily take away sin. But when the Lamb of God came, he eradicated sin. The book of Hebrews shows you the Old Testament was good, but Christ is better. The Old Testament was fine, but the New Testament is better.

You know what you have got here? You have got a picture of that. This story about a man being here with a bunch of other folks being lame and cannot get in there, and when an angel came down and troubled the water and only one man could get in, and when the first one in was in and everybody else had to go on with their infirmities, you know what that story really shows you? If you come to it as a child, if you get your education out of the way, if you just believe the story and believe that it ought to be in there. Once you get the key that I just gave you today about how all these stories are a picture of Israel's spiritual condition, you are in, man. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John will never be the same to you again if you keep that thought when you read it because that story illustrates the Old Testament situation. It was inadequate. Only one man could get in. It was only a temporary thing. Everybody else could get in. That was the Old Testament system. The Old Testament system was not a system that was accounted for everybody, and it shows you that the Old Testament system there would not get the job done, but when Jesus showed up, he healed the man instantaneously, and it shows you that what was coming was better than what they had in the Old Testament. That is the story. That is the picture. Under this system, only one could get in. The rest was out of luck, but someone was coming who is better than that system who will get everybody in and that there will be no diseased people once you trust Christ as your personal Savior.

IX. The Current State of Christianity and Stewardship

Now, boys, you want to preach a good message? The great parallel. All of these have great parallel. Historically, they are all true stories. Inspirationally, you can find great truths for you and for me, but from a doctrinal standpoint, you do not ever want to forget. First and foremost, these stories are showing you Israel's spiritual condition. God's people today, much like the nation of Israel in that story, are laying around. They have the Bible right in front of them. They do not even have the Holy Spirit of God. You talk about an analogy. You talk about a parallel. You talk about God's people representing this in your life. This is why there is such a great, easy message to preach. They were laying around a pool of water, which represents the Word of God and the Holy Spirit of God. You have the Bible in your hand. If you are saved, you have the Holy Spirit of God inside you. Why do you struggle with those infirmities when you have what can heal you?

God's people today, notice it says the sheep gate. That is the place of sacrifice. That is where they bring the sheep in for the sacrifice. No, it says Bethesda. That means mercy. These people are in the place of sacrifice. They are in the place where mercy is, but they cannot get in under the Old Testament system. You and I are in. You have the sacrifice of Christ applied to your life. You

have got the mercy of God. You have the water, the Holy Spirit of God in your hand this morning and the Holy Spirit of God inside you. Yet, we lay around the Bible. We lay around the pool, powerless, spiritually blind, halt. We have no walk with God. Withered, we have no work for God. That is the parallels here, which are incredible to what Israel was to what the body of Christ is today.

I have never in my life, I would have never thought in the short 40 years of my ministry and looking around that I would see such a demise of the power of God in people's lives. I will tell you, it means all the more to me when I see God using you and doing in your lives in this ministry that the power is there. But I also know that I will tell you what, we live in a day and age where God's people are, have no, they are withered, they are halt, they are maimed, they are powerless with God. All because they are laying around in the midst of all their infirmities when they have what can help and heal them. I have never seen it all my life. I have never seen a time where God's people take such a dim view of living a holy life for God. Think that you can have one foot in the world and one foot in doing what God wants you to do.

I had somebody before I went on, I see my mom, a friend of mine wrote me a letter or sent me an email and he said, "I am sending you something in the mail, I want you to see this." He is a friend of mine for years. We have talked many, many times about going on in Christianity and how dead it is and how God's people, and he got on the computer, I do not know anything about him. All I can find on my computer is the way to find my eBay, I cannot get anything out of that. But I guess they have what they call, they help me with this now, my face? MySpace. The laughing of my face? What is the face thing? Facebook, I got you. He sent me a whole copy of people that we knew as Christians. I do not know how it worked, but I guess you have got to be accepted in or something like that. I do not know. I could not believe it. These were people that he knew and I knew. They were God's people, saved people. When I got on there, I could not believe it. I could not believe the things that they were saying. I could not believe how they were talking about Bible here and then you go over here and they have got pictures of half nude women over here like it is some kind of porno site. I could not believe God's people talking about going out and drinking and doing this and "I cannot wait to get a beer" and "I cannot wait to hear that." He wrote to me and he says, "We have talked many times what is wrong with Christianity." The bottom line here it is. There is no fear of God and no holiness of God in our lives anymore. We actually think we can say we are Christian and do those things. God just says, "Well, you are okay." No wonder, my God people, it is no wonder we do not have any power in our lives. It is no wonder we have no real connection with God. God is not doing anything with us. We are just, many of God's people are just like those people there. They are laying around in their infirmities right in the middle of the pool of the Word of God and the Spirit of God and waiting for God to do something. When all the time you have got the Word of God in your heart and in your life and the Holy Spirit of God dwells inside you.

I look at Christianity and I think to myself, "My God, what is wrong with us?" Do not we realize that one of these days soon we are way past the 11th hour? That he is coming back, the church is done, the fullness of the Gentiles are in, and God then turns to the Gentiles, but we are gone. We stand there to give an account of our stewardship with God. Do not you ever think for a moment,

do not you ever think for a moment that your space, MySpace, your rear end, whatever it is, will not show up at the judgment seat of Christ. I am telling you people, we fight it every day. We fight it every day. The world has such a tug-and-a-pull. It is so easy to lose sight of the reason why God saved you, why he called you and what he wants you to do with your life, and the world out there calls and shines and glimmers and your friends go this and that and pretty soon you are sucked right back into it again. Where God wanted you to have the power of God, a walk with God, a work with God, we wind up withered, halt, blind, laying around in our infirmities.

Now I did not mean any of that. I just showed you why that is a good message to preach. I was not preaching to you. I told you I was going to show you how I was just a show. Wore me out, but it was a good show, telling you. I do not know if that is a great message to preach today. It is a message that every child of God needs to hear. It is a message that every one of us needs to bear in our hearts because it is just a tug on us just like it is in everybody else. I watch people who one time loved God, loved the Word of God, loved this church, and now they are out there bad-mouthing it, saying everything they can to say, "Want nothing to do with it." Somebody says, "How does that happen?" I will tell you why it happened because we live in a day and age when, my friend, the world wants to suck them right back in. We live in a world in Christianity where everybody is looking for a better deal. I used up all my deals here. I will go to another church where I can get some more deals. The truth of the matter is, my friend, the only deal you need is the deal in this book. That is why you need to invest your life in knowing it and learning it. That is why I have dedicated my life to teaching it to you. That is why you young Christians, next Saturday morning when you sit down there, we get in here, I get you to learn everything you can about it because we are in the 11th hour. We are at 11:54, and then it is over. Then my space will be about a 12-inch square as you stand there and look at him. My face then will be the reflection of his face, of why you took your salvation and you took his Bible and you took his love and then you did absolutely nothing with it. My space, my face, yeah, there will be great terms at the judgment seat of Christ, I guarantee you.

X. Conclusion: Investing in God's Word and Souls

Let me just say this to you. You are the greatest people on this planet. I cannot ever hope in all of my life to ever have a better group of men and women who love that book, who love God, who love this church, who have vested your life, your time, your finances, and your very being, who as the Bible in 1 Corinthians said, we talked about it, like the house of Stephanas, you have addicted yourself to this ministry, and it shows. It shows. I do not know when that final moment will be. I do not know if it will be before I die, after I die, or whatever. I know I have more years on that side than I have got on this side, but I know this. Not many pastors get to have the privilege that I have had to have in some of the greatest young men and young ladies, moms and dads, who fell in love with a book and fell in love with the author of that book, who dedicate their whole life to one thing and had us finding more out about God every day in our life and letting God have more of them. Let me tell you something. It is not about how much more you get of God. It is about how much more God gets of you. You have dedicated your life to this church, to this ministry, and the work that we do here, and it shows. For me to be gone and for you not only to have the men that preach the Word of God incredibly well, but to have the men

and women of this church be here speaks volumes. I do not know what to say. I have had a very emotional week, and I am about to have another emotional moment, so I am going to stop right now. You do not know what it means to me to know that people like you, forget me, your love is for that book and for God. All my simple little job is, is to get you to fall in love with a God in a book that I fell in love with. That is all my job is. I have no other task. Yes, I love you in the process, and I get mostly attacked and tagged to you in the process, but you know what? That will go away someday. What will never go away is your relationship with that eternal book and that eternal Savior that saved you and loved you.

Do not ever come to the place, do not ever come to the place where you let anybody take that book from you. You take every word of it, you hang on to every word of it, and you believe every word of it. You come to the place in your life where you just stay a little child. Do not ever grow up when it comes to being with God. Do not ever grow up when it comes to your relationship with Him. Just believe in the cars that drive through the road while you can sleep. Believe the moon is made of green cheese. Believe all of those things that little kids believe when their parents tell them because they just know mom and dad will always tell them that you are, I guarantee you, God will always tell you the truth. He will always be there for you, and He will always lead you through the principles of the Word of God.

Saturday morning, we go to work. Section two. You are here this morning and you missed the first section for whatever reason. You were not even here then. You want to get in the second section, get caught back up in the first one. I am going back to that table back there, shooting at the book, *My Appointments*. You come back and see me. I will hook you up with a family. I will get you on fire. I will get you going, and we will help you with your Bible. That is the only reason we exist. Everything else does not matter.

Say it one last time, then I am done. Only two things, folks, worth investing your life in. Only two things. Because they are the only two things that are going to last for eternity. One of them is the Word of God, and the other one are the souls of men. Nothing else makes any difference. Father, thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus.