

## Search the Scriptures

Before we delve into today's subject matter, I'd like to say thank you to those of you who have been supporting this ministry, and some for about thirty years now. I thought we'd be in heaven by now, didn't you? But here we are, and we still have a work to do. I just want to let you know that I appreciate your support and that every one of you is on our prayer list every morning. I know many of you have family members like mine, who are not following the truth they once knew, and perhaps you're at a loss to know what to do. But I want to assure you that God knows all about it, and if there's any way for them to be saved, He will take all our prayers into consideration as they accumulate in heaven, and He will dump them upon their heads when their heart is most receptive. So, take heart fathers and mothers, grandparents and siblings, because God loves them more than you do and He wants them to walk the streets of gold with you someday soon. So, keep praying, because "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much," much more than we can imagine.

How many times have you heard about the importance of studying the Scriptures? I dare say that you have heard it hundreds of times, perhaps thousands of times if you've been a Christian a long time. And one has to wonder, why is it so important? Is it to acquire knowledge so you can win an argument? Is it to become more like Christ in character? Is it to acquire God's approval? Is it to foster a closer relationship with Jesus? Is it so we can lead others to the truth? I think these are all valid answers except maybe for the reasons behind winning an argument, although that may be necessary sometimes as well.

I have a program on my computer called Microsoft 365, which is a software program that allows me to type up my sermon notes, among other things. But the reason I mention it is because it updated recently and I noticed that there's a little icon at the beginning of the line I'm typing on that I had not seen before, and as I hovered over it with my cursor it shows that it's an AI program called Copilot, and it knows the content of what I'm typing and can elaborate on what I wrote and suggests what I could add to my own comments to make them better. Here's what this artificial intelligence program wrote about the importance of studying the Scriptures.

"The answer to these questions lies at the heart of Christian living: studying God's Word is not a mere intellectual exercise, nor is it a checklist to secure personal approval or status. Instead, it is the pathway by which one discovers truth, discerns God's will, and

cultivates a living connection with the Divine. Through diligent, prayerful study, the Scriptures transform the mind and shape the soul, offering both comfort and correction. They challenge assumptions, clarify purpose, and invite the seeker to experience the presence of God in everyday life. In the sacred pages, we find wisdom for decision-making, strength to withstand trials, and the assurance that faith is built not on shifting opinions, but on the Rock of revelation. To study the Bible is to engage in a daily dialogue with the Source of all light and love—a dialogue that anchors, renews, and equips us for every good work.”

What do you think about that? It almost sounds like I’m reading the Spirit of Prophecy, doesn’t it? And in a way it’s kind of scary, and this is just an almost insignificant sampling of what AI can do. I also have a program that allows me to upload videos to places like my YouTube channel and other social media platforms so I can do my small part to take the gospel to the world. Anyway, in this program there’s also something called AI Avatar that can clone my voice and my face and make it look like it’s really me that’s speaking; it’s called “deepfake impersonation,” and there’s also a program called AI Dubbing that can turn my English-speaking Avatar into other languages. It’s really quite amazing!

Now, I don’t intend to ever use some of these features because I think they’re deceptive. The only reason I mention it is because we should all be aware of what’s going on in the world so we’re not fooled by what AI is capable of, because don’t you think the devil will use these kinds of things to trick people into believing a lie? Maybe even use this “deepfake impersonation” feature to personate Christ? This is one of the reasons we better know our Bibles, because in these last days the counterfeit will so closely resemble the true that the only way we will be able to distinguish between them is by a “thus saith the Lord.”

I’d like to say a quick prayer before we open God’s word, because it’s important that we be inspired by the same Spirit that inspired holy men of old so we’re not misled, which can have eternal consequences.

In **2 Timothy 2:15** we’re given several reasons why we should study God’s word. Paul, writing to young Timothy says, “Study to shew thyself approved (**or acceptable**) unto God, a workman (**or a teacher**) that needeth not to be ashamed (**or irresponsible**), rightly dividing (**or correctly handling**) the word of truth.”

So here we are given at least three reasons to study. Number 1, so God can approve of us. Number 2, so we can be teachers who are spreading His word, and number 3, that we

might teach the Scriptures correctly, because there are all kinds of voices out there claiming to have the truth, aren't there? but we know they can't all be true when they are saying different things.

And so, this counsel from Paul is crucial when you think about it, especially at a time when technology can blur the lines between truth and deception. And with the rise of artificial intelligence and digital media, being able to tell the difference between God's voice and all the various competing messages out there, it becomes all the more important to know for ourselves what God says. The ability to "rightly divide the word of truth" is not just for pastors and theologians, but for everyday believers who wants to walk in the light and avoid all the spiritual pitfalls that are presented by our great adversary the devil.

And so, studying the Scriptures is not only our safeguard against error, but that we might recognize God's voice and not be led astray by a counterfeit, however convincing it may appear, because we are living during a time when we cannot trust our senses, and that will become even more important as AI becomes more and more advanced.

Also, in **2 Timothy 3:16, 17** Paul says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly **(or thoroughly)** furnished unto all good works."

Now, we know that there are lots Christians today who don't think the Old Testament is all that important, but what did we just read? "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." In other words, the Old Testament is just as inspired as the New Testament, and they are equally profitable to study for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, and it's important to understand that both the Old and New Testaments speak of two covenants, but what many people fail to grasp is that the two covenants are the same except for the way they're kept. I have heard people say, "I'm a New Testament Christian under the new covenant, and we don't have to follow the Old Testament with its old covenant anymore." But they're missing an important point.

The main difference between the old and new covenants that are spoken of in both the Old and New Testaments, to put it simply, is the difference between having a heart of stone or a heart of flesh, or the difference between faith and works.

God made a covenant, or an agreement with ancient Israel that they would obey His law, and they agreed to it, but they thought they could do it in their own strength, which they failed to do. Remember when Moses was up into mount Sinai with God and then came

down with the stone tablets upon which God wrote the Ten Commandments with his own finger? When Moses came down, what were the people doing? They were singing and dancing naked around the golden calf. In other words, they broke the covenant they made with God, signified by Moses throwing down and breaking the stone tablets. There was nothing wrong with the covenant on God's end, the problem was with the people who didn't understand their own inability to keep the law in their own strength.

I'd like to take a deeper look at this for just a few minutes, because there's a lot of confusion about the old and new covenants where there really doesn't need to be any. Turn with me to **Hebrews 8** and we'll be reading **verses 7-13**, "For if that first covenant had been faultless **(so there was something wrong with it)**, then should no place have been sought for the second. **(There would have been no need for it)** For finding fault with **(who)** them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: **(that is, before new testament times)** Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they **(did what?)** continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days **(after those earlier days when they broke the covenant)**, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. **(And the way that happens is through confession and repentance, which under the old covenant they didn't do)** In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."

So very clearly here, the fault wasn't with the old covenant itself, but the fault was with the people. Basically the old covenant had morphed into something that God never intended and it became a salvation by works covenant in the minds of the people because of their misunderstanding. If they had allowed God to put His laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts to begin with, there wouldn't have been a problem, and no need for a new covenant. But since the people broke the first covenant it became null and void and a second was made on better promises. That's what it says if we back up and read **verse 6**. "But now hath he **(Christ)** obtained a more excellent ministry **(than any earthly priest)**, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was

established upon **(what?)** better promises.” Why was it a better covenant, and what were the better promises? It was better because God would put His laws into their minds and write them in their hearts. That didn’t happen in the first covenant, not because God was unwilling to put them in their minds and hearts, but because they weren’t ready to surrender their hearts and minds to God’s will so He could. And it’s no different with us today.

The old gospel song “I surrender All” is what was necessary anciently, and it’s still necessary today. And as I have said many times in the past, when it’s in the heart to obey, then we’ll have an experience like David wrote about in **Psalms 40:8** when he said, “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is **(where?)** within my heart.” You see, David lived during old testament times, and yet he understood and experienced the new covenant, and so can we if we will invite Jesus to come and dwell in our hearts and minds.

And notice what else David said in **verse 10**, because he wasn’t quiet about this new covenant righteousness by faith experience. He said, “I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.” David was born again, and he didn’t hide it from his fellow countrymen.

So, did the new covenant experience exist before the new testament was written? Absolutely, in fact it was available to Adam and Eve right there in the Garden when God told the serpent, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it **(this enmity, or this hatred for sin that God puts in our minds and hearts)** shall bruise thy head **(a fatal blow, because Satan’s kingdom will perish forever one day soon)** and thou shalt bruise his **(Christ’s)** heel.” **Genesis 3:15**. And He “was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities,” says **Isaiah 53:5**, but thank God He rose again and lives forever to minister that better covenant to all who are willing to enter into it.

And after the fall of our first parents this same covenant was renewed to Abraham, who is referred to as the father of the faithful in **Galatians 3**. And in **Hebrews 13:20** it speaks of the new covenant as an everlasting covenant, which means it’s always been here, and in **Revelation 14:6** it’s referred to as “the everlasting gospel,” which means it was in force when sin entered this world, because as soon as there was sin, there was a Saviour, and this everlasting covenant will be available until human probation closes.

Another thing that's important for us to understand is that in the Old Testament, animal sacrifice was used to show the coming of a Saviour that would one day sacrifice His own life, and when that happened 2000 years ago upon Calvary, animal sacrifice and the rituals that went along with it were no longer of any use. In fact, to continue them would be to deny Christ, and that goes for the feast days, but the ten-commandment law itself is perpetual and was to be kept under both covenants, it's just a matter of how. So, the law is not the problem here, never has been, but how to keep it is the issue, either by the mistaken idea that we can keep it in our own strength, which is nonexistent or at best only outward, or by allowing God to put His laws in our minds and write them in our hearts. That's what righteousness by faith is all about, and the new covenant and the everlasting gospel tells us how we can become righteous by faith.

Now let's get back to the importance of studying the Scriptures. It's important because the world is full of voices clamoring for our attention and offering countless interpretations of the Scriptures. The challenge we face is to remain anchored and to let the unchanging Word of God be our chart and compass and not what man says. In a time when technology can mimic truth and even our own senses can't be trusted, it becomes all the more urgent to know, personally, what God has said. Only then can we discern between the subtle errors of darkness and the genuine light that comes from God.

All throughout history, those who stood firm for truth during times of persecution and spiritual darkness did so by laying hold of the Scriptures and refusing to let go, even in the face of death. Their unwavering faith and reliance upon God's Word became both their shield and their guide, and if we are to meet the challenges of our day with the same kind of courage they had, then we need to follow their example of letting Scripture become our foundation instead of shifting sand.

And of course, who can forget **Isaiah 8:20** where it says, "To the law **(the ten-commandment law)** and to the testimony **(of all the prophets from both testaments)**: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

A deep and personal knowledge of Scripture is not an option friends, but a spiritual necessity. The Bible is more than just an ancient text on a scroll, but it's a living guide that shapes our beliefs, fortifies our faith, and helps us to stand against error. And so, from a study of the Bible we are not only informed, but we are transformed into the very image of Christ with our convictions anchored in Him.

As we think about these things, we need to remember that knowing what is written by inspiration will help us to detect subtle errors that diverge from the truth, and only as we hide God's Word in our hearts will be prepared to tell the difference between right and wrong and fact from fiction.

In **Titus 1:9** Paul says we are to hold "fast the faithful word" of God, that **(we)** "may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers," or those that oppose the truth. Again, not just to win an argument for argument's sake, but so that truth will triumph over those that are on the wrong track and help them to get on the right track, because the wrong track leads to perdition.

In **2 Timothy 4:3, 4** we've been warned ahead of time that "the time will come when they **(that is, those who are not rightly dividing the word of truth)** will not endure sound doctrine **(why? Because they would rather follow)**; . . . after their own lusts **(and)** heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

"Having itching ears" is an interesting phrase, isn't it? In today's language it simply means that people, in these last days, will go after teachers who will tell them what their carnal hearts are itching to hear. But friends, the word of God will rub the carnal nature the wrong way every time. Rather than conform to the word of God, it's much more pleasing to do what our fallen flesh wants to do, isn't it? but that will lead to eternal destruction.

In **Hebrews 2:18** it says, Jesus "suffered being tempted," and that we are to suffer likewise. What does that mean? It means that when Jesus was tempted to sin, He caused His sinful human nature to suffer by not giving in to it. Our sinful nature. And **Hebrews 2:14** says Jesus "took part of the same," and don't let anyone tell you He didn't; our sinful nature wants to do wrong, that's its bent or it's natural inclination, and when we say no, I'm not going to do what my sinful nature wants, we cause suffering to it, because it wants to be satisfied, and it has a ferocious appetite that can't be conquered except through faith in Christ who went through the same experience we go through, and He has promised to come to our aid when temptations come, but we have to choose to submit to the promptings of the divine nature before temptation turns into sin, because that's our part. When we choose to rely upon a power outside of ourselves, that's when power will be given.

Jesus was more like us on the human side than we may think, because He had to rely on a power outside of Himself as well. In **John 5:30** Jesus said, "I can of mine own self do

nothing (**not because He didn't have the power, but because He had to be like us to save us**): as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." And in **John 8:28** He said, "I do nothing of myself." In other words, Jesus lived life the way we have to live it in order to show us how to live. Jesus is the pattern Man; He is our example of how to be victorious Christians. And understand, Jesus gave up a lot to be our Saviour, because He will bare humanity for all eternity. Check it out in **Zechariah 13:6**.

Notice what Jesus said in **John 5:39**. He said, "Search the scriptures." What do you think of when you hear the word "search?" Dig deep, right? Investigate, go to the bottom of the subject, examine, explore, hunt, inquire, pursue, chase after, scrutinize, be diligent. And the word "diligent" reminds me of what Paul said in **Hebrews 11:6** when he wrote, "without faith *it is* impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that (**what?**) diligently seek him." Or doggedly seek Him we might say.

When Jesus said "search the Scriptures" it means that there's hidden treasure in God's word, and we can't afford to be without it, because it will yield spiritual riches that we need. Neither should we shy away from studying the difficult passages by comparing one verse with another, because as we do we'll find that scripture itself is the key which unlocks the scriptures.

**Isaiah 28:9, 10** says, "Whom shall he (**God**) teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? *them that are* weaned from the milk, *and* drawn from the breasts. (**in other words, we have to study like adults and not babies**) For precept (**or teaching**) must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line (**and the word "line" is an interesting word, which in the Greek mean, "a connecting cord. In other words, a verse here and a verse there will be like a cord to connect us to the truth. Then it says we should take it**); here a little, *and* there a little."

There's nothing wrong with reading the Bible from front to back like you would read a book, but if we want a deeper understanding, we have to follow what Isaiah says. When studying a certain topic like the state of the dead for instance, we will probably come up with the wrong answer if we take just one or two verses and try to build a doctrine upon just those two when there are dozens of other verses dealing with this subject. In fact, nearly all Christians get it wrong for that very reason. But when you look at everything, and that's why it's good to have a Bible concordance that will help lead you to other

Scriptures, you will come to know the truth about this most comforting topic, and it is comforting, because in **1 Thessalonians 4:18** the apostle Paul said it would be. And like all Bible teaching, error can cost us big time. By the way, if you have a computer and access to the Internet you can download a free program at [e-sword.net](http://e-sword.net) that would be very helpful to you. Check it out, because I think you will like it. [e-sword.net](http://e-sword.net)

The idea that professed Christians would have “itching ears” in these last days, and that deception would be rampant in this technological world we live in, has never been more true than today, because the closer we get to the end, the more and more nervous the devil is becoming, fearing that his prey will be taken from him, and so he’s going about as a roaring lion seeking who he may devour.

And besides, according to **Leviticus 16**, the day of atonement ends with the scape goat, which represents Satan, having all the past sins of God’s people placed upon his own head, because he’s the one who tempted them to sin in the first place, and the atonement won’t be completed without that happening. And of course he doesn’t want that, so it’s to his advantage to cause as many people as possible to be lost, because then they will have to suffer for their own sins rather than himself. And so, there are going to be terrible consequences for not knowing the Scriptures.

In **Matthew 22** we have the Sadducees trying to trip Jesus up by asking Him a question, and they never seemed to learn their lesson, because He always made them look like fools, and why did they always end up looking like fools? **Verse 29** gives the reason, “Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.” Number 1, the Sadducees didn’t believe in a resurrection from the dead, and Jesus let them know that God has the power to give life to the dead, both spiritually and literally, and number 2, the Scriptures are clear that there will be a resurrection in the end, in fact there will be two of them, and the Sadducees will be in the second one at the end of the thousand years spoken of in **Revelation 20**. In fact, one has to wonder why the Sadducees professed religion at all if they didn’t believe in an afterlife. And the reason they didn’t is because to them wealth and political power was their thing, but I wouldn’t want to be in their shoes when they wake up in that second resurrection only to experience a permanent death from which there will be no resurrection, and in this respect their belief of no resurrection will come true, at least for themselves, and all because they erred “not knowing the Scriptures.” What about us? Could there be danger that we might end up being raised with the Sadducees because we don’t know the Scriptures? Something to think about.

In **Acts 17** we have Paul and Silas travelling to Berea after having spent time in Thessalonica laboring with the people about Jesus being the Messiah, and notice what Paul said in **verse 11**, “These **(in Berea)** were more noble **(or we might say more open minded and willing to accept the truth)** than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind **(in other words, they were predisposed to accept the truth because they were Bible students)**, and searched the scriptures **(how often?)** daily, whether those things were so.”

The Bereans didn't just take Paul and Silas' word that they were telling them the truth, they had to know for themselves from the Scriptures what was truth, and they spent time doing that every single day. Are we like the Bereans, or are we more like the Thessalonians? The difference is a significant one my friends, because it's a matter of life and death. The Bereans understood that, and the Thessalonians didn't. Just like many people today, they were content to let their religious leaders do their studying for them, which is a very dangerous thing to do no matter how much confidence you might have in them, or because of how many degrees they might have behind their name. Because God is just as willing to teach you as He was them.

In **2 Peter 1:19-21** Peter is letting his brethren know that he and the other apostles were eye witnesses to some miraculous things that took place while Jesus was here, and then he says, “We have also a more sure word of prophecy **(more sure than what they we're telling them they witnessed firsthand)**; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star **(which is Christ)** arise in your hearts **(there's that new covenant experience again)**: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. **(This is one of the reasons we must study for ourselves and not just listen to someone's own private interpretation, because that's why there are so many differing ideas floating around within Christendom, and why there are some many different denominations. Find the truth for yourself and then find a people who believe that truth and you'll be much better off. That doesn't mean we shouldn't listen to what others have to say, but when you know for yourself what the Bible teaches, then you will know if what they're telling you is the truth)** **Verse 21**, For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” Do you believe that without reservation, or do you try to look for a way around what holy men of old wrote in an effort to find an excuse not to do what the Scriptures say and what the Holy Spirit is convicting you to do?

Dear friends, we are to take the Bible, and on our knees plead with God to enlighten our mind. If we would study the Bible diligently and prayerfully every single day like the Bereans, we should every single day see some beautiful truth in a new, clear, and forcible light. That's our first and highest duty, to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light and encourage others to follow our example. Day by day we should study the Bible carefully, weighing every thought and comparing scripture with scripture like Isaiah said, because you know what? With divine help we are to form our opinions for ourselves as we are to answer for ourselves before God someday soon.

In the end if God asks you why you did thus and so, or why you believed thus and so, and your response is "my pastor said," or "my parents said," or "my husband or wife said," that's not going to be good enough. That's passing the blame, and how far did that get Adam and Eve? After blaming one another and even God Himself, they were still cast out of the garden, weren't they?

Remember how Jesus defeated the devil during His 40-day fast in the wilderness? "It is written," right? Every time he met temptation with the Scripture weapons. And again, Jesus is the pattern man, He is our example of how to overcome temptation. If we don't have the Bible in our heads and in our hearts, we won't be able to say, "it is written" when temptation comes, and we will fall.

Jesus said something very important in **John 14:26**. He was trying to comfort His disciples because they knew He was about to leave them and go back to heaven, and what He told them is also meant for us. He said, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your **(what?)** remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Jesus made it clear that the holy Spirit cannot bring something to our remembrance unless we first put it in our head by diligent study. And so, if we want that promise to be fulfilled in our life, we must first commit the Scripture to our memory.

Let me ask you a question. Can a person be saved without the word of God? If you're struggling at all with that question let me ask it another way; can a person be saved without Jesus? Your answer should be a resounding no, because Jesus and the word are synonymous. Remember what **John 1:14** says? "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." And of course there's also **Acts 4:12**, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must

be saved.” Also in **John 14:6** Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no one comes to the Father, but by me.”

So what about the person who lived their whole life in a faraway jungle somewhere and never had the opportunity to hear about Jesus and the plan of salvation? Have you ever thought about that? Well, let me ask you this, does God want people to be saved? Yes. More than we want them to be saved? Again yes. If not, then the Father would not have been in agreement for Jesus come down here to this sin cursed earth and sacrifice His life to save us? Is God fair and just and loving and not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance? Of course! If we as sinful human beings think it’s not right that people would be lost because they were never given an opportunity to know about the plan of salvation, that would mean that we are more merciful than God, and that can’t be true. Simple logic tells us that there has to be a way for every rational being born into this world to be saved if they so choose. Are there some verses of Scripture that would shed some light on this? Yes there is, but first let me ask you, have you ever heard about God’s second book? It’s called the book of nature.

According to the Bible, the love of God is expressed in the things that He made. **Psalms 19:1-4** says, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. *There is* no speech nor language, *where* their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.”

And so nobody is in a position where these things have not spoken to their heart. The Holy Spirit is able to impress upon the mind the fact that there is a God in heaven, and if God cares so much for the things of nature and of the heavens, then He must care much more for the people that are formed in His image, don’t you think? In **Matthew 10:29-31** Jesus said, “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.”

Sometimes I think our ideas about God are much too narrow and that we are poor judges when it comes to the salvation of a soul. I believe the Scriptures are clear that many people will be accepted of Him if they have cherished every ray of light that has shone upon their pathway, and I think we will see that God's grace extends to those, who through no fault of their own, have never been exposed to the gospel, because God's existence and

attributes are revealed through nature and through the conscience the Holy Spirit works through.

Notice what it says in **Romans 1:18-20**, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because **(now listen)** Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them **(somehow)**; for God hath shewed *it* unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen **(by everyone that is)**, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are **(what)** without excuse,” even the person that has lived in a remote jungle somewhere all their lives and never heard the gospel.

In other words, no one will be able to say that they never had an opportunity to know that there is a God in heaven, because the things of creation, or we could say the things of nature and of the universe itself reveals that there is a God who made these things.

Also **Romans 2:14, 15**, “For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written **(where?)** in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)”

According to the apostle Paul, even if a person doesn't know that God has given a law as to how they should conduct themselves, like the Jews had, the principles contained in the law have been made known to them, because the Holy Spirit working upon their conscience impresses the truth upon their heart. That way they are accepted or rejected depending upon whether or not they follow that conviction.

**1 John 3:19-21**, “And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.”

In ***The Desire of Ages, page 638*** it says, “Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God.”

When I became a Christian, never once had I previously opened the Bible. How then did I receive salvation? It was by the Holy Spirit using someone else to tell me what the Bible said, and by asking me to receive Christ, but it was still the word of God, just second hand. But afterward I didn't want any more second hand food. I wanted it fresh from my Father's hand, and He has never since disappointed me.

So here's the bottom line, no matter how a person is saved, it will be through the sacrifice of Christ, whether they know it or not, because there is no other Saviour. And no one will be justified by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith, **Galatians 3** makes that very clear, whether it comes to them through the Scriptures, or through the observance of the things God has created. The Holy Spirit can bring conviction either way. The important thing is to listen and obey when that conviction comes to the heart. **Acts 17:30** tells us the times of ignorance God winks at; but now **(once the truth is known)** commands all men everywhere to repent." God is good, friends, and if we will but tell Him we're sorry for doing the wrong thing and going our own way, He is faithful to forgive us our sins and to cleans us from all unrighteousness. **1 John 1:9**.

I'd like to close by reading a few short statements from the pen of Ellen White that are dealing with the importance of knowing, believing, and living according to the word of God.

Notice what it says in the **1888 Materials, page 526**, "Many truths necessary to be known are hidden like precious ore in mines which must be diligently and perseveringly worked in order for the precious treasure to be discovered. Truths essential for us to know lie too deeply buried to be discovered by unaided human reason."

**Christian Service, page 41**, "Christians should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise, and this preparation they should make by diligently studying the Word of God and striving to conform their lives to its precepts."

**Early Writings page 58**, "What leisure time we have should be spent in searching the Bible, which is to judge us in the last day . . . let the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ be in your minds continually and let them crowd out worldly thoughts and cares. When you lie down and when you rise up, let them be your meditation."

**Testimonies to Ministers, page 112**, "When the shaking comes, by the introduction of false theories, these surface readers, anchored nowhere, are like shifting sand."

And lastly, *The Desire of Ages*, page 819, and this one is so important, so let it sink in. "The Jews perished as a nation because they were drawn from the truth of the Bible by their rulers, priests, and elders. Had they heeded the lessons of Jesus, and searched the Scriptures for themselves, they would not have perished." And friends, history is being repeated today.

We could spend another hour talking about that in relation to what's going on within Adventism today along with what's being taught in the various other denominations, couldn't we? Mark this point well; when everything is said and done, we're going to be surprised how many people will be lost for all eternity because they were drawn from the truth of the Bible by their rulers and religious leaders. May it not be you, and may it not be me.