

# Pastor Ivan Burgener

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Preacher: Ivan Burgener

[ 0 : 00 ] So it isn't often that we have an opportunity to sit under his ministry, but every time I've ever had that occasion, it has always been a memorable one, and I've always been enriched spiritually.

And this morning will be no exception. Those of you who were here for the 9 o'clock hour know whereof I speak, and I'm sure you enjoyed his message as much as I did. Pastor Bergner has been in the ministry for many, many years.

I heard just this morning that he came to know Christ in 1953. That was three years before I came to faith in the Lord. And it has been quite a journey for him and for his wife, Nina, ever since.

I've been richly blessed of the Lord and have been used to bless innumerable others through the Word of God. In addition to his being a pastor for several years, he's been engaged professionally also as a chemical engineer.

And I'm not sure what all that involves, but I know that it's something that is beyond my pay grade, so I'll just leave it there. I'm going to introduce Pastor Bergner to you now.

[ 1 : 12 ] And, Ivan, if you want to have a Q&A; at the end, that's your option. You can if you wish. We've got somebody with a roving microphone. If you'd like to entertain questions, that's entirely up to you.

Oh, one other thing. Much to our regret, Ivan and his guests, Stephanie and Darren, are going to have to leave right after this service, so they won't have time to visit with you.

I know you'd like to talk to Ivan and pick his brain about some things, but they're going to have to get out of here right away because there's another Bible class down in Centerville, and they have to leave right away so as to be able to be there for that.

Oh, you won't leave? Okay. Well, then, disregard what I said. He may be here at least for a while afterwards, and he'd be delighted to talk with you. So without any further ado, brother, come right ahead.

Thank you again for being with us. Thank you. Well, first of all, I'm very honored to be invited to speak to you.

[ 2 : 48 ] I have been in the ministry along the way, and the ministry gets more exciting as the years go by. The Bible was never richer for me than it is right now.

It's not getting old. And I'll say to this larger group what I said to the others earlier this morning. That is to say, the greatest help for me with the Bible is reading it through every year.

It's sad to say I only began that about 10 or 12 years ago. And I was encouraged to do it long before, but I just didn't take that good advice.

Well, I pass it on now because I feel a real regret that I didn't begin it in 1953. Every time I go through the Bible, it's a different book.

It gets better all the time. And I really mean it. And I'm saying things I've learned this year out of the Bible. And this past month.

[ 4 : 01 ] Very few days passed with my morning reading. I don't get something new. The Bible must be changing because there are verses there that weren't there the last time. And then I'm amazed I say how much I remember, how much I forget.

But still, every time it's better. So I heartily commend it to you. Now, I read out of the old King James, and I'll tell you why I do it. It's because the notes that are provided to help the reader in Bollinger's notes in his companion Bible.

So that's my companion, too. And there are some serious differences in my understanding with Mr. Bollinger. And there are differences that we have with one another.

And thank God for the differences. They can't all be right, but they can't all be wrong either. And the greatest mistake we make in learning, if I were to ask you, and I'm preparing you for my message here, too.

What is the greatest problem that you have in learning? Well, it isn't vision. And it isn't hearing. It's the ridiculous confidence that I already know something which happens to be wrong.

[ 5 : 19 ] But I'm not willing to test the new. Do you understand that? It's what we read of in the Gospel of John, chapter 9.

The Pharisees were so sure that the Lord Jesus had broken the Sabbath. He has to be a wicked man. He can't do the healing that they said He did.

And so the Lord Jesus, He said, He's come to make those who see, what? Blind. And He's helped to help the blind really see.

Well, you've got to know which you are. And you have a streak of blindness that will stay with you. And then they quizzed Him. He says, are we the ones you're talking to?

And He said, yes. Yes. So even the Pharisees picked up on that. So I will say this, too. My confidence in certain things I have believed about the Bible was not tested and examined honestly by me long enough.

[ 6 : 23 ] And I'm going to take one of those passages this morning. And for most of my life and most of my ministry, I had it wrong. Well, and you may still think I've got it wrong.

That's okay. Yes, it is. And we'll talk about it afterwards if you'd like. Before I get into that, my wife sends her greetings and her regrets. And even when we made this plan, a trip to come to Ohio, I make any reservation I do now, I said, well, it'll depend on how things go.

And I couldn't get my wife out for early voting. I voted on the first day of voting, which was Monday this past week. And if I can't get her out to voting, I can't get her to Ohio.

And she still hasn't gotten out. So I do early voting. And I don't vote for folks who support killing babies. So that's pretty clear.

I remember that Hitler killed six million Jews, they say. And hold up your hand in praise. We've killed over 50 million babies. So now in God's sight, which is the more corrupt nation?

[ 7 : 35 ] Now that's an easy call for me. And yet, how could I possibly cast a vote for those who kill the babies? I'd like to vote in a different way.

Well, so much, there's too much to say, too little time to say it. So we've got to check our words. Let's open in prayer now and ask God for help in a special way.

Father, thank you to have your help and assistance and guidance all along the way.

And especially now, we want your thoughts to replace ours. We admit that you said it right. Your thoughts are so much better than ours.

We'll put ours away. We'll be open and careful, but readily consider your mind and the understanding of your word.

[ 8 : 38 ] So for that, we ask and give thanks and look to you for blessing just now. Amen. Well, Pastor didn't ask me what my title was.

And I'm going to give the title. It's a title you've never heard before. So here's the title of my message. Does God want a crop of wild olives?

My question. Does God want a crop of wild olives? Now, the answer to that is no. But we've got to read a little bit to see.

Let's open our Bibles to the book of Romans chapter 11. One of the blind spots that we have in Scripture is our estrangement from agriculture.

We do not have an agrarian society. We have more an industrial society. And by an agrarian society, in times before, every family had its farm.

[ 9 : 48 ] Every family had its animals. Every family raised the chickens for the eggs. And that's agrarian. Now, we have maybe one farmer feeding a hundred or more people.

And the rest of us are city slickers of one kind or another. Well, I had the good fortune of being raised by a father who was born on the farm, lived on the farm, and did farming for a little.

And it's really true. You can take the boy out of the farm, but you can't take the farm out of the boy. And that relates to our topic here. We're going to talk about the Apostle Paul and the one story he gave about grafting.

Grafting. The grafting of trees. And we're going to read. Now, we know that the section in Romans from 9, 10, and 11, those three chapters are focused on the nation Israel.

And the last chapter is, to me, the most important and the most exciting of all. Chapter 11. That's where we're going to read. And we're going to read, starting at verse 13.

[11:01] So, Paul, now you've got to remember this. Now, he says, and he is addressing Gentiles. He's explaining something to Gentiles. But his focus isn't on the Gentiles in quite the way you think it is.

But let's read. Chapter 11 of Romans, beginning at verse 13. For I speak to you Gentiles, and as much as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry.

If by any means I may provoke to jealousy them which are of my flesh, and save some of them. If the casting away of them, that would be Israel, be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?

If the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy. If the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, were't grafted in among them, and with them partakes of the root and fatness of the olive tree, boast not against the branches.

But if you boast, you bear not the root, the root bears you. Thou wilt say then, the branches were broken off, in order that I might be grafted in.

[12:14] Bunk! The word well should be no. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. You Gentiles, be not high-minded, but fear.

For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold, therefore, the goodness and the severity of God. Two features from God, goodness and severity. Severity, a goodness, let's see, on them which fell, severity. But toward thee goodness, if thou continue in his goodness. Otherwise thou shalt be cut off.

And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in. For God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree, which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree, how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree?

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery or secret, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits. That's a caution, Gentiles, that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.

[13:36] And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the deliverer, shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob, For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

And here is one of the most amazing verses in all the Bible. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. As such an election, they are beloved for the Father's sake.

In that verse, Israel is called beloved. And what? Enemies. Isn't that funny? That's a mouthful. That verse upsets me terribly, in a way. Look at that again. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies. As touching election, they are beloved for the Father's sake.

For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. That repentance is on God's part. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet now have obtained mercy through their unbelief.

[14:40] Even if these have now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. God hath concluded them all in unbelief. And Paul ends this portion, he ends it with an exciting statement.

Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. God, how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counselor?

Who hath first given unto him, and it shall be recompensed unto him? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things to whom be glory.

Amen. Amen. May the Lord bless the reading of his word. We've read the whole chapter. It's more than we can cover, but we're going to ask.

The reason that I, for 50 plus years, have misunderstood this text is, I didn't understand grafting.

[15:46] How many of you understand grafting? Not many people know what it is, and I was brought up on a farm. My father had two acres, and boy, we had everything.

We had a garden, that was good. We had a pasture, had a horse and a cow and pig and sheep. The different animals at different times, a few. And then we had an orchard. And I remember that the orchard would sell you a tree.

There's an apple tree with five different kinds of apples that tree produced. Did you know that? And you can probably still get them. And what it is, is there's a main stem of one sort or another, and you graft in the Macintosh branch, and you graft in any different flavor you want.

It has to be apples. You can't put cherries grafted into an apple tree. That won't work. But different kinds of apples, different flavors, different brands, you can have an apple tree with.

So, in other words, we graft into the tree what? The one we want. If you want wine sap, you buy a graft.

[16:56] Many trees. Did you know that every citrus tree for oranges is a graft? Every orange tree is a graft. We start with the sour orange root for two reasons.

Number one, it's a hardy root. It's disease resistant, and it's a good, strong root. But you can't sell sour oranges. So, cut the thing off. And you put in a sweet orange stem, and the tree will go from there.

You got it? And now, if they have a branch below the graft, that'll be sour. We cut those off. So, you can sell, whether it's in Florida, Texas, or California, every orange tree is a graft.

And so, the lesson is real clear. You graft in the branch you want. And with that understanding, and most of you people, and I have talked to horticulturists.

That's what you call an expert in orchardry. Okay? Trees. And they cannot explain this. And Paul.

[18:06] Paul, stupid as he was, he got the graft backward. How could you be so stupid? Hold your fire.

Maybe, just maybe, he knew something they didn't know. So, it'll test this idea that I know something when I don't know all there is to know.

Right? So, that speaks loudly to me. I take it personal. My goodness, I've been set back so much so long. It's a shame.

I've missed out on. But a few things I've been open to receive. And this is one of them now. Now.

So, the question is, does God want a crop of wild olives?

Well, he grafted in some wild branches, didn't he? What were the natural branches? It's pretty clear. Those are the Jews. Those are Israel. Those are Israelites. Right?

[19:08] And he says, I'm writing to you Gentiles. And it's clear that the Gentiles are the branches grafted in and they're wild. And if I stand back and looked at the graft, suppose I've got a tree like that.

You understand? And I'm going to shake that tree. You know what the problem is? All those blasted wild olives are contaminating the crop. It's like having black junk in a wheat sample.

It's ruination. Well, if he didn't want the crop, why did he graft them in? It's a strange thing.

There's a fellow that wrote a book in horticulture at the time of Christ. At the time of Paul. He lived in the first century, we'd say.

And one of his last names was Longomanus. So it's a Latin name and it's got four parts and I can remember parts. And so sure enough, supposedly this horticulturist knew one thing about the olive tree that is special and not true of others.

[20:24] That suppose you've got an olive tree. And this olive tree is, let's just use some numbers. It gives you a hundred bushel every year. Boy, that's a hardy tree.

But this year it's down to 80. And the next year it's down to 50. And the next year it's down to 40.

Uh-oh. My production is going which way?

The wrong way. They say, and the guy says, If you take some wild branch, cut out some natural branches and in their place put in wild branches, graft them in, it acts like a shot of adrenaline.

Maybe next year it'll be a hundred and dead. And I say, look at that. Look at that. I never heard of a graft like that.

And you know what that does? It gives you the understanding of this chapter. That heretofore, at least I can speak for myself, I didn't have a clue.

[21:31] I didn't have a clue. The Apostle Paul says, I speak to you Gentiles. I meet Gentiles.

I meet Christians. And if I were to poll you, I would propose that maybe some of you think we are grafted in to the Jewish tree of blessing even now.

Well, I'm going to pop your bubble. That's not true. That's not true at all. Because it says here, remember this, that they partake, in verse 17, With Israel they partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree.

They are partaking together of the same source of blessing. And so we would say it's the Gentiles are sucking from the juices of blessing the Jews.

They share them in common. And you know that that understanding is verified here. If you'll turn to Romans 15, please. Turn to Romans 15.

[ 22 : 38 ] The Apostle Paul has gathered a great offering. It could be in today's dollars. He might have even had a million dollars collected to take back to Jerusalem to be a blessing.

This is money. Paul had one fun drive. And it took years of his ministry collecting it. And on his last visit to Jerusalem, he made the delivery of it.

And the sad part of the book of Acts is we don't know if it was delivered. We know he got there. We know his stated purpose. But we never see that gift handed over in statement.

But let's look at what he says here. In Romans chapter 15, he says in verse 25, And now I go to Jerusalem to minister to the saints.

Now by ministering, he didn't mean to stand in their synagogues and preach. He says, For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia. These are Gentiles. These are churches. And those churches have Jewish members too, though.

[ 23 : 46 ] To make a certain contribution for the poor saints of Jerusalem. And hath pleased them verily, and their debtors they are. Their debtors they are. Well, who's the they and who's the they? Well, the they are the Gentiles.

The Jews are debtor to the Gentiles. And there's a debtorsness both ways. A indebtedness both ways. So, that is to say, the Gentiles are indebted to the Jews for what?

The scriptures and the spiritual blessings. And so, the Gentiles, it's fair that they take some of their financial blessings and give back to the Jews. That's the change we're talking of.

Very plain. Let's read it. And Paul says, he says, verse 28, When I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come to you in Spain.

And I'm sure that when I come to you, the blessings are not so. So, I beseech you there. In other words, you pray that the Jews won't be so proud and so Jewish, hard-hearted and stubborn, that they reject the blessing.

[ 24 : 49 ] I've done a lot of work to put this thing out. And I hate to hand it over and then refuse to receive it. So, you pray that they will. That that Jewish pride will not make them refuse it.

Have you ever given or offered somebody a gift and they've turned it down? I have. They turned it down. Now, if I represented a charity, they would have accepted it.

But I was just a person. And I offered a... They turned it down. Well, they had their pride. The man had his poverty, but he had his pride, too. And his pride, one.

Now, my point is this. That is not a ministry that we have toward Israel today, number one. Number two, our position is different.

As members of the church, the body of Christ, we're blessed with all the spiritual blessings of the heavenlies, aren't we? Well, that's not what's called here. This is different.

[ 25 : 46 ] And this was true at that time. So, here's the situation. Back to Romans 11. The idea is this. That when Paul was ministering, as he did in every city, he went to the synagogue.

And when the synagogue ejected Paul, it's as though... What did God do? He took out some natural branches and put in some Gentile branches.

And what is Paul doing? He's using these Gentile branches to, in his words, provoke Israel to jealousy. So, the focus here is not on the Gentiles as his goal.

The Gentiles are Paul's tool to do what? Provoke Israel to jealousy. And that's what's stated so clear back in verse 13.

Paul says, I speak to you, Gentiles, as much as I'm the apostle of Gentiles. If by any means... I magnify mine office. If by any means I might provoke to jealousy them which are my flesh and save some of them.

[ 26 : 59 ] So, he's using the Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy. Now, if you don't remember, you should. God, all the way back in Moses' day, was using a number of methods and ideas to provoke the Jews to jealousy.

To them, God wanted the Jewish people to want him. Instead, they were flirting with idols, weren't they? Idolatry was a nemesis to Israel.

And God was a jealous God, and God did not want to share that affection with any less than himself. Of which he had every right to expect it.

So, here's the deal. When we come here, Gentiles read this and say, isn't that glorious here? We're grafted into the tree. The answer is, not anymore. And this was a time activity on God's part. But this was a last-ditch effort to do what? Read it. To provoke them to jealousy. Because the Jews were what?

[ 28 : 08 ] In the process of missing out. Aren't they? And when we get later in the chapter, blindness in part has happened to Israel. So, now then, you see, that's what this is here.

And does it fit here? Let's go back to the graft. The graft, which is so special. The graft was in to do what? Not produce olives, but to stimulate the olive production.

You get it? God is looking at Israel. He wants a crop of Israelites. And in the graft, the wild branches are just there to stimulate the natural crop, which was lagging.

Now, does it sound so stupid or not? There are not many fruits or vegetables that will do this thing. And you know what? I had never heard of that graft.

So, the guy in the book, he wrote, and this guy, the man that wrote the book has got four different names here, which I'm not able to recite for you, but I can find them.

[ 29 : 15 ] I know where to turn. But I put them in. I googled those names. And you know what? I came up with the book. This book that was written in the first century.

It wanted \$32. And I spent \$32. I got this book. It's real. This isn't hogwash. This isn't fog. This is information that, whew, it sure turned my grafting knowledge upside down, didn't it?

And it turns our theology upside down, too. Now, just a minute. I may have done more damage than you know. You think a minute. One of the big questions we have in our dispensational study and belief of the Bible, which I love dearly, we may have a little wrong, because in our books and our commentaries, I read some of them, and they say, well, at the stoning of Stephen, that was Israel's secret crisis.

That's what Sir Robert Anderson called it. And after that, that was Israel's, their goose was cooked after that. They still stoned Stephen, and they missed it.

But then some say, oh, I know when it was. Israel was set aside with the salvation of Paul. And then say, no, no, that's too early. The church began in Acts 11 with, they were first called Christians.

[ 30 : 44 ] That's a good verse, isn't it? Acts 11. And no, no, no, it's Acts 13 when Paul began his ministry. Well, then the question is, and Mr. Stamm made it clear, and I loved his books.

See, his books, well, more light and dispelled more darkness than I can remember to tell you. But the point is this. The point is this, that the idea that when God set aside Israel is a real question.

And with that, you might say we have the beginning of the church ministry for the body of Christ.

Now, there was a great awakening in Bible history that the church wasn't spiritual Israel.

And that happened with the movement and the leadership of John Darby and the Plinidic Brethren. And that was a heresy, a kind that the whole Protestantism reared in rejection.

But it's made its way that the church were not spiritual Israel. And we're not grafted into Israel, that is to say. Nor has the church become spiritual Israel.

[ 31 : 56 ] That's what I'm wanting to say. That Israel is Israel and the church is separate. And that was a marvelous wake up. And it wasn't, it's true. But the question is, did it begin in Acts 2 or Acts 7 or 9 or 11?

One thing for sure. That Israel was not set aside if in Acts. Now, where are we in the chapters of Acts where Romans was written?

Do you know? Can you list the Acts epistles that Paul wrote? During the book of Acts, Galatians is first.

Following that 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Following that 1 and 2 Corinthians. And I want to put Hebrews in there before, during the Acts period.

I believe the Apostle Paul wrote Hebrews and he should have left a copy with each synagogue. Let's go on. So that's book number 6.

[ 32 : 56 ] And number 7 is Romans. So the book of Romans was the last thing he wrote. And you can tell it from his writings. And he's headed for Jerusalem. And that's the visit he made when he was taken prisoner.

And after that, Paul assumes a new title. You know what it is? I'm the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles. So his title changes and so on.

And it's very interesting. Very interesting. But the point is this. That Israel was not set aside in Acts 21. Because Israel is the target of this grafting procedure.

Not the Gentiles. I've used the illustration in this way. It's a little poor, but it maybe helps you understand. Suppose in my business of selling, I have a customer and I just can't get that customer's attention.

But living next door to this customer that I'm having trouble making contact with is a friend of mine. And so I say to my friend, listen, let's have a barbecue in your backyard.

[ 34 : 03 ] And we'll make sure that the breeze is carrying those barbecue vapors over next door. And we'll have you invite your neighbor over so I can sell him my stuff.

I can make a sales call. And I'm using you. That's like Paul is using the Gentiles like I'm using the neighbor to whom? To reach.

This is God trying to reach Israel. It's not God using the Gentiles to save Gentiles. You are not the target here. You're the tool.

You're the tool. And you know what? I learned now the meaning of another verse here. Paul says, verse 13, I'm the apostle of the Gentiles.

Now, I've asked myself this question and you've heard about me asking myself questions. Here's one of them. And I want you to do this. I want you to sit back in your chair in your mind now.

[ 35 : 04 ] Put your feet up on the desk and relax and look at the ceiling and just say, now, suppose I were Paul. And I've got this expression. I am the apostle of the Gentiles.

And I'm going to write a bunch of letters. Where would you put that in those letters? Well, I'll tell you my answer. I'd put it in the first letter.

Wouldn't you? You know where he put it? In the last book. Really? What's it doing here?

Why did he wait so long? What's the matter with him? Hmm. Then I got to looking at the verse. Let's read it a little bit.

He says, I magnify mine office. Did you ever look up that word magnify? I looked it up. And you know what? It appears 40 or more times.

[ 36 : 06 ] And it's never, ever, ever, ever translated magnify. It's always glorify. I glorify. But this verse says magnify.

Why did you do that? And there's another problem. I magnify mine office. Did you ever look up that word office? That word too appears about 40 times.

A bunch of times. It's never, ever, ever translated office. Except here. I got these two words.

And here they're translated special and different. And I say, what's going on here? Well, you know what?

This is part of my wake up stuff. Let's translate it right now. I glorify my ministry. I glorify my ministry.

[ 37 : 06 ] Now I want you to put yourself back in that chair. And put your feet up on a desk. And tell me about your life. Your ministry. Your work. Your profession. Your work. Your profession. Your doctor.

What is the greatest thing you ever did in medicine? Well, I did a heart transplant. Oh, that's big, wasn't it?

So if I could look back and say, well, in all my surgeries, I got a heart transplant. Now that's a big point. Now that's a big. And I'll answer this. In my engineering, look back.

I cut my teeth on the chemistry and building the plant to make the silicon wafer for diodes and the chip.

And so we developed that. That was a pioneering work. One more thing. A peak in my chemistry and engineering.

[ 38 : 06 ] The company I went to work for operated the nuclear plant Weldon Springs in Missouri doing uranium processing for the federal government.

For the atomic procedure, the atom bomb, and so on. And the company that I went to work for developed the uranium isotopes for the first atomic bomb.

And there was an old building there, and it had a bronze plaque on it. In this building, we were trying to find the chemicals that were instrumental in developing the atomic bomb World War II.

So those were peaks, weren't they? Those were high spots. And so I wanted no part in that. I said, I don't want my skills to be building atomic bombs.

So I went to work for them in their chemical division. And then the government came out, and we're going to introduce this process into the private sector. So now we've got the first nuclear submarine.

[ 39 : 09 ] And the Mallinckot Chemical Works spun off a group, and I was part of that group. And we developed a plant to put the nuclear fuel in the first nuclear submarine.

Well, that's a high spot, too. So I look back, and those are peaks. And so what is Paul saying? He's saying here, I'm looking over my ministry. What's the greatest thing I ever did?

By way of God's assignments. And you know what it was? Using the Gentiles to provoke the Jews to jealousy.

That's what he's saying. He's saying the greatest thing in my ministry is I am God's tool to wake up this stubborn nation, Israel.

But did it work? The answer is no. No. Because what? Israel continued in their blindness, and Israel was set aside.

[ 40 : 27 ] Yes, they were. But it wasn't along the way. It was at the end of the book of Acts, wasn't it? Because even, and then I got disappointed. I was reading Romans, and Paul says he wants to visit with the church of Rome.

He wants to visit with those saints. And he said that in chapter 1. And then he says in chapter 16, man, I can't wait to get there. And so, just almost not thinking, I want to look at the book of Acts and see how this meeting went with the saints in Rome.

And I get to Rome, and Paul, he calls those dumb Jews into it. Three days passed, and he has the Jewish leaders come. He says, no, no, I want to.

I'm telling them what I want to read in the Bible. It's not there. But I went looking for it. I want to see Paul get together with the saints in Rome. He says he wants to see them. But it wasn't there.

Who did he get? He got the leadership of all the synagogues in Rome. There could have been a dozen or two dozen synagogues in the city like Rome.

[ 41 : 31 ] And it wasn't Paul going to the synagogue. It was the synagogue coming to Paul. And in all those churches, he never had a leadership conference like this, did he?

Huh? And they gave Paul a hearing. And what did the Jewish leaders say? This is the combined leaders of the synagogue of Rome, the capital of the Gentile world.

What's their answer? No. Wow. Wow. That's Acts 28, isn't it? And after that, Paul never darkened another synagogue door.

In the letters, he wrote seven letters after that. He never mentions Abraham. He never mentions anything like that.

It's a different story. It's an amazing thing. But God was using. The Apostle Paul was his last best effort to reach Israel.

[ 42 : 37 ] Listen to him. He's pleading. If by any means I can reach him. And Paul, how did he begin the chapter 9?

Oh, he says, my brethren. He says, I tell the truth in Christ. I lie not. My conscience bearing me witness that I could wish myself a curse from Christ for my brethren.

My kinsmen accorded in the flesh. He said, I'd give anything. Was it to save the Jews? No, but it was to save the nation. Paul wanted the nation.

We're dealing with Israel as a nation in this passage. And so he says, I say the truth in Christ. I lie not. My conscience. Why do you make a statement like that? I'm not lying. It's because what I'm saying, you wouldn't expect to hear it from me.

He says, I have great sorrow, heaviness and sorrow, continual sorrow in my heart. I could wish I said, my curse from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh who are Israelites.

[ 43 : 40 ] Paul says, my heart's desire is for them. How do you Gentiles like to read that stuff? You're not the big shots. Israel is.

And they were, weren't they? And you know what else? In reading the Bible through, in reading the Bible through, one thing that hit me like a ton of bricks was God's long suffering.

God's long suffering with Israel. And, and, and I'm just overtaken by it. And I read the Bible through it. Every year I get more of the same.

I get almost a heavy heart. God is, God, God puts up, he puts up so much for those guys. I can hardly believe it. Now, why didn't he reject them a lot quicker?

So I've got to, I don't have the half the patience that God does. And neither do you. But the point is this. Then I come to the New Testament. What is the greatest question ever put to Israel?

[ 44 : 44 ] Well, it wasn't the birth of Christ. It wasn't the Sermon on the Mount. It wasn't the Beatitudes and all that. It wasn't that. And it wasn't until we had the resurrected Christ.

That's the first. The biggest question ever Israel faced was the risen Christ. Will you accept his message? Isn't it? Does that beat anything you've seen up to that point?

It sure does for me. And so the disciples asked the question, well, at this time, restore the kingdom to Israel. That's the burning question. And the Lord Jesus didn't say, what a stupid question that is. They've got pictures on the radio say that. That's the stupidest question they ever heard. And I won't give you his name, but his initials are John MacArthur. My, I blew that one, didn't I? Well, the point, that's what he said. And those are his words, not mine. But the point is this. And that's the question. And so the Lord Jesus was taken out of their sight.

[ 45 : 53 ] Then what did they do? They stood there and the angel came and said, why stand you here gazing? This same Jesus you've seen go will come again. So what's our burning desire?

To see him come again, isn't it? And so now we have these apostles that were sure hard to get through. They are burning with desire to lead Israel to accept the risen Christ.

And that's what the book of Acts was all about. Do you know what the Lord Jesus said on the cross? This is something too. I didn't know what it meant. He said, Father, forgive them.

They know not what they do. Should they have known? Could they have known? Did they know? What did the Lord say?

They know not what they do. So what has the Lord Jesus done by that statement? The crucifixion, he puts it as a sin of ignorance.

[ 46 : 53 ] Now, if you read your Bible, there are sacrifices. There is a remedy for a sin of ignorance. And how do you cure ignorance? With information, with knowledge, with teaching, with understanding.

And to bring the ignorance, or to be brought to an understanding of knowledge now. The knowledge of the risen Christ.

So, then we get to the next time we see ignorance is in the mouth of Stephen. As he was dying, he said, Lord, what?

Lay not this sin to their charge. It's the same plea, isn't it? Don't charge them. And Pastor Stamm says that God said yes to the Lord Jesus.

He accepted their ignorance and gave them extended mercy. But Pastor Stamm says he said no to Stephen. So that's how he knew Israel was set aside there.

[ 47 : 55 ] And I accepted that. That was great. More life than I understood. And I come reading through the Bible later. No, God did not say no to Stephen. Stephen was a man full of faith.

Stephen was a dynamic, spirit-filled preacher. And he asked a stupid question that God had to say no. Did he pray amiss? No. Read the letters.

Read Peter's sermon in Acts 3. I want that you did it through. Ignorance is that. What does that do? Peter is extending the ignorance position that there's a remedy for this. And did you ever read 1 Corinthians?

Why, had they known the rulers of this world, did not know they would not have crucified the Lord of the glory. Why? They were ignorant. Then we have that great verse. I have not seen, ear heard, neither in the heart of man the things that God has prepared for them that love him.

[ 48 : 56 ] And people stopped right there and said, isn't that wonderful? It's not wonderful at all. What's Isaiah doing? What's he saying? Let's say it again. I have not seen.

I hear, have not heard. Neither have it entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them. Isaiah says, I don't know them. What does the next verse say? Paul says, but he, God has revealed them unto us by spirit.

Paul says, the leaders of the world didn't know it. The prophets didn't know it. I know it. God has revealed them to me. That's how the scriptures were given to Paul.

And when Paul says he revealed them unto us, it's not us Christians. It's us Bible writers. And he said us, but he meant me. And that too is one of the figures that speaks in the Bible.

It's not hard to, it's not hard to, not easy to see. God will use the plural and he means the singular. And he'll use the singular and he means the plural. So you read that in your figures of speech.

[ 50 : 02 ] And you know, that'll straighten you out. So, and 1 Corinthians chapter 2 is not talking about what the Bible means. It's how Paul received the Bible. He's talking about revelation, not illumination.

And, but what does he say? Did you read Romans? They, going about to establish their own righteousness, they were ignorant of God's righteousness. That's Romans 9 and 10.

Did you read that? God is still concluding Israel in what? If he's concluding them in ignorance, he's still dealing with them. That's what I'm saying.

You understand me? It's when I quit dealing with you, the jig's up, it's over. And you know what? God was still dealing with Israel in the writing of the book of Romans. He was dealing in Paul's ministry in Acts 21. So that I can't set aside Israel as early as I wanted to. [ 51 : 03 ] Don't you tell me I wasn't biased. I was biased. I was biased. And so the question is, on what do you base your opinion? There's an intended play there on what do you base your opinion? We want the facts. I want the revelation. Blindness in part has happened in Israel till the fullness of the Gentiles. We're in the time of the fullness of the Gentiles. And during that time, we call it another thing that Paul gave us later, the dispensation of the grace of God. But that wasn't enforced, at least not yet. Not while God is still dealing with Israel. Well, can you see that?

Here's another answer. Now, I lost my thread of thinking. If I'm so impressed with God extending Israel a lot of time, centuries. God dealt with Israel for centuries, didn't he? And finally, the northern ten tribes, they were captive. Then a century later, the southern tribes were captive. All twelve tribes were prisoners of Gentile kings, yes?

[ 52 : 16 ] But it took centuries to get it done. All right, let's take the same patience of God. What's the biggest question? Will you receive the risen Christ? Yes or no?

Well, was Israel set aside at Pentecost? Many teach you was. Because that's the beginning of the church. And to hell with Israel. Not so fast. Because I've shown you the ignorance in Peter's extending.

And in Paul, 1 Corinthians. And in Paul, in Romans 9 and 10, being ignorant of God's righteousness, going about to establish their own righteousness. Israel is still ignorant. My question is, is God still dealing with them in light of that ignorance? And the answer is, yes, he is. So that it turns out to me that one of the greatest trials ever in the book of your Bible is 40 years.

Israel spent 40 years in the wilderness, didn't they? You know what they didn't do in those 40 years? You know they didn't circumcise their children. They didn't hold the Passover.

[ 53 : 25 ] They didn't hold one of the seven feasts of the Lord. You know what Israel accomplished in that 40 years in the wilderness? Do you know the answer?

Every answer you gave was right. Nothing. Do you know when they had the next Passover? Do you know when they had the first real Passover where?

You've got to say in Egypt. Where was the next Passover? You ought to say at the foot of Mount Sinai. And when they broke camp, you know what they all said?

Next year, what? Jerusalem. Right? Do you know what they say when they celebrate the Passover? You're not very Jewish, are you? What are they doing? Today, they celebrate the Passover here in Springfield.

And they say what? They take their drink and they drink a little wine or whatever. Next year, what? Jerusalem. Let's get a little more Jewishness in the congregation, brother.

[ 54 : 30 ] Well, we're Gentiles. We're self-centered. Shame on us. Do you think he cut out the Jews for your honor? Nuts to that. It was because of their wickedness.

That's why he grafted in the Gentiles. That's what he says. And he says, you stand by faith. And if you, and if you, and if you not stay, he'll cut you back out too.

Remember? Yeah. Well, so there's Romans 11. And Romans 11, the grafting changed more than I knew.

So the implications are there, aren't they? And I'll tell you what. I was absolutely convinced, and Mr. Stamm convinced me, and for 40 plus years, I was sure that Paul's conversion, he's the first member of the body of Christ, that's where the church began.

And Israel was set aside in Acts 7. I was as sure of that as I am. Well, then I was sure, but what was I? I was confident. I was right when I was wrong.

[ 55 : 37 ] Boy, that's dangerous ground. That's dangerous ground. So if by any means, I may convert Israel, pull out all stops, give it your best, give it your last.

And that was Israel's, Israel's last chance was through Paul. You believe that, don't you? You better believe you do. You can't read the Bible and miss that.

And so, Paul said later in the book of Acts, the message is you're refusing now. That message is going to go out there. And in a way, it isn't the new covenant because the covenant still is a contract

with Israel nationally, isn't it?

We have the blessings. Mr. Stamm said this, and he said it right, and I'm glad for that. He said we have the blessings of the covenant, but not the covenant in itself.

That's well said. God has no covenant with us. We stand by what? One word. Grace. You know that. You know that very well.

[ 56 : 52 ] You folks are called the Grace Bible Church. We're called the Afton Grace Bible Church. Back there in St. Louis. Well, anyway. God's word needs to be gone over what?

Again. And again. And again. One more thing. Someone says to me, well, wait a minute, Ivan. Not so fast. He said blindness in part has happened to Israel. And because that happened before that. I beg to differ with you.

Now, you know. You've got to find out who God is in the book of Romans. You say, well, what a statement that is. Well, let me explain. In the book of Romans, I learned.

You know what God said to Abraham? Well, we have it recorded there in Romans 4. He called him the father of many nations.

[ 57 : 54 ] When what? When as yet Abraham didn't have baby number one. Because it says God counts those things which be not as though they were history.

It was future. It wasn't past. It wasn't history. It was future, wasn't it? But now God can do that. You and I can't do that. God counts those things that be not as though they were.

And Abraham believed it. He gives Abraham the credit for that. And the Lord Jesus said what? Abraham saw my day. How did he see it? By faith, of course.

All right. One more. Read Romans 8. Them whom he predestinated, called. And whom he called, he justified. Whom he justified, he glorified.

How many of you are glorified here? No hands. Well, no, no. No hands. Worse still, the bodies of glory are up ahead. So, but Paul writes it as though it were in the past tense, doesn't he?

[ 58 : 56 ] Counting on what? Those things which be not as though they were. It was future. But it was looked at as though it were past. And so when he gets to chapter 11, that same God says Israel set aside, doesn't he?

Blindness part has happened to Israel. Well, that would have them already blinded in Acts 21. Yes, that's when he wrote Romans. No, the answer is it was still future, wasn't it?

But God spoke of the future as though it were past, you see? And that threw me off too. Well, that's the story. So, from many different ways, we have a reshuffling and a rearranging.

At least we are, my understanding of God's dealing with us down through the ages. And I think I've said all that I need to say on that.

And if I've done poorly or mixed you up, we'll have opportunity to perhaps straighten that up. Now, we're at the end of the service, and I'll close in prayer. All right.

[ 60 : 04 ] Let's all pray. Our blessed God and Father, we just thank you for your word. It's beyond us. And so, we're in your debt to slowly but surely learn from you what you've written.

And we stumble and trip all along the way. But you're very forgiving with us individually. You haven't given up on us, and we'll surely not give up on you.

We ask you to just keep the light shining, keep the questions coming, because you have the answers. And we know where to look. We know to whom to turn. And we just ask that your light will be continually going forward on our behalf, that more and more of your book will be clearer and clearer every day in every way.

So, thank you for the mercies of the hour. Thank you for the fellowship of the saints. Thank you for light dispelling darkness in your precious word. Through our Lord Jesus, we pray with rejoicing and thanks.

Amen.