

## HOW EXCLUSIVE IS THE CHURCH? PART 4: HERE A LITTLE, THERE A LITTLE

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Last week we established that the whole Bible was written for the New Testament church, that it was founded on the apostles, the prophets, and Jesus Christ as the Chief Corner Stone. We saw scriptures that indicate the prophecies are written (1) for fulfillment in the church, and (2) for fulfillment in physical Israel. Then we discussed the prophetic and parabolic symbols for the church and its members as defined by the Bible, such terms as "City of God," "Zion," "Heavenly Jerusalem," "Mother," "Bride," "Living Stones," "Temple," "Building," "Body," etc., refer to the church and its members. We also saw a few examples of Old Testament references that obviously apply to the church today, such as the failure of the ministry in Ezekiel 34 and Malachi 1.

Now let's test the ice. Is it safe to walk around the Bible on it in applying these symbols of the church from the Old Testament prophecies to current conditions in the church? Can we jump back and forth from the Old Testament to the New Testament? Can we jump from book to book in the Old Testament? From chapter to chapter? From verse to verse? Will the ice break and we fall into the water if we attempt to do it that way, or must we keep everything absolutely in the context in which it is found, and not deviate from that whatsoever?

As a building contractor in Alaska I observed a phenomenon that most of you down here would not understand, and that is, they have perma-frost &endash ice which never melts beneath the surface. In the summer in some areas the sun warms the surface, and four or five or six feet down the ice from that winter thaws, but the summer isn't long enough to melt the ice that is farther down. When you're building roads or houses up there, it's very very hard to get a solid foundation, and very frequently we'll see roads that have what we call "frost heaves," and it gets so bouncy that it can ruin your car, or you could fall off the road. Houses have the same problem. In some areas the frost in the winter goes down four feet, or even more, especially if you drive over the area, and it can drive it down ten or twelve feet. If you do not dig the foundation of your house below that frostline, then in springtime when the temperature changes, the frost begins to heave as the ice contracts and expands, from winter to summer and from summer to winter, and your house "walks," as they call it. Over a period of time the floors settle in one direction, and in another direction, and you feel like you're drunk when you're stone sober, walking through the house. Given enough time many houses simply fall apart because the foundation keeps shifting. It is hard to **trust** the foundation, in other words. It fails fairly frequently. Those inexperienced in building in Alaska often make ignorant mistakes. They are uneducated, and their foundations are unstable. Therefore there are lots of lawsuits.

Now let's turn to 2nd Peter 3 and ask the question, "How much danger is there wresting the scriptures out of context and destroying the meaning?" Peter addressed this. In 2nd Peter 3 he is talking about Paul, and in verse 15 he called him "our beloved brother Paul." In verse 16 he said:

2 Peter 3.16 - As also in all his [Paul's] epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things **hard** to be understood.

God did not write them, or cause Paul to write them all in very easy form.

VI6 -. . . which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest [twist], as they do also the other scriptures unto their own destruction.

"Other scriptures" would of course be the Old Testament. But Peter, by this time, was considering some of Paul's writing to be on the same par with Scripture, and ultimately they were canonized as Scripture. Peter already recognized the value of them at **this** point. But those who are **unlearned** and unstable tend to wrest these things. So there is that possibility. Who does this though? It's the unlearned and the unstable. When we're unlearned and do not understand the principles of God, the purpose of God, the plan of God, how He has set it up, the meaning of the Holy Days and so forth so that we understand the order of the resurrections, we don't have a skeleton to hang things on. Without that understanding of the purpose and plan of God, it's so easy to get off in left field somewhere. Many many religions on this earth which claim to be Christian aren't Christian at all because they don't understand the Bible. They don't understand the framework, the skeleton. They are unlearned, and therefore unstable, and they come to the wrong conclusions.

Let's go to 2nd Peter 1 and verse 20.

2 Peter 1.20 - Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private *origination* [as it should be, opposed to *interpretation*]. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

So **God** wrote the Bible. God wrote it in a certain fashion, in a certain way, and He had very good reasons for writing it the way that He did. He inspired those men to write it exactly as it is written. Psalm 12, verse 6 states that the Scripture is purified seven times.

Psalm 12.6 - The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

Every word, every detail was written exactly as God wanted it. It was processed over and over and over again seven times to be sure there were no impurities, that there were no contradictions, that every thing fit His plan, His purpose, and His design. There have been some minor translation errors since, but as it was originally conceived and written by the prophets, it was absolutely perfect and solid in every way. Now I say "minor" translation errors since, because when you consider the whole plan of God and the purpose of man, and the resurrections and so on, in **comparison** to obtaining the message out of the Bible, these are fairly minor and can be answered by going back into original text. And just like this one here in 2nd Peter 1 where it says "private interpretation," many have \_\_\_?\_\_\_ [Typist's Note: word here is inaudible] ... on to that and say you can't as an individual interpret the Bible. But they didn't understand that he's talking about the **origin** of the Bible here, as the context clearly points out that it came from God, as the next verse shows. So it wasn't a matter of interpretation, but a matter of origin.

Now, as the New Testament church was **built** upon the prophets, along with Christ and the apostles, **everything in them** somehow impacts the end-time church, as well as physical Israel, whether directly or indirectly. In some **way** they have to fit that picture. Why? Because they are part of the **foundation** of the New Testament church, and Christ would **not** put anything in the foundation that did not have meaning for the church **erected** on that foundation, whether **we** understand it yet or not. It has to fit. You can't have a bad foundation, or bad ingredients in the foundation, nor can it be on a bad area like we have building over ice in Alaska and causing problems as a result of the foundation not being solid. So I think I'm safe in saying that everything **back there** has impact one way or another on the church, because it is in the foundation of the church.

Now, can we jump from book to book, back and forth from Old to New? Let's go to Isaiah chapter 28. This one was brought up to me as saying that everything has to be taken in context for the following reasons that we will see. Let's read verse 9 to begin with.

Isaiah 28.9 - Whom shall he teach knowledge" and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. 10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.

Someone told me that "taken in context". . . (because these people who were seeing things "precept upon precept" and "line upon line" were rebellious against God) , . . that that does not apply to us, that we can understand **everything** in its context, and we don't skip around through the Bible to put together a story. Now is that so? Are we wresting Scripture to follow the precepts for understanding, or the formula for understanding that is here in Isaiah 28, verses 9 and 10, and again down in verse 13?

Let's take the context of Isaiah 28 a little bit first, beginning in verse 1.

Isaiah 28.1 - Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower.

Now whom is this talking about? We touched on the book of Hosea I think last week, showing that "Ephraim" is also a symbol of the church, and that the mother church there was a harlot, and that the daughters also received some censure from God, and I referred to it as "the daughters of Zion," or the splits, the branches of the church that we have today. I won't further discuss that until we get a little further on in this sermon, and I think it will become very very clear to you that Ephraim does have something to do with the church. So this chapter of Isaiah 28 does certainly apply to physical Israel and the things that will happen to Israel, but it also applies to the church. We do have some people who are having wild parties on wine. Wine is a symbol of doctrine, and they have gotten very drunk on wine, on false doctrine.

Isaiah 28.1 - Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower. Look at Worldwide Church of God today. Is not a flower fading there?

VI -... which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine! 2 Behold, the LORD has a mighty and strong one, which is a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.

Well, God says He will destroy.

V3 - The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet.

That tells you the fate of those who get drunk on the wine of false doctrine.

V4 - And the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer; which when he that looks upon it sees, while it is yet in his hand he eats it up.

They think they have something, and suddenly it's going to disappear. It's going to be gone.

V5 - In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the **residue** of his people.

So the majority of the church is going to fade, disappear; but God will raise up a residue of His people, and

He will be a crown of glory to them.

V6 - And for a spirit of judgment to him that sits in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.

He will sit in judgment of those who sit in judgment of others, saying that they are unrighteous because they won't go with the new doctrines, which are actually **old** doctrines of paganism, not new.

V7 - But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of **the way**.

Paul refers to this way of life as "a **way** of life."

V7 - The priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of **the way** through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. 8 For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.

Now that reminds you of Malachi 1 doesn't it, that we read last week?

V9 - Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine?

In Hebrews 5 Paul said that when we **should** already be weaned from the elementary principles, we're still yet carnal.

VI0 - For precept *has been* . . .

The proper translation here in verse 10 is "**has been**."

VI0 - For precept has been upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.

VI1 - For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. 12 To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith you may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.

Those who understand are saying "the time of refreshing," "the time of uniting," "the time of God putting the church back together," and "the return of Christ". . . the time is very soon. But some don't believe that. They think it's still twenty or thirty or a hundred years off, and that "the time of refreshing" isn't near.

VI3 - But the word of the LORD **was** unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little, that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

That has happened, hasn't it? People that we thought had the truth years and years ago, didn't understand. They picked up a little bit here, and a little bit there, and they **lost** the overall meaning. Now they've stumbled. They're gone.

VI4 - Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, you scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem.

It's talking about those leaders who have stumbled and gone away.

VI5 - Because you have said, We have made a covenant with death,. . .

We've got this all figured out. We're in agreement. We know that we're going to be saved.

VI6 - Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, **I** lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believes shall not make haste.

We saw last week that Christ is the Head, the Corner Stone of the church.

VI7 - Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet.

He's beginning to talk here probably about the Two Witnesses, because they hold the plummet, and they will judge between those who are obedient and have true doctrine, and those who do not, a little later on.

So, yes I will agree that the Bible was written in such a way that people could be snared, they could be taken, they could be deceived, and there's a reason for that. If they were not concluded in unbelief, as Romans 11 points out, God would have to destroy them. He would have no choice, because they understood the truth and **rebelled** against it. But those who did not really understand it in the first place, perhaps they were tares, perhaps they were like Judas who came in and never did understand, but then led astray. They are not necessarily lost if they were not truly converted, but they are blinded.

Now let's go to Matthew 13, and verse 10, a sister scripture to this one of Isaiah 28. Christ had been talking to the multitudes and so on, and He gave them a parable about how some would be among thorns, others would be on good ground, others on stony places, and so.

Matthew 13.10 - And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speak you unto them in parables?

Now the religious line from the Protestants is that He spoke in parables and used little earthy agricultural things so that they might understand. It flies right in the face of what He says right here.

VI1 - He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto **you** to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. 12 For whosoever has, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever has not, from him shall be taken away even that he has. 13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

And then He quotes what we just read in Isaiah.

VI4 - And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which says, By hearing you shall hear; and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see, and shall not perceive: 15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

They don't **want** that. They want to live **their** way, **do** it their way, **think** their way.

VI6 - But **blessed** are **your** eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.

Now this is interesting in verse 17.

VI7 - For verily [truly] I say unto you, That many prophets **and righteous men** have desired to see those things which **you** see, and have **not** seen them; and to **hear** those things which **you** hear; and have not heard them.

Those prophets and those righteous men had the Old Testament, but it was written in such a way that even the prophets themselves couldn't understand what this was all about. Daniel was told to "**shut up**" his own prophecy; otherwise shut up, so that he couldn't understand it. So He has a reason in this all the way through.

Now the New Testament church was beginning to understand. Christ was explaining to the disciples what the purpose was and where the power would be henceforth. Richard gave a different explanation of these parables in Matthew 13, different from what churchianity and even **we** could grasp. We couldn't quite grasp the mustard tree. I couldn't for years. It says "it's big," and yet a mustard tree isn't big. I had never really taken time to study it out. It isn't a tree at all, and he showed that Worldwide grew into something that God did not intend to begin with. It overshot its bounds and went into areas that it doesn't belong in, and it's certainly there today. Now **we** can see that. Somebody out in the world can't understand that, because they don't know what Worldwide even is. How can they understand that that applies to the church when they don't even recognize the church? See how exclusive the church is in understanding the Bible? It's hard to grasp, but God has taken the weak and the base of this world and given us the truth, and we can understand what these prophecies are talking about, and these parables, and the world hasn't a clue. What an **incredible** thing it is for us. I really hope we're thankful and don't take for granted the knowledge that we have and let it slip away.

Let's go to Deuteronomy 25.1 want to see if you can interpret this scripture, if you can give me the meaning of it. First of all, the context here is various statutes, various ordinances, various laws that God set forth. In the midst of these in verse 4 it says:

Deuteronomy 25.4 - You shall not muzzle the ox when he treads out the corn.

What does that mean? If you're a Bible illiterate, and you're just learning the Bible, and you go back to Deuteronomy 25 and verse 4 and you read this, what does it mean to you? Well, I suppose if you're in agricultural land, it would mean **exactly** what it says, that you're not to muzzle the ox that treads out the corn, because the ox, in order to keep going round and round in grinding the corn, needs to eat. So don't put a muzzle on him so he can't reach down and get a slobbery mouthful once in a while and chew it as he walks, which those, I suppose, some of them did; but God says a laborer is worthy of his hire. That's the principle here.

Now is this for the church? It doesn't sound like it, does it? Let's go to 1st Timothy 5. We're going to see a principle here in action. Paul is talking in this chapter about church administration, telling Timothy **how** to oversee the church, **how** to be a minister, **how** to oversee other ministers. In verse 16 he says:

1 Timothy 5.16- If any man or woman that believes have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged, that it may relieve them that are widows indeed. 17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of **double** honor, **especially** they who labor in the word and doctrine.

Now **how** does he make this decision on New-Testament-salary administration in the church? Where does he draw it from? From some complete context out of the Old Testament? No. He picks one little verse out of the **middle** of a bunch of laws and ordinances and applies it to the New Testament church administration. Amazing, isn't it?

1 Timothy 5.18- For the scripture says, You shall not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.

Is that "here a little, there a little"? Is that picking something out of context and taking it forward as a principle to be used somewhere else? Yes, it is.

Let's go now to 1 st Corinthians 9, just in case you think that Paul might have goofed there and said the wrong thing.

1 Corinthians 9.9 - For it is written in the law of Moses, You shall not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treads out the corn. Does God take care for oxen?

Here he's talking about money again, in the New Testament church, in the context.

V10 - Or says he it **altogether** for **our** sakes? For **our sakes**, no doubt **this is written**.

But God did not necessarily **write** that for physical Israel beyond a certain point. It was a physical law to be kept in their society, but Paul says this was written for **our sakes**. It even says "**altogether**" for our sakes. But the meaning is even **greater** for the New Testament church than it was for ancient physical Israel, because it's a spiritual principle that carries through forever. A startling statement.

Now let's go to Acts 1. Let's see another example. We're testing the \_? \_ [Typist Note: the word her is inaudible] here to see if you can walk around the Bible on this principle. Here the context is talking about Judas Iscariot who hung himself. Let's pick it up in verse 17.

Acts 1.17 - For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. 18 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels [guts] gushed out. 19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.

Notice verse 20.

V20 - For it is **written** in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate; and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.

So Paul used the Psalms to talk about Judas, and said *This applies to Judas*. Now let's go back to the Psalms and read them. Go to Psalm 69.25. He quotes what Paul had just discussed here, but if you look back and forth through this context, it says nothing about Judas. It says nothing about purchasing a field. It shows nothing here about him betraying Christ. This is a Psalm about "Save me, O God," &ndash a Psalm of David, it says in my margin, This is something David wrote about himself and his troubles, about the deep mire he sunk into (verse 2), and how he had become a stranger to his brethren, and an alien unto his mother's children, (verse 8), and running for his life from Saul. He had troubles of all kinds.

Psalm 69.17 - Reproach has broken **my** heart; and **I** am full of heaviness.

V21 - They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

He's talking about his enemies here, nothing that would show about Judas Iscariot. He talks about his enemies, and in verse 25 he says:

V25 - Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.

There is nothing about that at all, and yet in the New Testament Paul applied it to the New Testament church, applied it to Judas, and said, "This fits." Out of context, but the principle applied. The word of God is a living word -- a principle applied here, and a principle applied there, apart from context, because it is a true principle.

Let's go to Psalm 109. This is the other one that Luke was quoting there in Acts 1.

Psalm 109.8 - Let his days be few; and let another take his office.

Well, that happened to Judas. He killed himself. Died. Another took his office. But that isn't what the context of Psalm 109 is about. Here again it is a psalm of David, and talking about his adversaries, and how he wants them destroyed, and so on and on and on. It doesn't have anything to do with Judas, at least on the surface, or in the context. But taken out, a verse here, a verse there, Luke says, *Yes. It does apply.*

Now let's go to Romans 9. This one is amazing. Let's pick it up and examine first of all verses 25 through 33. Nine verses here, and I want to show you how Paul took a whole menage of scriptures and put them together.

Romans 9.25 - I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

He's quoting Hosea 2.23.

Hosea 2.23 - I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, You are my people; and they shall say, You are my God.

Well that context back in Hosea is talking about Hosea marrying the harlot, about his daughters, about ostensibly physical Israel and Ephraim, and what happens to her in the book of Hosea, and yet Paul applies it to the **church** &ndash; to the New Testament church he was writing to in Rome. Now in the context, out of Hosea, Paul took **half** of one verse, and it is out of a **Millennial** prophecy that is interpolated into the story there in Hosea, if you go back and read it. Let's go back to Hosea 2. He quoted from verse 23, but if you go back a few verses you will find that he is talking here about God beginning to bless Israel after she's been destroyed.

Hosea 2.16 - And it shall be at that day [the Millennium], says the LORD, that you shall call me Ishi [my Husband]; and shall call me no more Baali.

He talks about the peace and the good conditions in the Millennium. I don't want to read it all for sake of time, but you can take more time if you want to establish that.

Now Paul took half a verse out of that Millennial prophecy and brought it forward to the people of the church in Rome.

Now go again to Romans 9 and verse 26.

Romans 9.26 - And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, You are **not** my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.

Here he quotes Hosea 1 and verse 10.

Hosea 1.10- Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, You are not my people; there it shall be said unto them, You are the sons of the living God.

He breaks in the **middle** of a verse in Hosea and only quotes the last half. He doesn't use the context at all in Hosea to explain what he's talking about to the Romans, he just quotes the last half of a verse. Here again we have another Millennial setting. It's referring to the Millennium on a physical level with Israel, and yet he applies it to the church before the Millennium even begins. Interesting.

Now go to Romans 9.27.



Romans 9.27 - Isaiah also cried concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a **remnant** shall be saved.

He's quoting Isaiah 10.22.

Isaiah 10.22 - For though your people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return.

He takes the first half of one verse. If you go back to Isaiah 10, the context is of the destruction the Assyrian wreaks on Israel, and how a remnant of Israel will remain, and yet Paul applies that to the New Testament church. Do we begin to see a pattern here, that we can take these Old Testament prophecies about the destruction of physical Israel and apply them to the destruction of the church today, that these prophecies apply today, and that we can do it with half a verse here, half a verse there, a whole verse somewhere else taken right out of the context of the Old Testament? Amazing, isn't it? And he just doesn't do it once in a while. Go down to verse 28.

Romans 9.28 - Because a **short work** will the Lord make upon the earth.

Now where he quoted this from is a little bit obscure, and yet it's a verse that has a lot of interest for you and me, because we're right here at the end of the work that God is doing on the earth, and Paul says it will be cut short. Now where is his authority for that? I think it's interesting that my margin gave me Isaiah 28, verse 22 and Isaiah chapter 10, verse 23. A commentary said he got it from Isaiah 65.8, 9, 11, and 15. Yet you can go back and read those, and it doesn't say it in so many words. It says that God will finish His work, that He will do these things that He promised He would do, but there's nothing I could find in those that indicated that it would be short.

Isaiah 28.22 - Now therefore be you not mockers, lest your hands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth.

Isaiah 10.23 - For the Lord GOD of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land.

Isaiah 65.8 - Thus says the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one says, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all. 9 And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and my elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.

VI1 - But you are they that forsake the LORD, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink offering unto that number.

VI5 - And you shall leave your shame for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord GOD shall slay you, and call his servants by another name.

Now I did find Proverbs 10.27 where there's a general principle: "The fear of the Lord prolongs days; but the years of the wicked shall be shortened." That's a proverb. That's a saying about people who are wicked, that their lives are liable to be cut short because of the sins that they're committed, but is it a statement that the work, the purpose of God, the six thousand years will be cut short? Maybe that's a stretch. Now maybe Paul had access to Matthew 24.22 by this time. Perhaps the gospels were written, where it says: "But for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened." So maybe he had heard that quote from Christ. It wouldn't surprise me at all. He had been taught by Christ in the desert, and he certainly had had discourse with the apostles, and I'm sure that if Christ had said "I'll cut it short," their ears picked up on that and they passed that one along because it's one of those things you like to hear. So maybe that's where he got it, but it's

interesting that he mixes Old Testament prophecies in this one chapter together with New Testament sayings, to apply to the church. He puts them all together. Wads them up together.

Let's go to Romans 9 and verse 29. Here's another, the fifth example he uses in this short passage of nine verses.

Romans 9.29 - Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

Here he's quoting Isaiah 1 and verse 9. Ironically I hadn't researched this at that point, but I quoted Isaiah 1.9 to you I think in my second sermon in this series, which says: "Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah," and I applied it to the church. Perhaps there were those who were skeptical that I could do that. And yet since then I found that Paul used the **exact same verse** and applied it to the New Testament church. So I feel good about that one now. Let's continue.

Romans 9.32 - They stumbled at that stumblingstone.

This was quoted from apparently Luke 2.34; but nothing in the Old Testament about it.

Luke 2.34 - Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against.

He quotes Christ here, who in turn was quoting Isaiah, and mixes New Testament instructions with Old Testament instructions in concocting a message to the Romans about the church. Christ's words and Isaiah's words he put together, and we saw that one back in Isaiah 28 where Christ is the Foundation Stone. So that shows me that Isaiah 28 is referring to today, not just to physical Israel.

Isaiah 28.16 - Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believes shall not make haste.

Let's go to verse 33 in Romans chapter 9.

Romans 9.33 - Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believes on him shall not be ashamed.

Here he's quoting Isaiah 8, verse 14.

Now if we were to go back to Isaiah 8 we would find the context there speaking of a confederacy, or a conspiracy, against Israel led by Assyria. Let's go back there and see this one. I'm not turning to all of them for sake of time, but let's go back to Isaiah 8 and just see the context to show you what I'm talking about. Here in verse 9 God throws out a challenge.

Isaiah 8.9 - Associate yourselves, O you people,. . . and I'll break you in pieces [paraphrasing here].

VI0 - Take counsel together, And it shall come to nought; Speak the word, and it shall not stand; for God is with us. 11 For the LORD spoke thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people [those who had departed from God, or the pagans around him. Either one, I suppose] saying, 12 Say you not, A conspiracy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A conspiracy; neither fear you their fear, nor be afraid. 13 Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let **him** be your fear, and let **him** be your dread.

A lot of people spend great hours of their time talking about the New World Order and looking into it, and the nation of Islam, and all these things that could be the King of the South. They spend many many hours looking at that. God says *Don't worry about it. It's there. It's going to happen. The Beast is rising. But don't fear that. **Fear God.** Let Him be your dread. He's the One that can destroy soul **and** body.* These people want to destroy your body. Big deal. It's going to die anyway.

VI4 - And **he** shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Jesus Christ became a snare to the physical Judah, didn't He? They rejected Him. They turned from Him, and His true message has become a snare and a gin against the church today, because they rejected the message of Christ, accepted the **person** of Christ, and therefore are no longer God's people, because they are in harlotry to paganism. Pretty plain here that there would be a conspiracy against God's people.

VI5 - And many among them shall stumble and fall.

Does that remind you of Daniel where it says some of those of understanding will fall? That's an end-time prophecy for sure, sealed up till the end.

VI5 - . . . and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

This sounds like Isaiah 28.

VI6 - Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. 17 And I will wait upon the LORD, that hides his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.

I won't worry about what the conspiracy is, either in the world against physical Israel, or in the church against spiritual Israel, because both are happening. The church is a little ahead of the world. The conspiracy here has already reached great height, and great destruction has been done in the church. This physical conspiracy in the world is going to happen to the physical people of Israel pretty soon. But Paul brought this forward in Romans to talk about the church. It's not just the conspiracy of the New World Order or of the Beast, or how the final formation is, but it's a conspiracy within the church, and it's about the Assyrian. So therefore those who led the conspiracy in the church can be symbolized by the Assyrian, as well as the Egyptian and the Babylonian. It all comes forward to the church.

So seven times in nine verses Paul pulls one verse, or a half a verse out of its context and wads it together with other pieces of verses to make his point to the Roman church. And that isn't all. In this same Romans 9 Paul quotes in verse 4: Exodus 4.22; 1 Samuel 4.21; and Genesis 7.22.

Romans 9.4 - Who are Israelites; to whom pertains the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises.

Exodus 4.22 - And you shall say unto Pharaoh, Thus says the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn.

1 Samuel 4.21 - And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband.

Genesis 7.22 - All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died.

He only takes a couple of words from each of those passages. He only takes a couple of **words**, and brings them forward. He takes several verses, a couple of words out of them, brings them forward and puts them in **one** verse in his letter to the Romans. If that's not "here a little, there a little, line upon line," and even *word upon word* Paul takes out [of context].

In verse 7 he quotes Genesis 21.12, and out of Genesis 21.12 he only takes a short phrase. Now you can follow along in Romans, because you can pick this out.

Romans 9.7 - Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall your seed be called.

Genesis 21.12- And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in your sight because of the lad, and because of your bondwoman; in all that Sarah has said unto you, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall your seed be called.

In verse 9 he quotes part of Genesis 18.10. He takes it right out of its context and brings it up here. Romans 9.9 - For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

Genesis 18.10 - And he said, I will certainly return unto you according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah your wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him.

In verse 10 he quotes Genesis 25.21

Romans 9.10 - And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac.

Genesis 25.21 - And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

In verse 12 he quotes from Genesis 25.23.

Romans 9.12 - It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

Genesis 25.23 - And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in your womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

In verse 13 he quotes from Malachi 1.2,3 about Esau.

Romans 9.13 - As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

Malachi 1.2-1 have loved you, says the LORD. Yet you say, Wherein have you loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? Says the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, 3 And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.

Then you go to verse 15. Here he quotes from Exodus 33.19.

Romans 9.15 - For he said to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

Exodus 33.19 - And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

Then you go to verse 17. Here he quotes Exodus 9.16.

Romans 9.17- For the scripture says unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

Exodus 9.16 - And in very deed for this cause have I raised you up, for to show in you my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.

In verse 20 he makes two quotes here from Isaiah 29.16 and Isaiah 45.9.

Romans 9.20 - Nay but, O man, who are you that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why have you made me thus?

Isaiah 29.16 - Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? Or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?

Isaiah 45.9 - Woe unto him that strives with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioned it, What make you? Or your work, He has no hands?

In verse 21 he refers to a totally different prophet &endash Jeremiah, and he quotes Jeremiah 18.6.

Romans 9.21 - Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Jeremiah 18.6 - O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? Says the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.

So here, about ten more words, phrases and verses, lifted out of their original context, and again melded together to prove Paul's point. "Here a little, there a little, line upon line, precept upon precept." If you understand, I reiterate, the plan and the purpose of God, you can fit **many** scriptures together to pick up the meaning, because you already understand the skeleton they fit on. If you don't understand that, then these would just be isolated verses that would mean nothing to you, but Paul put it in such a way that they could understand what he would say.

Now what **was** Paul's point in all this in Romans 9? What is Paul saying to these Romans? You go back to the first chapters of Romans and they show that being Greek or Jew has no great advantage over the other, except that the Jews were given the oracles, or the utterances of God, which should have been of great advantage to them, but they **rejected** those utterances of Christ and the utterances of God. Now the book of Romans is to show that being a Jew of the flesh has no spiritual meaning. Paul goes to **great** pain to show in chapter 6 through chapter 8 that a real **spiritual** Jew is an individual converted from carnal thinking, be he physically Jew or Gentile. It doesn't matter. Later in the book he shows how the Gentiles were grafted **in**, and once grafted, or converted, are just as much spiritual Israel as one **born** into Israel, and he says the *circumcision*, that is, physical birth into Israel and physically circumcised as a result of being born there, is **nothing**. It means **nothing** in the New Testament era. He goes to great pain to explain this in chapters 9 through 11, if you read the whole thing. That's his **whole** point, and he draws scriptures from here, there, and everywhere in the Old Testament to prove it. In Romans chapter 10 and verse 11 he says:

Romans 10.11 - For the scripture says, Whosoever believes on him shall not be ashamed. 12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

Now to the Jews, this was akin to blasphemy, but Paul was making a point of explaining it. Then he quotes several places in Isaiah again to show the spiritual meaning of all this. I won't take the time to go into it. I think you see the point. All the

way through here Paul uses Isaiah to explain spiritual meaning to these physical Israelites, and Gentiles who happened to be in the crowd as well.

Romans 11.1 - I say then, Has God cast away his people [speaking of physical Israel]? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

No. He hasn't cast away physical Israelites. This isn't replacement theology we're talking about here, brethren. God has not replaced Israel with the church. What we're teaching is that the church is the Firstfruits, and the rest of Israel is concluded in unbelief so they can be saved later on. "The first shall be last, and the last shall be first." Physical Israel was born **first**. They had an opportunity with the covenant **first**. They rejected it. They played the harlot. They were rejected, and they will not have a chance at salvation until the Great White Throne Judgment, or in the Millennium, if they survive the end of the age. Romans 11.25 pretty much says that.

Romans 11.25 -For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceits;

What did their conceits have to do with? Being the chosen people.

V25 - That blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.

The Bible was written *here a little, there a little*, so they **could** be snared and taken, and deceived. Otherwise had they really understood what they were doing, He would have had to destroy them. What did Christ say? "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they're doing." If they had really understood what they were doing &ndash killing the Savior, He would have had no choice but to destroy them.

V32 - For God has concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

When? In the Great White Throne Judgment primarily. Ezekiel 37.

Romans 11.4 - But what says the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. 5 Even so **then** at this present time also there is a **remnant** according to the election of grace.

He brings 1st Kings 19.18 out of context. Remember that story where Elijah said *I'm the only one, Lord. And He said, Don't kid yourself Elijah. There are seven thousand more I know of who haven't bowed their knee to Baal.* Well, that was Old Testament physical Israelites, and yet Paul said that God was calling a remnant of physical Israelites out of physical Israel at the time the book of Romans was written in the New Testament church, and he uses the seven-thousand number. That's interesting, isn't it? Go back to the first sermon in this series and we talked about how only a few **thousand** probably were in the early New Testament church. I don't know how many thousands, but it talked about three thousand the first day, and finally five thousand, and it never got big. They met in homes, not in great huge cathedrals. So it never got really big, and maybe only about seven thousand were called out of that particular era. I don't know. But Paul applies it to the church, and here we are, right at the end, and we see another **great** apostasy. Sometimes we think, well, if you take 150 thousand, take out the tares, take out the children and dogs, and the first thing you know, you're getting down to a small numbering. God says that He will work with a **remnant**, or a residue, and there might only be seven thousand. I don't know. I don't have the insight perhaps Paul did. It's speculative. But when you limit the first resurrection to 144,000, which the scripture clearly does, then you can't have too many from each era, and you don't have to do a great big end-time work of trying to convert people, because God called enough through Herbert Armstrong to finish the deal, except for maybe a few called in at the

eleventh hour. Verse 5 shows the application here that Paul made of Elijah and the seven thousand to the New Testament church.

Romans 9.6 - Not as though the word of God has taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel.

If you read the context here, all the way chapter 9 through chapter 11, you will see that Paul is explaining that there is a difference between physical Israel and spiritual Israel, the church, and that spiritual Israel takes the nod as the leader, and they have opportunity at salvation, whereas physical Israel does not until later on. There is an **order** of the resurrections. The church does not **replace** Israel, it's just the church has first crack at salvation. Physical Israel has it later on. The church, the Firstfruits, will have a double portion of reward. There's an Old Testament principle to bring forth. Wasn't the firstborn son supposed to get **double** the inheritance of the rest of the children? Yes. So God is going to make the firstborn, the firstfruits, have a higher reward, a greater blessing as the bride of Christ, as also the mother to teach the children in the Millennium and in the Great White Throne Judgment, -- kings and priests over them. So they will not have that opportunity until then. Now can I bring that forward from the Old Testament, that principle about the firstborn child having a greater reward? That's a no-brainer. That should be so simple. That is a very **clear** principle in the Old Testament, and some people argued over it back then because there were jealousies as to who would be the firstborn and who wouldn't, and the selling of the birthright by Esau and so on. That was very plain in there. But Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. That principle is still just as good today as it was then, and in fact it has **greater** meaning today, because it has to do with **eternal** reward, not just so many camels and cows. It's a bigger deal. The firstfruits have a very high reward. We can be included with Christ. He is **the first** of the firstfruits and has the very **highest** reward, and we as firstfruits just behind Him have the next highest reward. Now all of physical Israel will have opportunity to become **part** of spiritual Israel ultimately, and be part of the kingdom, but not until later. 1st Corinthians 15.29 — the order of resurrections, and a difference in reward. Somebody told me recently that after the Great White Throne Judgment everybody is going to be exactly the same, that there won't be any office, there won't be anybody higher than anybody else. Well, I'll just refer you to the parable of the talents and the pounds, and many other things in the Bible which we don't have time to go into. That's a different subject, but I think it's very clear here that the firstborn, the firstfruits have a greater reward.

I want to give you a few more examples. Instead of Paul, let's go to Peter. In Acts 2 Peter saw on the day of Pentecost there, which we rehearsed last Pentecost, all kinds of incredible miracles beginning to occur. Tongues of fire, and so on. Now what came to Peter's mind? He was familiar with the Old Testament prophecies. Did he say *Well, that's just the end of the age, and that just has to do with physical Israel?* No. He referred to Joel 2, verses 28 through 32 and he took a text out of prophecy, normally applied to physical Israel, and applied it directly to the miracles beginning the New Testament church. Now we can look back and see that that wasn't the final fulfillment as Peter thought. It's very clear in the scriptures that Peter and Paul and those thought that Christ would return in their lifetime, and Peter thought, *This is it. This is the end. This is Joel 2.* He wasn't totally wrong, because it was a beginning of that prophecy, and those miracles died out shortly thereafter, where his shadow passing didn't heal people. Now in once sense Peter **was** in the end time. If you count a day as a thousand years, Peter was at the beginning of the fifth day after four thousand years. So, it **was** the end time, and the beginning of the New Testament church of course carries over to today, when the sixth day is almost over, and what Peter applied is going to intensify **greatly** in the **same** New Testament church, not in the physical nations of Israel. God isn't going to give great spiritual power to the Methodists, the Baptists, the Catholics, the Evangelicals of this age. No. He won't. Satan will give it to the Catholics, or whoever else is involved. But God is going to give it to **His** witnesses, to **His** church; not to the world, and Peter recognized that. Christ even told His disciples they would do greater things than did He. Well, what does He say about the Two Witnesses? Zechariah 4 says that the mountains will become a

plain before Zerubbabel. Physical Israel has nothing to do with the Two Witnesses, other than be warned by them, but the Old Testament prophecies are **full** of references to them, including Zechariah 3 and 4, and Haggai, and many other places.

Let's go back to 1st Peter chapter 2, and verses 1 through 9. He's talking here to us.

1 Peter 2.1-9 - Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.

Don't get away from the basic understanding of the plan and purpose of God that we learned under Herbert Armstrong.

V5 - You also, as lively stones, are built up a **spiritual** house, an holy priesthood, to offer up **spiritual** sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

And then he quotes that He would lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect and precious, and shows that we are part of that foundation, that we are the lively stones to build the temple with, and how Christ became a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense (verse 8). "Even to them which stumble at the word, being **disobedient** whereunto also they were **appointed**." See, he concluded them in unbelief, as we read in Romans 11.32 and in Isaiah 28. They were **intended** to remain in darkness spiritually, until later on. But not us.

V9 - **You** are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a particular people, that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

He's talking to the church here. Whom did Paul address in his epistles? The scattered **church** of the ten nations of Israel. He wasn't talking to physical Israelites. They're concluded in unbelief. He's talking to the church here. He quotes from Isaiah 28.16 to prove the New Testament church is the people or nation God looks to now; not physical Israel. He quotes that in verse 10.

1 Peter 2.10 - Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God.

Physical Israel had been a people, but he's referring to something else here. He's referring to the church, and saying **You** are now that people. He quoted **one** verse out of Isaiah 28.16 & the same context that we have been reading at the beginning of this sermon. He moved that forward to the New Testament church, just like Christ did with the disciples in Matthew 13.

Now we're beginning to see a trend here. These men **constantly** applied the Old Testament prophecies to the church randomly. If you can pick out this many parts of verses, and single verses, and put them altogether to form a picture of the church, can you not honestly go back and read them in context and use the same analogies to **all** the prophecies? You think, if you just pick a little bit out of that prophecy and say this applies to the church, can you go back and apply that **whole chapter** that verse came out of, to the church? Well, I should think so. Remember, the prophecies are a **part** of the foundation of the New Testament church, along with the apostles and Christ. They **all apply** in some way. We are still learning how they apply, and as we move closer to the end, more and more of them can be **seen** to apply. Fifteen years ago hardly any seemed to fit the church in a full prophetic way. Since the scattering, they are all beginning to take shape, including what is coming next.

How many memory verses, brethren, over the years in the church do we have that we have applied to **so many** different things? You can sit in church for six months, and you might hear of **one verse** used by different ministers to prove a different point about fifteen different subjects, because it is **living**, and it applies so many different ways. Now let's see



that. The church ministry is already being devastated. On the other hand, "churchianity" will be destroyed very shortly. The people of the church are already scattered, and being scattered around the world. Physical Israel, we understand from the prophecies, will **shortly** be put to famine, pestilence, the sword, and scattered in captivity around the world. See how it applies to both? The **church** will soon be gathered together one by one. Isaiah 27.12-13. The Two Witnesses will put them together in the final temple. It talks about that in Haggai about how it will be built. Zerubbabel, the leader of the two, is a type of Christ, doing the regathering. A remnant will be gathered. We read that in Paul's epistle, in Romans 11.4, referring to the church. The Witnesses will feed all of them during the Tribulation & Zechariah 4. And on the other side of the coin, Israel will be regathered by Christ Himself, one by one, where they had been scattered all over the world in the Tribulation. In the same light, judgment is **now** on the spiritual house of Israel — 1st Peter 4.17. Your day of judgment, and mine, is **right now**; but the rest of physical Israel is concluded in unbelief. Judgment will be on them in the Millennium and in the Great White Throne Judgment -- Ezekiel 37. The firstfruits of spiritual Israel will be the bride of Christ, and number exactly 144,000. So the church is **exclusive** even **in** physical Israel, combined with some Gentiles. Physical Israel will be taught to become spiritual Israelites by the bride, by the kings and priests, the mother, the older brothers in the Millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment. Again, the first shall be last, and the last shall be first. Those who came last in history will be placed ahead of those who came first in history. This is going to be important to remember when we finally get to the *innumerable multitude*.

Now, the reason is, if the Bible were written in a crystal clear manner, deception would not have been possible, and God would have to destroy rebellious man. God could have written the Bible like a novel. He could have had one thing right after another in a logical story sequence, and it could have been very crystal clear. He is capable of that, believe me. **This** way they could be deceived and shown mercy. Now Christ, Paul, Peter, Luke, and all the others **knew** the Bible was written this way and the reason for it. So they picked the truth out, "here a little, there a little," and pieced the puzzle together, simply because that's the style God used to write the Bible. All the scriptures to prove any given doctrine are not found in a complete context. Go through and prove to me all the doctrine of faith in context, without skipping around in the Bible. **Prove** the nature of man. **Prove** the nature of God. **Prove** the trinity to be untrue. **Prove ANY** doctrine, and you're going to have to go all over the Bible to put scriptures together to prove it. You can't just take those things in any particular context and do it. God does not write like a man. He doesn't write like a novelist. It's layered like an onion. You peel a little off, and you peel a little off, and the meanings are endless. They are deep. Man can't write deeply the way God did; nor can man write where everything in a book that size **completely** ties in and agrees with everything else, and on all kinds of different levels. You have to search it out like fine gold. Herbert Armstrong studied and studied and studied to piece it together. He finally saw that you should keep the sabbath and the Holy Days, and then he kept the Holy Days for **years** before he began to understand the spiritual meaning of them, to apply them to the New Testament church. That was the principle that he used. It was "here a little, there a little." He studied through the Bible until he finally got it together. That's the way God taught Herbert Armstrong, and now the whole foundation of doctrine is here for us, and it is solid, and once we understand it, we can walk all the way through the Bible, skipping here and there, and not twist things out of context if we're honest and sincere and true in our application of these things to the plan of God. There just aren't any contradictions if they're fit together and properly understood. So Paul and Peter knew all the Old Testament prophecies applied to the church, so they had no problem gathering a verse here, and a verse there, and putting it together, because they knew it all applied. They weren't wresting the prophecies to do it, even though we saw that one in Romans 9 where there were close to twenty that he put together there & bits and pieces. Man, including physical Judah and Israel today cannot understand the scriptures. Billions of people cannot understand the scriptures. Revelation 12.9 & "The whole world is deceived." In 1st John 5.19 he says that the world lies in wickedness. They do not understand. Can't.

Let's go to John 14 and we'll wrap this up. Christ talks here about how He is the vine and we are the branches, and so on and so forth, and He tells us in verse 26:

John 14.26 - But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

He's talking to His apostles, to the church. He says that the Holy Spirit is going to teach you these things. But the problem is with the world, they don't have the Holy Spirit. They think they have the Holy Ghost, but they don't have it. Maybe they have the "unholy ghost," but they don't have the Holy Spirit, and I can prove that to you. Acts 5.32 — "He gives His spirit to them that **obey**," and they say there is no obedience, that the law is done away; therefore the Bible says they don't have the Holy Spirit, and they can't learn the truth. 1 st Corinthians 2.

1 Corinthians 2.6 - Howbeit **we** [the church, Paul, the true ministry] speak wisdom among them that are mature; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery.

It's a mystery to the world. And to us, to some degree, it's still a mystery because we see through a glass darkly even yet.

V7 - Even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 8 Which **none** of the princes of this world knew.

That pretty well says it, doesn't it?

V8 - For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love him.

Man just cannot understand it.

VI0 - **But** God **has** revealed them unto **us** by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?

VI4 - But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

I was walking the dog the other day and one of my neighbors said, "Did you have a good Christmas?" I said, "I made it through it," and he looked at me kind of funny. I couldn't explain to him that it's pagan, but I wasn't going to say "Yes. I hope you had a merry one." I couldn't do that. He's concluded in unbelief.

Let's go down just a little more to chapter 3, because there's a big lesson here for us.

1 Corinthians 3.1- And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal.

The Corinthians were having troubles. How was Paul able to speak to them?

VI - Even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto you were not able to bear it, neither yet now are you able. 3 For you are yet carnal.

Now how was that carnality evidenced?

V3 - For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, **are you not carnal, and walk as men?**

Now here's the problem. We can think we have **great** understanding of prophecy, or great understanding of this doctrine or that, or great understanding of something else, but we are like spiritual **children** if we can't put aside our intellectual vanity and get along with each other, if we can't love one another. They were walking as men, not as gods.

Now how **incredibly** exclusive spiritual Israel is. The true, called out, obedient church is the only group of people on earth who have the Holy Spirit of God and can understand His words. That puts us in pretty small company. What a **blessing** we share. Once we begin applying the **whole Bible** directly to the church, we begin to understand great chunks of the Bible in the light of the days' events that were a mystery fifteen years ago. We're beginning to see not just "here a little, there a little," but we're beginning to understand whole sections of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Romans, and so on and so forth.

Now let's conclude this in Romans 12, because after Paul shows in the book of Romans that man, of himself, is carnal, and that no one has any advantage unless he is repentant, whether he be Jew, or whether he be Gentile, he exhorts them thusly:

Romans 12.1 - I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a **living sacrifice, holy**, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. 3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith.

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