

John 10:1-6

Sunday 12/26/2021

SEC: Introduction to John Chapter 10

We do not know how to pray. That is an understatement when we look at God's people today. And yet, we are told in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 that we are to pray without ceasing. Going through chapter 9 really helps all of us understand in a better way how we can truly be everything that we need to be.

Today, we are going to move into chapter 10. In this chapter, we are going to start right off with a story. As I said earlier when I was making the announcements, we are going to get into the Bible today. I do not have time in the time allotted for our church service this morning to explain all this and then go into great detail. If I did that, we would be here tomorrow morning. But we have Thursday night Bible study now that I realize we have it. So if there are things that I can explain for you or help you understand, write it down and bring it Thursday night because, obviously, we are going to get into a lot of stuff today.

This story here is one of my favorites in the Bible. But it is one of those stories that once you get into it biblically, you can go 20, 30 different ways with it. There is so much to be able to study out of this great story. In this chapter, chapter 10, Christ is portrayed as the Good Shepherd. You are going to notice, if you have not noticed already, that all through the Gospel of John, chapters are designated to a different aspect of Christ's life and His ministry. Every one of them is a really great study.

In chapter 1, if you remember, we saw Him portrayed as the true light. In chapter 4, we saw Him portrayed as the true water of life. In chapter 6, you will remember that we saw Him as the bread of life. We have not gotten to chapter 15 yet, but when we get there, you are going to find where He is portrayed as the true vine. Then in chapter 17, He gives the disciples a prayer that is a true prayer for the nation of Israel. In John chapter 10, He is now laid out for us as the Good Shepherd. There is so much to glean from this little chapter, chapter 10, simply verses 1 through 6.

First off, the first thing I want you to know about this, because we are going to define some things here first before we actually get into the story. Then I am going to take this story and show you, which is almost universally completely taught wrong, how to put it into a biblical context by just using the Bible itself, which is what we do here.

SEC: Understanding Parables

First off, we are told that this story is a parable. That should put all kinds of red warning lights on your little thinking cap when you see that in the Bible. One of the things that you will always want to notice in your Bible, in the Gospels, is that Christ will always tell you when the story that He is giving you is a parable. When He does not tell you it is a parable, then it is a real story.

This is one of the things that Jehovah's Witnesses, who do not believe in hell, when you get over to Luke chapter 16, they will try to get out of that story by simply telling you that that is just a

parable. And yet, if you look at Luke chapter 16 very carefully, you are going to find that He does not say that it is a parable in Luke chapter 16 because it is not. It is a real story. So that is the first thing you want to know, you want to look for.

The second thing is to understand what a parable is itself. Most people teach today, who know very little about the Bible, that parables are some heavenly truth mystified in some kind of story that you have got to run through to figure it out and find all kinds of stuff that it applies to you. That is simply not true.

You are told in Matthew 13:13-16, you are going to get a lot of Bible verses today, because this whole thing is built on the Word of God itself. Not my opinion, not what I read somewhere. You just stick with the Bible. But you are going to find in Matthew chapter 13, you are going to find where He tells you why the parables came into being. You are going to find that as it goes back again to Acts 28:24, and you find it all the way back into the book of Isaiah 6:9. He tells you that the parables come into place because of Israel's rejection of the kingdom.

There is no hidden truth to the church. It is not some veiled thing that some pastor has to dig out to give it to you. It is given in a mystery form, and these are the Holy Spirit of God's Word. It is given in a mystery form to confound and confuse the nation of Israel because of their rejection of Christ, Matthew chapter 12, Matthew chapter 13. Now the kingdom goes into a parable state. It is a thing where He masks these things in a form that Israel cannot get them. So you want to remember that.

Again, today, as in everything, you are going to find that people are always trying to stick these into the church age. One of the things you want to look at is when they do that, they have to pick and choose just segments, because if they took the whole thing, they would have the church wind up losing its salvation. They would have the church wind up in all kinds of situations. The reason for that is they are not given to you and me.

Now, I get it. All the Bible is written for me. I understand that, but not all the Bible is written directly to me. There are three people groups that are addressed in the Bible: the Jew, the Gentile, and then there is the church. Rightly dividing the word of truth is you and me having the ability to see who He is speaking to and why, and then gleaning things out for us, maybe indirectly, but certainly not directly. So when we see it is a parable, using what we already know, and we are pretty much into the Bible around here all the time, we know our context of this story will be to the nation of Israel.

We also know that the parables will always deal with doctrinal issues like the second coming of Christ, the tribulation period, and then the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ, but all given to Israel. Now, I am going to break this parable down as we go through into two, maybe three sections over the next couple of weeks. This is one of these places in the Bible that I want you to get down. So I am going to take my time doing it. We have Thursday night. If I leave any things unanswered, which I most certainly will, because I do not have the time to get into all of these different offshoots that this story deals with. I am going to give you the story. I am going to lay out what it is, give you the material, and then you need to take it on your own and study it out

and then bring it back to me if need be, and then I will help you do that. We will see how this is a great story with a lot of incredible material that can be run through your Bible.

Let us begin, and let us read our text today, John 10:1-6. See now if you can use your trained eye here, because I am going to give them to you. You can get ahead of the game here. See now if your trained eye can pick out, say you are reading this for the first time, see if you can pick out the key words that will always unlock it.

John 10:1-6

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

Let us pray. Father, the nation of Israel, as we just read, could not understand the things that He spoke to them. May You allow us to see that today. May You take the scales off of our eyes that we in the New Testament, in this church, under the guiding and the leading of the Holy Spirit of God, be led into the truth of this great story. Help us to see what Israel could not see, yet help us to see what so many of God's people cannot see today: the truth of the Word of God and how it is rightly divided and how it lays itself out so easily when you just use the Bible itself. Help us today. As always, Lord, we come to this book knowing nothing. We come to this book totally reliant on the Holy Spirit of God to lead and teach and guide us today. Help us, Father, and we will give You all the honor and the glory and the praise. Forgive us where we have failed You. Put us under Your blood that we may receive all that You have for us today. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen.

Now, I am going to lay this out for you, and you need to get this down into your Bible. You can do it one or two ways. My best way is if you have a notebook there to get as much down as you can. Do not try to put this in your Bible as we go through, unless you are really good at that. I am not, but I am sure there are some people that are. You probably have to go back and listen to it online over and over again to get it. That is what I have had to do through my life over the years. Of course, I am here for you. Thursday night, if you have more questions, bring them and we will talk about it.

You will hear this story taught by people who really do not understand the depth of the Word of God. They will always try to put this into the church age. They will always take this and these other parables and then try to work them into the church age. Of course, nothing could be farther from the truth. I have told you time and time again, nothing in the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—will be written directly to the church.

Now, there will be people who disagree with that. My answer to that would be Romans 16:25-26. You see, you can have your own opinion. We do not have our own opinions here. We just keep coming back to the Bible. When I make a statement like Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is not written directly to the church, I am saying that based on the authority of the apostle to the church, the Apostle Paul, in Romans 16:25-26, where he told us that the church age was a mystery and not revealed to him. So this idea that some pastor wants to get up there and stick this into the church age, let us just stick with the Bible if that is okay with everybody this morning. As I have said, obviously the Bible is written for all of us, for our admonition, but it is not written directly to all of us. That is the first major thing you need to learn about the Bible. So we will approach this text as we do our other Bible explorations, using the Bible itself, with itself interpreting keys to unlock it and show us what it really means.

SEC: Defining Key Terms in John 10

First off, looking at this text, you always want to do this when you get into a situation like this. I do anyhow, it helps me. The first thing we want to do is define some things. We want to find a context of this passage, and we do that through looking at keywords and defining them.

The Door Now I want to start with what we should see with our trained eye, and maybe this is one of the first things you should have put down, and that will be the word "door." Now, inspirationally, and I have heard this all my Christian life, inspirationally, people will take this and they will say, "Well, the door here is a figurative thing. It is not a literal door. It is talking about Christ as the door, and Christ is the great door," and they try to deal with that way. But I want to draw your attention first off in John chapter 10. He is not portrayed as the great true door. He is portrayed as the Good Shepherd, and that is the first thing that would bother me about that understanding.

They want to teach that this is not a literal door, and I totally understand this. I really do. I have been in this business a long time. I have heard every angle and everything that somebody tries to put out, and I know where a lot of this stuff comes from, and I understand that. But the truth of the matter is, when we find the word "door" here, it is a literal door, and that is the first thing I want you to understand.

You need to realize that up in the second heaven, between the second heaven and the third heaven where God is at, there are real doors. The Bible talks about doors and it talks about windows, and they are real. I know we would like to make them figurative because we can do so much with that. But I want to tell you something, that up in heaven, there are doors and there are windows.

Back in my day, I grew up liking the 1970s Star Trek movies, when they were on TV. I remember one episode, and I have never forgotten it, where they, in the Enterprise, they were up there someplace and they went through a door. The door, I mean a literal big door up there, and they went through it and it put them into another dimension and put them into a whole other, what we call today, parallel universes. There is a theory out there that our universe is parallel with other universes, and you can actually go from one universe to the other if you find the right door. I understand how all this stuff works and I know how science comes up with it. But I want to tell you something, every element of science out there, as far-fetched as it may be, there is going to be an element of truth to it because everything has to originate from the Bible.

Now, I am not your expert on parallel universes, but I will tell you this, when you get into eternity, and eternity goes on forever, there has got to be some way that God has a system of some kind that it never ends, and with it increasing itself, Isaiah 9:6. There has got to be some format to that. Now we understand from the Old Testament that our second heaven is likened to the shape of a pyramid. We get that. A pyramid has different sides to it. We understand that. I am saying, I do not know this door exactly other than the text here, but I know there has got to be something to it that in eternity, God does what He does, and it is done through a door. It is just that. Isaiah 9:6-7 says when He establishes that government, it increases. So you are going to have an increasing government in a place where there is no time and is eternal, but it is an ongoing stage. God has got to have something. I am not professing I understand it, but I am saying this: in the Bible, you will find scores and scores of verses on these doors and windows.

When you get into a study of it, you will know, I do not know if you know this or not, the first time you find a door in the Bible is in Genesis 4:7. It is in the story of Cain and Abel. Remember what God said to him? He said, when he refused his offering, we studied a couple of weeks ago, He said to him, "Look, Cain, if you do what is right, then you are going to be okay. But if you do not do what is right, then sin lieth at the what? The door." Now we studied that back, and we know that 1 John 3:12, he is of the devil's seed. We know that he is called the son of perdition. His great father, the devil, John 8:44, "You have your father, the devil, and the lust of your father he will do. He was a murderer from the beginning." That is Cain with Genesis. When the devil rebelled against God in Ezekiel chapter 28 and Isaiah chapter 14, and he leaves God's presence, he did not have to do that. Sin was at the door. Lucifer, the devil, just like Cain, chose that and went out the door and left the presence of God. First time you find that in the Bible.

You do not have to turn to all these right now, but over in 2 Kings chapter 7, you are going to find where God killed a man. He killed a man because the man laughed when God said that there were windows in heaven. The guy laughed at him. When the famine was ceased, the guy wound up being trampled to death and he died because he did not believe what God said. You are going to find in Genesis 7:10-11 that when the great flood came down, the water came down from the deep. The Bible says that God opened the windows of heaven. Now, if that is figurative, then how did the water get through something that was not real? See, it is not figurative. In Song of Solomon 2:9, you find it again. You find where Christ up in heaven is looking through a window, looking at you. It is right there. It is literal. It is not figurative. So when you get into the story about a door, the first thing you want to do, because you really do not have a handle on the Bible

and you do not know how to explain it, is you make it figurative. Well, we do not do that around here. We will just go back to the Bible.

You will find in Genesis chapter 6, the story of Noah and the ark. I have told you before that that ark is a beautiful picture of something, but one other thing the ark is a picture of is the universe. There are three heavens. Paul said in 2 Corinthians chapter 12 that he was caught up to the third heaven. I know that confuses a lot of Baptists and scares the fire out of them because they do not know what heaven they are going to go to, but it is a simple little thing. We do not have time to get into it today, but there are three heavens. There is the first heaven, which is our atmosphere. There is a second heaven, which is the vastness of outer space. And there is the third heaven where God's throne is, where Paul was caught up to. So the ark being a type of the universe, guess what? Has three levels to it. You know what that ark, a type of the universe, has in it? It has got a door. It has got a window. How about that?

When God's judgment, here it comes, when God's judgment, the flood, was about to fall on planet earth, a picture of God's judgment that is going to come at the second coming of Christ, you know what the Bible says God did? He shut that door. Nobody could get in. Now that may not mean much to your average person, but if you are a Bible student and you go over to Matthew 25:10, you will find the story of the ten virgins. Five were wise and five were foolish. The Bible says that five took oil in their lamp, a picture of the Holy Spirit of God, and five did not, all a picture of the tribulation period. The Bible says that God came down and took the ones that were righteous off this planet, and guess what He says? "And the door was shut." That is a picture of what Noah went through. It is an incredible thing.

Later on in Genesis chapter 8, when the water begins to recede, Noah opens up a window, and he sends out two birds. He sends out a black bird, which is a raven, and then he sends out a white bird, which is a dove. I do not have time to get into all this this morning, and I have laid it out before, and I will certainly take the time at some other time to lay it out for you, but I am telling you, that is a picture of the Bible from Genesis 1:1, where the black bird, the devil, leaves the presence of God and never comes back. When he sends that raven out, the raven never comes back. Then he sends out the dove, a type of the Holy Spirit of God. It comes back a couple of times. All a picture of everything going through your Bible from Genesis to Revelation. It is an incredible study, all based on a window.

I will give you another one. After that all happens and the Ark lands in Mount Ararat, Noah comes out of that ark through the door after he sent the birds out through the window. He now comes out to planet earth through the door, which is a picture, if you go back and look at it after God's judgment, it is a picture of the Millennial Reign of Christ. Noah being a type of Christ coming out of that ark through the door. Somebody said, "I think you are stretching it." Well, let me stretch it a little farther for you. Only two places you find in your Bible where there is a rainbow. Only two places. See, somebody will say, "Well, I think you are reaching for that really." Well, let me reach a little farther for you, because in your Bible, there are only two places where you find a rainbow, and it is not Gay Pride week. You find that in Genesis 9:13, when Noah comes out, there is a rainbow in the sky. And then you find it in Revelation chapter 4 at the

second coming of Christ. There is a rainbow in the sky. See how you connect those things? It is incredible. Incredible.

Again, in Matthew chapter 25, I referenced just a few minutes ago, you have the story of the ten virgins. Five were wise and five were foolish. It is a story, a parable of the tribulation period and the nation of Israel going through it. Some Jews making it and some Jews not. In Matthew 25:10, the Bible says that when Christ comes back, just like in Genesis 6:16, God's judgment falls, the door is shut. It is a literal door, folks. I do not know how to break it down to you.

Now let us just get one more time here before we get going here. In Revelation chapter 4, we have the rapture of the church. Ah, that is you and me. This is more like home now. This is what we are waiting for any moment, any second, for God to come down and take us out. In Revelation 4:1, which is one of the key verses on the rapture of the church, he says this:

Revelation 4:1

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

Immediately, like a twinkling of the eye, there is the rapture. We go up through a door. It is just that simple. It is a literal door. This passage is a parable hiding the truth of the tribulation and the second coming of Christ and the establishment of the kingdom from the nation of Israel because of their rejection.

The PorterSo, let us look at the next one. The next thing we need to define and look at will be found in verse 3. It says here in verse 3, "To him the porter openeth." Not only do we have a door now, but we have a doorman. We have a porter. Now, I do not know if you have ever connected all this, and I am going to try to explain this to you in my feeble way, but this is where the idea comes from of Saint Peter at the gate. Remember, he takes the gate. You have got to go through Saint Peter to get in. You hear that all your life. I am not talking about in the Christian world. You hear about it from the world.

Back in World War II, the Marine Corps went through some really tough times in the Pacific. They talk about hell on earth, brother. They went through it from Peleliu to Okinawa to Iwo Jima to Guadalcanal to Tarawa, to those places. They had a little saying, and it went like this: "And when I get to heaven, to Saint Peter, I will tell, 'Another Marine reporting, sir, I have served my time in hell.'" See, they thought he was at the gate. Now, obviously, if you are in the Marine Corps and you went through World War II, that is probably the closest thing on this earth to ever get to hell, but it is not hell. But that is how the world looks at it.

Who all knows who Tennessee Ernie Ford was? A few of you. He sang a song, "Sixteen Tons" of number nine coal. "Another day older and another day, whatever it was, Saint Peter, don't you call me because I can't go. I owe my soul to the company store." It is all known. It is the way that it is. The whole world thinks that Saint Peter is up there at that door, the gate, and you have got to go through him. They even make jokes about it. A lady died and went to heaven, and she went up to the gate, and Saint Peter was at the door there. She says, "Oh, I am so glad that I get to go

to heaven." And Saint Peter said, "Well, wait a minute, to get into heaven inside the door here, you have got to spell a word." And she says, "Oh my." He says, "You pick the word." So being a Christian, she says, "Love, L-O-V-E." He said, "Come right on in." Two days later, she is walking around there and she sees her ex-husband, who they had a very rocky, stormy divorce, and he did not like her. She did not like him, but he is coming down the path to that gate. And she goes out to meet him and she said, "What are you doing here?" And he says, "Well, I guess I am going to heaven. I am really excited." She says, "Wait a minute. Before you get in that door, you have got to spell a word." He says, "What word?" She says, "Sheckler's Avocia."

A man said, "What time?" Actually, this is the true story. Years ago, a guy got up, we had taken prayer requests, not in our church, but another church. A guy got up and he said, "I want you all to pray. My wife is in the hospital and she is not doing very well. In fact, the doctors say that she is lying at death's door." And the pastor said, "Well, yes, brother, how would you like us to pray?" So, "Just pray God pull her through." It is a real door, man. It is a real door.

Now, let us get serious for a moment. Not for much of a moment, but let us get serious. This idea of a porter at the gate, the door, will biblically come from the biblical teaching that Peter in Matthew chapter 16 gets the keys to the kingdom of heaven. From that point, everybody just assumed, they do not know what the kingdom of heaven is, have no idea that it is on earth. They liken it to something up in heaven, that is, the gate of the door. So, ironically, Saint Peter gets plastered with the fact that he is the porter up there, keeping the gate open and all that stuff. Of course, that is not true. Now, I do not know who the porter is, but I will tell you who it is not. It is not Peter.

One of the great keys to your Bible will be to study the relationship of Peter and Paul. You will find out why Paul gets the kingdom, Peter gets the keys to the kingdom of heaven, and Paul gets the gospel to the church. You will find the illumination of that idea in Acts chapter 15, and then again in Galatians chapter 2, if you want to go that far with it.

The Sheep Now, the next thing we are going to see here is a reference to a shepherd and a reference to sheep. You will find it in verse 1, verse 3, and verse 4. Now, let me just say this, given the status of our story here, these sheep will be the nation of Israel. Sheep, in Paul's writings, now listen to me carefully, in Paul's writings, you will never find the church likened to being sheep. It is always a designation to the nation of Israel.

Now, if somebody gets up there and says, "Hey, you know what, I am the pastor of the flock," I am not going to fight that. There are a lot of things we say that are okay to say, but when it comes back to the Bible and laying it out biblically, it is not exactly the way it goes, but I understand when you are dealing with those kinds of things, it is okay. You are going to find that a sheep in Paul's writings are never likened to the church.

In Matthew chapter 10, the apostles were told with the message of the kingdom of heaven to go forth to the lost sheep, see, of the nation of Israel, not the church. In Matthew 9:36, we are told that Israel as sheep have lost their shepherd. You never read anything like that when Paul is writing to the church. So you just want to understand how this thing works. In Hebrews 13:20, Jesus is called the great shepherd of the sheep, but in the context, it is the nation of Israel.

Hebrews is written to Hebrews. In 1 Peter 2:25, you will find sheep, but it again is referring to the nation of Israel, knowing and understanding that Peter writes to the nation of Israel. He is the apostle to the Jews, Acts chapter 15.

You see, let me tell you why the New Testament church, and this is biblical doctrine now, it is okay to take a little license if you are preaching in an inspiration, I get it, I am not upset about that, it is fine, but I am telling you that doctrinally, there is a reason why you and me as the church are never going to be likened to, in Paul's writing, a sheep of the flock and Christ as the shepherd. The reason for that, biblically, and I hate to keep bringing up the Bible, but that is where we live today, biblically, the reason for that is, is because you and I as the body of Christ, we are not a sheep, we are part of His body. That is the doctrinal correctness. You talk about political correctness, well, there is a doctrinal correctness when it comes to the Bible. You are going to find that that is why we are never likened to sheep directly, because we in the body of Christ are part of His body. We became one with Him; Israel never did.

Again, I have heard the story back there in Matthew 18:18-19 about the parable of the ninety and nine, where the guy has got 99 sheep, and he is missing one. So he goes out looking for that sheep, he finds it, he picks up that little lamb and puts it over his shoulders and walks it back to the flock. Oh, how many times, how many times have I heard that put into the church? But you know what, you have got to pretty much cut that up because if you take that story just as it is, there is no way that little sheep could be part of the church, because it did not get saved or get back to the fold. It is Israel.

As a real Bible believer, you can be a party pooper on a lot of things that people believe. I would love to stand up here and say that that bothers me, but I have to confess, I rather enjoy it. It is a thing where I am a Bible believer and I give full license. If somebody came to this church and they preached a message on the ninety and nine, you would never hear a word out of me. I would not say a word. If somebody got up and said, "You are a," you know, whatever, made reference to you as sheep and He is a, I would not say a word about it. I understand there is a preaching license that you can take as long as you do not go off the deep end someplace. So I am okay with that. You know the reason why I am okay with it? Because I understand the difference. I know the real doctrinal background behind it. So I do not get upset about it because I know how it really lays out. The problem is that most of God's people do not know how it lays out, so they get caught up into it.

What I am about to say is going to offend a lot of people. I do not mean to. I even hesitate to say this because you are all good people and I do not mean this in a disrespectful way, any way, shape, or form. I am just telling you, do you want the Bible or do you not? It is actually not good.

Years ago, not years ago, several years ago, this little thing came out, kind of a poem with a picture of the footprints in the sand. I have seen it in people's houses. If you have me over for dinner and you have one of those on your wall, I am not going to say a word until after we eat. I am not going to say a word because I am okay because I understand. But you know how it goes. You have all seen it, and if you have it, it is fine. I do not look at you as the Antichrist or I just, it is okay. There are a lot of things, you are going to see in a minute, there are a lot of things we do

in Christianity that are so far from the Bible, it is unbelievable. But it is okay. It is the world we live in. I do not mind as long as I know that.

But you know how it goes. There is this picture here, two sets of footprints, walking in the sand by the beach. The story goes that I enjoyed my walk with you, dear Lord. We walked in the sunrise, the midday, in the sunset, and I could see the two sets of our footprints as we walked side by side. But then I had a dream, and Lord, I looked at that beach, and now there was only one set of footprints, and I asked the Lord, "Lord, we walked together and there were two sets of footprints. Now there is only one. Why did You leave me to walk alone?" Jesus looked down, that smile on His face, put His arm around me and said, "Son, I never left you. Those were the times that I carried you."

Now, being the resourceful person that I was, before I ever asked the Lord that, I would have measured His footsteps of the single footsteps because if He was carrying somebody, it would be deeper than it was when He was not. That was me. I am a tracker. I just said, "Oh, there is something going on here. Those footsteps are deeper than these here." I would have measured them and I would have deduced that He is carrying somebody.

You know why there are not two footprints in the sand and there is only always one set of footprints? Because I am not walking by His side. I am in Him and He is in me, and I can never get separated from Him. You know what? He does not have to carry me. You know why? He gave me a book that will get me through everything in life. You know why we want God to carry us through tough times? Because we are not in the book. Show me one problem man gets into that the answer is not in that book. I do not need God to carry me. He gave me a book that will get me through. But you see, that is where we are at today, and I do not fight it. I really do not. But it is just where it is at, and it is a shame.

The Stranger Now, the next thing you have is found in verse 5, and this will be the stranger. It says, "And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." Now, if you are going to put this into a church age, you have a problem with this verse because now who is the stranger? Here is where we have to go back to the Bible.

The word "stranger" or "strange" will be defined for you in the Bible through a great study that will ultimately lead us to, yes, the man of sin, the Antichrist. Now, where do you get that? It is a book called the Bible. It is so clear if you just pay attention. You will find in the beginning of your Bible in Genesis 35:2 that they are told to stay away from, here is the word, "strange gods." In 1 Kings 11:1, you will find that the downfall of the nation of Israel after David came into being with Solomon. How did that happen? Because 1 Kings 11:1 said, "Solomon loved many strange women." In the book of Proverbs, you will find the strange woman who seduces a young man, a picture of the religion of the Antichrist in the tribulation period. She is flattering with her lips. She is religious. She has paid her vows. She says all the right things, but she takes the man, the young kid, to hell.

Now, in 1 Kings chapter 18, you will find this story laid out for you completely with two people in your Bible that represent the Antichrist and his religion: Ahab and Jezebel. Have you ever noticed that there are two names with all the names? How many Johns have we got here? How

many people named John? A bunch. How many James? A bunch. Have you ever noticed how many Jezebels? Charles just pointed to you, Lord, when I said that. I want you to know that. That is okay. How many Ahabs? Okay, he has got your back. How many names Judas? Have you ever noticed that those two names are completely off the child roster? When you go to the website, "Name Your Kid," you will not find Jezebel and you will not find Judas. You will find James, you will find John, you will find Bob, you will find Robert, you will find Tom, you will find all the biblical names, but you will not find Jezebel and you will not find Judas. There is something special about those names that are not good.

So you have here in 1 Kings 18, the story of Ahab, a type of the Antichrist, Jezebel, a type of his religion. She is the strange woman and he is the strange man. When you go through the book of Proverbs, you will find in Proverbs 2:16, Proverbs 3:10, Proverbs 5:3, Proverbs 5:20, Proverbs 6:1, Proverbs 21:8, Proverbs 27:2, all references to this stranger or strange person. Then when we get to Zechariah chapter 11, you will find this strange man, this stranger, in the form of a false shepherd, the Antichrist. Here the key word that you find in verse 5 will be found in Matthew 24:16. It is the word "flee."

You probably had to look at Zechariah 11:15 just so you stay with me here, but look what he says:

Zechariah 11:15-17

And the LORD said unto me, Take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd.

For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, which shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces.

Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.

Now this is the shepherd. Now look, he is defined in verse 17, "Woe unto the idle shepherd." This shepherd is connected with an idol, like the beast, 666, that leaves the flock. "The sword shall be on his arm," that is where the Antichrist gets a bad right arm, "and shall be around his right eye," so he gets a bad wound in the eye. "His arm shall be clean dried up and his right eye shall be utterly darkened."

A couple of weeks ago on Thursday night, somebody asked a question about the breaking the bands and the brotherhood over here in Zechariah chapter 11, and I showed you that night that that is dealing with Zechariah 11:7 and Zechariah 11:14, that is dealing with the Antichrist coming in breaking up the bond of the nation of Israel and breaking the brotherhood of the nation of Israel. You know, it is a thing where this is the stranger, this is the idle shepherd, this is the Antichrist. This is who they are talking about in John 10:5, "And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him," and in Matthew chapter 24 they flee from him.

Last week I told you out of Leviticus 10:1-2 that somebody offered strange fire at the altar and the incense, and God killed him. The strange fire came from the strange man. You know, one of

the great jokes, and this is again, we can get into all this, I do not have time to get into it, one of the great jokes of the church and pastors today is when they try to put this passage, as I said, into the church age. Verse 1 tells us that someone is trying to get into heaven through some other way than Christ as the door, and they will teach that there is no other way to get to heaven, you cannot get around the door, you cannot get around Christ, and that sounds really good if you are just going to lift that out of the text. But that big biblical reference here, staying within the context, that biblical reference of somebody showing up and coming in another way will be one of the key studies in the Bible of the, here it comes, I know you are going to say, "Where did you get that at?" And I just go back to the Bible. I will give you the verse in a moment, to the devil. Once we are up in heaven at the wedding, guess who shows up? The devil shows up. You say, "What new doctrine is this?" Oh, it is one that you were playing your video games and missed. It is one that you were busy watching the ball game or doing this or fishing or hunting and missed. Oh, it is there, completely unknown today.

Before somebody says, "Well, that is crazy," you better just stop and look at your Bible before you make those kinds of statements, or we are going to find out who really is crazy, or at least shallow when it comes to the Word of God. Years ago, we used to take roller skating parties, remember those? Remember they used to have the limbo stick? They always play that song, you would be roller skating around and they would start the thing up here and then you would have to go under the stick. "Jack Be Nimble, Jack Be Quick, Jack Go Under Candlestick." And so they would put it up there and you would go underneath it, and then they would lower it a little bit, next time around, everybody would go down, and pretty soon it got to be like that, and the guy would say on the song, "How low can you go?"

I have always looked at that and thought to myself, that is the same kind of aspect of the Bible. How low, deep can you go with that book? How far down can you get into it? Or are you, to me, the limbo stick had to be about as high as that ceiling for me to get under it. But I watched some of those people get under that thing that was just like 12 inches off. You have got to contort your body and keep your balance and get under that thing. That is a young man's game. That is not an old man's game. I thought to myself, "Gee, that is exactly what you do with the Bible." The question is today, how low, when it comes to that Bible and it is down deep, how low can you go? Are you shallow up here? Are you one of those Christians that you can never lower the rod below, you know, 24 feet off the ground? Because that is what you have here. You have in your Bible, Matthew 22:8-13, you have us up at the wedding and somebody shows up without a wedding garment. I would like to see what they do with that. You know what they do with that? They do not bring that into their sermon because they do not know what to do with that. You have the wedding of the bride of Christ up in heaven and somebody shows up, read it, without a wedding garment. Guess where he is wound up? He is cast into hell. I wonder who that could be. Well, there is a key word there that tells you who exactly it is. I am not going to give it to you. Forget about yourself. Read it and study it for about 25 years and see if you can get it. Now, if you ask me on Thursday night, maybe I will give it to you. It depends on what kind of mood I am in. Completely unknown today, yet Matthew chapter 22 tells you that somebody does come up and get in around the door. And he says, here it comes, "a thief and a robber." The key word is in that verse. It tells you who it is.

SEC: The Real Christmas Story

Now, with all that in hand and heart and head, let us put a biblical context to all this. I told you that this is the real Christmas story. Turn over to me, if you will, Jeremiah chapter 10 for just a moment. I have heard many, many preachers, many, many people talk about the fact that Christmas has got so commercialized and it is such a mess. I have seen slogans and banners that said, "Put Christ back into Christmas." Well, I do not know how to tell you this, but Christ was never in Christmas to begin with. But okay, I am good.

I want you to see this here. What I am about to show you is American, European, worldwide, world understanding of Christmas. Now, we are going to get the biblical context and then I am going to tell you, it is okay. It is all right. Look at Jeremiah 10:1.

Jeremiah 10:1-5

Hear ye the word which the LORD speaketh unto you, O house of Israel:

Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.

For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe.

They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not.

They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good.

Now, most of us, you probably do not do this anymore, but when I was a kid growing up, that is exactly what we did. I can remember as a little kid, long treks in the woods, looking for the right tree. My dad with a big old axe, cutting that thing down, and then the fun part was dragging it out. One time my mom could not make it, so we had to tie her to the tree and drag her out, but we got it all done.

Now, look what happens here. Somebody goes in and cuts down a tree. This is a pine tree, fir tree. They deck it. "Deck the halls with boughs of holly." They deck it with silver and with gold. They fasten it with nails and with hammers that it move not. Then mom and dad get in a fight because it is not exactly where she wanted it to be. That is another memory I have growing up. Remember Sharon, the fight they used to get into over the tree? This is exactly what everybody is doing today at Christmas.

Let us go on. "They nail them with hammers that it moved not. They are upright as a palm tree." That is a key for you. "But speak not. They must needs to be borne." You have got to carry them around because they cannot go. "Be not afraid of them for they cannot do evil, neither also do they do good." So the idea of what we celebrate as Christmas today, let me tell you, it goes back to the Old Testament time in Jeremiah chapter 10 with the heathen.

Now let me explain how it worked back then. Then I am going to tell you, you are okay. You all look like you are sweating. There will be no confessional up here in the confessional booth. I did not finish yet. So do not worry about it. But here is how it worked. Notice he put "palm tree." You know why? Because the palm tree in the Bible, go to the book of Psalms, there is always a picture of the real tree and a picture of the millennial reign of Christ. It is likened to a palm tree. Do you not know that when Christ went into Jerusalem on the week before He was crucified, what did they put down on the ground for Him to walk on? Palm leaves, because they were looking for the millennium. See, so this is a counterfeit to that. This is a fir tree shaped like the universe. They go into the woods, they cut it down, they put it into the house.

Here is the way it worked. That is a counterfeit tree of life. The balls on it and the tinsel on it are a replica fruit of what is on the tree of life in the Garden of Eden. So the heathen got out and cut a tree, put it down, and then they put balls on it and decked it with gold and silver. The idea was that you went to sleep that night and then an eternal man from the north who lives forever. In Zechariah 2:6 it says, "the man from the north who says, 'Ho, ho.'" So for us it is all fun and games and we do not have anything to worry about it and all that stuff, but this is where it originates. Somebody would say what happened was while everybody went to bed, this man from the north would bring in the presents, a counterfeit of Matthew chapter 7 with the Holy Spirit of God giving good gifts, and puts them all around the tree. The tree when you go to bed at night is dead, and then in the morning it is decked with silver balls and all those things, and now it has come alive, and you now have a counterfeit tree of life.

Oh, oh, oh, do not forget this. It is shaped like this, a type of the universe. What did they always put at the top of that tree? A little winged angel. Angels do not have wings. That is the fifth cherub, and he had rule over the whole second heaven at one time.

Now, I do not care if you have a Christian tree. Notice we do not have one here. I understand what Paul said, "I become all things to all men." There are churches out there that will not have Christmas, they will not have Easter, they will not have any of those things. I do not care. I wish you a Merry Christmas. I am not one of these guys like the TV stations that say "Happy Holidays." I will put Christ in it, "Merry Christmas." But I understand that it got into the church with Constantine in 400 when he brought all the pagans in. He brings in the festival of Christians, Christmas, and also of Easter, Ashtoreth, a fertility goddess with their bunny rabbits and the Easter eggs, which are Egyptian, and all that stuff comes into the church. You will not find in Waldensian and Albigensian, anybody in the church age, the Huguenots, the Palacians, the Anabaptists, anybody who followed it.

Now, here it is today. Yes, we always have a, just so you know, we have a Christmas tree at our house. We did not put a real one up this year because Barb has got surgery here coming up in a week or two, and we did not want to have to deal with that tree. But we have a little one on the table there, about that tall. But we have a tree, it is upstairs. I stay in the fitting of it all. Our tree looks like it has got AIDS and leprosy. That is the ugliest tree you have ever seen in your life. Birds will not land in it. I put it out in the yard one time. Squirrels will not go up it. It is the ugliest tree you ever saw, but it is fitted. But it is a thing where I get it. I understand because I realize that if you take the real biblical stand against it, you never reach anybody. I do not care.

We went out and sang Christmas carols. I get it. I do not care. It is a thing where I understand in Acts chapter 21, Paul tells me exactly how as a Christian, I am to deal with things like this. So I follow that. For me, it all goes back to the Bible. As long as I know and understand what the bottom line is, I do not care. I will use whatever tools I can use to win somebody to Christ or get them to introduce them to the Lord. Acts chapter 21 shows you how exactly you do that. So you just follow it.

We do not have a Christmas service here. I had people call me. "Are you having a Christmas Eve service?" No. "Why not?" Well, my kids are bringing my presents over and I am not missing that. "Are you having an Easter service?" Yeah, we have a sunrise service. "Oh, what time?" 11 o'clock. And I have an Easter message. It is called "A Letter from Hell." You will enjoy it. You really will. See, I do not care. It is a thing where as long as I understand it, I am good with it. It does not cross over and mess up what I understand about the Bible. I understand the world that I live in and there are some things that I have to accept to deal with if I am going to be a witness. That does not mean I have to believe it. That is a thing where, you know, it is like the footprints in the sand. I do not care. I really do not. But now, you know, John chapter 10 is the real story of Christ coming into this world. If you want the true real Christmas story, here it is. "Silent Night, Holy Night." Here it is. "Joy to the World." Here it is. "Away in a Manger." There it is. "Angels We Have Heard on High." Airborne ranger jumping from the sky. I cannot finish that song. But anyway, it is a thing where I kind of slipped out. But anyway, it is a thing where, you know, it is okay. This is where it really is.

SEC: Breaking Down John 10:1-6

Now, I am going to break this chapter down for you. I want you to get this in your Bible. I have laid out all the things. I have defined everything. Now, I am going to show you in your Bible how you bracket these six verses out. Each one of these verses deals with something different, dealing with the second coming, tribulation, or the millennium. If you have a China marker or one of those red pens, I would do, I am talking about brackets like this on each side of the verses that I tell you to bracket. There are five of them. That way, and then we are going to write out on each one what we have the context here so you can break it all down and see it now that we have defined everything.

1.) The first brackets you are going to put, and I put them on both sides of verse 1, John 10:1. I would separate each one of these sections or verses individually from the other so you understand that they are each separate.

John 10:1

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

This will be the intro to this parable. In this verse, you will find He lays out where He is going with this story. It will show you that it is Christ coming to the nation of Israel. It gives you three key words: the door, the sheepfold, and a thief. So you want to bracket that out. This is the beginning of the introduction to our story.

2.) The next two verses you want to bracket would be verses 2 and 3.

John 10:2-3

But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

You want to segregate verses 2 and 3 from verse 1 and then the rest of the verses. So put brackets on either side of those two verses. Now this will be the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to the nation of Israel. This will be the true Christmas story.

Now we know that Christ was not born on December 25th. We know that. December 25th is the birthday in paganism as the birthday of the sun god. We know that the pagans back in the old days before Constantine made it Christ's birthday, they worshiped the birth of Baal on December 25th right around the winter solstice. So we know that that is not. Christ was born at the Feast of Tabernacles somewhere around September 23rd, 22nd, somewhere in there. We know that from the Bible. We do not have time to get into it this morning. Ask me on Thursday night. I will run you through it if you really want to.

Here is what you have. This is the first coming of Christ. He comes down through this door. He comes, leaves the third heaven down through the second heaven down to this earth. This is where He is born in a manger in Bethlehem. This marks the first coming of Christ. Again, I do not argue with people, and as long as I know, I do not really care, but Christmas is a hodgepodge of misinformation. Not only in the story itself like we have already seen, but in the way it is represented.

In your Bible, if you want to find the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, you will go to Luke chapter 2. You will find in Luke chapter 2, and this is where He is born in a manger. You will not find in Luke chapter 2 the wise men showing up. You will not find in Luke chapter 2 a star connected and leading them. The emphasis in Luke chapter 2 will be His birth in Bethlehem where He was prophesied to be born. It is dealing with Christ coming to the nation of Israel. The reason why the wise men do not come, you want to get this down, and the shepherds do come, is because He came as the shepherd to the nation of Israel.

Commonly you find Matthew chapter 2 connected to Luke chapter 2. On your Christmas cards and on Christmas messages and in Christmas carols and everything, there is a hodgepodge mixture of the two being mixed together. I do not care, but biblically speaking, doctrinally correct, Luke chapter 2 takes place at the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ in Bethlehem. Luke chapter 2 does. Matthew chapter 2 takes place at least two years, maybe three years later. You say, "How could you at least say that again, please?" In Luke chapter 2, He is in a manger. In Matthew chapter 2, He is in a house. In Luke chapter 2, He is a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes. In Matthew chapter 2, He is a young child. It is not the same.

Here, the wise men show up, guided by the star, which is a prediction out of the Old Testament in the book of Numbers, and here He shows up, the wise men show up, and this is after His birth,

and they bring Him three gifts: gold, myrrh, and frankincense. Each one of those gifts brought to Him in the house as a young child will represent the three offices that He holds: priest, prophet, and king. You see, it is all tied together.

So when you get into verse 2 and 3, and the door is open, and He comes down, we are talking about Him coming down to the nation of Israel. He is born in Bethlehem. He grows up. He becomes a carpenter's son. He starts His public ministry when He is 30 years old, and it comes in a place where all this in verse 2 is a picture of His earthly ministry. Then you know the story. He gets taken. He gets crucified, and He gets buried, and He rises again the third day.

Look what it says, verse 3, "To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." What is that a reference to? That is a reference of this whole first coming. He comes down. He is dead. He gets crucified. He rises again, and then Ephesians 4:8-13 and Matthew 27:52-53 tells us that He leads the inhabitants of Abraham's bosom out. He leads captivity captive. That is what it says. "He calls his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." So He comes down through that door, has His public ministry, dies crucified, buried, rose again the third day, and then He raises up Abraham's bosom, and He leads them out. That is what you have in verse 2 and 3. It is just that simple.

You want to remember that the Bible tells us in Hebrews 2:14 that up to this point when Christ came into the world that the devil has the keys to death and hell. That is why no man could resurrect himself. He had the key to death and hell. You are told that when Christ went down and died and He resurrected Himself, Revelation 1:18 tells us that after the resurrection, He has the keys of death and hell. This is why in the narrative of your Bible, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, people may call Him Lord, but the narrative of the Bible, the Holy Spirit of God, never calls Christ Lord after the resurrection. Trained eye. Why? Of course, He defeated the devil and now He has the keys to death and hell. So He goes down and unlocks those gates to Abraham's bosom and verse 3 says He leads them out. See how easy that is?

3.) Now, let us look at the next verse, verse 4.

John 10:4

And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

Now you want to put brackets on the other side of verse 4. So we have brackets around verse 1, brackets around verse 2 and 3, and now we have a bracket around verse 4. Now here is what you have, nothing to do with the church age. What He does here is what He does many, many times in the Bible if you are paying attention. He jumps from the first coming of Christ, verses 2 and 3, right over the church age, never mentions it because of Romans chapter 16, and brings us right into the tribulation period. So He skips over the church age, and the reason He does that is because you are told the church age is a mystery and Romans chapter 16 says it is not revealed until Paul. So He does not deal with it at all. He jumps right from the first coming into the second coming.

"And when he putteth forth his own sheep," these sheep will be found in Matthew chapter 22, Matthew chapter 24, Matthew chapter 25, also in Revelation chapter 7 and Revelation chapter 14. These will be the 144,000 Jews that go forth and preach the everlasting gospel in Revelation 14:6 before the Antichrist catches up with them. Notice it says they know His voice. You will find that in Revelation chapter 11 and other places in the Old Testament of the book of Malachi with the two witnesses, Moses and Elijah. Moses and Elijah in the Old Testament are the two men who represent the voice of God. Moses represents the law of God. Elijah represents the prophets of God, and that is the voice of God in the Old Testament wound up in the law and the prophets. Now you see how easy that is? No Greek, no Hebrew, no education above the sixth grade, just following the Bible that God gave you, and every piece of this, not somebody up here saying, "Well, I think it means this," or "What do you think it means?" Running it back to the Bible and allowing the Bible to define it for you. That is what you have to do.

4.) Now our fourth bracket will be verse 5, and you want to bracket verse 5. So now we have a bracket around verse 1, 2 and 3, verse 4, and now we are going to bracket independently verse 5.

John 10:5

And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

The stranger here, now we know from my defining it for you, will be the Antichrist, and we are right smack dab in the middle of the tribulation period, certainly not the church age. Of course, if you really want to study this out, you want to go to Matthew 24:15, Daniel chapter 8, Daniel chapter 11, 2 Thessalonians 2:4. What you find out by putting all those verses together is that when the Antichrist shows up, the first three and a half years anyhow, he makes an alliance with the nation of Israel and brings in a false peace and safety. Then at the middle of the tribulation period, at the three and a half year mark, and this is where our verses that I just gave you come into play, he does this. He goes into the temple, he sits down on the throne in the temple and declares himself to be God. This is called in your Bible the abomination of desolation.

When he does that, God working all the circumstances around now reveals himself to the nation of Israel. They see him who what they are as the idle shepherd, and the Bible says in Matthew 24:16, in the same context of the abomination of desolation, they flee Jerusalem. Just like it says in verse 5 and verse 4 and 3, they flee from him, and they get taken out. Of course, he tries to hunt them down, kill them all. They get some surrounded down in the valley of Armageddon, and God takes them out.

All this is dealing with here, you know, all this is dealing with here as a parable of God dealing with His people Israel, not the church. It is dealing with the first coming. It is dealing with them crucifying Him and Him leading out captivity captive of Abraham, and then coming back down and sending His own people out in the tribulation period, and they see the Antichrist and they flee from him because they do not know his voice because the voice of God is here in Moses and Elijah. This is all dealing with the restoration of the nation of Israel, which you will find the two great chapters of the New Testament that Paul writes about will be Romans chapter 9. In Romans chapter 9, you find why God sent them the parables, and it deals with their rejection of what they

go through. So you find that in Romans chapter 9. In Romans chapter 11, it deals with the restoration of the nation of Israel.

Notice how the Holy Spirit of God under Paul's teaching is different than what we just read in Matthew. If you have a trained eye, you know anything about your Bible, you know that the book of Romans chapter 9 deals with Israel, chapter 11 deals with them being restored, but oh, whoa, whoa, chapter 10 deals with the church and Gentiles getting saved. You see what he did? He showed you in chapter 9 in Romans why they got messed up. He showed you in chapter 10 why it went to the Gentiles, and he shows you in chapter 11 that they are going to be restored. He did not do that in Matthew. From Matthew he went from the first coming right into the tribulation and skipped right over the church age. Why? Because that revelation was reserved for Paul, Romans chapter 16. See how easy it all is, folks? It is just that simple.

SEC: The Importance of Rightly Dividing the Word

Lessons on things like this, this parable will be invaluable to the Bible student. Now if you are just somebody out there and you care one way or the other, you have been looking at your watch and waiting to get out of here, I got you. I understand. I know it is okay. Merry Christmas. Happy Hanukkah. I get it. But if you are a Bible student, if you have dedicated your life to be a student of the Word of God, it is things like this that will unlock the Bible for you in so many different ways. You may not see it. You may not understand it. You have got about 30 studies that you can take out of what I have given you this morning. It is endless. You could go on forever and ever and ever just unlocking the things that I gave you the keys to.

I am sure Thursday night some of you will have some good questions about some of this stuff, and I will take time to answer it and show you the best I can. I did not have time to do it this morning. But you are here to learn and I am here to teach you, and I am not going to get up here and just gloss over something because it may take me a lot of work to put it all together. No, no. We are here to learn, and in this church there are a number of Bible students who are fed up with the typical churches that just play around with the Bible. You want to learn the Word of God, and based on your desire, it is my obligation to teach you the Word of God and to give you what you need. So when you look at something like this today, they are invaluable for a number of reasons.

First of all, it will show you and give you an example of how you rightly divide the Word of Truth. I cannot emphasize that enough. What we did today is simply take a passage, define it, give you the key finger, and then what did I do? Divided it out for you rightly. Nothing in the church age, no allegorical applications to it, no spiritual stuff. It is just simply based Bible doctrine, and look what comes out of that. You learned about what history really is about Christmas and Easter, and I am not taking that away from anybody. I, you know, enjoy it. It is okay. I am not a Jehovah's Witness where I do not salute the flag and I do not represent holidays. They have got to have a boring life. No Christmas presents, man, I do not want that church at all. But it is a thing where I want you to know. We live in a world where we are going to have to become all things to all men, but there is a limit to that, and as I told you, we have got to find a model for that, Acts chapter 21. Everything is here. I gave you everything you need today out of this one little passage to show how you take every aspect of this and you simply rightly divide it.

The second thing you learn from it is the fact that, and this is the greatest thing I think, is it shows you that you do not need anything but the Bible itself. You do not need anything. You do not need a doctor's degree in theology. You do not need the Greek. You do not need the Hebrew. God gave you an English Bible to an English-speaking people, and that is all you need. It will unlock itself that you do not have to pay 50, 60, 70, 100,000 dollars for some Bible professor to unlock it for you, which he does not have the keys. The keys are in the book. That is the greatest single thing that you can learn out of something like this before we even get to the studies. That it is beyond the world's imagination. No man can stand in judgment of the Word of God and tell you this is what he really meant. I do not stand in judgment of this book. I stand this book judging me, and then we lay it out through the Holy Spirit of God.

I will show you how all this is separated from Paul's book. You have to see the difference between what God gives to the nation of Israel and He gives to the church. The Bible talks about seven mysteries given to the church, but there are 12 mysteries given to the nation of Israel, the parables. The Bible talks about the kingdom of God which the church is born into, but it talks about the kingdom of heaven that is given to the nation of Israel. It talks about Paul unlocking the keys of the church age to the Gentiles, and it talks about Peter having the keys to unlock the gospel of the kingdom to the nation of Israel, and it is a thing where you have to see the difference. Everything we do here, every time we are together, whether it is a Sunday morning or Bible study, and I know this is not a preaching message today, what was supposed to do just pass over the first story. No, no. We have to look at it so you leave here today with somewhat of a foundational understanding of it, and then we can put the pieces together later.

Now this was the first segment. I have maybe two or maybe two more out of this story that we will get into next week, and we are going to lay this whole thing out and you will fully understand it. Now my advice to you is, get into your notebooks before next Sunday, get it into your Bible as much as I have given you at this point in time. If you have questions about things, write them down and bring them Thursday night. Be diligent about it, and we will answer whatever questions you have. I want you to thoroughly understand it as a Bible student, and we will go from there. So next week we will continue with this story and we will put it all together.

Let us have a word of prayer. Do not forget to sign up for New Year's Eve. Jamie will be down here with the paper, and sign up for the gal, Dylan and Mason's mom, for this coming Wednesday. Let us have a word of prayer and we will be dismissed. Father, we do thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You. Thank You for today. Thank You for the wealth of information that You have.