

THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST

BY PASTOR J. C. O'HAIR

**1011 WILSON AVENUE
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS**

DEDICATION

This volume is dedicated to a group of several hundred saints of God who know the meaning of II Timothy 1:8: "Be thou not therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God."

I have been privileged to serve them as pastor for more than seventeen years. They have stood uncompromisingly for the gospel of the grace of God, for the Pauline message, and the Divine truth concerning "the Church of the Mystery." Inasmuch as they have learned something of Paul's suffering for "Body" truth, they have counted it a pleasure to suffer with him for their testimony. "My gospel; wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the Word of God is not bound." II Timothy 2:9.

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." II Timothy 3:12.

We also praise the Lord for the many faithful loyal Christian friends who have supported our daily radio ministry for more than fifteen years.

Let us all continue in the prayer of Ephesians 1:17 to 19—"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power." Ephesians 1:17 to 19.

And let us continue to rejoice in the truth of Ephesians 1:6 and 7. "To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."

J. C. O'HAIR

1011 Wilson Ave. Chicago, Ill.

FOREWORD

As we send forth these Bible messages we are praying that those who read and study them may be helped in the understanding of the Holy Scriptures, and be influenced to love the Lord Jesus Christ as never before, and to live well pleasing unto Him.

We do not differ with any true Christian as to the plenary inspiration of the Bible. We agree heartily with other Christians who believe in progressive revelation confined to the limits of the Book. "All Scripture is God-breathed." The inspired messages in the Bible were given on the installment plan. God revealed Divine truth to Moses that He had never made known to Abraham, Noah, Seth, Abel and Adam. God revealed truth to the twelve apostles that He had never made known to Moses or to any of His holy prophets. The Lord Jesus revealed truth to the Apostle Paul that no prophet or apostle had ever known.

But concerning progressive revelation, we say, spiritually speaking, "ANY THING THAT IS TRUE IS NOT NEW"; "ANY THING THAT IS NEW IS NOT TRUE." Since the day that the last apostle of Christ wrote the last truth revealed from heaven any servant of the Lord who has spoken spiritual Divine truth has spoken nothing new. If it is true, it can be found in the Book. If it is new, it is not true.

All Christians are agreed as to the eternal Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ and as to His sinless and perfect life. All "Bible" Christians believe that the Lord Jesus Christ was foreordained to be the spotless Lamb of God; that His death on the cross was neither premature nor accidental; that He was not the helpless victim of circumstances when He offered Himself without spot to God at Calvary. They believe just as firmly in His bodily resurrection, and they know that apart from the perfect redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ no member of the human race can be or will be saved.

We agree with every intelligent spiritual Christian as to salvation by grace, the salvation truth of Ephesians 2:8 to 10: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

We agree with every intelligent, spiritual student of the Bible that we are today living in the dispensation of the grace of God, and that during this present economy and age God has one and only one Church, and that that Church is the Body of Christ. We agree with every such student that every sinner, who is really trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ and relying on His once-for-all sacrifice for sin, becomes a member of that one Body the very moment he is saved by grace through faith. And we heartily agree with every Bible-taught spiritual saint of God that God expects those who are redeemed by grace to walk worthy of the calling wherewith they are called, in a separated life of service, in the name of the risen Christ.

WHEREIN WE DISAGREE

We heartily disagree with other servants of the Lord who teach that the Old Testament began with the first chapter of Genesis; that the New Testament began with the first chapter of Matthew; and that the "dispensation of the grace of God" began with Peter, in the second chapter of Acts.

These false assumptions have led to faulty "dispensationalism" which we are seeking to expose and correct in these lessons, by presenting a consistent "dispensationalism" that will clear up many of the seeming contradictions and

discrepancies which are to be found in the dispensational teaching generally accepted and propagated by the majority of “grace” preachers who are Premillenarians.

We submit here several verses of Scripture:

“FOR FINDING FAULT WITH 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: 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 CONTINUED NOT IN MY COVENANT, AND I REGARDED THEM NOT, SAITH THE LORD.” “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.” Hebrews 8:8 and 9 and 13.

“BUT EVEN UNTO THIS DAY, WHEN MOSES IS READ, THE VAIL IS UPON THEIR HEART.” “BUT THEIR MINDS WERE BLINDED; FOR UNTIL THIS DAY REMAINETH THE SAME VAIL UNTAKEN AWAY IN THE READING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, WHICH IS DONE AWAY IN CHRIST.” II Corinthians 3:15 and 14.

“BUT CONTRARIWISE, WHEN THEY SAW THAT THE GOSPEL OF THE UNCIRCUMCISION WAS COMMITTED UNTO ME, AS THE GOSPEL OF THE CIRCUMCISION WAS UNTO PETER; (FOR HE THAT WROUGHT EFFECTUALLY IN PETER TO THE APOSTLESHIP OF THE CIRCUMCISION, THE SAME WAS MIGHTY IN ME TOWARD THE GENTILES:) AND WHEN JAMES, PETER, AND JOHN, WHO SEEMED TO BE PILLARS, PERCEIVED THE GRACE THAT WAS GIVEN UNTO ME, THEY GAVE TO ME AND BARNABAS THE RIGHT HANDS OF FELLOWSHIP; THAT WE SHOULD GO UNTO THE HEATHEN, AND THEY UNTO THE CIRCUMCISION.” Galatians 2:7 to 9.

“FOR THIS CAUSE I PAUL, THE PRISONER OF JESUS CHRIST FOR YOU GENTILES, IF YE HAVE HEARD OF THE DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD WHICH IS GIVEN ME TO YOU-WARD: HOW THAT BY REVELATION HE MADE KNOWN UNTO ME THE MYSTERY; AS I WROTE AFORE IN FEW WORDS.” “AND TO MAKE ALL MEN SEE WHAT IS THE DISPENSATION OF THE MYSTERY, WHICH FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD HATH BEEN HID IN GOD.” Ephesians 3:1 to 3 and Ephesians 3:9.

Here we learn that the Divine Covenant, or Testament, by which Israel was governed from the day God led that nation out of Egypt, was made old after Christ died on the cross.

The Lord Jesus had not died on the cross when the events covered in the first chapter of Matthew took place. When did God lead Israel out of Egypt? When Moses was eighty years old. That was about 2500 years after God put Adam out of Eden. Therefore,

from the sin of Adam to the giving of the law at Sinai, there was no Old Testament or Covenant. Therefore, there is not one line of the Old Testament in Genesis.

The Covenant, made old by the death of Christ on the cross, was entered into about 430 years after God made a covenant with Abram. Galatians 3:16 to 19. The Abrahamic Covenant was not made “old” by the death of Christ on the cross. It is still alive and in force.

The gospel of the circumcision was committed to Peter after Christ arose from the dead. Galatians 2:7.

“The dispensation of the grace of God” was not committed to the Twelve by the Lord Jesus on or before the day of Pentecost; but to Paul, by revelation some years later.

Because of the utter confusion, due to the lack of knowledge concerning the difference between the Lord’s program given to Peter and the Eleven, and the program which He gave by special revelation to Paul, few, if any, of the Premillennial “grace” preachers, who teach these errors, are making any effort to obey Ephesians 3:9. “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.” The Lord Jesus wants this order obeyed.

In these lessons we are not only showing why this order is not obeyed; but we are endeavoring to present constructive Bible messages building up from the foundation to the capstone of Divine truth.

“WHEREOF I PAUL AM MADE A MINISTER; WHO NOW REJOICE IN MY SUFFERINGS FOR YOU, AND FILL UP THAT WHICH IS BEHIND OF THE AFFLICTIONS OF CHRIST IN MY FLESH FOR HIS BODY’S SAKE, WHICH IS THE CHURCH; WHEREOF I AM MADE A MINISTER, ACCORDING TO THE DISPENSATION OF GOD WHICH IS GIVEN TO ME FOR YOU, TO FULFILL THE WORD OF GOD; EVEN THE MYSTERY WHICH HATH BEEN HID FROM AGES AND FROM GENERATIONS, BUT NOW IS MADE MANIFEST TO HIS SAINTS.”
Colossians 1:23 to 26.

“WITHAL PRAYING ALSO FOR US, THAT GOD WOULD OPEN UNTO US A DOOR OF UTTERANCE, TO SPEAK THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST, FOR WHICH I AM ALSO IN BONDS: THAT I MAY MAKE IT MANIFEST, AS I OUGHT TO SPEAK.”
Colossians 4:3 and 4.

Paul had a new and different ministry. He had to fill up or complete
1—That which is behind of the afflictions of Christ.
2—The Word of God with the Mystery. The capstone of truth.

Paul was in prison for the mystery. He wanted all Christians to pray for open doors where this glorious Divine truth might be presented. This is still the Lord’s will concerning

every Christian. These messages are written with the desire, hope, and prayer that you may be led to obey the, Lord in this matter.

Faithfully and sincerely yours,
Together with you in Christ Jesus by the Grace of God

J. C. O'HAIR.

MESSAGE NUMBER 1

THE DISPENSATIONAL ANSWER TO UNDISPENSATIONAL RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

One of the principal reasons why we are publishing this 320 page book, entitled "The Unsearchable Riches of Christ," why we are sending forth these messages emphasizing the Divine truth which the risen Christ revealed to the Apostle Paul, is to prove that that truth, designated "**the unsearchable riches of Christ,**" is God's curative for every doctrinal ill and "ism" with which the Body of Christ is afflicted. It is God's curative for the fanaticism which is being practiced and propagated by many sincere, zealous saints who are sincerely wrong. You will find many statements reiterated many times in these messages, for they are printed from manuscripts. We trust that they may be used among some of the members of our Radio Bible Class when they gather in groups for Bible study.

Let us explain what is meant by "the dispensational answer to undispensational religious practices." You and I know that there are many saints in the different religious organizations in this country. We refer to the organizations that claim to be Christian organizations. They claim that they are organized to practice and propagate Bible Christianity. In creed, doctrine, and practice, they attempt to prove by statements from the Bible that they are carrying on a Scriptural religious program.

Presently we shall mention by name some of the twenty sects or religious leaders which we have in mind. In the religious program of these twenty "churches" we find that they teach and practice

- 1—Christians should eat no pork.
- 2—Christians should keep Israel's seventh day Sabbath.
- 3—Christians should wash one another's feet.
- 4—Christians should not wear jewelry.
- 5—Christians should sell their property and put the money in a common treasury
- 6—Christians should not pay a pastor a stipulated salary.
- 7—Preachers should go out two by two.
- 8—Preachers should not have any money in their purses.
- 9—Christians should cast out demons.

- 10—Christians should raise the dead.
- 11—Christians should heal the lepers.
- 12—Christians should lay hands on the sick and thus restore health.
- 13—Christians should anoint the sick with oil.
- 14—Christians should bless aprons and handkerchiefs and cure the sick by putting them on their bodies.
- 15—Christians should have visions and dream dreams.
- 16—Christians should not be injured by the poison from serpents.
- 17—Christians should speak with tongues and other Christians should be able to interpret.
- 18—Christians should have the gift of discerning of spirits.
- 19—Christians should cut off their offending hands and pluck out their offending eyes.
- 20—Christians should lend money to any one who would borrow and not expect the return of the loan.
- 21—Christians should take a gift to the priest when they are healed.
- 22—Christians should have miraculous jail deliverances.
- 23—Christians receive no more forgiveness from God than others receive from these same Christians.
- 24—The meek shall inherit the earth.
- 25—Christians should do greater works than Christ did.
- 26—Christians should give up their cloaks also when sued for their coats.
- 27—Christians should not have two coats.
- 28—Christians should be circumcised.
- 29—Christians should practice the imposition of hands.
- 30—Believers should be baptized with water for the remission of sins.

Before you condemn or ridicule any of these twenty groups for including these religious ceremonies and practices in their programs, find one single one of them that is not wholly Scriptural. Then ask yourself this question: "How many of the thirty do I practice?" Check them on the list. Then tell yourself why you do not include more of the thirty in your program. Your answer will perhaps be, **"they do not belong to this dispensation."** Those that you rule out by your dispensational principle, mean your dispensational answer to some undispensational religious practices. But are you absolutely positive that what you believe, endorse or practice is both Scriptural and dispensationally correct?

When that religious woman in California recently cut off her hand because it offended her, was she not obeying the words of the Lord?

GOD'S ONE CHURCH

Every saved individual, during the present Divine economy, whether Jew or Gentile, is a member of the Body of Christ, "the Church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood." Acts 20:28.

In this age of grace God requires no religious ceremonies for salvation or for membership in the one true Bible Church. But God does demand faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and in His shed blood for salvation. And God's Book declares, "by grace are ye saved through faith; and

that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Ephesians 2:8 and 9. There are multitudes of religious people, members of some religious organization, who are not saved. Moreover there are perhaps as many trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ and in His redemptive work, who, like the foolish Galatians, are trying to make the finished work of Christ more efficacious, by mixing in some religious doings. To them the Apostle Paul has written

“I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.” “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” Galatians 2:21, Galatians 1:6 and 7, Galatians 5:1.

We shall not consider the religious programs of the new metaphysical cults, which are propagating their Satanic vagaries, in the name of Christianity, in fulfillment of II Corinthians 11:13 to 15, II Peter 2:1 and 2, and I Timothy 4:1 and 7. With their Christianized pagan philosophies they have here and there mixed in a verse of Scripture which they have invariably corrupted. Every one of them deny all of the fundamentals of true Bible Christianity. But they all have much to say about Jesus and His program of physical healing, without the use of drugs or other material remedies. Concerning them God’s warning is, “bringing in the damnable heresies denying the Lord that bought them”; “seducing spirits”; “doctrines of demons”; “gone in the way of Cain.” II Peter 2:1, I Timothy 4:1, Jude 11.

But now let us consider the “church” creeds and religious programs of religious organizations whose members claim to believe the Bible and who profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His precious shed blood.

CASE NUMBER ONE

About fifty miles north of Chicago there is a religious town made up of religious people. And there are some splendid, godly, saved people there. At the head of that religious colony there is a religious man, who preaches much sound doctrine. He doesn’t seem to obey I Peter 5:3, “neither as being lords over God’s heritage.” But he does proclaim the message of blood redemption and presents a high standard of Christian living, even if it is a mixture of grace and law.

There is a religious hotel in that religious town. In the dining-room of that hotel the religious cooks are forbidden to serve any meat that has come from any part of a hog. Even Swift’s Premium bacon is tabooed. Undoubtedly if one of the cooks in that hotel should serve a piece of pork in that religious dining room, that cook would learn that he might think he is living in the day of grace, but he would be discharged by the overseer, according to the law of Moses. That overseer prefers to be governed by the legal message of Deuteronomy 14:8, rather than by the grace message of I Timothy 4:3 to 5. But you and I must agree that the brother is Scriptural in his law, “no pork.”

Along with the law of “no pork” is the law of “no surgeons.” Divine healing of the body is one of their principal doctrines. Many of them practice, as well as preach, Divine healing. But of course they die just like other saints, and like all the sinners, in spite of their doctrine, for until the Lord Jesus returns to redeem the bodies of God’s people the death rate will continue to be

one apiece. But you and I must agree that God's saints in the Bible, during certain periods, were miraculously healed without doctors and medicine.

These dear people have gone through litigation, sorrow, and some disgrace trying to carry on the communism, described in Acts 2:44 and 45 and in Acts 4:34 and 35.

“And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.” “Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.”

Yes, a communism is Scriptural. Now we say that the founders and leaders of that religious colony have capriciously and arbitrarily selected a few of the thirty religious practices found in the Bible, and have eliminated and ignored the others, without explanation or apology.

CASE NUMBER TWO

It would be wonderful if sane evangelical Christians would display the aggressive spirit, the zeal, the determination, and the energy found among the Seventh Day Adventists. They believe the Bible, although you and I often feel that the Epistles of Paul have been wholly ignored by them. We wonder if they have ever read the Epistle to the Galatians, the third chapter of II Corinthians, or the second chapter of Colossians, or Romans 6:14.

They, too, have capriciously and arbitrarily selected a few of the thirty religious practices which we have enumerated, and have passed up the others. They have selected Israel's seventh day sabbath; “no pork”; “the religious washing of feet”; and some of them are strong on water baptism for “the remission of sins”; and some are stronger than others on Divine healing.

Of course they have in their program a damnable heresy teaching that the believer's sins will ultimately be placed on Satan, the scape-goat, who will be loosed to go into the wilderness. They have a silly unscriptural teaching concerning “the sabbath” and “the mark of the beast.” But in many of their religious practices they are Scriptural. We quote the Scriptures:

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.” “The seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God.” Exodus 20:8 and 10.

“He (Jesus) came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.” Luke 4:16.

“On the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.” Acts 16:13.

“If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.” John 13:14.

“And the swine, because it divideth the hoof, yet sheweth not the cud, it is unclean unto you; ye shall not eat of their flesh, nor touch their dead carcase.” Deuteronomy 14:8.

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Acts 2:38.

The first day of the week is not the sabbath of the Lord thy God. The seventh day is the Scriptural sabbath. The Lord never has changed the sabbath from the seventh day to the first day. But there are some dear religious people who call Sunday “the Christian sabbath”; and others miscall Sunday “the Lord's day.” Is not a Christian a follower of Jesus Christ? Did not Jesus Christ attend Divine services on the seventh day sabbath? Did not Paul also?

Intelligent students of the Bible know from Colossians 2:11 to 16, II Corinthians 3:9 to 16, and Ephesians 2:6 that members of Christ's Body have nothing to do with Israel's sabbath.

But why do most of the Christian leaders, who are straight on the sabbath, pay no attention to John 13:14, and neglect the washing of feet? They use water in baptizing, but not in washing of feet. They say the washing of feet was symbolic of cleansing. Was not also water baptism?

But the Adventists are Scriptural in their religious practices. But of course they are utterly inconsistent in selecting five or six of the religious practices and ignoring the others.

CASE NUMBER THREE

In the city of Minneapolis there is a splendid man of God, a fighting, uncompromising Fundamentalist. He has been a real defender of the faith, and an aggressive evangelist. He is a zealous immersionist. For years in his auditorium a very godly man carried on a special ministry of healing. He prayed over, and in some way blessed handkerchiefs that were in turn used for healing the physical infirmities of the saints. The dear brother was very much in earnest about those blessed handkerchiefs, and of course claimed positive cures.

The pastor, who believed in physical healing, endorsed the healing ministry. But he has failed to include in his "church" program the other religious practices mentioned above.

Now the question, "isn't it Scriptural to bless handkerchiefs"? Didn't Paul say, "follow me," and didn't Paul bless handkerchiefs?

"And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them." Acts 19:11 and 12.

The pastor of that church tried to practice some of the program of Acts 19:1 to 12. He has accepted water baptism and the blessing of handkerchiefs. Well, some believers were baptized and the apostle prayed over handkerchiefs or aprons. But our brother is very inconsistent because he has wholly ignored the religious practice recorded in the same chapter, Acts 19:6:

"And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they speak with tongues, and prophesied."

Now let's be honest and unprejudiced and fair-minded. What right has any servant of the Lord to arbitrarily select baptism, and some religious handkerchiefs, and ignore the imposition of hands for Holy Spirit baptism and the speaking with tongues, when all are linked together in the same chapter and the same Divine economy? Didn't Paul say, "follow me" If we are to follow Paul in the matter of water and religious handkerchiefs, why not in the imposition of hands for Holy Spirit baptism and speaking with tongues? Hear Paul's testimony

"Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues." "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all." I Corinthians 14:39 and 14:18.

There is a very zealous Fundamentalist here in Chicago. He is the brother responsible for disrupting the fellowship in the Fundamentalist Ministers' Association by introducing a resolution concerning water baptism into the Association. He and one of the leading pastors of the city carried through their determined purpose after they were urged and warned. But the brother was somewhat consistent in contending so strenuously for the water because he delighted in the use of oil for physical healing. Water and oil belong to the same spiritual program in the Bible. Although James did write "to the twelve tribes of Israel," and although he did say in Acts 15:19, "wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are

turned to God,” and although there is no record in the Bible that any Gentiles were anointed with oil, the Bible does say,

“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.” James 5:13 and 14.

All of these brethren dispensationally, or otherwise, rule out many of the religious practices mentioned above, while holding on to their “pet” doctrines and practices.

CASE NUMBER FOUR

Have you ever heard of the Two-By-Two saints ?

These religious Christians have very little fellowship with other Christians. They are sincerely religious and endeavor to strictly and literally obey that part of the program of Jesus that they have selected for their program, especially Luke 10:1 to 12 and Matthew 10:7 to 14.

The program in Luke 10 is very much the same as in Matthew 10. Let us note something of the message and the method in these commissions of Jesus of Nazareth to His twelve Jewish apostles to the Jewish nation

“After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them TWO AND TWO before His face into every city and place, whither He Himself would come.” “Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.” “And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of His hire. Go not from house to house.” “And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.” Luke 10:1, 4, 7 and 9 to 11.

“But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand, Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold nor silver, nor brass in your purses. Nor scrip for journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.” Matthew 10:6 to 10.

The Lord Jesus most assuredly commanded His chosen messengers to preach and do what the **“Two-and-Two”** religious messengers in this country are trying to do. They certainly endeavor to conduct themselves according to the Bible. Other Christians call them **“fanatical.”** Why are they fanatical? If they are fanatical, it is not because they are unscriptural, but because they are undispensational. They pay no attention whatever to “the dispensation of the grace of God” of Ephesians 3:1 to 11, and God’s orders in II Timothy 2:15, “rightly dividing the Word of Truth.” They ignore the message and program which the risen Christ gave to “the apostle to the Gentiles,” to supersede His kingdom message to Israel, and cry with other confused and deluded Christians, **“back to Jesus.”** They disfellowship all Christians who do not send and receive two preachers instead of one, or any company of believers who pay a pastor a monthly salary. They try to obey the Lord’s command **“take no money for your journey.”** They have utterly failed in one of the Lord’s commands, **“raise the dead.”** But they will shake the dust off on those who do not receive them.

Of the thirty religious practices mentioned above they arbitrarily select seven or eight of them and forget the others.

CASE NUMBER FIVE

For some years a very religious and clever woman in California has been the head, the bishop, the evangelist, the baptizer, the pastor, and the Bible-teacher of a company of sincere religious people. The leader and the followers have been very zealous for Jesus, and they would not think of receiving into their membership or fellowship any person who did not believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible and the Deity and redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ. That religious woman has had several slogans for her particular program—"Jesus Christ the Same Yesterday, Today and Forever"; "Health, Happiness and Heaven"; "This Is That"; "The Latter Rain"; and many others.

She has included about as many of the thirty practices in her religious program as any other person. She has been strong on baptism, but she has scattered flowers on the water, without any Scriptural authority. Under the influence of her religious hands many have fallen under some kind of power with the cry, **"this is that," "slain of the Lord."** They have experienced religious ecstasy and have broken forth speaking in new tongues. Part of her program is certainly according to the Bible. Note Mark 16:17 and 18:

"And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

But she has been positively disobedient to the plain word of God, in I Timothy 2:11 and 12.

"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. "

She can cleverly explain this away to the satisfaction of her deluded followers. She can prove to them by her visions that she is one of the handmaidens about whom Joel prophesied.

This religious sister, whose slogan has been **"back to Jesus"** and **"back to Pentecost,"** has overlooked or ignored Luke 12:33:

"Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth."

She has accumulated no small fortune. Financially, she is well fixed. She has let her followers obey Luke 12:33 to her gain. There are about fifteen of the thirty practices that she has eliminated or ignored.

Some of the Pentecostalists in their programs have added one or more religious practices to this woman's program.

CASE NUMBER. SIX

THE SNAKE BITING PREACHER

In today's newspaper is an account of the arrest of a preacher who has encouraged members of his flock, and some of his own family, to prove that Mark 16:17 and 18 is for this

age; and that if it were not for the unbelief on the part of Christian preachers, these miracles would be constantly performed by all believers. So the poisonous serpents are brought into the religious meetings for the demonstration. Let us read the verses:

“And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”

“If they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them.” So they drink it to prove that Christ and the Scriptures are true. We say they are fanatical.

CASE NUMBER SEVEN

We might group the Lutherans, the Methodists, the Baptists, the Plymouth Brethren, the Presbyterians, and others. Consider the program of any one of them.

All of these churches, without explanation or apology, without presenting any intelligent Divine principle, have from their church creeds and programs omitted eighty per cent of the thirty religious practices which we have quoted from the Bible. They have all ignored I Corinthians 12:28 and I Corinthians 12:8 to 11:

“And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.” I Corinthians 12:28. “For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.” I Corinthians 12:8 to 11.

If God set them in the Church, who set them out? No one but God had that right. If He did it, when and how did He do it?

By whose authority have the Presbyterians voted for water baptism by sprinkling and kept silent concerning these sign-gifts of I Corinthians? Think of the inconsistency of the other denominations that teach that this present “grace” economy began with Peter and the Eleven on the day of Pentecost and without explanation or apology, they omit from their “church” programs, the visions, tongues, miracles, surrender of houses and lots, baptismal regeneration, anointing with oil, blessed handkerchiefs and aprons and every other religious practice except the baptismal font or tank of the “Acts” period. They all like the water, but concerning this religious ceremony no two of them agree. Many of them talk much of following the Lord in baptism, but they have nothing to say about following Him in many other religious practices. Why?

They make not the slightest endeavor to obey the “kingdom” orders and program of Jesus of Nazareth presented to His people when He was here on earth, but many of them condemn in no uncertain language another messenger who presents the Scriptural principle to be used by members of the Body of Christ for the selection or the elimination of those Scriptural ceremonies and commands which rightly belong to other dispensations but which have no rightful place in this present economy of grace.

The Roman Catholics have much religion in their program. But they frankly admit that their ecclesiastical potentates and dignitaries have assumed the right both to interpret the Scriptures and to add to the Bible such other religious doctrines and practices as they may elect. They have a healing ministry. Their priests and bishops bless water, or bones, or garments for the healing of physical afflictions, and the recipients of this healing ministry are instructed to obey Matthew 8:4:

“ . . . go thy way, spew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.”

Other healing preachers are not so consistent. They claim to heal on the authority of Matthew 8:3, 16 and 17; but they wholly ignore the command of Matthew 8:4, concerning the priests and the law of Moses.

A FEW QUESTIONS

Now these important and interesting questions:

1—How many or how few of the thirty religious practices are for the obedience of members of the Body of Christ?

2—Have Christians any Scriptural right to select one, two, three, five, ten, or twenty, or more of the thirty for their obedience and practice without offering some God-given principle?

3—Is there not such a Divine principle in the Bible?

The answer to this question, and many other questions, is found in this book with the title, **“The Unsearchable Riches of Christ.”**

If God did not radically change the program for His Church after the Nation Israel was set aside, and the transition of the “Acts” period came to an end, then one hundred per cent of the members of the Church of God are disobedient and unfaithful. And as some preacher has said, “if the signs of Mark 16:17 and 18 are the credentials of a Christian, there have been no Christians since the apostles died.”

MESSAGE NUMBER 2

THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST

Measured by true standards and values, the Apostle Paul was the greatest man who ever lived on this earth, with the single exception of the God-man, the Lord of glory, the Second Man from heaven. Whether or not this is our unanimous opinion we are all agreed that Paul was “Number One” Christian. He won all the rewards and crowns that it is possible for a Christian to win.

Note Paul’s testimony.

“FOR WE PREACH NOT OURSELVES, BUT CHRIST JESUS THE LORD; AND OURSELVES YOUR SERVANTS FOR JESUS’ SAKE. “ “BUT BY THE GRACE OF GOD I AM WHAT I AM: AND HIS GRACE WHICH WAS BESTOWED UPON ME

WAS NOT IN VAIN; BUT I LABOURED MORE ABUNDANTLY THAN THEY ALL: YET NOT I, BUT THE GRACE OF GOD WHICH WAS WITH ME.” “AND I THANK CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD, WHO HATH ENABLED ME, FOR THAT HE COUNTED ME FAITHFUL, PUTTING ME INTO THE MINISTRY.” “AND THE GRACE OF OUR LORD WAS EXCEEDING ABUNDANT WITH FAITH AND LOVE WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS.” “HOWBEIT FOR THIS CAUSE I OBTAINED MERCY, THAT IN ME FIRST JESUS CHRIST MIGHT SHEW FORTH ALL LONGSUFFERING, FOR A PATTERN TO THEM WHICH SHOULD HEREAFTER BELIEVE ON HIM TO LIFE EVERLASTING.” “FOR I SPEAK TO YOU GENTILES, INASMUCH AS I AM THE APOSTLE OF THE GENTILES, I MAGNIFY MINE OFFICE.” “BE YE FOLLOWERS OF ME, EVEN AS I ALSO AM OF CHRIST.” “ACCORDING TO THE GRACE OF GOD WHICH IS GIVEN UNTO ME, AS A WISE MASTERBUILDER, I HAVE LAID THE FOUNDATION, AND ANOTHER BUILDETH THEREON. BUT LET EVERY MAN TAKE HEED HOW HE BUILDETH THEREUPON.” II CORINTHIANS 4:5—I CORINTHIANS 15:10—I TIMOTHY 1:12,14,16—ROMANS 11:13—I CORINTHIANS 11:1 AND I CORINTHIANS 3:10.

Paul was Christ’s man. Note Paul’s words in Acts 21:13 and Acts 20:24.

“Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” “But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”

Then note what Paul wrote at the end of his stormy career after many years of faithful and fruitful service.

“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.” II Timothy 4:6 to 8.

In I Corinthians 15:1 to 7, Paul declared that more than five hundred Christians saw the Lord Jesus Christ after He was raised from the dead. Paul declared that the gospel, by which sinners are saved, is the fact that Christ died for our sins **according to the Scriptures**, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day **according to the Scriptures**. Yes, all of this was **“according to the Scriptures.”**

Note how this same truth is stated in Acts 13:29 and 30.

“And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a sepulchre. But God raised Him from the dead.”

When the Lord Jesus Christ had fulfilled all that had been prophesied in the Old Testament Scriptures concerning His suffering, when Israel had done to Christ all that Israel’s prophets foretold, Christ was taken down from the tree (Calvary) and laid in the sepulchre. But God raised Him from the dead. Then Christ after His death shewed Himself alive by many infallible proofs. He appeared to more than five hundred brethren.

“AND LAST OF ALL HE WAS SEEN OF ME ALSO, AS OF ONE BORN OUT OF DUE TIME. “ I Corinthians 15:8.

Paul was one born out of due season. Paul declared that he had personally seen the resurrected Christ. There is no hint that Paul, as Saul of Tarsus, ever saw Jesus of Nazareth while He was the Man approved of God in the midst of Israel by miracles and signs. Acts 2:22.

Paul declared, in Romans 15:8, that Jesus of Nazareth was in the midst of Israel with a “confirmation” or “fulfillment” ministry.

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.”

Note how the Lord Jesus stated this before His death and then right after His resurrection.

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Matthew 5:17 and 18.

“Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” Luke 24:45 to 47.

Paul went into the Jewish synagogues of Asia and Europe preaching this “confirmation” message, proclaiming Divine truth that had been prophesied by the Lord’s prophets, from Moses to Malachi. Note how he stated this fact in his own defense – **“Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.” Acts 26:22 and 23.**

Note the **“none other things,”** the death and resurrection of Christ, and light unto Jews and Gentiles.

See Paul at work in this ministry in the Jewish synagogue.

“And Paul as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, Whom I preach unto you, is Christ.” Acts 17:2 and 3.

From the synagogue in Thessalonica, he went immediately to a synagogue in a nearby town, Berea. **Note the results: “Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.” Acts 17:12.**

THE NOBLE BEREANS

Those Bereans were serious and sensible. How wonderful it would be, if, in the midst of all of the religious confusion of this day, church-members and others would be as wise as those Bereans. To their credit and praise it is written

“THESE WERE MORE NOBLE THAN THOSE IN THESSALONICA, IN THAT THEY RECEIVED THE WORD WITH ALL READINESS OF MIND, AND SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, WHETHER THOSE THINGS WERE SO.” ACTS 17:11.

With this statement we should read I John 2:26 and 27. In these verses we learn that the Holy Spirit is God’s infallible teacher. No Christian has a monopoly on the Holy Spirit. All human teachers are fallible. The Holy Spirit is the infallible teacher. Human interpretations of the Scriptures may be faulty but the Scriptures are infallible. The Lord has selected and endowed some men to be special messengers and teachers to members of the Body of Christ. Ephesians

4:8 to 14. But He wants all members of that Body to be Bereans; to receive with meekness and with all readiness of mind the Word of God from the servant of the Lord, and then to prayerfully, diligently, and spiritually search the Scriptures to see whether those things be true. Never was such an attitude more necessary than today, when the Church of Christ is torn asunder with sectarianism and the confusion of doctrines.

Let us ever be Bereans. Those Bereans searched the Scriptures when Paul preached to them “confirmation” truth; that is, when Paul preached what Christ had done in fulfillment, of the prophecies recorded in the thirty-nine Books in the Old Testament Scriptures. We might say what was in fulfillment of the thirty-eight Books of the Old Testament and Genesis; for there is not a line of the Old Testament in Genesis. The Old Testament began with Exodus 20. Now right here, let us be Bereans and see whether this be true.

THE CONFIRMATION MINISTRY OF THE TWELVE

We have observed that Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham (Matthew 1:1), was in the midst of Israel with a “confirmation” ministry. Romans 15:8.

Now note the statement concerning the ministry of Peter and the Eleven. Peter with the Eleven stood up on the day of Pentecost to address devout Jews from every nation under heaven. Acts 2:14 and 2:5. They had a message for “ye men of Judaea”, “ye men of Israel”, for “all the house of Israel.” Acts 2:14— Acts 2:22— Acts 2:36.

The Twelve addressed Hebrews. Now note Hebrews 2:3 and 4.

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will.”

The Twelve confirmed the “confirmation” ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. Be a Berean. Carefully study the ministry of the twelve apostles, in the first twelve chapters of Acts, and you will learn that everything that Peter and the Eleven preached to Israel and the household of Cornelius was in fulfillment of prophecies by Israel’s Old Testament prophets. As Christ’s “confirmation” ministry was accompanied by signs, so also was the “confirmation” ministry of the Twelve.

Now by way of contrast let us be spiritual Bereans and carefully consider this unique statement of Paul, in Ephesians 3:8.

“UNTO ME, WHO AM LESS THAN THE LEAST OF ALL SAINTS, IS THIS GRACE GIVEN, THAT I SHOULD PREACH AMONG THE GENTILES THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST.”

We learned, in Acts 17:11, that the noble Bereans searched the Old Testament Scriptures to see if Paul was telling the truth. He was preaching prophesied truth. But what would those noble hearers in Berea have done, if Paul had preached to them “the unsearchable riches of Christ”? They simply could not have done any searching with success. Why? Because what Paul wrote in the third chapter of Ephesians was never made known by Israel’s prophets of old, nor made known to them. Therefore the Holy Spirit gave to Paul the word “unsearchable”. Note how Paul stated this truth in Colossians 1:25 and 26.

“WHEREOF I AM MADE A MINISTER ACCORDING TO THE DISPENSATION OF GOD WHICH IS GIVEN TO ME FOR YOU, TO FULFILL THE

WORD OF GOD; EVEN THE MYSTERY WHICH HATH BEEN HID FROM AGES AND FROM GENERATIONS, BUT NOW IS MADE MANIFEST TO HIS SAINTS.”

Very interesting this. New Divine truth, truth about which all of Israel’s prophets, priests and kings had been silent and ignorant, was given by revelation to Paul to fulfill (complete) the Word of God. The Holy Spirit calls the new Divine truth, the new revelation to Paul, “the **Mystery**” or “the **Secret**”.

Whose Secret had it been? God’s own sacred Secret.

“AND TO MAKE ALL MEN SEE WHAT IS THE DISPENSATION OF THE MYSTERY, WHICH FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD HATH BEEN HID IN GOD, WHO CREATED ALL THINGS BY JESUS CHRIST.” Ephesians 3:9. “HAVING MADE KNOWN UNTO US THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL, ACCORDING TO HIS GOOD PLEASURE WHICH HE HATH PURPOSED IN HIMSELF.” Ephesians 1:9.

“Hid in God”. The mystery of God’s will. But the Lord Jesus made known that Secret, and God is eager that every member of the Body of Christ should know that Secret.

Note the very clear statement concerning God’s stewards, in I Corinthians 4:1 and 2. “Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” If you claim to be a minister of Christ, you should be a steward of the mysteries of God. What are you doing about obeying Ephesians 3:9?

“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ.”

THE SEARCHABLE AND THE UNSEARCHABLE

Most assuredly all Christians believe II Peter 1:19 and 20: “ We have also a more sure word of prophecy; 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 arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.”

We know that many wonderful events concerning Christ, His redeemed Israel, and His Messianic kingdom on this earth, are yet to take place. Much of prophecy concerning this glory of Jesus Christ is unfulfilled up to date. We believe the words of Jesus Christ, in Matthew 5:17 and 18—”Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”

But at the same time, let us know the difference between fulfilling the law and the prophets concerning the kingdom of heaven, and fulfilling, or completing the Word of God with that Divine truth, not included in the law and the prophets. That Divine truth is called “the unsearchable riches of Christ” among the Gentiles.

That truth was proclaimed by a man who began the third chapter of Ephesians, with these words

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words). Ephesians 3:1 to 3.

Then note Ephesians 3:11. The “Mystery” is called “the eternal purpose of God in Christ Jesus”—“The unsearchable riches of Christ”. “The Mystery of God’s will”.—“The Mystery hid

in God.”—“The mystery not made known to the sons of men in other ages”.—Note how this blessed Divine truth is stated in II Timothy 1:9.

“God’s purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

It was not God’s desire or will to make known this special truth concerning the hope and calling, position and possessions of members of the Body of Christ, from the time He talked with Adam, in Eden, until after the twelve apostles had completed their ministry in the first half of the Book of Acts. Then it was time for God to disclose His Secret. This His Son did, telling Paul all about it. Christ caught Paul away to paradise and revealed to Him many truths that no one on earth had ever heard. II Corinthians 12:1 to 6.

The “Unsearchable Riches of Christ” had to do with the truth of Romans 8:28 to 30, and I Corinthians 2:7.

“And we know that all things work together for good to “them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified them He also glorified.” “For we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.”

This blessed truth is not explained in detail, in Romans and Corinthians, but it is in Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, II Timothy, and other Pauline Epistles. One phase of the Secret is presented in Romans, the eleventh chapter, the fact that the casting away of Israel brought reconciliation for Gentiles. Romans 11:15.

Note Romans 11:30 and 31: “For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.”

What then was said?

“O THE DEPTH OF THE RICHES BOTH OF THE WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE OF GOD HOW UNSEARCHABLE ARE HIS JUDGMENTS, AND HIS WAYS PAST FINDING OUT!” Romans 11:33.

This word “**unsearchable**” is an altogether different word from the “**unsearchable**” of Ephesians 3:8, concerning “the unsearchable riches of Christ”. But it is interesting to note that the “**unsearchable**” of Ephesians 3:8 is the same Greek word translated, in Romans 11:33, “**past finding out**”.

Then how are we to reconcile “**past finding out**” with Ephesians 1:9, “**having made known the Secret of His Will**?” The explanation is, that Romans was written several years before Ephesians was written. Note Ephesians 3:3, “as I wrote afore in few words.” But then follows the revelation of that Divine truth that had been past finding out.

NO LONGER CHILDREN

Note why the Lord wants every member of the Body of Christ to know the difference between the searchable riches of Christ and the unsearchable riches of Christ.

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.” Ephesians 4:14.

“The unsearchable riches of Christ” cannot be searched out in Israel’s Scriptures. The Greek word “unsearchable” means “not traceable.” You cannot trace the truth, concerning the members of Christ’s Body, seated with Him in the heavenlies, through the Old Scriptures, for there is not a word to be found in those Books concerning this heavenly truth. It was God’s eternal purpose, but it was not made known to the sons of men in other ages. It was past finding out. But it is not now past finding out. But for some reason, with which Satan has much to do, the majority of Christians have no desire whatever to know the difference between the prophesied ministry of Jesus Christ and the unprophesied ministry, called “the unsearchable riches of Christ.”

It was with particular reference to this all-important distinction that Paul wrote II Timothy 2:15.

“STUDY TO SHEW THYSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD, A WORKMAN THAT NEEDETH NOT TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY DIVIDING-THE WORD OF TRUTH.”

But let us be assured that we must still pray and heed the prayer of Ephesians 1:17 to 23, if we would know God’s Divine truth for this a parenthetical period, this dispensation of the grace of God, “the dispensation of the mystery.” We quote Ephesians 1:17 to 19.

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.”

In the messages printed in this volume, it is our desire and purpose to compare the “confirmation” ministry of Christ, of the Twelve and of Paul, with the “revelation” ministry of Paul, building up from the foundation to the capstone of Divine truth.

Certainly, if God tells us “to test things that differ”, we should know the difference between “the gospel of the kingdom”, “the gospel of the grace of God,” and “the mystery of the gospel,” for which Paul was in the Roman jail.

“And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” Ephesians 6:19 and 20.

Quite frequently we hear a preacher remark, “Christ is coming for His Church”, and then “Christ is coming with His Church”, stating dogmatically that the Church of the Mystery will not go through the tribulation. In the very next message they will preach on political signs to prove that Christ will soon come for His Body, and then ignorantly preach the Church right into the tribulation because they do not know the difference between the “searchable” and the “unsearchable” riches of Christ.

Is it any wonder their followers are in such utter confusion?

Will you be a Berean ?

MESSAGE NUMBER 3

HOW TO ENJOY SALVATION AND THE SCRIPTURES

The Bible has much to say about salvation. The Bible is divided into different economies. For more than 1500 years, from the day that Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the ten commandments from the Lord, until the day that the Lord Jesus died on the cross of Calvary, God kept His people under the reign of law. During that Divine economy God's people were "kept under the law, shut unto the faith which should afterward be revealed." Galatians 3:23.

After centuries of waiting, the Lord Jesus came from heaven to live for some years with the Jews who were under the law. Galatians 4:4. Then the Lord Jesus, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man. Hebrews 2:9. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Romans 10:4. By His death on the cross the Lord Jesus abolished the Old Covenant. That has been done away. II Corinthians 3:12 to 16.

Concerning the Lord's visit to earth, where He lived among His people, we read:

"THOUGH HE WERE A SON, YET LEARNED HE OBEDIENCE BY THE THINGS WHICH HE SUFFERED; AND BEING MADE PERFECT, HE BECAME THE AUTHOR OF ETERNAL SALVATION UNTO ALL THEM THAT OBEY HIM." Hebrews 5:8 and 9.

Beautiful expression! Wonderful truth! Blessed good news! Jesus Christ the Son of God became the Author of eternal salvation! Note how this glorious truth is stated in I Peter 3:18 and Hebrews 9:12:

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."

"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

The Lord Jesus Christ was both God and man. He was altogether perfect. He accomplished a perfect redemption. He provided perfect salvation for lost human beings, sinners. We are living in the day of grace, under God's economy of grace. We are made saints by faith in Christ and His once-for-all sacrifice. Hebrews 10:10 and 14.

Note the "grace" good news.

"FOR THE LAW WAS GIVEN BY MOSES, BUT GRACE AND TRUTH CAME BY JESUS CHRIST." John 1:17.

"Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded GRACE DID MUCH MORE ABOUND: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might GRACE REIGN THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS UNTO ETERNAL LIFE BY JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD." Romans 5:20 and 21.

NOT BY WORKS – BUT UNTO GOOD WORKS

"For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship created in

Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:8 to 10.

What part does sinful man play in his salvation? He is the recipient of God’s grace. Hear the cry of a poor condemned sinner, **“What must I do to be saved ?”** And the reply, **“believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.”** Acts 16:31.

By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves:

“IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD.”

“NOT OF WORKS.”

“GOD’S WORKMANSHIP.”

Note how the wonderful “grace” message is stated in II Timothy 1:9 and 10:

“Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His, own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

Then note the future:

“That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches, of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 2:7.

From “before the foundation of the world” to “the ages to come, **“GRACE.”** Salvation is God’s gift to the believing, receiving sinner.

“ The free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23.

Because most human beings are incurably religious they cannot be persuaded that Paul’s statement, in Romans 7:18, is generally true. Note his statement and with it Romans 8:8:

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.” Romans 7:18.

“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” Romans 8:8.

Some of the self-sufficient and self-righteous religious sinners repudiate and reject the Holy Spirit’s message by Paul in Romans 4:4 and 5. Others say such a message of salvation is too good to be true. It is good and it is true. Hear it. Believe it. Claim it. Appropriate it. Experience it. Thank God for it. Here it is:

“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Romans 4:4 and 5.

Hear it in different language

“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour: That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.” Titus 3:3 to 8.

Here then is God’s order, God’s message, God’s way of salvation. Note the human material that God has to work with, how He works, and what He really does with sinners who will let Him do the work of salvation. Keep in mind the word “let.” “Let” God save you. Ac-

knowledge that you by nature are not fit for God's presence and God's heaven. You can be made fit by God's grace and Christ's redemptive work.

Not by your unrighteous works, which you may consider works of righteousness, but by God's mercy and grace and Divine power, in, through, and by His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Note Ephesians 2:3 to 5:

"Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved). Ephesians 2:3 to 5.

Out of dead sinners God makes living saints, "by grace."

Hear again this good news:

"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity." I Timothy 2:4 to 7.

God will have all men to be saved. Do you really want to be saved? Then let God save you. Note the Divine process in II Thessalonians 2:13:

"BUT WE ARE BOUND TO GIVE THANKS ALWAY TO GOD FOR YOU, BRETHREN BELOVED OF THE LORD, BECAUSE GOD HATH FROM THE BEGINNING CHOSEN YOU TO SALVATION THROUGH SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT AND BELIEF OF THE TRUTH."

Yes, salvation is of the Lord. God does the work. God is a great Giver. Man is a poor receiver. God has chosen us unto salvation. How? By sanctification of the Spirit. Belief of the truth.

Note the truth of Romans 10:9 and 13:

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Believe the truth. Believe it not only in your head; but believe with all your heart. Believe that you are ungodly and that Christ died for the ungodly. Receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your own individual personal Saviour. Believe unto the saving of your soul.

Accept at full face value this glorious truth recorded in Titus 2:11 to 13:

"FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGETH SALVATION HATH APPEARED TO ALL MEN. TEACHING US THAT DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY AND GODLY, IN THIS PRESENT WORLD; LOOKING FOR THAT BLESSED HOPE, AND THE GLORIOUS APPEARING OF THE GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST."

What has appeared? The grace of God. To whom has it appeared? To all men. What has the grace of God brought? Salvation. And then that grace of God teaches the believer "that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should **live** soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; **Looking** for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. "

The saved sinner is taught "**to live**" and "**to look**."

THE KNOWLEDGE AND JOY OF SALVATION

The real joy of salvation is experienced by those who “live” and “look”, in obedience to Titus 2:12 and 13.

The Lord Jesus Christ said to His disciples, **“rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”**

“Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits, are subject unto you; But rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” Luke 10:20.

The Holy Spirit directed John to write an Epistle to saints. In that Epistle he wrote

“AND THESE THINGS WRITE WE UNTO YOU, THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL.” I John 1:4. “THESE THINGS HAVE I WRITTEN UNTO YOU THAT BELIEVE ON THE NAME OF THE SON OF GOD: THAT YE MAY KNOW THAT YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, AND THAT YE MAY BELIEVE ON THE NAME OF THE SON OF GOD.” I John 5:13.

What does the Holy Spirit desire concerning those who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ? “That they may know that they have eternal life.” “That their joy may be full.” The Holy Spirit wants those who are saved by grace to have a “know-so,” salvation and a joyous fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Note what the Holy Spirit said by the pen of Paul:

“NOW THE GOD OF HOPE FILL YOU WITH ALL JOY AND PEACE IN BELIEVING, THAT YE MAY ABOUND IN HOPE, THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY GHOST.” Romans 15:13.

So we learn that the Lord desires that His redeemed ones should live righteously, soberly and justly in this present evil age, that they should know that they are saved, that they should rejoice because their names are written in heaven, that they should be joyous, filled with joy and peace, and be full of hope.

MEMBERS OF GOD’S HOUSEHOLD

Let us note carefully II Timothy 2:19 to 21:

“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His. And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge Himself from these, he shall be A VESSEL UNTO HONOUR, sanctified and meet for the Master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.”

And II Timothy 2:15:

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, A WORKMAN THAT NEEDETH NOT TO BE ASHAMED, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.”

Here we learn that God knoweth them that are His. We also learn “them that are His” should be “vessels of honour” in God’s great House, and they should be workmen that need not to be ashamed. We learn that “them that are His”, “who name the name of Christ,” are to “depart from iniquity.”

Unless God's children do depart from iniquity and do rightly divide the Word of truth, they cannot be vessels of honour sanctified and meet for the Master's use. Here then is the secret of the joy of salvation.

God's children cannot lose their salvation, but the majority of God's children know, by their own personal experience, very little about the real joy of salvation.

We all love the parable of the Vine and the branches. Hear the words of the Lord Jesus in John 15:8:

"Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples."

There are two ways of bearing fruit; one is, manifesting the fruit of the Spirit "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Galatians 5:22 and 23.

The other is leading other sinners to the Lord Jesus Christ. Next to the joy of receiving Christ for salvation is the joy of leading some one else to receive Jesus Christ for salvation. There is also joy in heaven: "Likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." Luke 15:7.

The Holy Spirit has presented a very high plane of spiritual living for members of the Body of Christ in the different Epistles written to them. In Colossians 1:9 to 11, the Lord's desire for His saints, is thus expressed

"THAT YE MIGHT BE FILLED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL IN ALL WISDOM AND SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING. THAT YE MIGHT WALK WORTHY OF THE LORD UNTO ALL PLEASING, BEING FRUITFUL IN EVERY GOOD WORK, AND INCREASING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD; STRENGTHENED WITH ALL MIGHT, ACCORDING TO HIS GLORIOUS POWER, UNTO ALL PATIENCE AND LONGSUFFERING WITH JOYFULNESS." Colossians 1:9 to 11.

Here then is the secret of enjoying salvation, a spiritual walk, and a fruitful life, patient and longsuffering with joyfulness.

Note again carefully II Timothy 2:21 and 15:

"If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work. "

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. "

If the believer departs from iniquity and rightly divides the Word of Truth he will be an unashamed workman and a vessel meet for the Master's use.

This brings us to the consideration of:

"HOW TO ENJOY THE SCRIPTURES."

In II Timothy 3:16 and 17 we read:

"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, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Note Romans 15:4 and I Corinthians 10:11.

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

Let us consider these statements together with I Corinthians 10:32:

“Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God.”

Redeemed sinners during this present Divine economy are members of Christ's Body. They belong to the Church of God which He purchased with His own blood, the House of God, the pillar and ground of the truth. Acts 20:28. Some of the Scriptures are addressed directly and specifically to these Church-members.

Note the wonderful truth addressed to and concerning members of Christ's Body in Ephesians.

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD.” “In Whom ye also are builded together for an HABITATION OF GOD through the Spirit.” Ephesians 2:19 and 22.

“But if I tarry long that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in THE HOUSE OF GOD, which is THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery.” I Timothy 3:15 and 16.

“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a Perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:12 and 13.

In rightly dividing the Word of Truth, it behooves God's workmen to know definitely that God is building a House, that He is building up the Body of Christ, which He called “the House of God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

The Holy Spirit declares that God is not the author of confusion. God is not responsible for all the different Sectarian groups into which the Church of Christ is divided. God recognizes but one true Bible Church during this present economy of grace, and that Church is not primarily an organization, but an organism. It is not Israel.

THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND THE BODY OF CHRIST

No one rightly divides the Word of truth, or can truly enjoy or understand the Scriptures, who confuses “**the House of Israel**” with “**the House of God**” described in Paul's Epistles to Timothy and to the Ephesians.

“The House of Israel” has fallen. It is going to be rebuilt or re-established during a future Divine economy. If you want a real vivid picture and guarantee of this, read the thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel and Isaiah 62:1 to 5.

The Scriptures which were written to and concerning “**the House of Israel**” are to be diligently and faithfully studied by members of the Body of Christ. They are for admonition, and they are profitable for instruction in righteousness. They are not written to members of Christ's Body.

Note in Genesis 35:10 and 11 and 15 how Jacob's name was changed to “Israel.”

“And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and He called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of

thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Bethel."

When God met Jacob, Jacob said, **"this is none other than "the House of God."** Genesis 28:17. That desert lonely place was to Jacob **"the House of God."**

Jacob's name was changed to **"Israel"** about 1732 B.C. The first time the expression **"the House of Israel"** is found in the Scriptures is Exodus 40:38. That was about 1495 B.C.

Now let us read Exodus 1:1 and 5, and learn that about 1710 B.C. seventy Israelites went down into Egypt. Then note about 1495 B. C.; Exodus 12:41.

"And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt; this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations."

"And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, besides children." Exodus 12:37.

Out of "the house of bondage" went "the House of Israel" about 430 years after God called Abram to leave his home and loved ones. Genesis 12:1 to 4—Galatians 3:8.

Israel was forty years in the wilderness, journeying from Sinai to Canaan. Then they went to Canaan to become "the Commonwealth of Israel." They reached Canaan about 1455 B. C. Now read Acts 13:17 to 23:

"The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought He them out of it. And about the time of forty years suffered He their manners in the wilderness. And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He divided their land to them by lot. And after that He gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they desired a king; and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years, And when He had removed him, He raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also He gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all My will. Of this man's seed hath God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus."

As God gave "the House of Israel" judges about the space of 450 years, He gave kings to reign over Israel and Judah about 500 years.

Then about 606 B. C. Nebuchadnezzar came from Babylon to Jerusalem. He besieged and destroyed the city, took the vessels out of the temple and took many of the Jews to Babylon. This was the beginning of **"the times of the Gentiles."** Luke 21:24. Read the last two chapters of II Kings and Jeremiah.

THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL IN THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

In Isaiah 43:7 God declared that Israel was created for His glory. In Romans 11:25 and 26 we read that a blindness in part is happened to Israel until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Now read the judgment of the Lord Jesus upon that people and city.

"There shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and

Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” Luke 21:23 and 24.

What are we to understand from these statements? God is not, by any means, through with the House of Israel.

“For this is the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel after those days, 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.” Hebrews 8:10 and 11.

The Israelites are today where Christ said they would be, in Luke 21:24. So also is the city of Jerusalem. The future redemption of the House of Israel is recorded in Luke 21:27 and 28 and 31.

“And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads for your redemption draweth nigh.” “So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.” Luke 21:27, 28 and 31.

So we should realize how very important and imperative it is to know when God created Israel and when God set **“the House of Israel”** aside temporarily, if we are to enjoy and understand the Bible.

Before God created Israel, from Adam to Jacob, God had some faithful servants, Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Shem, Eber and Abram. None of these belonged to **“the House of Israel.”** Abram belonged to **“the House of Shem”** to **“the House of Eber”**, to **“the House of Terah.”** Terah, Abraham’s father, was an idolatrous Gentile. Joshua 24:2.

ABRAHAM - ISAAC - JACOB - NOT UNDER LAW

Abram was an Eberite, a Hebrew, a descendant of Adam, Noah, and Shem. But Abram was neither an Israelite nor a Jew. Abram did not belong to the House of Israel because there was no House of Israel at the time he died. Judah was the son of Jacob (Israel). Judah was the great grandson of Abraham. The Jews, as to race, were **“Judahites”**. But all Israelites became **“Jews”** by religion.

Abram became **“Abraham”** when he was 99 years old. Genesis 17:7 to 17. Abram was justified in uncircumcision. Galatians 3:8 and Romans 4:8 to 11. But when Abram was declared righteous he was not baptized into the Body of Christ, as were Jews and Gentiles 1900 years later. I Corinthians 12:13.

Abram was not under the law, or under the Mosaic Covenant that became the **“Old Covenant”** after Christ died on the cross. II Corinthians 3:13 to 15. Hebrews 8:11.

Note carefully Galatians 3:19 and Romans 5:20 and 21:

THE LAW WAS ADDED.

“WHEREFORE THEN SERVETH THE LAW? IT WAS ADDED BECAUSE OF TRANSGRESSIONS, TILL THE SEED SHOULD COME TO WHOM THE PROMISE WAS MADE; AND IT WAS ORDAINED BY ANGELS IN THE HAND OF A MEDIATOR.”

“MOREOVER THE LAW ENTERED, THAT THE OFFENCE MIGHT ABOUND. BUT WHERE SIN ABOUNDED, GRACE DID MUCH MORE ABOUND: THAT AS SIN HATH REIGNED UNTO DEATH, EVEN SO MIGHT GRACE REIGN THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS UNTO ETERNAL LIFE BY JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.”

Let us carefully compare these two verses of Scripture with Romans 5:13 and 14

“UNTIL THE LAW SIN WAS IN THE WORLD: BUT SIN IS NOT IMPUTED WHEN THERE IS NO LAW. NEVERTHELESS DEATH REIGNED “FROM ADAM TO MOSES.”

‘The period “from Adam to Moses” was subdivided into other periods or dispensations. “From Adam to Noah and the flood, about 1656 years.” “From Noah to the casting away of the Gentiles and the call and circumcision of Abraham, more than 400 years.” “From the call and justification of Abram to the adding of the law, the Old Testament and Israel’s religion (Hebrews 9:10), about 430 years.”

LET US LEARN THESE IMPORTANT LESSONS

First: That from Adam to Moses, about 2500 years, Adam, Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Shem, Eber, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Levi, Joseph, and other men of God were not under the law. They were not Old Testament saints. In fact Moses was 80 years old when God gave the law to Israel at Sinai. They lived “when there was no law.” So God has very definitely marked a period in the Bible, designated

FROM ADAM TO MOSES WHEN THERE IS NO LAW

Second: We learn in Galatians 3:8, Galatians 3:16, 17 and 19, that 430 years before God added the (Old) Testament at Sinai, God preached the gospel to uncircumcised Abram, and by faith Abram was declared righteous. Let us keep in mind that the covenant given to Israel at Sinai was entirely new to Israel at that time and it did not become “Old” until after Christ had died on the cross.

Abraham was circumcised at the age of 99. Genesis 17:7 to 17. With that covenant of circumcision (Acts 7:8) God cut off the Gentiles and began a new Divine movement. Romans 1:21 to 31.

God made a covenant with Abraham in which He guaranteed to Abraham’s seed (Israel) the land of Canaan. He confirmed that covenant with an oath.

Third: We learn in Galatians 3:16 to 19 that God added the law to the gospel preached to Abraham, to the covenant of promise which God gave to Abraham 430 years before Moses was on Mount Sinai. God added the “Law” Covenant to the Abrahamic Covenant. The “Law” Covenant was abolished after Christ died on the cross. But the Abrahamic Covenant has not been annulled. Because of this Covenant Israel will yet be saved. Romans 11:26 to 29.

Fourth: We learn in Matthew 1:1, that Jesus Christ was the Son of David, the Son of Abraham. In Romans 15:8, we learn that Jesus Christ was the Minister of the circumcision to confirm promises which God made to Israel. In Galatians 4:4 we learn that Jesus Christ was born under the Old Testament to redeem them that were under the Old Covenant. In Luke 2:12 to 20 we learn that Jesus Christ was circumcised. In Hebrews 9:15, we learn that Jesus Christ was the Mediator of the New Covenant. Jesus Christ was sent only to the children of Abraham (Israel), while on earth. Matthew 15:24. Luke 13:16. Luke 19:9.

Fifth. We learn in Romans 11:15 that the glorified risen Christ sent Paul with the message of reconciliation to Gentiles when and because Israel was cast away. Then and there began “**the times of the Gentiles**” spiritually. Since that time we have been living in “**the times of the Gentiles**” in every sense of the word. It is so important that we see “the times of the Gentiles” began with Nebuchadnezzar, politically, and with Paul spiritually.

Premillennarians are **dispensational** Bible-teachers and all **dispensational** Premillennarians teach that when “**the House of Israel**” fell, God began to build a new and different House, “**the House of God**” of I Timothy 3:15.

Then believing Jews and Gentiles were baptized by the One Spirit into the One Body. I Corinthians 12:13. That One Body is called in Ephesians 3:6, “the JointBody.” Divine Truth concerning this “Joint-Body,” its hope and calling, is called “**the unsearchable riches of Christ**.” Ephesians 3:8.

The word “**unsearchable**” means “**not-to-be-tracked**.” That truth was not prophesied by Israel’s prophets. It was called God’s Secret. Ephesians 3:9. It was disclosed to Paul, and by him to us. And it is our duty “to make all see what is the dispensation of the Secret.” Ephesians 3:9. “Having made known the Mystery of His will.” Ephesians 1:9.

WHEN DID THE BODY BEGIN?

The historical beginning of “the Church of the Mystery” was not while Christ was on earth. And assuredly “the Church of the Mystery,” disclosed to Paul, did not begin with Peter on Israel’s feast day, Pentecost.

Let us learn that “the Body of Christ” is “the Church of God,” but “the Church of God” is not always “the Body of Christ.” Note the definition of the Body of Christ in Ephesians 1:23, “the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” The Church is one flesh with Christ. This was one phase of “the Mystery.” Ephesians 5:30 and 31.

Now let us carefully read and consider the radical change recorded in Acts 14:27. In that verse we learn that God opened up the door of salvation unto the Gentiles shortly after the Holy Spirit said, “separate unto Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them,” (Acts 13:2), shortly after Paul turned from the Jews and said, “lo, we turn unto the Gentiles.” Acts 13:46.

We would impress upon your minds and hearts the importance of marking the change from Jews to Gentiles in Acts 13:46, Acts 14:27, Acts 18:5 and 6, Romans 11:11 to 15, and Acts 28:25 to 28.

NO DIFFERENCE

In Matthew 15:24 to 28 we learn the great difference between Jews and Gentiles, “children” and “dogs.” In Romans 10:10 to 15 we learn that difference no longer existed. Believing Jews and Gentiles were then one in Christ and all baptized into One Body by One Spirit. Galatians 3:26 to 28, I Corinthians 12:13. Romans 6:14: “Ye are not under the law.”

MEMBERS OF CHRIST

Now let us note Romans 12:4 and 5:

“For as we have many members in one Body and all members have not the same office, go, we being many, are one Body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”

Note how this was accomplished in Romans 6:3 and 4: believers were baptized into the death of Christ, buried with Him by baptism, and raised to walk in newness, of life.

Christ’s Body is called in Ephesians 3:6, “the Joint-Body.”

We learned in I Corinthians 10:32 that the members of Christ’s Body were not to offend Jews, Gentiles, or the Church of God.

In II Timothy 2:15, members of Christ’s Body are thus instructed, “rightly dividing the Word of Truth.”

GOD’S DIVINE PRINCIPLE

Let us study the Four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, as well as from Genesis to Malachi, and the first twelve chapters of Acts, in the light of God’s truth revealed after the radical change marked by Acts 14:27.

Then let us study all Divine Truth, from Acts 14:27 to the other radical change, marked by Acts 28:25 to 28, in the light of Paul’s Epistles, written after the close of the “Acts” period.

Thus we should find that God’s “golden key” for the interpretation, appropriation, application and enjoyment of the Scriptures, is in the “Body Truth” in Paul’s Prison Epistles.

Let us study all Scripture in the light of Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Titus, II Timothy and other Epistles and be careful not to frustrate the grace of God or eliminate any precious truth that God wants brought over from some former dispensation. “Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body’s sake, which is the Church: Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the Word of God; Even the Mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints: To Whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; Which is Christ in you the hope of glory.” Colossians 1:24 to 27.

NOTHING TO PAY

Nothing to pay ! Yes, this is true,
There is nothing left for the sinner to do.
There’s nothing to pay to earn God’s love
There’s nothing to pay for a home above.
The sinner has nothing good within;
The sinner has nothing to pay for sin.
No human can keep God’s holy law
None can remove a single flaw.
God’s debtors we are in our bankrupt state ;
How can we pay our debt so great?
Apart from grace, though doing our best,
We find no pardon, peace or rest.
Christ came from heaven to die on the tree.
Eternal life! God’s gift, is free;
For God hath accepted the work of His Son,

He saves, guilty sinners by the work He has done.
God saves by grace, without good deeds;
Christ is all that the sinner needs
This is the gospel so often we've heard
The message of grace in God's own Word.
Why should a sinner think he can aid?
Why should he pay what Christ has paid?
No value is there in a human plan;
But Christ tasted death for every man.
No payment more will God require,
What more than Christ should man desire ?
Complete in Christ and justified,
Forgiven, cleansed and sanctified.
Let us thank God for His infinite grace;
And the Saviour Who was willing to die in our place,
To die on the cross to put sin away,
Rejoicing to know there's nothing to pay.
The work of our Saviour we'll never forget;
Forever we'll praise Him for paying our debt.
We'll honor and praise Him, looking above,
Seeking each day to be filled with His love.
Yes, looking to Jesus, we'll run well the race,
Depending each day on God's wonderful grace.
God's Word is true; we're sure of reward
For all that is done in the name of the Lord,

MESSAGE NUMBER 4

GOD AND CHRIST IN SALVATION

Note several verses quoted from one of the last Epistles written by the Apostle Paul.

“God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not); a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.” I Timothy 2:4 to 7.

Let us emphasize the fact that God will have all men to be saved. Christ Jesus is the one and only Mediator between God and men. Christ Jesus gave Himself a ransom for all. “To be testified in due time.” To the Apostle Paul was committed this truth for Gentiles.

Note Paul's testimony in I Timothy 1:11; “According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.”

Then note one other important fact, stated in this chapter; namely, that Paul was chosen by the Lord Jesus Christ (verse 12) to be a pattern for believers. "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." I Timothy 1:16.

During the years that Christ Jesus was on earth He was Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God by miracles, in the midst of Israel. Acts 2:22. Just before the Lord Jesus went to the cross He said "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die." John 12:31 to 33.

Some years after the Lord Jesus died on the cross and went back to heaven, these messages were written to the Lord's people concerning the once-for-all sacrifice of the Son of God

"But we see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." Hebrews 2:9.

"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Hebrews 9:12.

"But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." Hebrews 10:12.

"And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." Colossians 1:20.

"And He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John 2:2.

This message of grace was sent out to all men, Gentiles as well as Jews:

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." Titus 2:11.

"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit; Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Titus 3:4 to 7.

Note Paul's testimony written about 65 A.D., more than thirty years after the Lord Jesus, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man:

"For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world." Colossians 1:5 and 6.

"The gospel which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister." Colossians 1:23.

Here we learn that the gospel had been preached to every creature under heaven. The great majority of those human creatures had rejected the gospel and refused to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved by grace. The religious people, who claimed to love and serve God, were responsible for Paul's imprisonment. He was in jail at Rome when he wrote to the Colossians. He wrote from that jail to Timothy concerning, "My gospel: wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the Word of God is not bound." II Timothy 2:9.

Note again Paul's testimony: "For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office." Romans 11:13.

Note what the risen Christ said to the Apostle Paul—“And He said unto me, Depart; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.” Acts 22:21.

“That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:16.

“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Ephesians 3:8.

Now by way of contrast note what Jesus of Nazareth said to the twelve apostles while He was in the midst of Israel, in the land of the Jews, and what they agreed to do many years after Christ had gone back to heaven:

“These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Matthew 10:5 and 6.

“And when James, Peter, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.” Galatians 2:9.

Therefore even the superficial student of the Bible knows that neither the Lord Jesus nor any of His accredited messengers proclaimed while the Lord was on earth—“The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” Titus 2:11.

Note the attitude of the twelve apostles about seven years after Christ went back to heaven – “And He said into them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” Acts 10:28

Later on something happened. Note Acts 13:46—Romans 10:12 and 13—Romans 11:30—Romans 11:15:

“Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.”

“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. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

“For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief.”

“For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?”

Thus we see when “the due time” came for the Gentiles. We see why salvation and reconciliation was sent to them. Because Israel put the Word of God from the .. Because of Israel’s blindness and unbelief, the casting away of Israel brought reconciliation for the Gentiles. Then Paul preached the gospel to every creature under heaven. Note the statement in Acts 19:10—“And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.”

We have learned that Jesus Christ offered one sacrifice for sins and then sat down in heaven. We have learned that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasteth death for every man. We have learned that by His once-for-all sacrifice and His once-for-all entering into heaven Christ obtained eternal redemption for us. We have learned that He made peace by the blood of His cross.

Now note those who experience this peace. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 5:1 Those who are justified by faith. What about those who do not believe?

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36

"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." John 8:24.

"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." II Thessalonians 1:7 to 9.

"That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." II Thessalonians 2:12.

But for believers, this blessed truth: "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." I Thessalonians 5:9.

Thus we see that God, Who will have all men to be saved, has provided salvation by grace, for any child of Adam who will be the recipient of His grace and receive Jesus Christ as his or her Saviour.

The free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:23.

"Being justified without a cause by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Romans 3:24.

"He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." John 3:18.

"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come He might skew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Ephesians 2:6 and 7

"But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." Hebrews 10:39

Settle the matter of your salvation now, according to the will of God.

MESSAGE NUMBER 5

BY ADAM - BY MOSES - BY CHRIST

THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH

By Adam

"WHEREFORE, AS BY ONE MAN SIN ENTERED INTO THE WORLD, AND DEATH BY SIN; AND SO DEATH PASSED UPON ALL MEN, FOR THAT ALL HAVE

SINNED.” ROMANS 5:12. “FOR AS IN ADAM ALL DIE, EVEN SO IN CHRIST SHALL ALL BE MADE ALIVE.” “THEY THAT ARE CHRIST’S AT HIS COMING.” I CORINTHIANS 15:22 TO 24.

“FOR IF BY ONE MAN’S OFFENCE DEATH REIGNED BY ONE; MUCH MORE THEY WHICH RECEIVE ABUNDANCE OF GRACE AND OF THE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL REIGN IN LIFE BY ONE, JESUS CHRIST. THEREFORE AS BY THE OFFENCE OF ONE JUDGMENT CAME UPON ALL MEN TO CONDEMNATION; EVEN SO BY THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF ONE THE FREE GIFT CAME UPON ALL MEN UNTO JUSTIFICATION OF LIFE.” ROMANS 5:17 AND 18.

THE LAW OF TEN COMMANDMENTS

By Moses

“FOR THE LAW WAS GIVEN BY MOSES, BUT GRACE AND TRUTH CAME BY JESUS CHRIST.” JOHN 1:17.

“THEREFORE BY THE DEEDS OF THE LAW THERE SHALL NO FLESH BE JUSTIFIED IN HIS SIGHT; FOR BY THE LAW IS THE KNOWLEDGE OF SIN.” ROMANS 3:20.

“FOR IF THE MINISTRATION OF CONDEMNATION BE GLORY, MUCH MORE DOTH THE MINISTRATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS EXCEED IN GLORY.” II CORINTHIANS 3:9.

“BECAUSE THE LAW WORKETH WRATH; FOR WHERE NO LAW IS, THERE IS NO TRANSGRESSION.” ROMANS 4:15.

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

By Christ

“GRACE AND TRUTH CAME BY JESUS CHRIST,”

“AND BY HIM ALL THAT BELIEVE ARE JUSTIFIED FROM ALL THINGS, FROM WHICH YE COULD NOT BE JUSTIFIED BY THE LAW OF MOSES.” ACTS 13:39.

“MOREOVER THE LAW ENTERED, THAT THE OFFENCE MIGHT ABOUND. BUT WHERE SIN ABOUNDED, GRACE DID MUCH MORE ABOUND: THAT AS SIN HATH REIGNED UNTO DEATH, EVEN SO MIGHT GRACE REIGN THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS UNTO ETERNAL LIFE BY JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.” ROMANS 5:20 AND 21.

“BEING JUSTIFIED FREELY BY HIS GRACE THROUGH THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS.” ROMANS 3:24.

“HE THAT BELIEVETH ON HIM IS NOT CONDEMNED; BUT HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT IS CONDEMNED ALREADY, BECAUSE HE HATH NOT BELIEVED IN THE NAME OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD.” JOHN 3:18.

Here is a very interesting truth:

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God

sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” Romans 8:2 and 3.

1—**The law of sin and death** - By Adam, sin and death passed upon all men. Sin entered by Adam. This law is a universal law. “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23. “There is none righteous; no, not one.” Romans 3:10. Condemnation upon all by Adam.

2— **The law of Sinai - given by Moses.** No descendant of Adam could perfectly keep the perfect law. Why? “For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin.” “For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do.” Romans 7:14 and 19.

In Romans 8:3 we read: “What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh.” Because of indwelling sin the natural man could not be subject to God’s holy law, the ten commandments. Romans 8:7. Note Hebrews 7:19—“The law made nothing perfect.” But Christ did.

Note again “For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do.” “By the law is the knowledge of sin.” Romans 3:20. “The law worketh wrath.” “By the law let every mouth be stopped and all the world become guilty before God.” Romans 4:15 and 3:19.

“The law entered (by Moses) that sin might abound.” Romans 5:20.

Therefore the Law, which was given by Moses, is called “The Ministration of Condemnation.” II Corinthians 3:9. “The Ministration of Death.” I Corinthians 3:7.

3—**The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.** “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:4.

“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” Romans 3:28.

“ Far sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” Romans 6:14.

Note what Christ accomplished: “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law.” Galatians 4:4. “To redeem them that were under the law.”

“For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” II Corinthians 5:21.

Now note the words of Christ in John 10:17 and 18, and what He accomplished in II Timothy 1:10. “Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life.”

“No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father.”

“But now is made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

This is how and when the eternal, omnipotent Divine Christ established the new law; **the law of the Spirit of life.**

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” II Corinthians 5:17.

Condemned or not condemned. “He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

BY ADAM
The entrance of sin
BY MOSES
The knowledge of sin
BY CHRIST
The forgiveness of sin

CONDEMNED ALREADY

- 1— The human race condemned in Adam. Romans 5:17 to 20.
 - 2— The human race condemned by the law of Moses. II Corinthians 3:9.
 - 3— The human race condemned because of the sin of unbelief. John 3:18.
- “Have not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

BY ADAM

Note “the law of sin and death,” in Genesis 2:16 and 17.

“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Genesis 2:16 - 17.

“So he drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden, Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.” Genesis 3:24.

FROM ADAM TO MOSES

“Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come.” Romans 5:14.

About 2500 years after Adam left Eden, Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving God’s holy commandments, written on two tables of stone. (Exodus 20).

“The law was added because of transgressions.” Galatians 3:19.

Death reigned from the day of Adam’s sin until the day that Moses received the law. During those 2500 years Adam’s descendants were not “under the law” that was given to Moses. The offence entered by Adam. “The law entered that the offence might abound.” Romans 5:20.

Moses was 80 years old when God gave the law to Israel. (Exodus 7:7.)

FROM MOSES TO CHRIST

“But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.” Galatians 3:23 to 25.

Under the law God’s covenant people (Israel) received the spirit of bondage unto fear. Romans 8:15.

THEY COULD NOT ENDURE THAT WHICH WAS SPOKEN

“For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest. And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the Word should not be spoken to them any more: For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart.”

Hebrews 12:18 to 20.

About 1530 years after Moses received the law written by the hand of the Lord, the hands of the Lord were nailed to Calvary's cross.

Note what happened to the law

“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.” Colossians 2:14. “For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.” “But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which is done away in Christ.” II Corinthians 3:11 and 14.

GRACE CAME BY JESUS CHRIST

Then note Ephesians 3:1 and 2: “For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward.”

Compare and contrast “The reign of law” with “the dispensation of the grace of God.”

“The law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 5:21.

THE LAW DISPENSATION

The Law dispensation, or economy, was a temporary and a parenthetical period. The gospel was preached before the law was added.

1—“Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached BEFORE the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.” Galatians 3:6 and 8.

2—The law was added till the Seed should come. Galatians 3:19.

3—“Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Romans 10:4.

“But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.” Galatians 3:25.

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” Galatians 5:1.

UNDER GRACE

“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” Romans 6:14.

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” Romans 3:20 and 28.

“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” James 2:10.

“Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples. which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? Acts 15:10.

“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Romans 4:4 and 5.

We learn in Galatians 3:13 and in Romans 7:1 to 6, that the Jews who were under the law of Sinai were delivered from that law by faith in the crucified and resurrected Christ.

However the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus not only frees the: believing sinner from the curse and penalty of the law of Sinai and from the law of sin and death, but it empowers and enables him, as a new creature in Christ Jesus to walk in the Spirit and fulfill the righteousness of the law. Romans 8:4.

The new creature is God’s workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works. But let us remember that Christ put an end to the Old Covenant by His death and resurrection and that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. II Corinthians 3:12 to 15. Romans 10:4.

MESSAGE NUMBER 6

JESUS CHRIST THE SAME

What meaneth this statement?

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.” Hebrews 13:8. Jesus Christ is mentioned, in the New Testament Scriptures, by noun and pronoun more than 6,900 times.

Let us behold Christ before His incarnation, during His incarnation, His present exaltation, and His future glory on earth.

FIRST—

BEFORE HIS INCARNATION

a—He was in the bosom of the Father. John 1:18.

b—He was in the form of God. Philippians 2:6.

c—He was with God and was God. John 1:1.

d—He was before all things and by Him all things consist. Colossians 1:15 to 18.

e—He had glory with the Father before the world was. John 17:5.

God is a Spirit. But God has a form. Christ was in the form of God when He was in the bosom of the Father.

SECOND—

THE WORD BECAME FLESH. JOHN 1:14.

- a—He took upon Himself the form of a servant. Philippians 2:6 and 7.
 - b—He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. Romans 8:3.
 - c—He was made lower than the angels for the suffering of death. Hebrews 2:9.
 - d—He took on Him the Seed of Abraham. Hebrews 2:16.
 - e—Made like unto His brethren that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. Hebrews 2:17.
 - f—Made flesh and blood to destroy Satan's death power, by death. Hebrews 2:14.
 - g—The Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil. I John 3:8.
 - h—He came down from heaven to do His Father's will and give His flesh for the life of the world. John 6:38 and 51.
 - i—Christ was the brightness of God's glory and the express image of God's person. Hebrews 1:3.
 - j—Christ was the Son of David the Son of Abraham. Matthew 1:1.
 - k—He was the King of Israel. John 1:49.
- When Christ was on earth He said, "before Abraham was I AM". John 8:58. "Father, Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" John 17:24.
- "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." John 14:9. "I and My Father are one." John 10:30.

We have noted the Scriptures stating that Christ was made flesh to die on the cross. Hebrews 2:9. Note His own words "The Son of man goeth as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born." Matthew 26:24.

But in Luke 1:29 to 33 and 1:67 to 77 we learn that Christ was born in the city of David, in the house of David, of the Seed of David, to occupy the throne of David, to reign over the house of Jacob forever. So Jesus Christ was born to go to the cross of Calvary and to go to the throne of David. "Where is He that is born Sing of the Jews?" Matthew 2:2.

Now read these several statements:

"When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law." Galatians 4:4.

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." Acts 2:22.

"He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matthew 15:24.

"Now I say that Jesus Christ WAS a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." Romans 15:8.

We emphasize **WAS**. Jesus Christ **WAS** a minister of the circumcision. It would be contrary to fact to say that Jesus Christ **IS** a minister of the circumcision for He is not during His present ministry.

THIRD—

CHRIST IN HIS EXALTATION.

a—"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name." Philippians 2:9.

b—"But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God." Hebrews 10:12.

c—"Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the Word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Hebrews 1:3.

d—"Him hath God exalted with His " right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Acts 5:31.

e—"Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Acts 7:56.

f—"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an High Priest, Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." Hebrews 8:1.

g—"And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power. Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, Which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Ephesians 1:19 to 23.

After Christ had died and abolished death, He showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs. He said to His disciples "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." Luke 24:39.

Stephen recognized Christ as the Son of man standing in heaven. When Christ called Saul of Tarsus He said, "I am Jesus." Acts 9:5.

The ministry of Christ, in Acts 5:31, seemed to be different from His ministry in Ephesians 1:21 to 23.

"HIM HATH GOD EXALTED WITH HIS RIGHT HAND TO BE A PRINCE AND A SAVIOUR, FOR TO GIVE REPENTANCE TO ISRAEL, AND FORGIVENESS OF SINS." Acts 5:31.

"FAR ABOVE ALL PRINCIPALITY, AND POWER, AND MIGHT, AND DOMINION, AND EVERY NAME THAT IS NAMED, NOT ONLY IN THIS WORLD, BUT ALSO IN THAT WHICH IS TO COME; AND HATH PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIS FEET, AND GAVE HIM TO BE THE HEAD OVER ALL THINGS TO THE CHURCH, WHICH IS HIS BODY, THE FULNESS OF HIM THAT FILLETH ALL IN ALL." Ephesians 1:21 to 23.

Before Christ's incarnation He was in the Father's bosom, a Spirit. Now He is on the Father's throne, at the right hand of His Majesty, the Man Christ Jesus.

We must note these differences when we say "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever."

FOURTH—

CHRIST THE COMING KING.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting. Father, The Prince of Peace. of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.” Isaiah 9:6 and 7.

“When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory.” Matthew 25:31.

“And the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name One.” Zechariah 14:9.

“And David My servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments, and observe My statutes, and do them.” Ezekiel 37:24.

“For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” Matthew 23:39.

“And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Matthew 19:28.

MESSAGE NUMBER 7

ADAM - ABEL - SETH - ENOCH- NOAH

Every member of the human race has come from Adam and from Noah. Adam was the only man created in the image of God. The Lord Jesus, of course was the effulgence of His glory, and the express image of His person. But we are referring to all other men. Adam was not born as a baby, but God created him as a man. Genesis 1:26 to 28.

Noah and his family were saved in the ark. At that time all other human beings were destroyed in the flood. Genesis 7:1 and 7:21.

Concerning Adam and Eve, we read in Genesis 5:4 that sons and daughters were born unto them. But we mention three sons of Adam -

CAIN – ABEL - AND SETH

In Hebrews 11:4 we read concerning Abel—”By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he being dead yet speaketh.”

In I John 3:12 we read concerning Cain—”Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother, And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous.”

Note Jude 11 concerning apostate preachers who go in the way of Cain. Cain rejected salvation by blood.

Thus we see that the first man born of woman murdered his brother. There are other lessons in the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4:1 to 8 and 4:16 and 17.

“And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord. And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect.

And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.”

“And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch; and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.”

Cain and Abel were under “the law of sin and death.” Genesis 2:17. Romans 8:2. Cain was self-righteous and sought deliverance from sin and death by the works of his own hands.

It is interesting to read, in this connection, Romans 10:1 to 3—“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”

Abel submitted himself unto the righteousness of God. He acknowledged that his own righteousness was not acceptable to God. He knew that “without faith it is impossible to please God” (Hebrews 11:6) ; and “they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Romans 8:8).

Abel’s offering prefigured the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary, “the Lamb of God which beareth away the sin of the world.” John 1:29.

Note II Corinthians 5:21 and Romans 3:24. “For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” “Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Abel, being dead yet speaketh; or is yet spoken of.

The Evangelical Christians are today opposed by the so-called Liberals or Modernists in the evangelical denominations. The Evangelicals teach salvation by the blood of the Son of God, justification by faith, and by grace. The Liberals teach salvation by character and conduct, without the shedding of blood. That controversy was settled by God in favor of the Evangelicals in His acceptance and rejection of Abel and Cain, and is dogmatically and clearly shown all through the Bible.

SETH THE SUBSTITUTE

“And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth; for God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew. And to

Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos; then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.” Genesis 4:25 and 26.

“And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth; And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years; and he begat sons and daughters. “ Genesis 5:3 and 4.

Seth begat Enos, Enos begat Cainan. Note in Genesis 5 - Adam - Seth - Enos - Cainan - Mahalaleel - Jared - Enoch - Methuselah - Lamech - Noah.

NOTE THE RECORD OF ENOCH

“And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundreds years, and begat sons and daughters; And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.” Genesis 5:22 to 24.

By faith Enoch was translated and by faith Enoch pleased God. Hebrews 11:5. “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints.” Jude 14.

Enoch was the father of Methuselah. Methuselah was the oldest man who ever lived on this earth. He died at the age of 969 years. (Genesis 5:27.)

ENOCH - METHUSELAH - NOAH

Methuselah was Enoch’s son and Noah’s grandfather. Noah was 600 years old when God destroyed the world with the flood. (Genesis 7:6.) As we study the fifth chapter of Genesis we learn that the flood was on the earth the year 1656 A. H. (year of man), or about 2344 B. C. So the flood was on the earth about 4284 years ago. This was the year that Methuselah died.

“And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.” II Peter 2:5.

“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” Hebrews 11:7.

“As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.” Luke 17:26 and 27.

Note the moral condition of the human race when Noah was called into the ark. “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Genesis 6:5.

Note concerning Noah’s sons. “And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth; and Ham is the father of Canaan. These are the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread. “ Genesis 9:18 and 19.

“And Noah was five hundred years old; and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth. “ Genesis 5:32.

“These are the generations of Shem; Shem was an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxed two years after the flood.” Genesis 11:10.

NOAH AFTER THE FLOOD

“And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years.” And all of the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years, and he died.” Genesis 9:28 and 29.

By carefully studying the fifth chapter of Genesis we learn that the flood was upon the earth 1656 A.H., the year of man. That was about 2344 B.C. Noah died about 1994 B.C. Abraham was born about 1990 B.C. Shem died about 1840 B.C. Genesis 11:10 and 11. Abraham died about 1817 B.C. Genesis 25:7.

God called Abraham 430 years before He gave the ten commandments to Israel, by Moses. Galatians 3:16 to 19. The covenant that God made with Israel at Sinai by Moses is called now, “the Old Covenant”, “the Old Testament”. Moses received the law, the Covenant, from the

Lord between 1490 B.C. and 1500 B.C. Thus we see that none of those men of God who lived before the flood were Old Testament saints. Abraham died more than 300 years before God entered into the (Old) Covenant with Israel. Abraham did not live under the Old Testament. Not one word concerning the Old Covenant or Old Testament is recorded in Genesis.

The record of the giving of the (Old) Covenant is in Exodus 20,

Also we learn that Abel, Seth, Enoch and Noah were neither Jews nor Israelites, except as they prevailed with God - Jacob’s **name** was changed to Israel several centuries after the flood.

MESSAGE NUMBER 8

BEHOLD ISRAEL AFTER THE FLESH

“BEHOLD ISRAEL AFTER THE FLESH.” I Corinthians 10:18.

In this same chapter note I Corinthians 10:32 “GIVE NONE OFFENCE, NEITHER TO THE JEWS; NOR TO THE GENTILES, NOR TO THE CHURCH OF GOD.”

In the study, appropriation, and application of the Scriptures, in Paul’s time, the Holy Spirit expected the student to recognize the three-fold division of the human race, “the Jews”, “the Gentiles”, and “the Church of God”.

Concerning “the Church of God”, in the same Epistle, note the thirteenth verse of the twelfth chapter. “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” I Corinthians 12:13.

The Church of God was composed of saved Jews and saved Gentiles. Outside of the Church of God were unbelieving Jews and Gentiles.

Note in Ephesians 2:12 and 17 how the unsaved Jews and the unsaved Gentiles were divided:

“That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.”

“And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.”

Here we learn that the Jews were called “the commonwealth of Israel,” “those who were nigh.” The Gentiles were called “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,” “those who were afar off.”

In Ephesians 2:11 the Jews were called “the circumcision;” the Gentiles were called “the uncircumcision.”

Now carefully note Romans 3:1 and 2 and Romans 9:4 and 5.

“What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way, chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. “

“WHO ARE ISRAELITES; TO WHOM PERTAINETH THE ADOPTION, AND THE GLORY, AND THE COVENANTS, AND THE GIVING OF THE LAW, AND THE SERVICE OF GOD, AND THE PROMISES; WHOSE ARE THE FATHERS, AND OF WHOM CONCERNING THE FLESH CHRIST CAME, WHO IS OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER. AMEN.”

With these statements in Romans, let us read the words of Jesus Christ, in John 4:22 - “We know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.”

One of the first lessons we must learn, if we would be intelligent, spiritual students of the Bible, is the place of Israel in the Scriptures, and in God’s purposes and programs.

Holy men were borne along by the Holy Spirit to give us the Holy Scriptures. II Peter 1:19 and 20.

“All Scripture is God-breathed.” II Timothy 3:16.

The Holy Spirit used Moses, an Israelite, to write the first five Books of the Bible. The Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus used John, an Israelite, to write the last Book of the Bible. John too wrote five Books.

The Lord Jesus Christ is called “The Lion of the tribe of Judah,” “the Root of David.” Revelation 5:5. He took His place as Jesus of Nazareth, under the law, as a worshipping Jew. John 4:22. Galatians 4:4. He was saluted as “the King of Israel.” John 1:49.

Above His cross these words were written, “Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews.” John 19:19.

When Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, note Peter’s message to the Jews—“The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.” “To be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel.”

Paul called himself a Jew. Acts 21:39. Paul called Peter, “a Jew.” Galatians 2:14. Paul called himself, “an Israelite, of the tribe of Benjamin.” Romans 11:1. Philippians 3:5. Paul was a Jew by religion. Galatians 1:14.

Jesus of Nazareth came from Judah. He was a Jew in the double meaning of the word, “a Judahite,” and a Jew in His religion. Generally when the word “Jew” is found in the Scriptures it refers to the Israelites religiously. In that sense, descendants of all the twelve sons of Jacob were Jews.

ISRAEL - JEWS

It is interesting to note the first occurrences of the word “Israel” in the Bible, and the first occurrences of the word “Jew” in the Bible.

“And He said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.” “Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this

day; because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank." Genesis 32:28 and 32.

"Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite." Esther 2:5.

"At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drave the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day." II Kings 16:6.

The word "Israel" is found more than 1400 times in the Bible before the word "Jew" is first used. The word "Israel" is found about 2600 times in the Bible. It is interesting to note that the word "Christian" is not found once in the Gospel of John which Christians love so much. But in that Book, "Jews" is found 70 times. In the Book of Acts "Jew" is found 79 times.

Jacob's name was changed to "Israel" about 1740 B.C. This was about 2260 years after Adam left the Garden of Eden, about 610 years after Noah left the ark, about 250 years before Moses was on the mountain receiving the Old Testament.

THE BIRTH OF THE NATION

We quote Exodus 1:5 and 6—"And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: for Joseph was in Egypt already. And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. "

Let us get clearly fixed in our minds and hearts that there were no Jews or Israelites on this earth until after Jacob's sons were born.

In other words, there were no Jews or Israelites on this earth during the first 2200 years of human history.

Jacob was Isaac's son. Isaac was Abraham's son. Abram was Terah's son. Terah was not an Israelite. He was not a Jew. He was a descendant of Shem and Eber; but he was an idolater. Note Shem was born before the flood and lived 600 years on the earth. Genesis 5:32 and Genesis 11:10 and 11. He lived through several generations and was a contemporary of Abraham, although Abraham was Shem's great-great-great-great-great-great grandson. Genesis 11:10 to 31. Eber lived on this earth 464 years. Genesis 11:17.

Abram was called by God and declared righteous in uncircumcision. Romans 4:8 to 13—Genesis 12:1 to 3. Abram was circumcised and named "Abraham" 24 years after he was called to leave his father and follow God. Genesis 12:4 and 17:1. Abram was circumcised at the time his name was changed to Abraham. Genesis 17:24.

Abraham was declared righteous in uncircumcision 430 years before God entered into the Old Covenant with the children of Abraham, the nation Israel. Exodus 20 and Galatians 3:16 to 19.

The Old Covenant was added. Galatians 3:19. It was added 2500 years after Adam left the Garden of Eden, about 857 years after Noah left the Ark, about 430 years after Abram left his father's home.

Jehovah and the children of Israel entered into that mutual contract at Sinai some years after the last one of Jacob's (Israel's) twelve sons had died.

NO ISRAEL - NO OLD COVENANT

As there was no Israel until after Jacob's sons were born, there was no Old Covenant until Moses was on Mount Sinai, about 1495 B.C. Therefore there is not one line concerning the

Old Covenant (Hebrews 8:7 to 13) in the Book of Genesis. One of the first blunders generally made in the study of the Bible is calling Genesis, “the Old Testament Scriptures”, and Adam, Seth, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Levi, Joseph, and their brethren Old Testament characters.

Let us get fixed in our minds when Israel entered God’s program, and then when the Old Testament entered that program. When the Old Testament entered at Sinai it was not “old”; it was decidedly “new”. It became “old” by Christ’s death on the cross. II Corinthians 3:12 to 16p - Hebrews 8:13. When the law was added at Sinai, note what was added with it. Religion, “Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.” Hebrews 9:10.

This is religion. It became the religion of all of the twelve tribes of Israel. And all Israelites were called “Jews,” and their religion was called “Judaism.”

GENTILES GIVEN UP ISRAEL TAKEN UP

In the first chapter of Romans we are told how and why God gave up the Gentiles.

In the eleventh chapter of Romans we are told how and why God gave up Israel. In the thirteenth chapter of Acts and the eleventh chapter of Romans we are told when and why God took up the Gentiles when He gave up Israel.

Then in the eleventh chapter of Romans, and in other Scriptures, we are told that God is going to again give up the Gentiles and take up the Jews.

Note Romans 1:24—“God gave them up”. Romans 1:26 and 28—“God gave them up.” What became of the children of Adam and of Noah? Read what happened before the flood.

“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Genesis 6:5.

“And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.” Genesis 7:23.

Then later on note Genesis 11:9—“Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth; and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.”

Note that God cut off the children of Adam and began a new movement in Abram, the Hebrew. Genesis 14:13. Note what became of the Gentiles—“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.” Ephesians 4:18. Alienated from the life of God.

A Gentile could become a Jew under the economy of law. Note Esther 8:17—“And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king’s commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews, for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.”

Here we learn that alienated Gentiles could become “Jews”, that is, they could accept the benefits of the Lord’s covenants with Israel, and become proselytes.

One of the important covenants Stephen mentioned, in Acts 7:8. “And He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.” Compare this with Genesis 17:14—

”And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant.”

Note why the Christian Jews condemned Peter for preaching to Cornelius, the Gentile. **“Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.” Acts 11:3.**

The circumcised Gentiles who accepted Israel’s God-given covenants and religious programs were called “proselytes.” Acts 2:10. So we may be sure that any Gentile who may have been saved while Jesus of Nazareth was here on earth, became a Jew by religion, a proselyte, and not a member of the Body of Christ saved by grace without religion.

In studying the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, let us keep in mind:

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.” Romans 15:8.

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law.” Galatians 4:4.

“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.” Acts 2:22.

“But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Matthew 15:24.

“And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Luke 19:9 and 10.

A GENTILE WHO LOVED THE JEWS

“Now when He had ended all His sayings in the audience of the people, He entered into Capernaum. And a certain centurion’s servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto Him the elders of the Jews, beseeching Him that He would come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they besought Him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom He should do this: For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.” Luke 7:1 to 5.

This is all very clear concerning the scope of the Lord’s ministry on earth, to Israel after the flesh. The only Gentile man to whom He ministered, according to the Records, loved Israel and built them a synagogue. He also ministered to a Gentile woman. Matthew 15:21 to 27. Christ was ministering to all who were protected and preserved by the covenant of circumcision.

But later on something happened. Note Paul’s words: - **“But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter.” Galatians 2:7.**

“That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:16.

“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.” “For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?” Romans 11:13 and 15.

“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Ephesians 3:8.

Yes something happened. "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, it was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, **LO: WE TURN TO THE GENTILES.**" Acts 13:46.

"I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid. But rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy." Romans 11:11.

"For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief." Romans 11:30.

Therefore, the message of Romans 10:12 - Ephesians 2:17.

"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."

"AND CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHICH WERE AFAR OFF, AND TO THEM THAT WERE NIGH."

When the Gentiles were cast away justification by faith was preached to Abram, and the children of Israel were established in God's program for the human race. When Israel was cast away justification by faith was preached to Gentiles, and then the reign of grace, without Israel's law or religion, was ushered in. Israel will have a glorious future.

ISRAEL'S FUTURE

"Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of hosts is His name: If those ordinances depart from before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me for ever." Jeremiah 31:35 and 36.

"For finding fault with 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." Hebrews 8:8.

"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." Hebrews 8:11.

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Romans 11:25 and 26.

And the Gentiles have a Divine warning. "For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee." Romans 11:21.

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." II Timothy 2:19.

MESSAGE NUMBER 9

WHO IS THIS SON MAN?

“AS MOSES LIFTED UP THE SERPENT IN THE WILDERNESS, EVEN SO MUST THE SON OF MAN BE LIFTED UP.”

Let us study the record of the brazen serpent “And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that He take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.” Numbers 21:5 to 9.

Why was the serpent brass? Why was the brass in the form of a serpent? As Moses lifted up that brass serpent, the Son of man was lifted up.

Note the words of the Lord Jesus in John 1:51: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”

Note also John 12:23 and 31 to 34:

“Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.” “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die. The people answered Him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever; and how sayest Thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?”

Here we learn how the Son of man was lifted up. He was nailed to the cross of Calvary.

Note the question of the bewildered, perplexed Jews; “Who is this Son of man?”

Note the Lord’s words in Matthew 26:24, and Mark 10:45:

“The Son of man goeth as it is written of Him; but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.”

“The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

The Lord Jesus Christ became a man for the specific purpose of dying on the cross for the sinful children of Adam.

“BUT WE SEE JESUS, WHO WAS MADE A LITTLE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS FOR THE SUFFERING OF DEATH, CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOUR; THAT HE BY THE GRACE OF GOD SHOULD TASTE DEATH FOR EVERY MAN.” Hebrews 2:9.

During the years of the Old Covenant many sacrifices were offered for the sins of Israel on the altar without the holy place. The altar on which they were offered was made of brass.

Exodus 27:1 to 4. The laver also was of brass. “Thou shalt make a laver of brass:” Exodus 30:18. Brass in the Bible seems to speak of judgment. Jesus Christ is coming back for judgment. The Father has committed all judgment to His Son John 5:22.

In Revelation 1:15 we learn that Christ’s feet, in judgment, are to be like unto fine brass. The brass serpent, in some way, spoke of Satan and judgment. The serpent beguiled Eve. II Corinthians 11:1 to 3. That brought the poison of sin. In order that He might take away sin the Son of man was lifted up in judgment. “Now is the judgment of this world.” “Now is the prince of this world cast out.”

The only cure for sin is the shed blood of the Son of God.

WHO IS THIS SON OF MAN?

A very interesting question. Many have failed to give the correct answer to the question.

Note how Christ asked the question of His apostles: “When Jesus came unto the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? Matthew 16:13.

The answers differed. Some said “John the Baptist”. Some said “Elijah”. Some said “Jeremiah”. Some said “One of the prophets”.

But Simon Peter gave the correct answer. “Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Matthew 16:16.

Note why John’s Gospel was written—“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.” John 20:31.

Note Christ’s testimony in John 14:9—“Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?”

This title of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of man”, is found more than 80 times in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Then after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus the first Christian martyr, Stephen, said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the **Son of man standing on the right hand of God.**” Acts 7:56.

Here is a most interesting fact: In the more than 80 times that Jesus Christ is called “The Son of man”, in the four Gospels, not once was He called “the Son of man” by any person other than the Lord Jesus Himself. Just the question, “Who is this Son of man?”

The Deity of the Lord Jesus is proved by the title “the Son of man”

1—The Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath. Mark 2:28.

2—The Son of man hath power to forgive sins. Matthew 9:6.

3—At the end of the world the Son of man shall send His angels. Matthew 13:41.

4—The Son of man is coming in His glory with His angels. Matthew 16:27.

5—The Son of man gives meat that endures unto everlasting life. John 6:27.

Note John 3:13 and 8:28—“And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” “Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things.”

We can understand why the bewildered and perplexed Jews asked “who is this Son of man?”

By calling the Lord Jesus “the Son of man” instead of “the Son of God” we do not make His eternal Deity any less of a mystery.

But remember it was not others who called Him “the Son of man” until Stephen saw Him in His glorified body in heaven. Christ Himself used the title.

THE SON OF MAN—ISRAEL—THE BODY

Christ will be “the Son of man” when He comes back to redeem Israel and to judge the world. Revelation 1:13 and 14:14.

The Lord Jesus is not “the Son of man” to the Church described in Paul’s messages as “the Body”.

Christ is to appear for His Church saints. They are to appear with Him in glory.

But this is not His coming as “the Son of man”. When He comes as the Son of man:

1—It will be on earth as it was in the days of Noah. Luke 17:26.

2—The Son of man will not find faith on earth. Luke 18:8.

3—Israel and the nations will be in the great tribulation, signs in the heavens, and distress on earth Matthew 24:13 to 23—Luke 21:25 to 31.

4—Christ will sit on an earthly throne as King and as “the Son of man.” Matthew 25:31.

Note John 5:26 to 30: “For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; And hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man. Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

The Lord Jesus Christ is now far above in the heavenlies, the Head of the Church His Body - the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. Ephesians 1:22 and 23.

The Lord Jesus is going to appear for His church. After His church is safe with Him in glory the man of sin will be revealed. Israel will be in distress, and other nations with them. “Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle.” Zechariah 14:3. “And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives.” Zechariah 14:4.

Let us read with these statements Acts 1:10 and 11, where we find the resurrected Christ leaving the mount of Olives to go back to heaven. Note these words, “This same Jesus, which is taken into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.”

Note also Luke 21:27 and Matthew 25:31—“And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.” “When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory.”

And then what? “And the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one.” Zechariah 14:9.

But let us remember the words of the Lord Jesus, “As it was in the days of Noah so shall it be in the days of the Son of man.” But after He establishes His Kingdom on earth it will all be different.

MESSAGE NUMBER 10

FULFILLED ALL THAT WAS WRITTEN OF JESUS

Note again Acts 13:29 and 30:

“AND WHEN THEY HAD FULFILLED ALL THAT WAS WRITTEN OF HIM, THEY TOOK HIM DOWN FROM THE TREE, AND LAID HIM IN A SEPULCHRE. BUT GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD.”

With these verses note, in I Corinthians 15:3 and 4, the words, **“according to the Scriptures.”**

“FOR I DELIVERED UNTO YOU FIRST OF ALL THAT WHICH I ALSO RECEIVED, HOW THAT CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES; AND THAT HE WAS BURIED, AND THAT HE ROSE AGAIN THE THIRD DAY ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES.”

Here **“according to the Scriptures”** means in fulfillment of prophecies recorded in the thirty-nine Books, from Genesis to Malachi.

In this connection note also the words of the Lord Jesus, in Matthew 5:17—18.

“THINK NOT THAT I AM COME TO DESTROY THE LAW, OR THE PROPHETS: I AM NOT COME TO DESTROY, BUT TO FULFIL. FOR VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, TILL HEAVEN AND EARTH PASS, ONE JOT OR ONE TITTLE SHALL IN NO WISE PASS FROM THE LAW, TILL ALL BE FULFILLED.”

Note also John 5:46—“For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me.”

Moses wrote Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. He wrote of Israel's Great Prophet, Messiah and Deliverer. So also did all of the other Old Testament prophets. Christ was foretold as Prophet, Priest and King. Study with Acts 13:29 and 30 the statement in Luke 2:39.

“And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.”

When did the parents take Jesus back to Nazareth? When they had performed (ended) all things according to the law. When was the Lord Jesus taken down from the tree and buried?

“When they had fulfilled (ended) all things that were written of Him.”

CHRIST CAME TO ISRAEL

TO FULFILL PROPHECIES

1—“Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” Isaiah 7:14.

2—“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” Micah 5:2.

3—"He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him." Isaiah 53:2.

4—"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." Isaiah 53:3.

5—"And one shall say unto Him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then He shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." Zechariah 13:6.

6—"And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver Him unto you? and they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver." Zechariah 11:12 and 13 and Matthew 26:5.

7—"He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." Isaiah 53:7.

8—"For dogs have compassed Me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed Me: they pierced My hands and My feet." Psalm 22:16.

When the Lord Jesus died on the cross, note how he fulfilled the Scriptures.

"And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabach. thani? which is, being interpreted, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" Mark 15:34.

This was in fulfillment of Psalm 22:1. It was prophesied that He should be the Stone rejected by the builders.

"And He beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The Stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the Head of the corner." Luke 20:17.

Then in fulfillment of Psalm 22:

"They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be; that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted My raiment among them, and for My vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did." John 19:24.

And another Psalm:

"Because Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." Acts 2:27.

We give the references in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John showing the words and deeds in fulfillment of the prophets, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled: Matthew 1:22-2:5-15-17 and 23, 3:3, 4:4 and 14, 5:18, 8:17, 12:17, 13:14 and 35, 21:4, 24:34, 26:54 and 56, 27:9. Mark 1:2, 14:49, 15:28. Luke 1:20, 2:39, 3:4, 4:17, 21:22 and 32, 24:19 and 44. John 1:23 and 45, 6:14 and 45, 7:40, 9:17, 12:38, 13:18, 15:25, 17:12, 18:9 and 32, 19:24-28 and 36.

Then note the words of the Lord Jesus, in Luke 24:44 to 46:

"THEN HE SAID UNTO THEM, THESE ARE THE WORDS WHICH I SPAKE UNTO YOU, WHILE I WAS YET WITH YOU, THAT ALL THINGS MUST BE FULFILLED, WHICH WERE WRITTEN IN THE LAW OF MOSES, AND IN THE PROPHETS, AND IN THE PSALMS, CONCERNING ME. THEN OPENED HE THEIR UNDERSTANDING, THAT THEY MIGHT UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURES, AND SAID UNTO THEM, THUS IT IS WRITTEN, AND THUS IT BEHOVED CHRIST TO SUFFER, AND TO RISE FROM THE DEAD THE THIRD DAY."

About 15 years after the resurrected Christ spoke these words to His apostles, another apostle (Paul) spoke these words in a Jewish synagogue to the rabbi and the people:

“For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him.” Acts 13:27.

THE SUFFERINGS AND GLORY OF CHRIST

“OF WHICH SALVATION THE PROPHETS HAVE ENQUIRED AND SEARCHED DILIGENTLY, WHO PROPHESED OF THE GRACE THAT SHOULD COME UNTO YOU: SEARCHING WHAT, OR WHAT MANNER OF TIME THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST WHICH WAS IN THEM DID SIGNIFY, WHEN IT TESTIFIED BEFOREHAND THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST, AND THE GLORY THAT SHOULD FOLLOW.” I Peter 1:10 and 11.

Note the Spirit of Christ was in Israel’s prophets, testifying beforehand the sufferings and glory of Christ. Israel’s prophets foretold that Christ was to be rejected by Israel and be crucified, buried and raised from the dead.

Israel’s prophets foretold that Christ would be accepted by Israel, be honoured, and go to the throne of His glory.

Note Isaiah 9:6 and 7:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”

Jeremiah 30:8 and 9:

“For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him. But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their King, Whom I will raise up unto them.”

Ezekiel 36:28 and 37:25:

“And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be My people, and I will be your God.” “And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob My servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children for ever: and My servant David shall be their prince for ever.”

Zechariah 14:9:

“And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one.”

According to Zechariah 12:10, the Nation Israel **“shall look on Me Whom they have pierced.”**

Read Isaiah 65:19 and Isaiah 62:3 and 4. Wonderful and glorious things concerning Christ, Jerusalem and Israel are yet to take place on this earth, in fulfillment of prophecy, “that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.” We have a more sure word of prophecy.” II Peter 1:19.

Note Acts 3:20 and 21 and 24:

“And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, WHICH GOD HATH SPOKEN BY THE MOUTH OF ALL HIS HOLY PROPHETS SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN.” “Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.”

Concerning the coming glory of Christ and Israel, remember the words of Christ “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Matthew 5:17 and 18.

HE THAT SHOULD COME—HE THAT SHALL COME

“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” Hebrews 9:28.

Now note the question of John the Baptist sent to Christ: **“ART THOU HE THAT SHOULD COME?” Luke 7:19.**

Note the statement in Hebrews 10:37:

“For yet a little while, and HE THAT SHALL COME will come, and will not tarry.

Christ was the One Who should come. Christ is the One Who shall come. All of God’s great events are centered in the two great advents of the Lord Jesus Christ. He came the first time. He will come the second time.

1—In Genesis to Malachi, Christ is coming.

2—In Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the One promised to come has come.

3—From Acts to Revelation, the One Who came has gone back to heaven, and will come again.

4—In Genesis 3:14 and 15, the coming One (Christ) is to be the Seed of the woman.

5—In Malachi 3:1, the coming One (Christ) is to be the Lord.

6—In Isaiah 7:14, the coming one (Christ) is to be the Lord in the form of the woman’s Seed.

“Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” Isaiah 7:14.

“And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. I John 5:19 and 20.

God’s plan to establish on earth the Messianic kingdom of Christ has not been abandoned; only postponed. The earthly kingdom of Christ will yet be established. In the meantime, while this particular kingdom is in abeyance, we are living in a parenthetical period. Concerning this postponement read Luke 21:24—Romans 11:25 and 26—and Ephesians 3:1 to 3.

“UNTIL THE APPEARING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST; WHICH IN HIS TIMES HE SHALL SHEW, WHO IS THE BLESSED AND ONLY POTENTATE, THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS: WHO ONLY HATH IMMORTALITY, DWELLING IN THE LIGHT WHICH NO MAN CAN APPROACH UNTO; WHOM NO MAN HATH SEEN, NOR CAN SEE; TO WHOM BE HONOUR AND POWER EVERLASTING. AMEN.” I Timothy 6:14 to 16.

MESSAGE NUMBER 11

THE SIGNS OF JESUS OF NAZARETH

The truth revealed in Acts 2:22 and 23 is very interesting.

“YE MEN OF ISRAEL, HEAR THESE WORDS; JESUS OF NAZARETH, A MAN APPROVED OF GOD AMONG YOU BY MIRACLES AND WONDERS AND SIGNS, WHICH GOD DID BY HIM IN THE MIDST OF YOU, AS YE YOURSELVES ALSO KNOW: HIM, BEING DELIVERED BY THE DETERMINATE COUNSEL AND FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD, YE HAVE TAKEN, AND BY WICKED HANDS HAVE CRUCIFIED AND SLAIN.”

Note these two verses:

“But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?” John 12:37 and 38.

With these clear and significant statements, let us note several other statements

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.” Romans 15:8.

“He (Christ) answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Matthew 15:24.

“I have greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me.” John 5:36.

“The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom.” I Corinthians 1:22.

Who was Jesus of Nazareth? He was a Man approved of God. To whom? Israel. Where? In the midst of Israel. How? By signs, wonders and miracles.

Christ was sent by the Father. One sent is an apostle. Christ is called “The Apostle.” Note Hebrews 3:1. Miracles in the Bible times were the signs of an apostle II Corinthians 12:12. So long as there were apostles there were signs.

The signs of the apostles were to bear witness that they had been sent by Christ. Hebrews 2:2 to 4. Note Christ’s words to His apostles: “Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.” John 20:21. Signs and miracles were the King’s credentials for Israel. The Jews required a sign.

The expression “a man approved of God” means “a man put on display by God.” Christ said to the Jews, “I and Father are one.” “I came down from heaven.” “Before Abraham was I AM.”

Christ said to the Jews, “you search the Scriptures (Old Testament), they testify of Me.” “I testify of Myself.” “John the Baptist testified of Me.” “But My greatest witness, supernatural works.”

In John's Record, Christ is set forth as the eternal I AM. Seven is the Divine number. Seven miracles of Christ are recorded in John to cause Israel to believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. John 20:31.

1—Turning water into wine.

2—Walking on the water.

3—Healing the nobleman's son.

4—Making the impotent man walk.

5—Feeding 5,000 people.

6—Healing a man born blind.

7—Raising Lazarus, three days dead,

We should not endeavor to prove the Deity of Jesus Christ by perpetuating or duplicating His miracles unless we can do all that was done in the seven miracles. God put them together.

It is likewise interesting to observe that, with one or two exceptions, the Lord's order was to heal physically before healing spiritually. Some who received physical healing apparently were not concerned about the spiritual blessings.

In the case of the man born blind, after Christ gave him physical sight—note John 9:35 to 38: “Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen Him and it is He that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.”

Some today who attempt to perpetuate miracles of healing insist that the individual desiring Divine healing must first be saved. And then they quote Hebrews 13:8—“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

Christ healed all manner of disease. He healed instantaneously. He raised the dead. He controlled nature inanimate and was not hindered by the laws of gravitation.

Christ proved, by His miracles, that He was the eternal God, in human form, and Israel's Messiah. On earth Christ was sent only to Israel. The Jews required a sign. They were given many signs. “But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him.” John 12:37.

In this connection let us carefully note Romans 11:30 to 33—“For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!”

When the Jews had rejected and crucified the Lord Jesus, God made known the truth of Acts 2:23 and Acts 4:27 and 28:

“Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” “For of a truth against thy Holy Child Jesus, Whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.”

While on earth the Lord Jesus spoke this parable against Israel “But His citizens hated Him, and sent a message after Him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.” “But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.” Luke 19:14 and 27.

Then note the Lord's message to Israel, in Acts 13:46

"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

So Israel rejected the Messiah in their midst with signs. They also rejected the message of the Messiah's apostles with signs concerning His resurrection. Then Israel was cast away, and that meant salvation for Gentiles.

Note Roman 11:11- Roman 11:30 and Roman 11:15.

"I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid; but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy."

"For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief."

"For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?"

When Israel turned from Christ in His incarnation, He prayed for them on the cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34.

Then the resurrected Christ sent His Twelve and Paul to the Jews first. "Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." Acts 3:26.

We quote again the words of Paul in Acts 13:46, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles." Paul said this when he said to Israel, "it was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken unto you."

But they would not receive Christ. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name; Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:10 to 13.

While Jesus Christ was on earth, the Minister of the circumcision, He said to His messengers, "go not into the way of the Gentiles." Matthew 10:5.

Note the awful condition of the Gentiles at that time: "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Ephesians 2:11 and 12.

"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were of nature the children of wrath, even as others. Ephesians 2:2 and 3.

After Christ had gone back to heaven He appeared in a vision to a new apostle. Note this apostle's testimony—"And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; And saw Him saying unto Me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; for they will not receive thy testimony concerning Me." "And He said unto me, Depart for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." Acts 22:17, 18 and 21.

Then note Paul's message: "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more.

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." II Corinthians 5:16 to 18.

After these statements made by Paul miracles and signs waned and passed away. In Paul's prison Epistles written after the close of "Acts" he wrote: "Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick." II Timothy 4:20. Paul instructed Timothy to use wine for his oft sicknesses. I Timothy 5:23. In the last Epistles of Paul there is no record of .miracles, signs, healing, tongues, etc.

In Paul's Epistles to members of the Body of Christ he did not refer to the Lord as "Jesus of Nazareth."

There is a great difference between Jesus of Nazareth in the midst of Israel performing miracles and Christ in the Gentiles the hope of glory. Colossians 1:27.

MESSAGE NUMBER 12

ABRAM—ABRAHAM

Abraham Was Declared Righteous In Uncircumcision

"WE SAY THAT FAITH WAS RECKONED TO ABRAHAM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS." ROMANS 4:9.

"HOW WAS IT THEN RECKONED? WHEN HE WAS IN CIRCUMCISION, OR IN UNCIRCUMCISION? NOT IN CIRCUMCISION, BUT IN UNCIRCUMCISION. AND HE RECEIVED THE SIGN OF CIRCUMCISION, A SEAL OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE FAITH WHICH HE HAD YET BEING UNCIRCUMCISED; THAT HE MIGHT BE THE FATHER OF ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE, THOUGH THEY BE NOT CIRCUMCISED; THAT RIGHTEOUSNESS MIGHT BE IMPUTED UNTO THEM ALSO." ROMANS 4:10 AND 11.

These are important truths to enable us to understand other important truths. Comparatively few Christians have understood Paul's words in Galatians 2:7:

"But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter."

Just what was the difference between Peter's gospel of the circumcision and Paul's gospel of the uncircumcision? This is for a later lesson. But this study will prepare us for that lesson.

Now let us read Acts 7:8 and Genesis 17:10, 24, 14 and Genesis 17:5.

"And He gave him (Abraham) the covenant of circumcision; and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs."

"This is My covenant, which ye shall keep, between Me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised."

“And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.”

“And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant.”

“Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.”

God gave the covenant of circumcision when He changed Abram’s name to “Abraham” when Abraham was 99 years old. Isaac was born one year after uncircumcised Abram became circumcised Abraham. Genesis 21:5. Isaac, the promised son, was the child of circumcised Abraham. Then note that Isaac and Jesus of Nazareth were both circumcised when eight days old. Genesis 21:4 and Luke 2:21. Isaac, the promised son, was a type of Jesus Christ, the promised Son.

From circumcised Isaac came Jacob (Israel), his twelve sons, Israel and the Jews, called “the circumcision”. Romans 15:8. “Jesus Christ was a minister to the circumcision.” Romans 15:8. While on earth He did not minister unto the Gentiles. (One Greek woman and one Roman man. Matthew 8:1 to 12 and Matthew 15:21 to 24.)

Peter and the Eleven were sent to Israel in the cities of Israel. Matthew 10:5 and 23. Peter and the Eleven are to minister to Israel in the coming kingdom age. Matthew 19:28.

Peter and the Eleven remained in Jerusalem during the period covered by the Book of Acts. Acts 8:1.

On the day of Pentecost Peter and the Eleven spoke to Jews from every nation under heaven. Acts 2:14 and 5. About fifteen years later they were still messengers to the circumcision. Galatians 2:9.

From Genesis 17:14 (about 1900 B.C.) to Acts 10:47 (about 40 A.D.) the circumcision of men was a Divine requirement for fellowship with God’s people. To Peter was committed “the gospel of the circumcision”. Galatians 2:7.

No one was ever saved except by the once-for-all sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross; but the word “gospel” covers much more than the salvation of the individual sinner.

THE GOSPEL OF THE UNCIRCUMCISION

Abraham was circumcised. But Abraham was not a Jew. Abraham descended from Noah, Shem and Eber. Abraham was an Eberite. Abraham became the father of one branch of the Semitic race. Abraham’s father was Terah. Terah lived in Chaldea and was an idolater.

The word “Jew” in the Bible has a double meaning. Abraham’s grandson, Jacob (Israel), had twelve sons. The fourth son was Judah. Speaking of the Jews, as a race they were Judahites. But when Jesus Christ said, “salvation is of the Jews”, He was not thinking of just one of the twelve tribes. The Israelites were all Jews by religion. Galatians 1:14. Jesus Christ was a Jew by race and by religion.. He is called the “Lion of the tribe of Judah.” Revelation 5:5.

NOTE THE 430 YEARS

But note Galatians 3:8 and 3:17:

“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.”

“And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.”

Here we understand what Paul meant when he said the gospel of the uncircumcision “was committed unto me.”

Four hundred and thirty years before Moses was on Sinai, receiving the law and the Jews’ religion, uncircumcised Abram did something. What he did was to believe. “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” Galatians 3:6. The doing was God’s part. The believing was Abram’s part. God declared uncircumcised Abram righteous.

Note Genesis 12:4 and 15:6—“So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him; and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.”

“And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness.” When was Abram circumcised to become Abraham? When he was 99 years old. When was Abram called? Twenty-four years before he was circumcised. His circumcision was the seal of the righteousness which he received in uncircumcision. Romans 4:9 to 11. So Abram’s circumcision did not contribute to his righteousness or improve it. He had God’s righteousness. God’s righteousness is perfect and cannot be improved. The one thing Abram did to receive God’s righteousness was to believe God.

THE SCRIPTURES FORESAW

Note again Galatians 3:8

“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.”

What people were seen when the gospel was preached to Abram 24 years before he was circumcised, and 430 years before the law was added to the gospel (Galatians 3:19)? The heathen (Gentiles) of Paul’s day. What was seen? That the uncircumcised heathen would be declared righteous without circumcision, without the law, without any religious observances. Just as Abraham was, by faith without works.

“For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Romans 4:3 and 5.

Christ in heaven revealed to the Apostle Paul that the covenant of circumcision was not binding on the Gentiles.

For some years after Paul received his Divine commission to preach, God permitted the Christian Jews to continue the practice of circumcision. (Acts 16:3 and 21:25). But later on a new interpretation of circumcision was given.

“For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” “In Whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, Who hath raised Him from the dead.” Philippians 3:3 and Colossians 2:11 and 12.

:

God’s message is Galatians 6:15 and 5:3

“IN CHRIST JESUS NEITHER CIRCUMCISION AVAILETH ANY THING, NOR UNCIRCUMCISION, BUT A NEW CREATURE.”

“For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.”

Every member of the Body of Christ has been circumcised with the circumcision not made with hands. Colossians 2:11. Jesus Christ was circumcised in the flesh when He was eight days old. Luke 2:18 to 21. Some Christians speak of following Jesus Christ in baptism, but they say nothing about following Him in His circumcision or about following His example in the matter of going to the Jewish synagogue on the Jewish sabbath. Luke 4:16. Christ’s death baptism took place on the cross. Luke 12:48 to 52. Members of His Body, who have been circumcised with the circumcision not made with hands, have also been baptized into the baptism (death) of Christ with a Divine baptism not made with hands, the operation of God. Colossians 2:12. For the believer there is one circumcision and one baptism.

Thus we learn that as uncircumcised Abram was justified by faith before God gave to Israel the ten commandments and their religious program, so any uncircumcised heathen in the United States or in the heart of Africa can be justified by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished redemptive work. God’s message of grace is, “being declared righteous without a cause by God’s grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Romans 3:24.

MESSAGE NUMBER 13

THE TRUE BIBLE CHURCH AND HOW TO JOIN IT

Dr. Scofield versus Dr. Bullinger.

Dr. C. I. Scofield, of the United States, was the editor of the Scofield Reference Bible. Dr. E. W. Bullinger, of England, was the editor of the Companion Bible. Both of these men were positive and aggressive evangelical and evangelistic Christians. They both believed in, and dogmatically taught, the plenary inspiration of the Bible. They believed, as all saved individuals believe, that Jesus Christ was God, manifested in man; that man’s deliverance from the wrath of God and his only hope of heaven and eternal life, is by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, His once-for-all sacrifice on the cross and His triumphant resurrection from the dead. Both of these men were Premillenarians. They were both pre-tribulation Premillenarians; that is, they believed that the Lord Jesus Christ will rapture His Church before He comes, as the Son of man, to save Israel from the great tribulation. They both repeatedly emphasized the importance of knowing the difference between God’s reign of law and God’s reign of grace, and the equally important distinction between Israel and the Body of Christ. They both taught clearly that God’s reign of grace, or dispensation of grace, did not begin while Jesus Christ was on earth, proclaiming to Israel truth concerning the kingdom of heaven. They emphasized the truth declared in Romans 15:8 and Matthew 15:24: “Now I say that Jesus Christ was a Minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.” “But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Both of these brethren taught that the

sermon on the mount, recorded in Matthew, chapters five to eight, is primarily truth concerning the Messianic kingdom of Christ and therefore that much of that message does not fit into this present dispensation of grace, mentioned by Paul in Ephesians 3:1 to 3: “For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words.”

Both Dr. Scofield and Dr. Bullinger taught that the Body of Christ did not begin, historically, until after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. They both taught that the Body of Christ is a Divine organism rather than man’s organization. They both taught that the Body of Christ was not a prophetic subject, because Israel’s prophets were wholly ignorant and silent concerning the Church of the Mystery; that is, the Body of Christ was God’s peculiar secret until the Lord Jesus Christ revealed it to the Apostle Paul. These two brethren most heartily agreed with all intelligent, spiritual, diligent students of the Scriptures, that during this present Divine spiritual economy of grace, God has one chief purpose, and that is, to build up the one, and only one, Bible Church, the Body of Christ. Both of these brethren agreed with all other true grace preachers that the very moment a believing sinner is saved by grace on the grounds of the shed blood and bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, he becomes a member of the true Bible Church, whether or not he joins some organization; that the moment the believing sinner is saved by grace, he becomes a saint, he receives the Holy Spirit, he becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus, and at that very moment he is baptized into the death of Christ, is buried with Him by baptism, is raised to walk in newness of life, he is seated with Christ in the heavenlies, and is blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. They both taught that if one such redeemed sinner should afterward be received into a Presbyterian organization by sprinkling, and another into a Baptist Church by immersion, the salvation and standing of neither person is in any way improved or changed. But both of these men of God agreed with every intelligent person who is truly saved by God’s infinite grace, that every redeemed person should constantly desire and endeavor to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ; should earnestly strive to be a consistent, spiritual, separated child of God.

They believed in aggressive evangelism for every member of the Body of Christ. Both of these Bible teachers believed in the eternal security of the believer.

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE “WORD”

Both Dr. Scofield and Dr. Bullinger laid much stress on the Holy Spirit’s instruction in II Timothy 2:15: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.” Dr. Scofield’s pamphlet, entitled “Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth,” has brought blessing and satisfaction to many confused religious Church-members and has helped them to better understand the Bible. Dr. Scofield was decidedly a dispensational Bible teacher. The word “dispensation” is found in I Corinthians 9:17, Colossians 1:25, Ephesians 3:2 and 9 and in Ephesians 1:10,

The word “dispensation” is literally “economy.” Dr. Scofield believed that the Bible is divided into different economies. So does every intelligent student of the Bible., whether he calls himself a Premillenarian or a Postmillenarian, a dispensationalist, or an anti-dispensationalist, for every intelligent Christian recognizes at least two economies, the Old Testament and the New Testament, the reign of law and the reign of grace. But just twenty minutes spent in the study of Romans 5:13, 14 and 20, and Galatians 3:19, will convince any student of the Scripture that

there was at least one economy before God entered into the Covenant (Old) with Israel at Sinai 2500 years after Adam sinned. Moreover, a little more than twenty minutes devoted to the study of Colossians 1:24 to 27—Colossians 4:3 and 4—Ephesians 3:1 to 11—Ephesians 6:1 and 20, should convince any intelligent student of the Scriptures, that “the dispensation of the Mystery” (the economy of God’s Secret) is a fourth dispensation: “And to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ.” Then the same study of Matthew 10:5 to 8 and Acts 3:19 to 21, should convince such a student that the kingdom of heaven, to be established when the king comes, is different from any of the other Divine economies.

Now in all that we have set forth Dr. Scofield and Dr. Bullinger agreed. All that we have set forth is accepted as Divine Truth (and is the intelligent way of studying the Bible) by the great majority of grace preachers identified with Christians who are called Fundamentalists.

In the teaching thus far presented, not only were Dr. Scofield and Dr. Bullinger agreed, but to their agreed teaching thus far presented, the majority of grace Fundamentalists give their hearty endorsement.

Dr. Scofield and Dr. Bullinger believed that a crisis, or radical change, took place with the close of the Book of Acts, after the words recorded in Acts 28:25 to 28; “And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand: and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.”

Dr. Bullinger taught that a new and different Church, that is, the Church of the Mystery, the Body of Ephesians and Colossians, began after the close of Acts. Dr. Scofield believed that the Church, or the Body, of the Post-Acts period, was the same Church as the Church or Body mentioned in I Corinthians 12 and Romans 12. But Dr. Scofield believed in the change of God’s spiritual program stated in these words

“There is no foundation in the Word of God for the prevailing popular doctrine of ‘Divine Healing.’”

“A careful study of the Epistles, especially of the latest Epistles of Paul, which give the normal course of the Church during the present dispensation, would dismount all from their hobbies, eliminate the last vestige of Judaism from their lives.”

“After repeated study of the Epistles written after Paul’s arrival at Rome, I am convinced that in them is found a curative teaching for all of the present day delusions and fanaticisms found among many of the most sincere saints in the Church.”

“The sign gifts of I Corinthians 12 were operative only during the Book of Acts period.”

Up to this Post-Acts difference, personally I heartily agree with both Dr. Scofield and Dr. Bullinger. But in this difference I take my stand with Dr. Scofield, and feel sure that Dr. Bullinger taught error concerning the new Body.

Those who follow the teaching of Dr. E. W. Bullinger as to the Post-Acts different Church, or Body, are called extreme dispensationalists, ultradispensationalists or hyperdispensationalists.

In recent years many Fundamentalists who do not seem to know the difference between carnal weapons and spiritual weapons have maliciously misrepresented other Fundamentalists who do not agree with their faulty dispensationalism. The cry has been "Bullingerism." "He is a Bullingerite." Twenty-five per cent of these false accusers do not know what they mean by "Bullingerism." They are just sheep and parrots, and prejudiced, ungracious, uninformed Christians, who prefer to exaggerate, misrepresent, and malign, rather than devote a little time in intelligent study. They should study the teachings of Dr. Bullinger and read such testimonies of him as that of Dr. James M. Gray

"Bullinger would be called a fundamentalist were he now on earth, for he was an able defender of the inspiration of the Bible, the deity and virgin birth of Christ, the substitutionary atonement, the premillennial coming and all that. But he was an extremist, some would call him a faddist, on dispensational truth, and he was unscriptural, as we believe, on future retribution. Because of these last named errors, the Monthly has not felt free to advertise Bullinger's books, certainly not all of them, and yet the writer of these lines owes one of his richest spiritual blessings to that great teacher, for a truly great teacher he was. No one ever set before us from the Word of God so clearly as did Bullinger, the profound mystery of the Body of Christ, and we always shall be indebted to him."

Dr. Bullinger was misrepresented in the matter of the future state. But in some points he disagreed with the teaching of Dr. Gray and Dr. Scofield. Dr. Gray and Dr. Scofield taught that the Church of the Mystery is both the Body and Bride of Christ. Dr. Bullinger taught that the Church of the Mystery is the Body, of Christ but that a company of Israelites will be the Bride of Christ. Therefore, Dr. Bullinger taught that the seven Churches of Revelation could not refer to the Body of Christ, and give the spiritual program of the Church of the Mystery.

Dr. Bullinger also taught the unconscious state of the believer between death and the resurrection of the body.

Dr. Bullinger believed that with the close of the "Acts" period a signless dispensation was ushered in; that the signs of Mark 16:16 to 18, and the sign-gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11 ceased. He believed that water baptism and the Lord's Supper of the "Acts" Church ceased with the sign period, after the pronouncement of Acts 28:25 to 28, and that neither has any Scriptural place in the Body of Christ described in Ephesians and Colossians. As to water baptism I believe Dr. Bullinger was right, but not as to the Lord's Supper.

Hereafter, when you feel led by the Holy Spirit to criticize the teaching of Dr. Bullinger, do it honestly and intelligently and be sure that you do not call some brother in the "Lord a" Bullingerite" who does not agree with the extreme teaching of Dr. Bullinger.

While you are thinking this over, ask yourself this question: "why is it that the most spiritual, faithful grace preachers among Fundamentalists, make no attempt to exercise any of the sign gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11, whereas they were exercised by the carnal saints in Corinth, the babes in Christ, who could only take the milk that belongs" to infants? Dr. Scofield's explanation is the one and only answer.

Sit down for a quiet, spiritual, diligent study of Ephesians 2:11 to 17 and Ephesians 3:5 to 9: "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, Who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having

abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain One New Man, so making peace: And that He might reconcile both unto God in one Body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.” Ephesians 2:11 to 17. “Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be joint-heirs and of the Joint-Body, and joint-sharers of His promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power. Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the UNSEARCHABLE riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the. mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 3:5 to 9.

When did God begin to join those who were nigh (non-covenant Gentiles) and those who were afar off (covenant Israelites) in one Body, and make them a Joint-Body?

Before you answer this question read Acts 10:28: “And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” Some seven years after Pentecost it was unlawful for the twelve apostles to preach to Gentiles. In Acts 5:29 to 32, Peter declared that God’s purpose was to give repentance and forgiveness to Israel. Then Stephen saw Jesus, as the Son of man, standing in heaven. Note Matthew 10:23 and 19:28. Where did the Gentiles come in? They didn’t come in.

They came in later, when Saul had become Paul, and he declared the truth of Acts 14:27: “And when they were come and had gathered the Church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.” And Romans 11:15: “For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?” Then Paul received his new commission: “And all things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, That God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” II Corinthians 5:18 and 19. Paul preached reconciliation to Gentiles when, and because., Israel was set aside. Israel had not been set aside when Stephen preached to Israel, or when Peter preached to Cornelius.

What did Peter preach? “But contrariwise, when they saw that the. gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter.”

What had Peter preached to Israel in the first nine chapters of Acts? That which Joel, David, Moses, Samuel, and all the Israelitish prophets had foretold “Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.” Acts 3:24. Not one of these prophets said one thing, or knew one thing, about the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6, the Church of the Mystery.

WHAT BIBLE TEACHERS TEACH

Note what Dr. C. I. Scofield wrote in his Reference Bible (his footnote), concerning the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6:

“That the Gentiles were to be saved was no mystery (Romans 9:24 to 33; Romans 10:19 to 21). The mystery “hid in God” was the divine purpose to make of Jew and Gentile a wholly

new thing—"the church, which is His (Christ's) Body," formed by the baptism with the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:12, 13) and in which the earthly distinction of Jew and Gentile disappears (Ephesians 2:14, 15; Colossians 3:10, 11). The revelation of this mystery, which was foretold, but not explained by Christ (Matthew 16:18), was committed to Paul. In his writings alone we find the doctrine, position, walk, and destiny of the Church."

Note what Mr. Wm. R. Newell has written in his book on Romans

"And again it pleased Him to choose Paul to be the great proclaimer and revealer of just what the gospel is for this dispensation. You can judge any man's preaching or teaching by this rule-Is he Pauline? Does his doctrine start and end according to those statements of Christian doctrine uttered by the Apostle Paul? No matter how wonderful a man may seem to be in his gifts and apparent consecration, if his gospel is not Pauline, it is not the gospel, and we might as well get our minds settled at once on that point." Page 339.

"Paul calls down the anathema, that is the curse of God Himself upon any one who preaches any other gospel than that which he declared. Galatians 1.

"For instance, if you were to take Paul's Epistles out of the Bible, you cannot find anything about the Church, the Body of Christ, for no other apostle mentions the Body of Christ." Page 340.

"But unto none of these twelve apostles did God reveal the great body of doctrine for this age

"Finally, Paul is the unfold of that great company of God's elect, called the Church, the Body of Christ, which is also the Bride, the individuals of which, are called members of the Body of Christ-members of Christ Himself." Page 338.

"Would that we had grace to defend just as vigorously this great message today, for it has many enemies and even real friends who do not yet see it clearly; and there are others, who like Peter (Galatians 2), through fear of others, are ready to compromise and tone down the gospel of God." Page 344.

Note what Dr. H. A. Ironside has written concerning the Church of the Mystery

"The mystery of the Church as the Body of Christ was never made known in Old Testament times, nor yet in the days when our Lord was on the earth. We are told distinctly it had been "hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifested to the saints." The Divine method of making it known was by a special revelation to the apostle Paul, as he tells us in Ephesians 3. But this revelation was not for him only. It was a ministry committed to him to pass on to the saints."

"But this doctrine of the one body is never referred to by any other apostle than Paul. He calls it "the dispensation of the mystery" which he has especially been entrusted with."

"It was the secret purpose of His heart only to be revealed after the rejection of His Son." "To the Epistles of Paul alone do we turn for the revelation of this mystery. He was the special vessel chosen to make known the heavenly calling."

"The mystery formed no part of the revelation of the previous dispensations. Had it been otherwise, Paul could not rightly have written that it was "kept secret since the world began."

"The mystery was not something of difficult, mysterious character, but a sacred secret never known to mankind until in due time opened up by the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul."

“It was a special revelation given, not to the twelve, but to him as the apostle of the new dispensation.”

“That a doctrine so clearly revealed in the Scriptures could have become so utterly lost is only to be accounted for by the Judaizing of the Church, and the consequent minding of earthly things that beclouded the heavenly ones.”

“Now if the mystery be for those who have faith to obey, it is certainly of vast importance that every child of God be instructed as to its true character.”

(The above quotations copied from Dr. Ironside’s writings.)

This is what I believe and teach concerning the Church of the Mystery, the Body of Christ. But the Church to which Peter belonged on the day of Pentecost was not the Church of the Mystery, for the Divine movement which Peter presented in connection with the gospel of the circumcision, unlike the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6, was prophesied.

We learn in II Peter 3:15 and 16 that Peter acknowledged that some things in all of Paul’s Epistles were hard to be understood. It was not hard for Peter to understand Acts 15:13 to 18: “And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up, That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, Who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.”

Peter and the Eleven understood this program of God, for it was a prophesied program. But they had to learn from Paul concerning the gospel of the uncircumcision. Galatians 2:2 to 9. Paul had to explain to them the truth of Ephesians 3:6 to 11, God’s eternal purpose, the unsearchable (unprophesied) riches of Christ for Gentiles, the dispensation of the mystery, the Joint-Body unknown to Israel’s prophets. Peter preached a prophesied message and presented a prophesied spiritual program. Paul, in addition to a prophesied message, proclaimed unprophesied truth concerning the One New Man of Ephesians 2:15, the Perfect Man of Ephesians 4:13.

GOD’S PROGRAM IN ACTS 15

Now let us compare Acts 15:13 and 14 with Galatians 2:9 and Ephesians 2:16: “And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name.” Acts 15:13 and 14. “And when James, Peter, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.” Galatians 2:9. “And that He might reconcile both unto God in one Body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.” Ephesians 2:16.

From these verses we learn the folly of teaching that God’s purpose during this age of grace is to visit the Gentiles, to take, out of them a people for His name, in fulfillment of Amos 9:11 to 15. If Peter and James knew that to be God’s purpose and will for this age, and then agreed to confine their testimony to the Jews (Galatians 2:9), then obviously their decision was contrary to God’s will. Again, if God’s purpose is to visit the Gentiles, how do the Jews get in?

God's prophesied kingdom program is presented in Acts 15:13 to 18, and that program was God's program from Acts 2:1 until one of the Twelve (James) died. Acts 12:2. That prophesied program was postponed after Saul became Paul. Then God changed His program. God began to reconcile Gentiles when Israel was set aside by God. Then began the Joint-Body. To understand this truth read Acts 13:46—Acts 14:27—Ephesians 2:11 to 17—Romans 11:30—and Romans 11:15.

There is surely a great difference between reconciling both Jews and Gentiles, baptizing them into one Body, making of them One New Man, the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6, concerning which all prophets were ignorant and silent, and taking out from among the Gentiles a people for His name, in fulfillment of promises known to and made known by Israel's prophets.

Right here we would emphasize the truth of I Corinthians 3:10: "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon."

Peter was not the wise masterbuilder who laid the foundation for truth concerning the Church of the Mystery; that truth in all of Paul's Epistles hard to be understood.

Let us not follow those who have exceedingly erred in beginning the dispensation of grace, the dispensation of the mystery, and the Joint-Body, the unsearchable riches of Christ, God's eternal purpose, on Pentecost a Jewish feast day. Such faulty dispensationalism leads to confusion and many contradictions in the New Testament Scriptures.

Neither let us be as extreme as Pastor George Douglas in his teaching as presented in the Moody Monthly, of July, 1936. You will note, in this article, he designates the period during the "Acts" period "the Pentecostal dispensation," and from the close of Acts down to the present "the Christian dispensation."

"It is a common error to assume that the rejection and crucifixion of Christ was the historical crisis at which Israel was set aside."

"When we come into the Acts we at once discover that a place of repentance was granted to Israel, and a 'blotting out of sins' was preached to them through the Messiah whom they had rejected and crucified." Acts 2:14, 22 and 36. Doubtless repentance would have brought them 'times of refreshing' and 'the times of restitution of all things' spoken of by all the prophets since the world began. Acts 3:19 to 21. That was the Pentecost proclamation of the Divine amnesty for the guilty people of Jerusalem, and their answer to it was the stoning of Stephen. Acts 7.

"But that crowning sin of Jerusalem was not laid upon the Jews of the dispersion and so the disciples who were scattered abroad by the persecution which followed, carried the Pentecostal gospel to them, for in the first period of the Pentecostal dispensation the preaching was, 'to the Jews only.' And in the second part of the Pentecostal period or dispensation, they still enjoyed a distinctive priority for now it was 'to the Jew first.' But in this Christian dispensation, 'there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles.'

"The simple answer is that in this Book (Acts), we have the Divine Record of the Pentecostal dispensation, and that transition period was now ended."

This is indeed "ultradispensationalism." While we cannot agree with the "dispensationalists" who teach that the dispensation of the mystery began on the day of Pentecost we do most heartily endorse the statement of Dr. Wm. L. Pettingill who is a true "grace" preacher.

“There is much preaching of Jesus Christ which does not stablish God’s people, because it is not according to Paul’s gospel, nor according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but was made manifest by revelation to the Apostle Paul.”

It is for this reason that Dr. Pettingill, Dr. James M. Gray, Mr. John Darby and others have not believed that the so-called great commission is for this age of grace.

MESSAGE NUMBER 14

BELOVED FOR THE FATHER’S SAKE

Note this statement in Romans 11:28:

“As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes”

Then note what follows:

“ O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!”

As we develop the truth concerning “the salvation of Gentiles”, because of Israel’s unbelief, and the coming salvation of Israel “for the fathers’ sake,” we too shall cry out: “ O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!”

First let us see God’s description of the unsaved Gentiles at the time the risen Christ sent Paul to them.

“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind. “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.” Ephesians 4:17 and 18.

“Because that, when they knew God they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.” “And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.” Romans 1:21 and 28.

What hope could there be for such people? They were “by nature the children of wrath:” Ephesians 2:3. They were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, in the world having no hope. Ephesians 2:12. In Romans 10:19 they were called “a foolish nation;” “no people.” Christ on earth said to a Gentile, “it is not meet to give the children’s bread to dogs.” Matthew 15:25 to 27. Think of them; “no people;” “dogs.”

Now let us see what God did to Israel because Israel would not receive Paul’s message to them.

“(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.” “Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.” Romans 11:8 and 10.

Now some interesting facts:

Way back, about 1900 BC, when the Gentiles were blinded and God gave them up, He called a man by the name of Abram, to leave his country, family and home. Genesis 12:1 to 5. Note God's Word: "I will make of thee a great nation." Abram's wife was Sarah. Note Hebrews 11:11 and 12.

"Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful Who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable." The child of Abraham and Sarah was Isaac. From this promised son came Jacob and the nation Israel.

Now note God's declaration concerning Israel:"

"But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine." "For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in My sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not: For I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; Even every one that is called by My name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him." Isaiah 43:1 and 3 to 7.

"Thus saith the Lord, If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord." Jeremiah 31:37.

"Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for MINE HOLY NAME'S SAKE, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went." "Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel." Ezekiel 36:22 and 32.

Israel is going to be preserved for God's holy name's sake. They are beloved for the fathers' sake. The fathers were Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Note in Ezekiel 36:22 to 32 what God is going to do for and with Israel for His own holy name's sake

"For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." Ezekiel 36:24 to 26.

We might read more than 500 verses from the pens of Israel's prophets as to Israel's glorious future.

THE FATHER'S SAKE AND THE FATHERS' SAKE

God made a covenant with Abraham concerning Israel and Canaan. Genesis 17:8. God confirmed that covenant with His oath when Abraham had placed Isaac on the altar. Genesis 22:16 to 19. The gifts and the calling of God are without repentance. Romans 11:29, Therefore

for the fathers' sake Israel shall be saved after God's present reign of grace for Gentiles. And they are going to be saved for the Father's sake. Ezekiel 36:22.

In this connection note Romans 11:11, 15, and 30:

"I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy." "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" "For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief." Romans 11:11, 15 and 30.

So once again, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" Romans 11:33.

Let us go back to the statement concerning Israel in John 12:37 to 41:

"But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart: that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." John 12:37 to 41.

"O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!"

When the Gentiles were blinded and in universal idolatry and adultery, alienated from the life of God, the Lord chose Abraham and created Israel for His own glory. God began a new movement on the earth with the nation Israel. By the covenant of circumcision God cut off the rest of the human race. Genesis 17:12 to 16. Acts 7:6 to 12. Israel was selected to reveal God to the heathen.

They miserably failed. God finally set Israel aside. But they will be saved.

"And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all." Ezekiel 37:21 and 22.

In Ezekiel 36, God tells how Israel profaned His name among the heathen. In other Scriptures He tells how Israel rejected and killed God's prophets.

"But last of all He sent unto them His Son, saying, They will reverence My Son." "And they caught Him and cast Him out of the vineyard, and slew Him." Matthew 21:37 and 39.

That Son was their Messiah and King. What did that Son say to them?

"Ye fools and blind." "Ye blind guides which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel." "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see Me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Matthew 23:17, 24, 33, 38 and 39.

They were truly blind. They rejected their Messiah. He was delivered according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders, and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you,

as ye yourselves also know: Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” Acts 2:22 and 23.

“And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.” Acts 3:17.

Then note Acts 3:25 and 26:

“Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.” Acts 3:25 and 26.

The rest of the story is told in I Thessalonians 2:14 and 16:

“For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews.” “Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost”

God again sent blindness upon Israel. Romans 11:8. They have been spiritually blind since then, scattered all over the earth. Then note God’s revealed secret

“For I would not brethren that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” Romans 11:25 and 26.

Israel’s blindness and unbelief meant reconciliation, salvation, grace and mercy for Gentiles. Romans 11:15, 11 and 30.

We have learned that when the Gentiles were blinded and God gave them up, Israel was given the place of honor and privilege. And then when Israel was blinded and set aside (temporarily) God’s reign of grace for Gentiles was inaugurated. For about 1900 years we have been receiving Divine mercy. In the first chapter of Romans we learn of the rejection of the Gentiles. In the eleventh chapter we learn of the rejection of Israel.

FOR OUR SAKES AND FOR CHRIST’S SAKE

Note Ephesians 4:32:

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God **FOR CHRIST’S SAKE** hath forgiven you.”

Why are Gentiles forgiven all their sins? **FOR CHRIST’S SAKE**. Why will Israel yet be forgiven, saved and blessed? For Jehovah’s sake. Ezekiel 36:22 and 32. And also for the fathers’ sake. Romans 11:28. Why were the rulers of Israel enemies of the gospel when Paul preached to them? For the Gentiles’ sake. Romans 11:28.

The disobedience, unbelief, and blindness of Israel is told in the story of Barjesus, Paulus, and Barnabas in Acts 13:6 to 12: Let us read this interesting story

“And when they had gone through the isle into Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the Word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul,

(who also is called Paul), filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.” Acts 13:6 to 12.

Barjesus means “the child of Jehovah the Saviour.” Israel was God’s “Barjesus.” Barjesus sought to turn the Gentile away from faith in Israel’s Messiah. Israel was chosen to turn Gentiles to Israel’s Messiah. For Barjesus’ disobedience God’s judgment fell upon him, “blindness for a season.” This Divine judgment caused Paulus to believe and be saved. “Saul” became .”Paul” to declare the truth of Romans 11:25 and 26. A blindness in part to Israel until God ends His dealings with the Gentiles.

The Jews are scattered among all the nations of the earth in spiritual blindness “And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” Luke 21:24.

The times of the Gentiles will be fulfilled. The fulness of the Gentiles will come in. And let all Gentiles remember Romans 11:21.

Many, many so-called Christian preachers today are as blind as Israel. Even the great majority of the saved ones are not only ignorant of Romans 11:25 and 26 but wholly ignorant of God’s eternal purpose, under the dispensation of grace, during this parenthetical period while the Messianic kingdom is in abeyance. Ephesians 3:1 to 11.

Then think of the modernists in evangelical denominations who are given the right hand of fellowship by modernist rabbis who say; “now that you believe that Jesus was only a good man and a religious reformer, but not conceived by the Holy Spirit, we can enjoy fellowship with you. “

As Barjesus sought to turn the Gentiles away from the faith so many of the leaders in the so-called Christian churches are turning Jewish leaders away from the faith and all of them together are headed for the same ditch

“Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.” Matthew 15:14.

MESSAGE NUMBER 15

THE END OF THIS PRESENT DIVINE ECONOMY

Even unsaved religious sinners and carnal Christians are joining with the spiritual children of God in this time of wars, and rumors of wars, in asking or wondering if the end is at hand. The end of what? Well, that is what we want to consider. A friend said to me this week, “I overheard a group of Catholic girls talking about the latest developments of the European war and one said to the other. “I believe the end of the world is near at hand.” My friend said, “that is rather unusual for Catholics, isn’t it ?”

The Bible has much to say about the last days, the end time, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to reign as a King on this earth. The Bible tells of the beast and the antichrist, who shall rule over men and nations with the power and cunning of Satan. The Bible informs us that the Jews are to be saved, by the coming of their Messiah, out of a time called “the great tribulation.”

All of these events are clearly set forth in the Bible and now even skeptics admit that there seems to be evidences on earth that we are hastening to the realization of all that is predicted in the Bible. The spiritual Christians know that II Peter 1:19 to 21 is true: “We have also a more sure Word of prophecy; 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 arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. 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 Spirit.”

But all spiritual Christians do not know how to interpret and apply prophecy in this particular Divine economy. “Economy” is in the Greek “oikonomia” and is translated “dispensation” in I Corinthians 9:17—Colossians 1:25—and Ephesians 3:2. It is translated “fellowship” in Ephesians 3:9. In the interpretation and application of all Scripture the students must always recognize that there are different economies, or dispensations. We know that for about 1500 years, from Moses to the Apostle Paul, there was an economy of law, and that the end of that economy came with the first advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we should all know that another end is coming with the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. But again we ask, “the end of what?” Will it be the end of this present dispensation, or the end of the time of Israel’s tribulation? If the present dispensation and the time of Israel’s trouble are to end at the same time, then, of course, that means that the living members of the Body of Christ are going through, or into, the great tribulation.

Some of our leading spiritual Premillenarians are trying to comfort and calm Christians by saying that there are two aspects of the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ: that He is first coming for His Church and subsequently coming with His Church, and that the great tribulation will fall in between the “coming for” and the “coming with.” Most of these men not only offer no Scriptural proof of their comforting doctrine, but in their very next message they repudiate and contradict it by teaching that the doings of the blood-thirsty tyrants in Europe, in fulfillment of the predictions of Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah and other of Israel’s prophets, are signs that the Lord’s coming for His Church is at hand, that is, the rapture of the Church.

Now a few questions, for which all should demand, or at least desire, a true Scriptural answer. Are we living in the end time described by Christ in answer to the question of Matthew 24:3: “Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Will the Church be saved from the great tribulation? Will the Lord Jesus rapture His Church before the great tribulation? Are the beast and the antichrist now alive? Are the activities of Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin Divine signs to teach members of the Body of Christ that Christ will come at any moment FOR His Church?

We might offer as Scriptural proof that the Church will be saved from the great tribulation, Luke 18:8 and II Thessalonians 1:7 to 10. In Luke 18:8 we learn that the Son of man is coming to earth, and when He does, He will not find faith on the earth; therefore He will not find His Church. Inasmuch as they shall have been taken to glory, He will not expect to find them here.

In II Thessalonians 1:10 the words “when He shall come,” should be translated “when He shall have come.” The Greek word is “elthe.”

But many other Scriptures which are being quoted by Christian preachers to prove that the coming of Christ is at hand prove that the Church will be in the great tribulation when He comes. One chapter frequently used is Luke 21:24 to 31. And another chapter that is being overworked is Ezekiel 38, concerning “Gog,” “Magog,” “Meshech,” “Tubal” and “Gomer.”

And, of course, now that Mussolini has joined with Hitler, great emphasis is given to the image of Daniel Two and the animals of Daniel Seven. “Rome” and “Gomer” in an alliance must surely mean the end time. Again, the end time of what?

Ezekiel and Daniel did not know one thing about the “beginning time” or the “end time” of this present Divine economy. They did prophesy concerning the end time and their prophecies will be fulfilled. But not during this present dispensation. The end of this present dispensation will come, not because of the doings of Hitler and Mussolini, and when they fail or succeed, but when God completes His present building. God is a great Builder. He is building a great House. That House is called in Ephesians 3:6, the “Joint-Body” (in the Greek). In Ephesians 1:20 to 23 it is called the Body of Christ, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. In Ephesians 2:21 and 22, it is thus described: “In Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord In Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” As members of that Body we are given important instructions in I Corinthians 3:10: “According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.”

It is important, yea, imperative, that we recognize this masterbuilder (Paul) if we are to build together acceptable to God. If we obey I Corinthians 3:10 and Ephesians 3:1 to 11 we will know how to answer questions concerning the end time.

The course and culmination of this dispensation is set forth in Ephesians 4:12 and 13:

“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” And don’t fail to read verse Ephesians 4:14: “That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”

Unless we know Pauline Ephesian Truth we will be numbered with those who are tossed to and fro by the undispensational prophets of the hour. We too shall be “gone with the wind”

THE JOINT BODY-THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

During this present dispensation God is engaged in completing the one Body of Ephesians 4:4 and 12. This Body is “the Church of the Mystery,” “the Church of the Secret.” Members of this one Body are to obey Ephesians 3:9 and 4:3:

“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.” “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

What does it mean to see “the dispensation of the Secret”? Whatever it means, all Christians should see it. All Christians should diligently and prayerfully and spiritually learn from Paul’s Prison Epistles what the dispensation of the Secret is. They should also diligently, prayerfully and spiritually read the prophecy of Daniel and understand the secret which the Lord of heaven revealed to Daniel concerning political rulers and empires, kings and nations, “the

times of the Gentiles,” which will be suddenly brought to an end by the coming of the King from heaven.

Paul knew Daniel’s secret. But Daniel did not know Paul’s Secret. David died before Daniel was born and therefore he did not know either one of them. Neither did Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, John the Baptist, and other prophets, who died before the “dispensation of the mystery” was revealed to Paul, know Paul’s Secret.

Note Paul’s testimony in Ephesians 3:1 to 6.

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same Body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.”

And Colossians 1:24 to 26: “Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body’s sake, which is the Church: Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, and now is made manifest to His saints.”

How interesting! If the Holy Spirit, in Romans 11:25, would not have Christians ignorant as to the why and when of Israel’s blindness and temporary Divine disfavor, most assuredly the Holy Spirit wants no member of the Body of Christ ignorant of the “Secret” of Ephesians 3 and Colossians 1. Certainly where there is such ignorance the Body members cannot say, “where ignorance is bliss ‘tis folly to be wise.” The bliss of ignorance in this case cannot be compared with the bliss of knowing what is meant by Ephesians 1:9 and 11:

“Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself.” “In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.” And Ephesians 3:11: “According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

God’s Secret was revealed to Paul by Christ. It is also called “the Secret of Christ,” “the Secret which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.” “The Mystery of God’s will” has been told. This was God’s “predestinated” will, His eternal purpose. It was purposed in Christ for members of Christ’s Body before the world began. II ‘Timothy 1:9. Note what Paul adds in verse 11: “Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.”

This Divine Secret is the capstone of Divine Truth. It was given to Paul to complete the Word of God. Paul was the prisoner of Jesus Christ, in jail for making known this Secret. Ephesians 6:19 and 20. Colossians 4:3 and 4. II Timothy 2:8 and 9.

When the Lord Jesus was on earth He announced “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” in fulfillment of the law and the prophets. He was a minister of the circumcision, confirming prophecies and promises. Romans 15:8. He did not reveal to any of His twelve apostles the Secret to complete the Word of God while He was on earth. He did not reveal this until after Saul’s name was changed to Paul, until after Israel had been set aside. Certainly Acts 5:29 to 31 proves that Israel had not been set aside when Peter preached that message to them. Israel had not been set aside when Paul preached Acts 13:40 and 41 to them. Note Paul’s words in Acts

13:46. Jesus Christ in the flesh came to fulfill the law and the prophets. Matthew 5:17. He did not come to fulfill the Word of God with the Mystery. That was Paul's Christ given ministry.

The prophesied kingdom of heaven and the unprophesied Church of the Mystery are different. Unless we recognize this difference and interpret, appropriate and apply the Scriptures accordingly, we shall be workmen who need to be ashamed. By diligently searching the Scriptures we shall learn that the kingdom of heaven yet to be established on earth was prophesied by all of God's holy prophets since the world began but not predestinated before the foundation of the world. The Body of Christ was predestinated but not prophesied.

The end of the times of the Gentiles will be when the Son of man comes in the time of Jacob's trouble. The Son of man will destroy the antichrist with the brightness of His coming. The beast and the antichrist will be cast into the lake of fire. For Israel, the kingdom of God will be at hand. Israel will be restored to Divine favor to enjoy the kingdom blessings on earth promised Israel by Israel's prophets. The prophesied kingdom will be established on earth.

This end time will not come during this present reign of grace. Prophecy concerning the end time is in connection with Israel's tribulation period, and the kingdom age will come after. The Body of Christ has been completed and taken from the earth to appear with Christ in glory.

The end of this present dispensation of grace is the end of an unprophesied parenthetical period. The prophecies of Daniel and Ezekiel, concerning Gentile kings and Gentile nations, do not fit into this unprophesied, parenthetical period. Our duty, as Christians, is to tell other Christians this Truth, in obeying Ephesians 3:9: "And to make all men see what is the dispensation of the Secret, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ," so they will no longer be children tossed to and fro.

This is to continue to be God's program until the Body of Christ is full: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Ephesians 4:13.

Members of Christ's Body walk by faith and not by sight. The dispensation of the grace of God is not the sign age.

Let us be careful to clarify our question dispensationally, when we ask, "is this the end time?"

MESSAGE NUMBER 16

THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS

In Acts 3:21 the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of Peter, revealed unto the people of God, a blessed Divine Truth

"WHOM THE HEAVEN MUST RECEIVE UNTIL THE TIMES OF RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS, WHICH GOD HATH SPOKEN BY THE MOUTH OF ALL HIS HOLY PROPHETS SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN."

Note what the speaker added in Acts 3:24:

“YEA, AND ALL THE PROPHETS FROM SAMUEL AND THOSE THAT FOLLOW AFTER, AS MANY AS HAVE SPOKEN, HAVE LIKEWISE FORETOLD OF THESE DAYS.”

“The restitution of all things.” “These days.” What days they will be! These days will make up years. Let us carefully, prayerfully, spiritually read and study this wonderful message of Peter in the third chapter of Acts. He begins “Ye men of Israel” Acts 3:12. The message concerning “the restitution of all things” mentioned by all the holy prophets since the world began concerned Israel primarily. But the kingdom blessings will extend to all the nations of the earth. We quote Acts 3:19 to 21:

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord: And He shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.”

Now note in Luke 1:70 the same language that is used in Acts 3:21:

“As He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began.” Luke 1:70.

Note the context:

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people.” “That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us: To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant; the oath which He sware to our father Abraham; That He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear.” Luke 1:68 and 71 to 74.

What will that mean for the poor scattered persecuted Jews who are now the football for almost every Gentile ruler and government in Europe and other countries?

“The times of the restitution of all things” will mean for Israel deliverance from Gentile dictatorship and persecution and humiliation. Then note what is going to take place:

“And I will bring again the captivity of My people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God.” Amos 9:14 and 15.

“And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one.” Zechariah 14:9.

Some time after Peter proclaimed the truth of Acts 3:12 to 26, he again addressed Israel and said:

“The God of our fathers raised up Jesus Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him.” Acts 5:30 to 32.

Christ was exalted to be Israel’s Prince and Saviour to give them repentance. When we read of the awful judgment which Christ pronounced upon Israel in Matthew 23:13 to 39, we should then ascertain why the Lord changed His attitude toward Israel and offered them forgiveness and the restitution of all things, if they would repent. Note some of the things Christ said to Israel in Matthew 23: “Ye fools and blind” (Matthew 23:17) “ye serpents, ye generation

of vipers” (Matthew 23:33) “the children of murderers” (Matthew 23:31). Then note Matthew 23:38,

“Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”

But now let us remember the words of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 10:23: “But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye may not have gone over the cities, till the Son of man be come.” Then following the death and resurrection of the Messiah the apostles asked Him a question, **“wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” Acts 1:6.** They could have put this question in these words, “wilt Thou at this time bring about the restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began” They meant, “are we going now into those days spoken by Samuel and the other prophets?” Acts 3:24.

Let us keep in mind that none of those twelve apostles knew one single thing concerning “the dispensation of the grace of God” of Ephesians 3:1 to 3; or “the dispensation of the secret” of Ephesians 3:9, or “the Joint-Body” of Ephesians 3:6. The risen Christ revealed to Paul these vital, new precious truths for Gentiles saved by grace. During this parenthetical period, while the King is absent from the earth and the Messianic kingdom is in abeyance, the dispensation of grace will continue. The Scriptures speak of these messages of grace for Gentiles as “the unsearchable (untraceable) riches of Christ.” Ephesians 3:8. These days of grace were not spoken by the mouth of Israel’s prophets since the world began. These days of grace in which we live are altogether different from “these days” mentioned in Acts 3:24.

Thus we see that before God ushered in this parenthetical “grace” period and began the Church of the Mystery (Colossians 1:24 to 26) He gave to Israel another opportunity to receive Jesus as Messiah and King. This is the message of Acts 3:12 to 26. Christ had prayed for His murderers on the cross, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Luke 23:34. This prayer brought to Israel this new opportunity to repent. Note Acts 3:14 and 15, 17 and 19

“But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you: And killed the Prince of Life, Whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.” “And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.” “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.” Acts 3:14, 15, 17 and 19.

Even after the Lord Jesus had called those wicked men, “the children of murderers,” “a generation of vipers,” “serpents,” after He had said, “your house is left unto you desolate,” God was willing to forgive all and send Christ back, if they would repent. God was willing to forgive and forget all of their wicked deeds on the grounds of ignorance, even their murder of His Son. But they imprisoned the apostles and killed Stephen and stoned Paul.

Note Paul’s words to them:

“Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets: Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.” Acts 13:40 and 41.

They blasphemed against the Holy Spirit again and again. Acts 18:5 and 6. Then the Divine judgment fell:

“(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear) unto this day.” “Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.” Romans 11:8 and 10.

The Messianic kingdom was postponed and another apostle then became the chief messenger of the Lord; the Apostle Paul. He wrote

“For this cause, I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles.” Ephesians 3:1.

“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.” Romans 11:13.

“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24.

“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.” I Corinthians 3:10.

This new apostle wrote of “the Church which is Christ’s Body,” “the Mystery unknown to Israel’s prophets,” “the unsearchable riches of Christ,” “the Mystery of God’s will.” He stated that members of the Church of the Mystery, were one with Christ, seated with Him in the heavenlies, and blessed with all spiritual blessings. He wrote concerning “One New Man.” All of this is in Paul’s Epistles, especially in Ephesians.

Members of Christ’s Body constitute “the household of God.” “In Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord In Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Ephesians 2:21 and 22. Church members are spoken of as “the fulness (or the filling up) of Christ.” Ephesians 1:23.

Concerning their heavenly position and these heavenly possessions of members of Christ’s Body, Samuel and Israel’s other prophets said nothing, because they knew nothing. Colossians 1:24 to 26—Ephesians 3:5 to 11.

We do not rightly divide the Word of Truth when we confuse “the Church of the Mystery”, “the Joint-Body” of Ephesians 3:6, unknown to Israel’s prophets, with “the restitution of all things” spoken by all the prophets. These days of grace are different from the “these days” of the Messianic kingdom concerning which Samuel and all the prophets spoke and wrote.

The dispensation of the Mystery is identified with the Mystery among the Gentiles. Colossians 1:27. During the first nine chapters of Acts it was not even lawful for an apostle of Jesus Christ to preach to a Gentile. Acts 10:28. Therefore it is a great blunder to begin “the dispensation of the grace of God for Gentiles” or “the dispensation of the Mystery” on the day of Pentecost. This dispensation is mentioned in connection with “the unsearchable riches of Christ among the Gentiles;” that is, the spiritual blessings for Gentile believers not prophesied in Israel’s Scriptures.

Everything which Peter and the Eleven preached in Acts was in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. Paul began his ministry by first preaching truth in fulfillment of these same prophecies. But it behooves us to learn at what time in the ministry of Paul he began to preach the “unsearchable” riches of Christ; the unprophesied ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

After God has accomplished His eternal purpose during this present reign of grace, after the Church has been taken to glory, God will set His hand the second time to recover the remnant of His people Isaiah 11:11. That will be the restitution of all things. Until then the heavens will retain Jesus Christ.

MESSAGE NUMBER 17

THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

Let us consider Peter's confession in response to the question which the Lord Jesus put to His disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?"

"Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Matthew 16:16.

Then note the Lord's words to Simon Bar-jona:

"AND I SAY ALSO UNTO THEE, THAT THOU ART PETER, AND UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH; AND THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT. AND I WILL GIVE UNTO THEE THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN: AND WHATSOEVER THOU SHALT BIND ON EARTH SHALL BE BOUND IN HEAVEN: AND WHATSOEVER THOU SHALT LOOSE ON EARTH SHALL BE LOOSED IN HEAVEN." Matthew 16:18 and 19.

Then after His resurrection the Lord

Jesus said to His apostles:

"WHOSE SOEVER SINS YE REMIT, THEY ARE REMITTED UNTO THEM; AND WHOSE SOEVER SINS YE RETAIN, THEY ARE RETAINED." John 20:23.

Many Christians have been perplexed and in much doubt as to what the Lord Jesus meant when He said;

a—"Upon this rock."

b—"I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven."

c—"Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them."

Did the Lord Jesus say, "I will build My Church on Peter", or "I will build My Church on Peter's confession", or "I will build My Church on Myself the Rock?"

It is interesting to note that the Lord said "Thou art petros, and on this petra I will build My Church." Petra is a rock larger than petros.

But let us note the words of Peter in I Peter 2:5, 6 and I Peter 5:1 to 3 and 5:

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded."

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."

"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."

Peter wrote, as an elder, that an elder should not shepherd a flock as a lord over God's heritage. And Peter called believers, living stones.

Then let us note the words of Paul, in Ephesians 2:19 to 22:

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone. In Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; In Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

Here again we see that believers are living stones in the spiritual temple. Then note Paul’s words, in I Corinthians 3:10 and 11:

“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

Before we search the Scriptures to see how the ministry of Peter fits into Divine truth concerning the Church which Paul calls “the Body of Christ”, let us see how Peter forgave sins:

“And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.” Acts 10:25 and 26. Peter would not permit a man to kneel before him in adoration or worship. Note how he forgave sin.

“TO HIM GIVE ALL THE PROPHETS WITNESS, THAT THROUGH HIS NAME WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHALL RECEIVE REMISSION OF SINS.” Acts 10:43.

Peter forgave sins just as any young or old Christian can forgive sin by preaching forgiveness of sins by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. He did have apostolic authority, but it was never transferred by Peter to any successor.

THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

What did Christ give to Peter? We will let the Scriptures speak for themselves:

“These Twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not in the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give.” Matthew 10:5 to 8.

“Then answered Peter and said unto Him, Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Matthew 19:27 and 28.

“Afterward He appeared unto the Eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen. And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues: They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” Mark 16:14 to 18.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commended you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Matthew 28:19 and 20.

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Acts 1:8.

In John 21 Christ commanded Peter to feed His sheep and to tend His lambs. After we have carefully studied these commissions, let us again study them in the light of Galatians 2:7 to 9—Acts 10:28—Acts 8:1 and Acts 5:29 to 32.

“BUT CONTRARIWISE, WHEN THEY SAW THAT THE GOSPEL OF THE UNCIRCUMCISION WAS COMMITTED UNTO ME, AS THE GOSPEL OF THE CIRCUMCISION WAS UNTO PETER; (FOR HE THAT WROUGHT EFFECTUALLY IN PETER TO THE APOSTLESHIP OF THE CIRCUMCISION, THE SAME WAS MIGHTY IN ME TOWARD THE GENTILES;) AND WHEN JAMES, PETER, AND JOHN, WHO SEEMED TO BE PILLARS, PERCEIVED THE GRACE THAT WAS GIVEN UNTO ME, THEY GAVE TO ME AND BARNABAS THE RIGHT HANDS OF FELLOWSHIP; THAT WE SHOULD GO UNTO THE HEATHEN, AND THEY UNTO THE CIRCUMCISION.”

“And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, EXCEPT THE APOSTLES.”

Do you suppose Roman Catholic priests ever read these verses? Then note what Peter said about seven years after Pentecost.

“And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” Acts 10:28.

Note that instead of going to Rome to organize the Roman Church, Peter remained in Jerusalem.

How plain are these truths. Unto Peter was committed “the gospel of the circumcision” for the circumcision, and God worked in Him in that ministry.

Paul gave this testimony concerning Gentile salvation and the Body of Christ “Whereunto I also labour, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily.” Colossians 1:29.

“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Ephesians 3:8.

It was in this sense that Paul was a wise masterbuilder. “According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.” I Corinthians 3:10.

The words, “But contrariwise”, in Galatians 2:7 quoted above, assure us that Peter had no jurisdiction over Paul. In Acts 22:17 to 21, we read that Christ told Paul to get out of Jerusalem and go to the Gentiles. In Acts 8:1, we learn that Christ instructed Peter to remain in Jerusalem and preach to Jews. Peter remained in the land of the Jews, according to the Book of Acts, and the only time he went out of Palestine, so far as the “Acts” record is concerned, he got into trouble. Note that trouble

“But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.” Galatians 2:11 to 13.

It has truly been said that if Peter was a Catholic, Paul was a Protestant. Peter was neither infallible nor the first pope. But note Paul’s testimony concerning his gospel and his communications with Peter.

“But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught, it but by revelation of Jesus Christ:” Galatians 1:11 and 12.

“To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me; God accepteth no man’s person): for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me.” Galatians 2:5 and 6.

Paul did not receive the gospel from Peter. Peter did not know the gospel of the uncircumcision which Christ committed to Paul. Galatians 2:7. He heard this for the first time from Paul.

After Peter preached to the household of Cornelius, the Gentile, he and others of the Twelve agreed to go to the Jews. Galatians 2:9. Up to the time Peter preached to Cornelius, it was unlawful for him or any of the Twelve to preach to a Gentile. Acts 10:28. The other eleven condemned Peter when he did preach to Cornelius. Acts 11:1 to 5.

Note the difference between Peter’s message and Paul’s. Compare them. “Ye men of Israel.” Acts 3:12 to 15.

“Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.” Acts 3:25 and 26.

“Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” Acts 5:30 and 31.

“Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Ephesians 3:8.

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward.” Ephesians 3:1 and 2.

“Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, Which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” Ephesians 1:20 to 23.

You see there is a great difference. Now we note in Acts 2:14 that eleven other apostles stood up with Peter, on the day of Pentecost, and spoke to devout Jews from every nation under heaven concerning all the house of Israel. Acts 2:5— Acts 2:36. Twelve apostles to twelve tribes. One of the twelve was killed some years later. Acts 12:1 and 2.

With the death of James the Lord's program changed. It was no longer twelve apostles to twelve tribes.

A NEW COMMISSION

“AS THEY MINISTERED TO THE LORD, AND FASTED, THE HOLY SPIRIT SAID, SEPARATE ME BARNABAS AND SAUL FOR THE WORK WHEREUNTO I HAVE CALLED THEM.” Acts 13:2.

“Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, **LO, WE TURN TO THE GENTILES.” Acts 13:46.**

Up to the death of James, in Acts 12:1, Simon Peter is mentioned many times. From the death of James to the close of Acts, Peter is mentioned very few times, and where his name is mentioned., in the last sixteen chapters of Acts, it is in connection with Paul's ministry. Paul is mentioned in those closing seventeen chapters more than 130 times. Peter passed out and Paul became the chief human actor.

Now let us compare other statements in Peter's messages with some of Paul's.

- PETER -

“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.” Acts 2:22.

“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him.” Acts 10:38.

“Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.” Acts 10:34 and 35.

- PAUL -

“Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more.” II Corinthians 5:16.

“ For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?” Romans 11:15.

“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Romans 4:4 and 5.

Peter used the keys of the kingdom with Israel and with the household of one God-fearing, devout, religious, Jew-loving Gentile who feared God and who worked righteousness. Acts 2:22 and Acts 10:35.

Paul preached the gospel of the uncircumcision, the gospel of the grace of God, the ministry of reconciliation, the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ to Gentiles.

In Philippians 1:10 the Word says, “test things that differ.” Peter and the Eleven never called the “Church of the Mystery” the “Body”. That was the Lord’s own special revelation to Paul.

The twelve apostles are to have a ministry with the twelve tribes of Israel after the Body has been taken to glory. Matthew 19:28 and Revelation 21:12 to 14.

From Acts 1:1 to Acts 12:1 we have something of the kingdom program that God will put into action after this age has ended. Jesus Christ was raised from the dead to take the throne of David, and the heavens will retain Him until the times of the restitution of all things. Acts 2:27 to 32. Acts 3:19 to 21.

Note again-Matthew 16:16 to 19:

“And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

Now compare with Ephesians 3:1 and 2— Ephesians 3:5 and 6:

“FOR THIS CAUSE I PAUL, THE PRISONER OF JESUS CHRIST FOR YOU GENTILES. IF YE HAVE HEARD OF THE DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD WHICH IS GIVEN ME TO YOU-WARD.”

“Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same Body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.”

So we are sure that the Joint-Body of Ephesians is the Lord’s Church of this age. It was not built on Peter’s confession. Ephesians 2:20 and I Corinthians 3:10.

The keys of the kingdom of heaven will not fit into the dispensation of the grace of God. “The dispensation of the grace of God” and “the dispensation of the mystery” did not begin with Peter and Pentecost.

MESSAGE NUMBER 18

JESUS CHRIST THE SON OF ABRAHAM

“THE BOOK OF THE GENERATION OF JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF DAVID, THE SON OF ABRAHAM.” Matthew 1:1.

“For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him THE SEED OF ABRAHAM. Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.’; Hebrews 2:16 and 17.

“Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, Which was made of THE SEED OF DAVID according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” Romans 1:3 and 4.

Jesus Christ was the Son of David, the son of Abraham. Notice the first question, in Matthew: “Where is He that is born King of the Jews?” Matthew 2:2.

The Jews came from Abraham. God’s Jewish kings came from David. Note God’s promise concerning the Man to take David’s throne: “For thus saith the Lord; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel.” “Thus saith the Lord; If My covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David My servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them.” Jeremiah 33:17, 25 and 26.

Now read carefully Jeremiah 23:5 and 6 and Jeremiah 33:15 and 16. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

“In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely; and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness.”

God’s covenant with David is recorded in II Samuel 7:13 to 16: **“He shall build an house for My name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But My mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee; thy throne shall be established for ever.”**

More than 800 years before God made this covenant with David, and concerning his Seed and kingdom, God made a covenant with Abraham.

“NEITHER SHALL THY NAME ANY MORE BE CALLED ABRAM, BUT THY NAME SHALL BE ABRAHAM; FOR A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE THEE. AND I WILL MAKE THEE EXCEEDING FRUITFUL, AND I WILL MAKE NATIONS OF THEE, AND KINGS SHALL COME OUT OF THEE. AND I WILL ESTABLISH MY COVENANT BETWEEN ME AND THEE AND THY SEED AFTER THEE IN THEIR GENERATIONS FOR AN EVERLASTING COVENANT, TO BE A GOD UNTO THEE, AND TO THY SEED AFTER THEE AND I WILL GIVE UNTO THEE, AND TO THY SEED AFTER THEE, THE LAND WHEREIN THOU ART A STRANGER, ALL THE LAND OF CANAAN, FOR AN EVERLASTING POSSESSION; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD.” Genesis 17:5 to 8.

THE COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION

“And He gave THE COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION; and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.” Acts 7:8.

Note the covenant in Genesis 17:10, 14 and 24— Genesis 21:2 to 5.

“This is My covenant, which ye shall keep, between Me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you SHALL BE CIRCUMCISED.”

“And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant.”

“And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.”

“Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him. And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.”

Then note God’s word to Jacob, who was Abraham’s grandson

“And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, BUT ISRAEL SHALL BE THY NAME: and HE CALLED HIS NAME ISRAEL. And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.” Genesis 35:10 to 12.

JESUS CHRIST THE MINISTER OF THE CIRCUMCISION

In the Book of Matthew Jesus Christ the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, presents Himself as the promised Seed of Abraham, the promised King of the Jews.

Of course, as we compare Hebrews 2:16 and 17 and Hebrews 2:9 with Luke 1:29 to 33, we ask the question, “did Jesus Christ come to Israel the first time to be a living King on David’s throne, or did He come to be a dying Saviour on Calvary’s tree?” We have quoted Hebrews 2:16 and 17. We quote Hebrews 2:9: “But we see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”

Read this statement with the words of Christ in Luke 24:45 to 47

“Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

Here we learn, as we learn in Acts 2:23, Acts 4:27, Acts 13:29, I Corinthians 15:3 and 4 and Hebrews 9:26 that Jesus Christ came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and thus become the Saviour of the world.

But as we read the first chapter of Matthew, Mark and Luke, we learn that Jesus Christ was born in the house of David, in the city of David, of the seed of David, to take the throne of David and deliver Israel from Gentile subjugation.

“And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His, father David: And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.” Luke 1:31 to 33.

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David; As He

spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant; The oath which He sware to our father Abraham, That He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear.” Luke 1:68 to 74.

After Christ had presented Himself to Israel as their promised King, Deliverer and Messiah, and they had rejected Him, He said, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate; and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” Luke 13:34 and 35.

Now note these significant words of Christ in Luke 19:41 to 44:

“AND WHEN HE WAS COME NEAR, HE BEHELD THE CITY, AND WEPT OVER IT, SAYING, IF THOU HADST KNOWN, EVEN THOU, AT LEAST IN THIS THY DAY, THE THINGS WHICH BELONG UNTO THY PEACE BUT NOW THEY ARE HID FROM THINE EYES. BECAUSE THOU KNEWEST NOT THE TIME OF THY VISITATION.”

Israel knew not. They knew not the time of their visitation. They knew not the things that belonged to their peace. When will Israel see their King and Messiah again? When they say, “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

THE KING IS COMING AGAIN

“Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.” Revelation 1:7.

“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.” Zechariah 12:10.

“And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob My servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein; even they, and their children, and their children’s children for ever: and My servant David shall be their prince for ever.” Ezekiel 37:25.

God has not abandoned His “kingdom” program guaranteed in the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. No; God has postponed the earthly kingdom promised to His earthly people. But let us believe II Peter 1:19: “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; 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 arise in your hearts.”

Note Christ’s own words in Matthew 25:31 and Matthew 19:28: “When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory.”

“Jesus said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Surely we know that the Lord Jesus was not, in any way, referring to the Church, which He calls the Body of Christ, when He spoke of the throne of His glory.

Those who are in Christ's Body also belong to Christ's kingdom: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into **the kingdom of His dear Son**; In Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Colossians 1:13 and 14.

"For **the kingdom of God** is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." Romans 14:17.

"And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto **the kingdom of God**, which have been a comfort, unto me." Colossians 4:11.

But here we have a different phase or department of the kingdom of God.

THE KINGDOM—THE BODY

Compare Matthew 10:5 to 8 and Matthew 10:23 with Titus 2:11 and 13.

"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give."

"But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another; for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come."

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

The kingdom of heaven at hand for Jews, a message and program by Christ's apostles in the cities of Israel, is quite different from the "grace of God at hand for all men". Strictly speaking, Christ is the Head of the Body rather than the King of the Body. The kingdom that was at hand in Matthew 10:7 is in abeyance. The Body of Christ is not that kingdom of heaven.

We will study Matthew in several other lessons, but we have learned that the Lord Jesus, in that Book, is fulfilling covenants which God made with Abraham and David for Israel.

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

We shall study in another message Galatians 3:6 to 8 and Romans 4:3 to 11 and shall learn that Abram, the Gentile, was declared righteous in uncircumcision, just as uncircumcised Gentiles are now justified by faith without religion or good deeds. The Scripture foresaw this when God preached the gospel to Abram 430 years before the law was given. Galatians 3:8 and Galatians 3:16 and 17.

Therefore when we say that there has been an interruption of the Abrahamic covenant it is not concerning the justification of believing sinners but concerning God's guarantees as to Israel's land and kingdom.

MESSAGE NUMBER 19

BACK TO JESUS – ON TO PERFECTION

Most Christians seem to prefer a Red Lettered New Testament. In the Red Lettered New Testament the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, spoken while He was on earth, are printed in red ink.

It is true that Jesus of Nazareth spake as never man spake. John 7:46. “They wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth.” But Christians should ever remember that “all Scripture is God-breathed”, from Genesis to Revelation.

Some years after Jesus of Nazareth had closed His earthly ministry and gone back to heaven Paul wrote these words, in II Corinthians 13:3,—“**since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me.**” Then concerning the gospel which he preached, Paul said, “**for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.**” Galatians 1:12.

Again Paul said:

“AND I THANK CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD, WHO HATH ENABLED ME, FOR THAT HE COUNTED ME FAITHFUL, PUTTING ME INTO THE MINISTRY.” I Timothy 1:12.

Concerning his knowledge of Divine truth Paul said concerning himself: “How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” II Corinthians 12:4. Note several other statements from the pen of Paul.

“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.” II Corinthians 4:5.

“Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.” I Timothy 1:16.

“Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.” Ephesians 3:4.

“That I should be the minister to the Gentiles.” Romans 15:16.

Note Hebrews 1:1 and 2: “God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, **Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son,** Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds:”

Here we learn that from Moses, the human author of Genesis, to Malachi, the human author of the last inspired Book of the Old Testament, God spake in divers manners unto the fathers by the prophets. This covers the thirty-nine Books, from Genesis to Malachi.

Then follow Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the inspired writings, in which we find recorded the sayings and doings of the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, the Son of God. God truly spake in His Son. The Lord Jesus made a wonderful statement to His apostles

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will shew you things to come.” John 16:12 to 14.

So after the death of the Son of God on the cross, God continued to speak in divers manners. The apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit, and controlled by the Holy Spirit, they spoke and wrote messages that were God-breathed. Then followed revelations from Christ, in heaven, to the Apostle Paul, and the great unveiling of Christ given to the Apostle John, on the Isle of Patmos. So God did not cease to speak to His people when He ceased to speak in His Son on earth. Christ spoke in and by the Apostle Paul. Christ, on earth, was the Minister to the Jews. Romans 15:8. Later on the same Christ in heaven put Paul in the ministry to Gentiles.

Obedient children of God, who are spiritual and intelligent students of the Scriptures, will obey the command of Paul, in I Corinthians 11:1. There Paul writes, “follow me as I follow Christ.” They will believe what Paul has written, in Colossians 1:25 and 26:

“Whereof I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil (complete) the Word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints.”

Believing this statement, they will know that the risen Christ gave to Paul a message, a ministry, and a spiritual program, that, in many respects, superseded the commands, the commissions, and the doctrines which He, as Jesus of Nazareth, on earth, gave His disciples for their obedience and practice.

Note Galatians 5:1—**“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us, free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”**

It would be impossible for a member of the Body of Christ to obey this command, and at the same time attempt to obey some of the commands which Jesus of Nazareth gave while He was on earth. We see this the very moment we compare Galatians 5:1 with Matthew 23:1 and 2:

“Then spake Jesus, to the multitude, and to His disciples, Saying, the scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat.”

Now let us note Paul’s instructions, in II Timothy 2:2 and in I Corinthians 3:10

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”

“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.”

In I Timothy 1:16 we learned that Paul presented himself as a pattern. In I Corinthians 11:1 he said, “follow me as I follow Christ.” Now we read that Paul presents himself as a wise masterbuilder.

Paul was a pattern, an example, and a wise masterbuilder. Paul told Timothy to teach others what Paul had taught him.

Paul was not only a masterbuilder, but he was a master teacher, because he was the Master’s inspired teacher. Christ spoke in Paul to complete the Word of God. Let us compare several statements which speak of the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as the “Acts” ministry of the Twelve, with some of the commissions and revelations which He later gave to Paul.

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a Minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.” Romans 15:8.

“But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Matthew 15:24.

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law.” Galatians 4:4.

“These Twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.” Matthew 10:5 to 8.

“And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.” Luke 19:9.

“Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.” Acts 3:25.

“The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” Acts 5:30 and 31.

“And he said unto them, Ye know that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” Acts 10:28.

“Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the Word to none but unto the Jews only.” Acts 11:19.

Paul was the chosen vessel of Christ, sent to the Gentiles with a new message and ministry.

“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.” Romans 11:13.

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” “Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.” II Timothy 1:9 and 11.

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward” Ephesians 3:1 and 2.

“That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” Ephesians 2:13.

“I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.” Romans 11:11.

“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Ephesians 3:8.

“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Colossians 1:27.

“That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same (Joint) Body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.” Ephesians 3:6.

“Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.” II Timothy 4:17.

Jesus Christ and His twelve apostles were ministers to the children of Abraham, the children of the covenant, and not to the Gentiles.

Have you carefully observed the contrast? Jesus Christ, on earth, was a Minister of the circumcision. Then note Galatians 2:8: "For He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles." The twelve apostles were ministers of the circumcision and to the circumcision. Note one difference between the ministry of Peter and that of Paul. "But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter." Galatians 2:7.

Jesus of Nazareth, on earth, was Israel's Messiah and King. During the several years that He was on earth He preached in the land of the Jews. Acts 10:39. He was a Jew. He was under the law. He was a circumcised Minister to circumcised Jews. At the time Jesus of Nazareth was circumcised His mother, according to the law, brought for sacrifice, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." Luke 2:24.

Consider this prayerfully. And then remember, in Luke 22:15, about thirty-three years later, we learn that one of the last Israelitish ceremonies, observed by Jesus of Nazareth, was "the Passover".

Here are three facts to get fixed in our minds and hearts to help us to go on to perfection, in obedience to Hebrews 6:1, rather than to heed the foolish slogan repeatedly heard in religious circles, "back to Jesus." Now for the three facts

1—So far as the written Records are concerned, in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the only Gentile man to whom Christ ministered, while He was on earth, was a centurion who loved the Jews and built them a synagogue. Luke 7:1 to 6. Jesus called the one Gentile woman to whom He ministered, "a dog". Matthew 15:22 to 27.

2—During the earthly ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, when He was under the law, a Minister of the circumcision, when He recognized those who sat in Moses' seat, He did not tell the Jewish priests to discontinue the sacrifice of animals.

3—Any Gentile who might have been saved while Jesus Christ was on earth, sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, would have become an Old Testament Jew (proselyte), and he would not have been baptized into the Body of Christ by one Spirit. (I Corinthians 12:13.)

BACK TO JESUS

Some Christians cry, "back to Jesus". Others cry, "back to Pentecost." But they just think they go back. They cannot go back with Jesus in Palestine, under the law, to obey the Old Testament ritual, no matter how much they desire. You can neither go back to the earthly ministry of Jesus, nor back to Israel's Pentecost, without access to Jerusalem and Israel's temple.

THE CHRISTIAN'S POSITION IN CHRIST

"WHEREFORE HENCEFORTH KNOW WE NO MAN AFTER THE FLESH; YEA, THOUGH WE HAVE KNOWN CHRIST AFTER THE FLESH, YET NOW HENCEFORTH KNOW WE HIM NO MORE. THEREFORE IF ANY MAN BE IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATURE; OLD THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY; BEHOLD, ALL THINGS ARE BECOME NEW." II Corinthians 5:16 and 17.

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:3 and 4.

“For as we have many members in one Body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one Body in Christ, and every one members one of another.” Romans 12:4 and 5.

“And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 2:6.

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” Colossians 3:1 and 2.

“And ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power.” Colossians 2:10.

“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” Romans 6:14.

Just think of the ignorance and folly of any member of the Body of Christ who desires to go back under the law, the other side of the sacrifice and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, when He called Gentiles, “dogs”, when he told His disciples, “go not in the way of the Gentiles.”

Of course man is incurably religious and he can get all mixed up in religion, if he can go back to Jesus. Just think! there are thousands of intellectual religious church leaders, some of whom are saved, who say, “give me the religious program of Jesus in preference to the grace program of Paul.”

All of the program of the Lord Jesus, which He intends for members of His Body, can be brought over to fit into “the dispensation of the grace of God”. Every member of the Body of Christ should take an uncompromising stand with Paul. Note what he said, “I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” Galatians 2:21.

And surely every sinner should rejoice to hear the wonderful news of Ephesians 2:8 to 10 and 2:13:

“For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

But you may be sure that **“the back to Jesus”** preachers and **“the back to Pentecost”** preachers will see to it that sinners do not hear this “grace” message.

If we go back to Pentecost what do we find? We find twelve Jews standing up, the Lord’s preachers to devout Jews from every nation under heaven, giving a message to all the house of Israel. Acts 2:14— Acts 2:5 and Acts 2:36.

The scene is in the Jews’ city on a Jewish feast-day, and the message is for the children of the covenant. Acts 3:25. The message is, “repent and be baptized for the remission of sins.” They were to sell their earthly possessions and bring the money to the twelve Jews. Then Peter preached, “repent, and God will send Jesus Christ back from heaven to take David’s throne and redeem Israel.” Pray tell, what has any of this to do with the “dispensation of the mystery” of Ephesians 3:9, or “the JointBody” of Ephesians 3:6? Nothing whatever. For God’s spiritual program for this age of grace, no spiritual and intelligent member of the Body of Christ will go

back before there was a Body, before God opened the door of faith to the Gentiles (Acts 14:27), before Paul said, “lo, we turn to the Gentiles”, before “the dispensation of grace” was given to the apostle to the Gentiles. They will not go back the other side of Paul’s conversion to say nothing of the other side of Calvary.

What Christian, who knows his position and possessions in the heavenlies, wants to come down out of the heavenlies, from under the guaranty and blessings of grace, to go to Jerusalem under the law, to strive to enter in, or to endure unto the end? Should we who have been risen with Christ go back to Matthew 10:5 to 8?

GO ON TO PERFECTION

“THEREFORE LEAVING THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST, LET US GO ON UNTO PERFECTION.” Hebrews 6:1.

Note the three verses just preceding:

“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the Word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” Hebrews 5:12 to 14.

With these verses let us read Ephesians 4:13 and 14—I Corinthians 3:1 to 3—I Corinthians 13:11 and 13.

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, UNTO A PERFECT MAN, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth BE NO MORE CHILDREN, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”

“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even AS UNTO BABES IN CHRIST. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?”

“WHEN I WAS A CHILD, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.”

“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.” The Corinthian babes could speak with tongues, in fact those Corinthian carnal saints exercised all the sign gifts. But they could not receive the “meat”, the profound and blessed “Body” truth of Ephesians and Colossians. Compare the standing and gifts of those sanctified Corinthians with their carnal state or behavior.

STANDING AND GIFTS

I CORINTHIANS 12:8 to 10

“For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of

healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.”

I CORINTHIANS 6:11

“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

I CORINTHIANS 6:19 and 20

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with, a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

I CORINTHIANS 6:2

“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?”

I CORINTHIANS 12:13

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

CARNAL STATE

I CORINTHIANS 3:3

“For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?”

I CORINTHIANS 6:7 AND 8

“Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.”

I CORINTHIANS 5:1

“It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you.”

I CORINTHIANS 8:10

“For if any man see thee which past knowledge sit at meat in the idol’s temple.”

I CORINTHIANS 11:30

“For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.”

I CORINTHIANS 15:12

“How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?”

I CORINTHIANS 6:5

“I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you?”

Here we see that the Corinthians were saints, members of the Body of Christ, temples of the Holy Spirit, exercising all of the sign-gifts. But we also see what kind of saints they were. They certainly were not in the Body of Christ because of their sinless behavior. They did not have the gifts of the Spirit because they were spiritual. They were carnal and not able to take the “manhood” truth of Ephesians 4:13, the meat of Hebrews 5:12 to 14.

The Apostle Paul wrote the Epistle to the Ephesians, to the faithful in Christ Jesus. The majority of the saints in the Church of God, at Corinth, could not have understood the profound truths presented in Ephesians.

When we go out of Corinthians into Ephesians we say with Paul—“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” I Corinthians 13:11.

When we understand Ephesians 4:13, and live that glorious truth, and labour together with God in that program, we will know what is meant in Hebrews 5:14 and Ephesians 4:14.

“But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”

Now let us carefully note Ephesians 4:13—“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a Perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

This is the ultimate of God’s eternal purpose in Christ Jesus. To enter into this wonderful truth is “to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God”, (Ephesians 3:18 and 19). This is indeed to go onto perfection.

Christ spoke in Paul to give His spiritual program for this present Divine economy which began after Saul became Paul.

Let us resolve by the grace of God, and yielding to the Holy Spirit as our infallible Guide and Teacher, that whatever may be the cost we shall line up with the Lord and work intelligently and diligently in the work He is doing, as set forth in Ephesians 4:12 and 13.

“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a Perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

MESSAGE NUMBER 20

CHRIST CAME UNTO HIS OWN

“HE WAS IN THE WORLD, AND THE WORLD WAS MADE BY HIM, AND THE WORLD KNEW HIM NOT. HE CAME UNTO HIS OWN, AND HIS OWN RECEIVED HIM NOT. BUT AS MANY AS RECEIVED HIM, TO THEM GAVE HE POWER TO BECOME THE SONS OF GOD, EVEN TO THEM THAT BELIEVE ON HIS NAME.” John 1:10 to 12.

Here we have the statement that Christ’s own received Him not. His own refers to the Jews. But note these statements:

John 2:23; Many believed in His name.

John 4:39 to 41; Many more believed on Him.

John 7:31; Many of the people believed on Him.

John 8:30; Many believed.

John 10:42; Many believed on Him.

John 11:45; Many of the Jews believed on Him.

After reading these statements then read John 12:37 to 40:

“ But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.”

Thus we have the statements that “many believed on Him” and “His own received Him not”. Note the question of the Pharisees: “Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?” John 7:48

Most of the rulers of Israel neither believed nor received Christ. We see then that the Lord Jesus, while on earth, was not only offering salvation to individual Jews, but was presenting Himself and His kingdom to the Nation Israel. “But His own received Him not.” They knew not the time of their visitation. Luke 19:44. They knew not the things that belonged to their peace. Luke 19:42.

Note Christ’s words concerning John the Baptist: “But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto Him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of Him.” Mark 9:13

“And if you will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.” Matthew 11:14.

Then note Luke 13:34 and 35: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate; and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

In what sense was Israel’s house left desolate? On the day of Pentecost 3000 Israelites believed and were saved. Acts 2:41 to 43.

Then note Acts 4:4—“Howbeit many of them which heard the Word believed; and the number of men was about five thousand.” These were all Israelites.

Then note Acts 5:14—“And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.” All Jews. “And the Word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.” Acts 6:7. All Jews.

Then note Acts 11:19—“Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the Word to none, but unto the Jews only.”

Many of Christ’s own did receive Him. What is meant then by the statement, “His own received Him not?”

HOW ABOUT GENTILES?

Now search the Scriptures diligently from Matthew 1:1 to Peter’s statement in Acts 10:28, about seven years after the death of Jesus Christ, and count the Gentiles to whom Christ or His twelve apostles preached.

When the Twelve met one Gentile what did they say? “And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.” Matthew 15:23. Why did they do this? “These Twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Matthew 10:5 and 6

Why did one Gentile man receive a blessing from Jesus Christ on earth? “For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.” Luke 7:5. “And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto Him the elders of the Jews, beseeching Him that He would come and heal his servant.” Luke 7:3

AS MANY AS RECEIVED CHRIST

“As many as received Christ.” Think of this in the light of Acts 10:28 and Romans 10:14

“Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.”

“How then shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?”

If it was not lawful for the Jewish disciples of Christ to go to the Gentiles, how could they hear and receive Christ? If the Gentiles did not hear the gospel they could not believe and receive Christ.

How do we reconcile Matthew 15:24 with John 3:16. “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

In the light of Matthew 15:24 and Acts 10:28 and Acts 11:19, we must conclude that there was no “whosoever” message for the Gentiles until the words of Peter, in Acts 10:34 and 43. “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.” “To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.”

The proselytes, of Acts 2:10, were Gentiles by nature, but Jews by religion. The Grecians, of Acts 6 and 11, were Greek-speaking Jews. Philip did not preach to Gentiles, in the city of Samaria. Acts 11:19.

In the light of Acts 10:28 and 11:19 we may be sure that the Ethiopian was a proselyte. Acts 8:27.

Several years after Philip preached to the Ethiopian, the other apostles condemned Peter for preaching to the household of Cornelius. Acts 11:1 to 5.

Note what happened after Peter told them of Christ's instructions to preach to Cornelius. "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." Acts 11:18.

Now compare

1—Go not into the way of the Gentiles. Matthew 10:5.

2—It is an unlawful thing for a Jew to go to a Gentile. Acts 10:28.

3—"And when James, Peter, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." Galatians 2:9.

Here we learn concerning the twelve apostles; from first to last their ministry was to and for Israel.

DOGS AND NO DIFFERENCE

WHILE JESUS CHRIST WAS ON EARTH

Now let us compare Matthew 15:24—26—27 with Romans 10:12 and 13.

"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

"It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs."

"And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table."

ABOUT 25 YEARS LATER

"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. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

There is a very great difference between a sheep and a dog. This was the difference between the Jews and the Gentiles, while Christ was on earth.

But twenty-five years later there was no difference. Something had happened.

ISRAEL REJECTED

Now let us compare the statement of Christ to the Jews, "your house is left unto you desolate", with Paul's statement to the Jews, in Acts 13:46: "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

Why was it necessary that the Word of Christ should be preached to Israel first, some years after Christ had said “your house is left unto you desolate”?

The answer is, Luke 23:34—Acts 3:17, 18 and 3:26,

“Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

“And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled.”

“Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”

Christ on the cross prayed for Israel. God gave Israel another chance. And for several years after the prayer of Christ, God’s order was “to the Jew but not to the Gentile.” And then for some years, God’s order was “to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.” Romans 1:16—Acts 13:46—Acts 18:6 and Acts 28:28.

Then what happened? Study, “as many as received Christ” and John 3:16, in the light of Romans 11:30 and Ephesians 3:1 and 2 and 3:6.

“As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name. “

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

“For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief.”

This was written years after Christ died.

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward.”

“That the Gentiles should be jointheirs, and of the JOINT-BODY, and jointsharers of His promise in Christ by the gospel. “

Israel’s blindness, unbelief, and rejection brought mercy and salvation and reconciliation for and to the Gentiles. Romans 11:11 and 11:15.

MESSAGE NUMBER 21

THE CHILDREN OF THE KINGDOM AND THE GENTILES

Note these three interesting verses of Scripture:

“BUT JESUS SAID UNTO HER, LET THE CHILDREN FIRST BE FILLED: FOR IT IS NOT MEET TO TAKE THE CHILDREN’S BREAD, AND TO CAST IT UNTO THE DOGS.” Mark 7:27.

“BUT THE CHILDREN OF THE KINGDOM SHALL BE CAST OUT INTO OUTER DARKNESS; THERE SHALL BE WEeping AND GNASHING OF TEETH.” Matthew 8:12.

“I SAY UNTO YOU, THAT MANY SHALL COME FROM THE EAST AND WEST, AND SHALL SIT DOWN WITH ABRAHAM, AND ISAAC, AND JACOB, IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.” Matthew 8:11.

The Jews, or Israelites, were called **“the children of the kingdom.”** Note how Peter addressed them in Acts 3:12, **“Ye men of Israel”**—And in Acts 3:25, **“Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant** which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.” **“The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus; Whom ye delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go.”** Acts 3:13.

But now the two statements, **“LET THE CHILDREN FIRST BE FILLED”;** and **“THE CHILDREN OF THE KINGDOM SHALL BE CAST OUT.”** With the second statement let us read Romans 11:7, 11 and 15:

“What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.”

“I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid; but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.”

“For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?”

Something happened to the children of the kingdom. The Lord Jesus, on earth, foretold God’s awful judgment upon Israel. Note Matthew 22:7 and Luke 21:20, 23 and 24.

“But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth; and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.”

“And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.”

“But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days? for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

Several years before the terrible judgment fell upon Israel and Jerusalem the Apostle Paul pronounced God’s judgment of blindness upon Israel, in Acts 28:25 to 27, and then added **“the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles and they will hear it.”** Acts 28:28

Here we learn that the children of the kingdom were cast into the outer darkness of blindness; and we learn, in Romans 2:7 to 9, that a far worse judgment was the portion of the individual Jews who died without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

During the “Acts” period (from about 33 A.D. to 63 A.D.) the children were first being filled. This we learn in Acts 3:25 and 26, Acts 10:28, Acts 13:46, and Acts 18:5 and 6.

“Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. UNTO YOU FIRST GOD, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”

“And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.”

“Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God SHOULD FIRST HAVE BEEN SPOKEN TO YOU; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, LO, WE TURN TO THE GENTILES.”

“And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. And when they opposed

themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.”

THE CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM

Note the words of the Lord Jesus and the response of the Jews. “I know that ye are Abraham’s seed, but ye seek to kill Me, because. My Word hath no place in you.” John 8:37

“They answered and said unto Him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham.” John 8:39

The saved and the unsaved Jews were called “the children of the kingdom.” They were the children of Abraham.

Note these significant verses:

“And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?” Luke 13:16

“And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Luke 19:9 and 10

Jesus Christ was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. Matthew 15:24. He was a minister of the circumcision. Romans 15:8. It was God’s decree that no uncircumcised man should have fellowship with God’s people. Genesis 17:8 to 14. Peter stated that this fellowship was unlawful. Acts 10:28

Jesus Christ, on earth, was the circumcised Son of Abraham. Matthew 1:1 and Luke 2:11 to 16. He took His place with the Jews as a worshipping Jew, with the God-given religious program. Luke 4:16 and John 4:22

Christ had kingdom blessings for the children of the kingdom, the sons and daughters of Abraham.

In Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, we read of but one Gentile man who received a blessing from the Lord Jesus. Note why this one Gentile man received the blessing from Jesus Christ

1—Because he was of great faith. Luke 7:9

2—Because he was very humble. Luke 7:7

3—Because he asked the sons of Abraham to intercede for him. Luke 7:3

4—Because he loved the sons of Abraham and built them a synagogue. Luke 7:5

All of this is most significant. The story is told in Luke 7:1 to 10 and in Matthew 8:5 to 12. Read the two records.

Note why one Gentile woman received a blessing from Jesus Christ:

1—She was of great faith. Matthew 15:28 and Mark 7:26

2—She overcame every obstacle to reach Jesus. Matthew 15:23 and Mark 7:24

3—She took her place as a Gentile dog. Matthew 15:25 to 27 and Mark 7:28

This is the only record of any Gentile woman who received a blessing from the Lord while He was on earth. The woman at the well, in John 4:7, was not a Gentile. John 4:12—Matthew 10:5

So the two Gentiles who received blessings from Jesus of Nazareth give us one of the dispensational outlines of Acts. **“Let the children first be filled” and “Let the children be cast into outer darkness.”**

God's order was, "to the Jews, and not to the Gentiles", while Jesus Christ was on earth. Matthew 15:24—Matthew 10:5. God's order was, "to the Jews and not to the Gentiles" during those first years after the resurrection of Jesus Christ covered by the first nine chapters of Acts. Acts 5:29 to 32. Acts 10:28. Acts 11:19. God's order from the new commission to Paul in Acts 13:2 to the Divine judgment upon Israel in Acts 28:28 was, "to the Jew first and also unto the Gentile," Romans 1:16. All through the Book of Acts the children were first being filled, then the children were cast out. From the close of Acts down to the present time God's order has been, "to the Gentiles and also to the Jews."

A blindness in part is happened unto the children of the kingdom until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. Romans 11:25. Then the children of the kingdom will be brought back into Divine favor. Romans 11:26

In the meantime all saved Gentiles have been translated into the kingdom of the Son of God's love. Colossians 1:13. They have been adopted into the household of God, and are the children of God and joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1:5. Romans 11:13 to 17

MESSAGE NUMBER 22

CHRIST'S MIRACLES - THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

"AND MANY OTHER SIGNS TRULY DID JESUS IN THE PRESENCE OF HIS DISCIPLES, WHICH ARE NOT WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK; BUT THESE ARE WRITTEN, THAT YE MIGHT BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD; AND THAT BELIEVING YE MIGHT HAVE LIFE THROUGH HIS NAME." John 20:30 and 31.

Here we see why the miracles of Christ are recorded in John's Gospel. Note. John 10:30 to 33—"I and My Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from My Father; for which of those works do ye stone Me? The Jews answered Him, saying, For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God." Christ, being a man, made Himself God.

Now, note that Christ, being God, became a man. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." John 1:1 and 2.

"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," John 1:14.

When Thomas beheld the resurrected Christ, he said, "My Lord, and my God." John 20:27.

God wants every one to believe and know, concerning Christ, what Thomas believed and knew. Therefore, certain miracles which Christ performed before His death are recorded in this Divine Record; just seven miracles. We believe that "seven" is a Divine number.

Now note the miracles

1—Turning water into wine. John 2:1 to 10.

2—Healing the Nobleman's Son. John 4:49 to 53.

3—Healing the Impotent Man. John 5:1 to 8.

4—Feeding the Five Thousand. John 6:9 to 13.

5—Jesus Wanting on the Sea. John 6:19.

6—The Blind Man Healed in Siloam. John 9:11.

7—Raising Lazarus from the Dead. John 11:43.

Several of these miracles are not recorded in Matthew, Mark or Luke. Before we consider these, we suggest a few other facts concerning the Gospel of John.

More than eighty per cent of the contents of John's Gospel is not found in the other three Gospels which are called "The Synoptics."

In this Divine Record we find a combination of the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of grace. John is the only one of the four writers whom the Holy Spirit used to record the ministry of Jesus Christ with the woman at the well in Samaria. But she was not a Gentile. She said, "our father Jacob". John 4:12. And true, we have the "whosoever" in John 3:16. But every scene, except Christ's visit to Samaria, is set on a Jewish scene. There is no record in John's Gospel that Christ spoke to even one Gentile while on earth. The word "Jew", "Jews", is found in this Record 70 times.

In the miracles, all who were healed and blessed were Jews. These miracles began with a Jewish wedding and ended with a Jewish funeral or grave. We also find an impotent Jew, in a Jewish religious city; a healed blind man in a Jewish religious meeting-place.

With special reference to these four miracles, "turning water into wine", "healing the impotent man", "healing the man born blind in Siloam" (which means Sent—John 9:7) and "raising the dead man", let us note these messages in John:

1—"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." John 3:5 and 7.

2—"No man can come to Me, except the Father Which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:44.

"John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven." John 3:27.

"Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent." John 6:29.

3—"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3.

"He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing:" John 9:7.

"And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and they which see might be made blind." John 9:39.

4—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." John 5:24 and 25.

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believeth thou this?" John 11:25 and 26.

In John's Gospel we learn that the sinner is unregenerated, impotent, blind from his mother's womb, and spiritually dead.

“Turning water into wine” speaks of the new birth by the Spirit and water, and the joy that follows.

The impotent man was unable to do anything to bring about his own cure. He could not. That is the helpless predicament of the unregenerated, blind, dead sinner, in John’s Gospel. Note again John 6:28 and 29 and John 6:40.

“Then said they unto Him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom God hath sent.”

“And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

THE POOL SILOAM (SENT)

More than forty times, in John’s Gospel, Christ is called the “Sent One”. The pool of Siloam was the pool of Sent. This spoke of the blood of Jesus Christ, the Sent One. Apart from faith in the shed blood the most cultured, moral, religious individual will remain spiritually blind. “The natural man receiveth 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 Corinthians 2:14.

“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” I Corinthians 1:21.

PASSING OUT OF DEATH INTO LIFE

In John 5:24 and 25, we learn that the sinner, in John’s Gospel, is a dead man. Lazarus was a dead man. It was near his grave that Jesus Christ spoke one of the greatest truths in the Bible

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?”

Note with this, Ephesians 2:1 and 6, Romans 6:13 and 6:3 and 4.

“And You hath He quickened (made alive), who were dead in trespasses and sins.”

“And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

“Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

Then note I Thessalonians 4:14 to 17.

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; Then we

which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Here then we have the answer to both of Job's questions; so far as the saint is concerned.

"But man dieth, and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" Job 14:10. "If a man die shall he live again?" Job 14:14.

Sinners are made alive spiritually the moment they believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and accept Him as their resurrection and life.

Then they will be made alive in resurrection bodies at His coming: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." I Corinthians 15:22 and 23.

JESUS APPROVED BY MIRACLES

The miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ were to prove to Israel that Jesus Christ was God's Apostle. Miracles were the signs of an Apostle. II Corinthians 12:12. Christ was God's Apostle to Israel. Hebrews 3:1. Note the words of Christ, in John 5:36: "The works which the Father hath given Me to finish the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me."

Jesus of Nazareth was a man put on display by God in the presence of Israel by miracles and signs. Acts 2:22.

There are some Christians who still endeavor to prove the Deity and omnipotence of Christ by carrying on a healing program. They use the slogan, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever." Hebrews 13:8. They generally have their bottles of oil to anoint the sick and the afflicted and claim that all Christians could perpetuate or duplicate the miracles of the Lord Jesus, if they had the same faith that the first century disciples had.

Timothy was a disciple of genuine faith and courage. Paul instructed Timothy to take a physical remedy for his physical disease. There are no miraculous healings recorded in the writings of Paul after God's Divine judgment upon Israel recorded in Acts 28:25 to 28.

But if we are to prove that Jesus Christ is Divine by perpetuating His miracles let us be sure that we perform all seven miracles of John's Gospel, feeding the 5000 with a few fish and loaves, walk on the water, raise the dead, turn water into wine.

MESSAGE NUMBER 23

DIFFERENT GOSPELS

No intelligent student of the Scriptures believes, or teaches, that there is only one gospel in the Scriptures; but all such students should agree that there is only one gospel by which sinners are saved in this day of grace, the gospel of the grace of God, which is called in Ephesians 1:13, "the gospel of your salvation." No one has ever been saved except on the grounds of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But now let us compare I Corinthians 15:1 to 4 with two other portions of Scripture, namely, Luke 9:1 to 6 and Luke 18:31 to 34.

I CORINTHIANS 15:1 to 4

“MOREOVER, BRETHREN, I DECLARE UNTO YOU THE GOSPEL WHICH I PREACHED UNTO YOU, WHICH ALSO YE HAVE RECEIVED, AND WHEREIN YE STAND; BY WHICH ALSO YE ARE SAVED, IF YOU KEEP IN MEMORY WHAT I PREACHED UNTO YOU, UNLESS YE HAVE BELIEVED IN VAIN. FOR I DELIVERED UNTO YOU FIRST OF ALL THAT WHICH I ALSO RECEIVED, HOW THAT CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES; AND THAT HE WAS BURIED, AND THAT HE ROSE AGAIN THE THIRD DAY ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES.”

LUKE 9:1 to 6

“Then He called His twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And He sent them to preach the Kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. And He said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece. And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them. And they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where.”

LUKE 18:31 to 34

“Then He took unto Him the Twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge Him, and put Him to death: and the third day He shall rise again. And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.”

Here we learn that the gospel by which we are saved is the fact that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for our sins, that He was buried and that He was raised again. We learn that all of this was “according to the Scriptures.”

Note how this is stated in Acts 13:29 and 30: “And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a sepulchre. But God raised Him from the dead.”

This is the gospel by which we are saved. Presently we shall consider Ephesians 6:19 and 20:

“And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known “THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

Here we learn that Paul was in prison at Rome for “**THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL.**” We know that when Paul mentions “**the mystery**” he specifically tells us that it is called “**the mystery**” because the truth was not “**according to the Scriptures,**” not a spiritual message or program that was in fulfillment of prophecy. At once then we see that there is a difference between, “**the gospel by which we are saved,**” in I Corinthians 15:1 to 4, and “**the**

mystery of the gospel". Paul was not in prison for preaching I Corinthians 15:1 to 4, but for "the mystery" of the gospel.

But now let us look into Luke 18:31 to 34 and Luke 9:1 to 6. We learn in Luke 18 that when the Lord Jesus told the twelve apostles in advance the truth of I Corinthians 15:1 to 4, "the gospel by which we are saved", they understood none of those things. That truth was hid from them. Peter even said "Be it far from Thee, Lord, this shall not be unto Thee." Matthew 16:22. Most assuredly, if this Divine Truth was hid from them and they did not understand, they were not preaching it to others. They were not preaching the gospel by which we are saved. This we can learn by studying every line in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. But note Luke 9:6:

"And they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing every where."

For two or three years the Twelve preached the gospel, while they companied together all the time that the Lord Jesus Christ went in and out among them. Acts 1:21. What gospel did they preach? They preached, **"Repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand"; the Kingdom gospel.**" Matthew 3:2— Matthew 4:17— Matthew 10:7— Matthew 4:23. Note Matthew 9:35:

"And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. "

Let us always keep in mind that while the Lord Jesus was on earth, God was carrying on a two-fold program, in that Christ was offering salvation to individual Israelites and presenting the prophesied Kingdom to the Nation Israel. Therefore, in **"the gospel of the Kingdom"**, the nation Israel was always in view, as was David's throne.

PAUL'S MY GOSPEL

Now by way of comparison, note Romans 16:25 and 26:

"Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to MY GOSPEL, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."

To these Romans the Apostle Paul wrote:

"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office." Romans 11:13. When the Lord Jesus told His twelve messengers to preach the gospel of the Kingdom, He specifically instructed them, "go not into the way of the Gentiles;" "go to Israel;" Matthew 10:5 to 8. Paul also wrote to the Romans:

"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, So we, being many, are one Body in Christ, and all members one of another." Romans 12:4 and 5. He wrote in Romans 10:12 and in I Corinthians 12:13 that things had been very much changed since Christ was on earth; that there was now no difference between Israel and the Gentiles, but that all Jews and Gentiles who believed the gospel were baptized into one Body and were joined thus to Christ and to one another. Then in Romans 16:25 and 26 he wrote that these Gentile members of the Body were to be established **"ACCORDING TO MY GOSPEL"; "according to the revelation of the mystery."** They were not to be established by "the gospel of the Kingdom", although every member of the Body of Christ should be informed

concerning “the gospel of the Kingdom” and know when and how this gospel fits into the plan and program of God.

Was Paul presumptuous or conceited or deluded when he called the gospel **“MY GOSPEL?”** Romans 16:25—Romans 2:16—II Timothy 2:8. Why did he not call it “our gospel?” Perhaps Galatians 2:6 and 7 will help us to answer this question. We quote Galatians 2:7:

“But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel OF the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel OF the circumcision was unto Peter.”

Then note I Timothy 1:11:

“The glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to MY TRUST.” Then note again II Timothy 1:9 to 11:

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: WHEREUNTO I AM APPOINTED A PREACHER, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.”

This grace was given in Christ before Adam was created and made efficacious by the death and resurrection of Christ. Then Paul adds:

“WHEREUNTO I (PAUL) AM APPOINTED A PREACHER, AND AN APOSTLE, AND A TEACHER OF THE GENTILES.” (II Timothy 1:11.)

THE GOSPEL FOR SAINTS

The Greek word translated “gospel” means “good news”. There are different aspects of the gospel. We have quoted from I Corinthians 15:1 to 4 the good news by which believing sinners are saved from the penalty of sin, from the wrath to come. Surely every unsaved person should hurry with all speed to Calvary, receive Christ, the forgiveness of sins. Divine righteousness and eternal life, and be at peace with God.

Then when we learn that more than ninety per cent of the instructions in the Epistles of Peter, John, James and Paul, instruct the saints how to appreciate the blessings of the Lord, how to enjoy salvation, and how to live to please the Lord, we should know that all of these messages contain the gospel, or good news, for the saints. Note Ephesians 1:3: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ.” The redeemed sinner is blessed with all spiritual blessings. Every single spiritual blessing and benefit that is available in Christ for the believer in Christ, is a part of the gospel. So let us not be foolish enough to say that there is only one gospel and only one aspect of that gospel.

THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL

Now note Paul’s words in II Timothy 2:8 and 9 and in II Timothy 1:8:

“REMEMBER THAT JESUS CHRIST OF THE SEED OF DAVID WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD ACCORDING TO MY GOSPEL: WHEREIN I SUFFER TROUBLE, AS AN EVIL DOER, EVEN UNTO BONDS; BUT THE WORD OF GOD IS NOT BOUND.”

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor, of me His prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.”

Read Ephesians 6:19 and 20:

“And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL, For which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

Note Colossians 4:3 and 4:

“Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.”

Why did Paul suffer as an evildoer? For the gospel. For what gospel? He said, **“MY GOSPEL”**. All of the apostles were preaching I Corinthians 15:1 to 4. Paul was not referring to that. When Paul wrote Timothy to be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, he was not referring to **“the gospel of the kingdom”**, or merely to the gospel of salvation of Ephesians 1:13. No, Paul was referring to the Divine truth designated **“the mystery.”** This truth was not revealed by Christ to the twelve apostles. What they knew of the mystery they first learned from Paul.

If you will refer to the Greek in II Timothy 1:12, you will learn that Paul called it **“MY DEPOSIT.”** God had kept this glorious secret hid from all of Israel’s servants and prophets. Christ had kept it hid from the Twelve. But later on He revealed it to Paul to complete the Word of God. Note Colossians 1:24 to 26:

“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body’s sake, which is the Church: Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, TO FULFIL THE WORD OF GOD: Even THE MYSTERY WHICH HATH BEEN HID FROM AGES AND FROM GENERATIONS, but now is made manifest to His saints.”

Always keep in mind that “the mystery” is peculiarly Gentilish truth.

From the Roman jail Paul urged his fellow Body-members to pray for an open mouth and for open doors for the proclamation of this glorious truth. The Lord is still waiting for open mouths and open doors. How about your mouth? “Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself.” “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.” Ephesians 1:9, 17 and 18.

God also wants us to pray that saints may receive the spirit of wisdom and revelation to understand the mystery of His will: “And to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ.” “According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Ephesians 3:9 and 11.

Let us remember that the truth of Ephesians and Colossians concerning members of the Joint-Body (Ephesians 3:6) seated and blessed in the heavenlies, is truth that was predestinated, given us in Christ before the foundation of the world, truth which God held as His own secret and that it is therefore called, “God’s eternal purpose”, “the dispensation of the, Mystery”, “the Secret of His will. “

Now read carefully the prayers of Ephesians 1:17 to 23 and Ephesians 3:14 to 21.

MESSAGE NUMBER 24

PEACE ON EARTH - AT PEACE WITH GOD

In Romans 10:15 we read of the beautiful feet that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings.

Concerning the gospel of peace and the benefits and blessings of that gospel, note Colossians 1:20 and Romans 5:1.

“HAVING MADE PEACE THROUGH THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS, BY HIM TO RECONCILE ALL THINGS UNTO HIMSELF; BY HIM, I SAY, WHETHER THEY BE THINGS IN EARTH, OR THINGS IN HEAVEN.”

“THEREFORE BEING JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.”

The good news is, that Christ on the cross made peace by His shed blood. The good news is, that any sinner, who will believe that Christ actually accomplished this on the cross and will receive Christ, will realize the blessing of Romans 5:1, and be at peace with God. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 5:1.

Note in Ephesians 2:14 that the Lord Jesus is the believer’s Peace. “And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.” Ephesians 2:17.

After the Lord Jesus had made peace by the blood of His cross and had been raised from the dead, He appeared in His resurrection body to His disciples. “And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.” John 20:26.

Before the Saviour went to the cross He said to His disciples-” These things I have spoken unto you that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” John 16:33.

“And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars; see that ye be not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.” Matthew 24:6.

“For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.” Matthew 10:35 and 36.

Here we read, not of peace on earth but of tribulation, wars and divided households. In the midst of all of this sorrow and suffering they were to have peace.” **“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” John 14:27.**

Then note the message of peace, in Philippians 4:4 to 7:

“Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. AND THE PEACE OF GOD, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus.”

Believers in this period of grace are to rejoice, to be anxious for nothing, and the peace of God will garrison, or protect, their hearts and minds. But “all who will live godly in Christ Jesus

must suffer persecution.” II Timothy 3:12. God’s promise for believers; tribulation and peace, persecution and peace, peace in the midst of war.

PEACE ON EARTH

Now let us note Luke 2:11 and 14.

“FOR UNTO YOU IS BORN THIS DAY IN THE CITY OF DAVID A SAVIOUR, WHICH IS CHRIST THE LORD.” “GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN.”

Hear this prophecy.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.” Isaiah 9:6 and 7.

The Prince of peace is to sit on David’s throne and bring peace to a troubled world. That **“peace on earth”** is to begin with Jerusalem. Jesus Christ was born in the City of David, in the house of David, of the seed of David, in fulfillment of God’s covenant with David, to establish peace on earth, Luke 1:29 to 33.

What did the rulers of God’s covenant people do with Jesus which is called the Christ? They said, “We will not have this man to reign over us.” Luke 19:14. Then what did Jesus do with them? “But those Mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before Me.” Luke 19:27.

“AND WHEN HE WAS COME NEAR, HE BEHELD THE CITY, AND WEPT OVER IT, SAYING, IF THOU HADST KNOWN, EVEN THOU, AT LEAST IN THIS THY DAY, THE THINGS WHICH BELONG UNTO THY PEACE, BUT NOW THEY ARE HID FROM THINE EYES.”

“For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee; and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.” Luke 19:41 to 44.

A short while after this judgment, the rulers of Israel said to Pilate concerning Christ, “away with Him; crucify Him.” Pilate asked, “shall I crucify your King?” They answered, “we have no king but Caesar.” John 19:15.

“PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM.”

What has been the condition of Jerusalem, and the predicament of Israel during the last nineteen centuries? Just what Christ predicted after Israel’s rulers had rejected Him.

“Woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” “And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.” Luke 21:23, 24 and 21:27.

When Christ saw the evil hearts of His people and their murderous attitude toward Him, He said,

“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.” Matthew 10:34 to 36.

“I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.”

There is quite a difference between this message of Luke 12:49 to 52 and the proclamation of Luke 2:11 and 14. Read again Luke 2:11 and 14: “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

“Peace on earth.” “No peace on earth.” Peace on earth will be a reality when the true King David is in Jerusalem on David’s throne. Jesus Christ is coming back to build again the tabernacle of David. Amos 9:11 to 15. The angel said to the shepherds, “behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.” Luke 2:10. “Peace on earth.” That was the kingdom gospel. The kingdom gospel of peace. If Israel’s rulers had accepted their Messiah and King, the nation Israel would have been planted in their own land, delivered from Gentile domination. That kingdom has been postponed. It is yet to be established when the Son of man shall come to redeem Israel. Luke 21:27 to 32.

In the meantime we have “the gospel of peace” to proclaim in this period of grace.

“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.” Romans 10:12. “And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach THE GOSPEL OF PEACE, and bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:15. This “grace” gospel of peace is for any member of the human race, while the prophesied kingdom is in abeyance.

Between the moment that the Lord Jesus shall appear to take the members of His Body to appear with Him in glory, in accordance with Philippians 3:20 and 21 and Colossians 3:3 and 4, and the day that He shall come as the Son of man to redeem Israel and bring about the restitution of all things, there will be a time of sorrow, called, in the Bible, “the great tribulation.” Matthew 24:13 to 24.

The four horsemen, of Revelation 6:1 to 8, will usher in the tribulation. The fifth Horseman, of Revelation 19:11 to 20, will bring an end to this great tribulation.

Note the second horseman, of Revelation 6:4. This “red horse” symbolizes and speaks of some horrible wars that are yet to be so horrible that peace shall be taken from the earth. “He shall take peace from the earth.”

“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.” I Thessalonians 5:2 and 3.

Note Exodus 15:3 and Psalm 46:9.

“THE LORD IS A MAN OF WAR: THE LORD IS HIS NAME.” “HE MAKETH WAR’S TO CEASE UNTO THE END OF THE EARTH; HE BREAKETH THE BOW,

AND CUTTETH THE SPEAR IN SUNDER; HE BURNETH THE CHARIOT IN THE FIRE.”

Jesus Christ is coming as Prince of Peace to inaugurate a reign of peace and righteousness on the earth. But He is coming as a man of war on the white horse. The government will be on His shoulder. At that time He will be in Jerusalem on the throne of David. Isaiah 9:6 and 7.

But note that Jesus Christ is coming as a man of war to bring peace after war.

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war.” “And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations; and He shall rule them with a rod of iron; and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” “And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth; and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.” Revelation 19:11, 14, 15 and 21.

Note what is to take place. The political world ruler and the religious world ruler are to be sent to the lake of fire. The prince of this world (Satan) is to be made a prisoner in the bottomless pit.

Then the kingdom saints will be raised to reign with Christ for a thousand years. Read Revelation 20:1 to 9. Christ will come in wrath to establish peace.

When Christ came the first time He established peace for believers by receiving God’s wrath on the cross. “And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.” Colossians 1:20.

The result—“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 5:1.

Now each justified believer is thus instructed—“Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:4 to 7.

The peace of God shall **“keep”**. This word **“keep”** is an army or war word. It is “garrison”. The figure is an outpost of sentinels protecting.

Yes, thank God, in the midst of tribulation, persecution and war, temptations, trials and afflictions the redeemed of the Lord can be at peace with God, and conscious of the peace of God that passeth all understanding.

MESSAGE NUMBER 25

THE SON OF MAN IS LORD ALSO OF THE SABBATH

“AND HE (JESUS) SAID UNTO THEM, THAT THE SON OF MAN IS LORD ALSO OF THE SABBATH.” Luke 6:5.

We find in the Four Gospels that Jesus Christ calls Himself **“the Son of man”** about eighty times.

Very solemn words were spoken by the Lord, in John 5:25 to 27—“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; And hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because **He is the Son of man.**”

Note also His statement, in Luke 5:24 “But that ye may know that the **Son of man** hath power upon earth to forgive sins (he said unto the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.”

Again, note John 1:51, Luke 22:69 and Matthew 25:31. “And He saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon **the Son of man.**”

“Hereafter shall **the Son of man** sit on the right hand, of the power of God.”

“When **the Son of man** shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory”

Here we learn something of the power, authority and Divine glory of the Son of man.

Note this strange question of the Lord Jesus—“What and if ye shall see **the Son of man** ascend up where He was before?”

Then in John 8:58, Christ said, “Before Abraham was I AM.” Where was the Son of man before? Before what and when? Not only before His incarnation but before Adam was created. Hear His own words: “And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the word was.” John 17:5.

Yes, the Lord Jesus had glory with the Father before the world was. If Jesus Christ was the Jehovah of Israel, He Himself wrote the ten commandments on the two tables of stone. One of those commandments was, remember the sabbath day.

In God’s message of grace we read: “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that **believeth.**” Romans 10:4.

In writing concerning Old Testament Israel, the Holy Spirit said:—“But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which is done away in Christ.” II Corinthians 3:14.

“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.”

“LET NO MAN THEREFORE JUDGE YOU IN MEAT, OR IN DRINK, OR IN RESPECT OF AN HOLYDAY, OR OF THE NEW MOON, OR OF THE SABBATH DAYS.” Colossians 2:14 and 16.

Christ is the end of the law. Christ abolished the law. Christians are not under the law.

“For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” Romans 6:14.

THE LAW A YOKE

“Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we: were able to bear?” Acts 15:10.

Concerning the law given at Sinai, note:

“For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart.” Hebrews 12:20.

“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” James 2:10.

By carefully studying the history of Israel under the law we learn that they had a sabbath but no rest; but the spirit of bondage unto fear. Romans 8:15. They were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Hebrews 2:15. They could not endure that which was written on those two stones. The Psalmist cried out, “it is time for Thee, Lord, to work; for they have made void Thy law.” Psalms 119:126. “They have broken thy law.” Since the law was given no man, saint or sinner, with the single exception of Jesus Christ, the Righteous, has ever perfectly kept God’s perfect law. “Therefore the law made nothing perfect.” Hebrews 7:19. Note condemned Israel under the law.

“But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.” Galatians 3:23.

Note carefully these words, “under the law the people of God were shut up.” Then note Galatians 3:24 and 25: “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.”

The law was Israel’s schoolmaster. Justified Israelites were not under the schoolmaster after they believed Paul’s gospel of grace.

Why did God give the law? **“That sin might abound.”** Romans 5:20. The law was added **because of transgressions till Christ should come.** Galatians 3:19. The law was given that every mouth might be stopped and all the world become guilty before God. Romans 3:19. The law worketh wrath. Romans 4:15.

Jesus Christ made peace by the blood of His cross. Colossians 1:20.

“I do not frustrate the grace of God for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” Galatians 2:21.

It is a spiritual crime to preach grace and law mixed for salvation.

“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” Romans 3:28.

When the zealous religious legalists insisted on giving Israel’s law to the Gentile Christians, an important conference was called. Read about it in Acts 15:1 to 23. Note the results: “Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?” Acts 15:10.

THE DECISION AT JERUSALEM

“FORASMUCH AS WE HAVE HEARD, THAT CERTAIN WHICH WENT OUT FROM US HAVE TROUBLED YOU WITH WORDS, SUBVERTING YOUR SOULS, SAYING, YE MUST BE CIRCUMCISED, AND KEEP THE LAW; TO WHOM WE GAVE NO SUCH COMMANDMENT.” Acts 15:24.

It was not the ceremonial law that Israel could not endure. What were the commandments against us and contrary to us that God blotted out on the cross? Colossians 2:14. The ceremonial law was taken away, but the commandments that were against Israel were “thou shalt” and “thou shalt not”. Note Galatians 4:7—“Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”

Under the law the Jews were servants.

They received the spirit of bondage unto fear. Christians are in the Household of the Father. We are a race of sons.

Under grace the sinners have a new law that just fits the sinner's needs; namely, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:2. This law does for the believer what the ten commandments could never do. Romans 8:3. Why? Because of the sinner's weakness, his inability to perfectly keep God's perfect law. That same Divine law enables the justified believer to fulfill the righteousness of the law by walking- in the Spirit. Romans 8:4.

THE LAW WAS ADDED

Note Galatians 3:19. "The law was added." "The Old Covenant was added." "Then the Old Covenant was done away." II Corinthians 3:14. To what was the law added? When the law was added, Israel's sabbath was added. When the promised Seed came, the law was taken out of the way. So also was Israel's sabbath. The law was added that sin might abound. Romans 5:20. The law was added to the gospel which God preached to uncircumcised Abram. Galatians 3:8 and Romans 4:7 to 11. The law was added to the promise which God made to Abraham more than 400 years before the law and the sabbath were added. Galatians 3:16 and 17.

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect."

The law economy was a parenthetical and temporary economy.

Abram believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Genesis 15:6, Romans 4:1 to 6, Galatians 3:6 to 8. Abraham was not an Old Testament character. The old Testament was added when Moses was 80 years old. That was several centuries after Abraham had died. Abram was not under the law. Abram was not given a sabbath or any holy days to keep. Those holy days belonged to Israel, and "were imposed on them until the time of reformation." Hebrews 9:10. Members of Christ's Body are not under the law. They are not to be judged by sabbaths.

"Sabbath" is "cessation or rest." God rested on the seventh day. Genesis 2:2. God had accomplished a perfect work of creation; and "sabbathed." Now note Hebrews 10:12

"But this man (Christ), after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God."

Christ sat down. He rested in a perfect work of redemption. Christ "sabbathed". God, at Sinai, gave Israel a perfect work to do, and with that perfect work a sabbath to keep. What did they do? Note Christ's words, in John 7:19—"Did. not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill Me?"

The religious sabbath-keepers had their own King, Messiah and Lord nailed to the cross. They were sabbath-keeping murderers. Sabbath-keepers are always religious, but never spiritual.

Note the words of the Saviour: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and **I will give you rest.**" Matthew 11:28. Those who accepted Christ **found** rest. Note "He that hath entered into his rest hath ceased from his own works as God did from His." Read Hebrews 4.

Christ is the believer's peace, hope and life. Ephesians 2:16 to 18. I Timothy 1:1, Colossians 3:4.

The believer is seated with Christ far above in the heavenlies, and is blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies: Ephesians 2:6, Ephesians 1:19 to 23, Ephesians 1:3.

Note again Colossians 2:16 and Galatians 5:1. These are plain instructions. God intends that members of the Body of Christ should obey them. Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath set you free.

NO UNIVERSAL SABBATH

Note God's Word to Israel. **"Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. IT IS A SIGN BETWEEN ME AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL for ever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed."** Exodus 31:16 and 17.

Members of the Body of Christ are seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus and are not living in Canaan. The Sabbath was a sign between Jehovah and Israel. It was kept from what we now call, Friday sun-down until Saturday sun-down. At this present time when it is night here it is day in the orient. Therefore we cannot have a universal sabbath. None but an ignorant Christian would confuse Israel's religious program with the God-given spiritual program for the Body of Christ. In the dispensation of the grace of God there is no religion.

Note what God says in Galatians 4:10 and 11 and Galatians 5:3 and 4: "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."

God warns His children against religious days under His reign of grace. Every man who makes the Sabbath binding makes himself debtor to the whole law. No sinner or saint perfectly keeps the whole law without offending in one point; for no man ever lived on this earth, except Jesus Christ, who could honestly say, "I do always the things that please My Father," "I love God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength, and my neighbor as myself."

There is no **Christian sabbath**. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. He is the believer's Sabbath.

Note the following verses in which we read of the first day of the week. Luke 24:1, John 20:1, John 20:19, Acts 20:17, I Corinthians 16:2.

There was nothing legalistic or obligatory about the gathering of saints on the first day of the week. It was a day of privilege for the saints who gathered in the name of the Lord. **It was neither the Christian sabbath nor the Lord's day of Revelation 1:10.** It is a great blunder to call Sunday "the Lord's day."

We leave with you Romans 14:5 and half of verse 6 and I Corinthians 8:13. "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it."

THE SIN OF OFFENSE

"Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

So many religious members of the Body of Christ know very little about the Divine program of grace, and toward them others who have knowledge have to obey Romans 14 and I

Corinthians 8, and be careful because of the ignorance and weaknesses of other members of the Body of Christ. In closing we quote, **“What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.”** Romans 6:15.

“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him Who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.” Romans 7:4.

“But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” Romans 7:6.

“That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:4.

Love is the fulfilling of the law.

Romans 13:8 to 11. Love is the fruit of the Spirit. “Against such there is no law.” Galatians 5:21 to 26.

Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Christ is the believers’ righteousness. Romans 10:4, I Corinthians 1:30.

MESSAGE NUMBER 26

CONSOLATION OF ISRAEL

What an interesting story in Luke 2:25 to 32, the story of an aged Jew by the name of Simeon, who took the Child Jesus in his arms.

Simeon was just and devout, and he was waiting for **the consolation of Israel**. Luke 2:25.

The Holy Spirit revealed to him that he would live to see the birth of Israel’s Messiah and Deliverer. With the Messiah in his arms, the Holy Spirit was upon him and he said, “A light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel.”

Here we see the great difference between the Gentiles and God’s people. At that time the Gentiles were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. Ephesians 2:12.

Note that Simeon took Jesus in his arms right after He was circumcised; and Mary had observed the religious purification ceremonies required by the law of Moses. Luke 2:21 to 24.

Let us note carefully the fact of Luke 2:24—“And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, and two young pigeons.”

This was an Old Testament sacrifice. Jesus Christ was born under the law. “When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law.” Galatians 4:4.

It is most interesting and significant to carefully study the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, to learn how He lived as a circumcised Jew under the law. When He was thirty years of age we learn that He had regularly attended the Jewish religious services in the Jewish synagogue at Nazareth. Luke 4:16. Jesus had just been baptized, with water, by John the Baptist. Luke 3:21.

Note why John baptized with water, “And I knew Him not; but that He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.” John 1:31. John the Baptist was God’s messenger to the nation Israel. Luke 1:16 and 1:80.

So we see that Jesus Christ was both circumcised and baptized. We see that Jesus Christ regularly attended Jewish services in the Jewish synagogue, on the Jewish sabbath. So when we say that a Christian is one who follows Jesus Christ, we must qualify our statement. Some speak of following Christ in baptism, who do not follow Him in circumcision or in His sabbath synagogue worship. But we are circumcised with the circumcision of Christ. Colossians 2:11. Some Christians dedicate their children, following Luke 2:21 to 25, but no turtledoves or pigeons are offered for the mothers. When sprinkled, children are not always eight days old. Neither are they circumcised according to the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants. The public dedication of children may be a sweet religious ceremony, permitted under grace, but is not mentioned in God's message and program of grace.

Some Christians use water on the head instead of circumcision in the flesh, persuading themselves that they must have some religious ceremony for the children. So their teaching is, sprinkling to take the place of circumcision. But with such teaching, no baby girls should be sprinkled, because no baby girls were circumcised. Moreover, we will learn by the study of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, that no one was baptized who had not first been circumcised. Simeon was waiting for the consolation of Israel, 1940 years ago.

STILL WAITING FOR ISRAEL'S CONSOLATION

Eighteen million Jews are today scattered among all the Gentile nations, and there Israel will remain "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21:24. When that time comes the consolation of Israel will be at hand. The consolation of Israel will be realized when Israel's rejected Messiah and King returns to take David's throne, and "He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever." Luke 1:30 to 33. The consolation of Israel is thus stated in Luke 1:69 to 71 and 1:74 and 75.

"And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David; As He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began; That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us."

"That He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life."

But something went wrong. Israel was not delivered from the hands of their enemies (Gentiles). Instead, note Luke 19:42 and 43.

"If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things, which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side."

No consolation for Israel here.

"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate; and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Luke 13:35.

"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

"So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." Luke 21:27 and 31.

The consolation of Israel, stated in Luke 1:69 to 71, was by Zacharias, filled with the Holy Spirit, right after the message of one angel to the Virgin Mary, and right before the message of another angel to the shepherds. Note the two messages “And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.” Luke 1:31 to 33.

“And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid’.” “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” Luke 2:9, Luke 2:11, Luke 2:14.

THE KINGDOM AND THE BODY

Jesus Christ was born to occupy David’s throne, in fulfillment of Isaiah 9:6 and 7. Instead of taking David’s throne, note where He is and what He is now doing.

“And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, Which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” Ephesians 1:19 to 23.

Christ is not where He now is and is not doing what He is now doing, in fulfillment of prophecy. But note II Peter 1:19—“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; 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 arise in your hearts.”

The clock of prophecy has stopped during this parenthetical “grace” dispensation, but Jesus Christ is coming back to take David’s throne to reign over the house of Jacob, and to bring about the restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets of Israel. “Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which Good hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.” Acts 3:21.

So **THE CONSOLATION OF ISRAEL** has been postponed.

Peace on earth will not be realized until Jesus Christ returns as Prince of Peace to occupy David’s throne. Then the government will be upon His shoulder, and of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end. Isaiah 9:6 and 7 will be fulfilled. That will be the consolation of Israel.

NO PEACE—ANOTHER BAPTISM

Note the plain words of the Lord Jesus, in Luke 12:49 to 52:

“I AM COME TO SEND FIRE ON THE EARTH; AND WHAT WILL I, IF IT BE ALREADY KINDLED? BUT I HAVE A BAPTISM TO BE BAPTIZED WITH; AND HOW AM I STRAITENED TILL IT BE ACCOMPLISHED SUPPOSE YE THAT I AM COME TO GIVE PEACE ON EARTH? I TELL YOU, NAY; BUT RATHER DIVISION;

FOR FROM HENCEFORTH THERE SHALL BE FIVE IN ONE HOUSE DIVIDED, THREE AGAINST TWO, AND TWO AGAINST THREE.”

What a contrast and seeming contradiction as we compare these words with the message of the angels, in Luke 2:9 to 15. In Luke 2:14, “Peace on earth.”

Now, “No peace on earth.” Note how the Lord Jesus stated it in Matthew 10:34 to 36.

Note when the Lord announced “no peace on earth,” He spoke of another baptism, His death on the cross of Calvary. His death baptism. Jesus, the Anointed King, would not go to David’s throne for “peace on earth,” but to Calvary’s tree, to make peace for individual believing sinners. Note what Jesus Christ did. “And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.” Colossians 1:20.

Christ made peace for believers by His baptism on the cross. Christ’s baptism brought peace. When the sinner believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and accepts His death baptism, note what happens to that believing sinner. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 5:1. “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:3 and 4. Christ was both circumcised and baptized, so with every member of the Body of Christ—”In Whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, Who hath raised Him from the dead, And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.” Colossians 2:11 to 13.

“For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” Philippians 3:3.

ANOTHER JEW WAITING FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD

As we saw that the Book of Luke began with a devout Jew, waiting for the consolation of Israel, with Jesus in his arms, so we see that the Book of Luke closed with a devout Jew “waiting for the kingdom of God,” with Jesus in his arms.

“And, behold there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just; (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathea, a city of the Jews; who also himself waited for the kingdom of God. This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.” Luke 23:50 to 54.

Not only were Simeon and Joseph waiting for the kingdom of God, the consolation of Israel, but so also were all of the Lord’s most intimate and faithful apostles. Note the request of the mother of two of Christ’s apostles

“Then came to Him the mother of Zebedee’s children with her sons, worshipping Him, and desiring a certain thing of Him. And He said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto Him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left, in Thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask, Are ye able to drink of the cup

that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto Him, We are able.” Matthew 20:20 to 22.

Note the expectation and desire of all the waiting Jews:

“BUT WE TRUSTED THAT IT HAD BEEN HE WHICH SHOULD HAVE REDEEMED ISRAEL; AND BESIDE ALL THIS, TODAY IS THE THIRD DAY SINCE THESE THINGS WERE DONE.” Luke 24:21.

“WHEN THEY THEREFORE WERE COME TOGETHER, THEY ASKED OF HIM, SAYING, LORD, WILT THOU AT THIS TIME RESTORE AGAIN THE KINGDOM TO ISRAEL?” Acts 1:6.

THE KINGDOM REWARD FOR THE TWELVE

“Then answered Peter and said unto Him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Matthew 19:27 and 28.

“But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another; for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not (may not) have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.” Matthew 10:23.

Note very carefully the words of the Lord Jesus, in Matthew 10:23. “Ye shall not (may not) have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come.” Note in Acts 8:1 that the twelve apostles remained in Jerusalem. They trusted it had been Christ Who should have redeemed Israel. They were promised twelve thrones when Israel was redeemed. Matthew 19:28. They didn’t know one single thing about “the dispensation of grace” of Ephesians 3:1 to 3, or “the eternal purpose of God” of Ephesians 3:11; that is, what Christ revealed to Paul.

Even during the first chapters of Acts Peter and the Eleven knew nothing and preached nothing concerning the truth of Ephesians 3:6.

“That the Gentiles should be jointheirs, and of the same (joint-) Body, and joint-partakers, of His promise in Christ by the gospel.” Ephesians 3:6.

Hence their question: Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? The kingdom will be restored to Israel. But this is quite different from the “Joint-Body” of Ephesians 3:6, which is God’s purpose and program, while Israel’s Messianic kingdom is in abeyance.

That kingdom will be established when the King comes, and then the prophesied **CONSOLATION OF ISRAEL** will be realized.

Let us not confuse the Consolation of Israel with the blessed hope of the Church which is Christ’s Body. Titus 2:13.

MESSAGE NUMBER 27

LUKE AND ACTS

The Holy Spirit chose Luke, the beloved physician, to write one of the four Records of the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ; and also the Book of Acts, the Acts of the Holy Spirit and the apostles.

The Christian who really desires to know the Bible should diligently study Luke's Gospel and Luke's Acts together, continuing out of the Gospel into the Book of Acts.

Note Luke 1:3 and 4 and Acts 1:1 and 2. "It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus; That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed."

"The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which He-was taken up, after that He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments unto the apostles whom He had chosen."

Here we learn that Luke expected Theophilus to know the truth of the third Gospel before he could understand the Book of Acts. It is significant that Luke is the only one of the four writers who recorded the prayer of the Lord Jesus on the cross. "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." This prayer, in Israel's behalf, brought to that nation a continuation of God's favor and mercy and another offer of national blessing.

Note the pronouncements of Christ, in Luke 13:35 and 21:20. "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate; and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh."

The Lord Jesus pronounced that terrible judgment upon Israel and Jerusalem about 32 A.D. But the Divine judgment did not fall upon "the land and wrath upon this people" (Luke 21:23) until 69 to 70 A.D., several years after the Apostle Paul had died. Perhaps Luke was still alive.

The Book of Acts covered a period of about 30 years, and never was Rome more gracious to Israel, never did Rome give more liberties to the Jews in their land, than during those years covered by the Book of Acts. The desolation was postponed. The temple stood. Israel's high-priest continued to minister to the people in their religious program. Acts 23:3 to 6.

In another message, we have referred to the contrast between Matthew 23:33 and 38 and Acts 3:25 and 26.

BEFORE CALVARY

**"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"
"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."**

AFTER CALVARY

"Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."

What a change in God's attitude towards Israel! "Serpents" and "vipers" become "the children of the covenant," tenderly and affectionately addressed with great compassion: "And

now brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.” In the shadow of the cross the Lord Jesus declared, “your house is left unto you desolate.” Then His prayer on the cross, “Father, forgive them”, and then Acts 3:26—“Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”

Then Acts 5:30 and 31:

“THE GOD OF OUR FATHER’S RAISED UP JESUS, WHOM YE SLEW AND HANGED ON A TREE. HIM HATH GOD EXALTED WITH HIS RIGHT HAND TO BE A PRINCE AND A SAVIOUR, FOR TO GIVE REPENTANCE TO ISRAEL, AND FORGIVENESS OF SINS.”

If Israel was “a generation of vipers” and their house was left desolate, why should the resurrected Christ send to them such a message? God hath exalted Christ to be a Prince and a Saviour for Israel. To Israel first is the message of forgiveness sent.

Many Christians have followed the erroneous teachings of their leaders without “searching the Scriptures daily to see if these things be true”, and have assumed or presumed that “the dispensation of the grace of God”, for Gentiles, began with the message of Peter and the Eleven on the day of Pentecost.

They seem to know the truth of Romans 11:15, that reconciliation was sent to Gentiles when and because Israel was set aside in blindness by God; but they have accepted the statements of others that Israel was set aside when Christ spoke, in Matthew 23:31 to 39, and that on the day of Pentecost God ushered in this present “grace” economy, which is called, in Ephesians 3:9, “the dispensation (economy) of the mystery.”

It is a blessed thing to know the truth of Romans 11:15 concerning the why and when of reconciliation for and to Gentiles, and the truth of Titus 2:11, Romans 10:12 and Ephesians 2:17.

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.”

“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.”

“And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.”

But no one knew this truth during the first years after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Study these messages of grace for Gentiles in the light of Acts 2:5 and 36—Galatians 2:8—Acts 10:28—Acts 11:1 to 3 and Acts 11:19.

“And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.”

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

“For He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles.”

“And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.”

“And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the Word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.”

“Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the Word to none but UNTO THE JEWS ONLY.”

Thus we see that there was no dispensation of grace for Gentiles during the first years after Christ's resurrection.

GOD OPENED THE DOOR

But later on something else happened.

“AND WHEN THEY WERE COME, AND HAD GATHERED THE CHURCH TOGETHER, THEY REHEARSED ALL THAT GOD HAD DONE WITH THEM, AND HOW HE HAD OPENED THE DOOR OF FAITH UNTO THE GENTILES.” Acts 14:27.

“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am an apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.” Romans 11:13.

Then remember the turning-point in Asia, marked by the words of Acts 13:46, **“Lo, we turn to the Gentiles”**. Note the turning-point in Europe, marked by Acts 18:5 and 6. “And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads I am clean; **FROM HENCEFORTH I WILL GO UNTO THE GENTILES.**”

Then carefully note that every message of Peter and the Eleven, and of their fellow-labourers, recorded in the first nine chapters of Acts, was addressed to “ye men of Judaea”, and “ye men of Israel”; that is, to the Jews. It was not lawful for them to go to the Gentiles. Acts 10:28. When Peter did go to Cornelius, the other apostles contended with him. Acts 11:1 to 5. In the light of Acts 10:28 and Acts 11:19, we must decide that the people to whom Philip preached in the city of Samaria, and also the eunuch, in the same eighth chapter of Acts, were all Jews. Some of the Jews of Acts 2:5 were called in Acts 2:10, proselytes. The eunuch had been up to Jerusalem to worship, and was doubtless a proselyte, a Jew by religion. The Grecians of Acts 6 were Greek-speaking Jews.

Again all of the messages proclaimed by the apostles, during the first eleven chapters of Acts, were in fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures. By way of contrast note Ephesians 3:8:

“UNTO ME, WHO AM LESS THAN THE LEAST OF ALL SAINTS, IS THIS GRACE GIVEN, THAT I SHOULD PREACH AMONG THE GENTILES THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST.”

The word **“unsearchable”** means **“untraceable”**; that is, **“unprophesied”**. In the ministry of Paul we find much truth to both Jews and Gentiles that was in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy; but there is a very distinctive message in some of his writings designated **“the Mystery”** or **“the Secret”** which was not prophesied. It is called **“God's eternal purpose”**. It is truth concerning the Church of the Mystery, the Joint-Body of Christ. The members of that JointBody were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. They are seated in the heavenlies in Christ. Ephesians 3:11—Ephesians 1:3 and 4. All of this is included in the **“UNSEARCHABLE” riches of Christ.**

We shall study these profound truths in some of our last messages, but let us note in passing, Ephesians 1:5—Ephesians 1:11 and Ephesians 1:9. **“Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.”** “In

Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.” “Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself.”

Also II Timothy 1:9—**“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”**

In Ephesians 1:19 to 23 we learn that the Lord Jesus Christ is far above in the heavenlies and there He is Head of the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him. In Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Gentile. All, with Christ, constitute the One New Man of Ephesians 2:15, the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6.

All of this is so different from the message of Acts 5:29 to 32 concerning the exalted Christ as Israel’s Prince and Saviour.

LUKE AND ACTS

Now let us note several verses in Luke and compare them with several statements in Acts.

Luke 1:32 and 33

“He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.”

CONCERNING JOHN THE BAPTIST

Luke 1:16

“And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.”

Luke 1:80

“And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.”

Luke 3:3

“And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”

Luke 3:16

“John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of Whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”

Luke 3:11

“He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.”

THE KINGDOM

Luke 9:3

“And He said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.”

Luke 10:9

“And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.”

Luke 12:32 and 33

“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.”

NOTE CAREFULLY

Luke 1:68 to 70

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people; And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David; As He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began.”

Acts 1:5

“For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”

Acts 2:5

“And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout man, out of every nation under heaven.”

Acts 2:28 to 32

“Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; Thou shalt make me full of joy with Thy countenance.

“Men and brethren. let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

“Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on His throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses.”

Acts 2:36

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Acts 2:38

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost”

Acts 2:45

“And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.”

Acts 4:32

“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.”

Acts 3:19 to 22

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And He shall send Jesus Christ Which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto Me; Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you.”

Acts 5:30 and 31

“The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.”

What an interesting comparison! Both John the Baptist and Peter preached to Israel “baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins” to precede Holy Spirit baptism. In Luke, we learn that Jesus Christ was born of David to sit on David’s throne. In Acts, we learn that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead to sit on David’s throne. The kingdom messengers, in Luke,

healed all manner of diseases. The kingdom converts, in Luke, sold their property and gave their money away. The kingdom converts, in Acts, did likewise. It was the Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom, in Luke 12:32. It was the Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom, in Acts 3:19 to 21.

Note the same language in Luke 1:70 and 71 and Acts 3:21, concerning the restitution, Israel's kingdom. "As He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began." Luke 1:70.

Now let us note that in the first three chapters of Luke we find angels visiting Israelites, John the Baptist appearing to Israel and preaching to Israel. About 33 years later we read, "And in the day time He (Christ) was teaching in the temple; and at night He went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives." Luke 21:37. Then after the death and resurrection of Christ we find Him (Christ) in Luke 24, appearing to Israelites.

Then we turn to the first chapters of Acts and we find 120 Jews in an upper room after the Lord had appeared to more than 500 of His disciples. Acts 1 and I Corinthians 15:6. Then we find twelve Jews speaking to devout Jews from all over the world. Note again carefully Galatians 2:7 and 8:

"But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; For He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles. "

Then Peter, by the authority of the risen Christ, again presented the kingdom to Israel. In the seventh chapter of Acts, Stephen addressed the nation Israel.

And as we come to the close of Acts we read Acts 28:17 and Acts 28:23 to 28. "And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together." Yes, Acts begins with a company of Jews in Jerusalem. In the last chapter we find a company of Jews in Rome.

"And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Spirit by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say; Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known, therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it" Acts 28:25 to 31.

It was several years after this radical change, stated in Acts 28:25 to 28, that the judgment of Luke 21:20 and Matthew 22:7 fell on Jerusalem and the Jews.

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh."

"But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth; and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city."

Let us learn from this study the all important lesson, in obedience to II Timothy 2:15, that Israel was not set aside during the recorded ministry of Peter and the Eleven, in the Book of Acts. And never forget the changes in God's program mentioned in Acts 13:46—Acts 18:6

Romans 11:9— Romans 11:11— Romans 11:30—and in Acts 28:28. All of these changes took place during the “Acts” period.

“Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.”

“And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.”

“And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompence unto them.”

“I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid; but rather through their fall salvation is, come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.”

“For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief.”

“Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.”

When we have learned this lesson we shall not follow the blunder of many who believe that the “dispensation of the grace of God” and the “dispensation. of the mystery” began on a Jewish Pentecost.

MESSAGE NUMBER 28

WHO ARE THE OTHER SHEEP?

Note the words of the Lord Jesus Christ in the tenth chapter of John

“I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD: THE GOOD SHEPHERD GIVETH HIS LIFE FOR THE SHEEP.” “MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE, AND I KNOW THEM, AND THEY FOLLOW ME.” “AND OTHER SHEEP I HAVE, WHICH ARE NOT OF THIS FOLD: THEM ALSO I MUST BRING, AND THEY SHALL HEAR MY VOICE; AND THERE SHALL BE ONE FOLD, AND ONE SHEPHERD.” John 10:11, 27 and 16.

In John 10:14, Christ again calls Himself “the Good Shepherd”. In Hebrews 13:20 and 21, Christ is called “the Great Shepherd” of the sheep.

In I Peter 2:25, Christ is called “the Shepherd of your souls”. In I Peter 5:4, Christ is called “the Chief Shepherd”.

We know that while Christ was on earth He was talking to Israel. We know that Hebrews was written to Israel. We know that I Peter was addressed to the dispersed twelve tribes of Israel. I Peter 1:2.

But now this question: “to whom did Christ refer as **“the other sheep?”** Read carefully the conversation between Christ and the Gentile woman, recorded in Matthew 15:24 and 26: “I am not sent but unto **the lost sheep** of the house of Israel.” “It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and cast it **to dogs.**” **“Sheep” and “dogs.”** Who were the sheep? Israel. Who were the dogs? Gentiles. Did some of these Gentile dogs later on become sheep?,

PETER’S VISION

One of the most interesting studies in the Bible is Peter's housetop vision, at the time the Lord sent him to preach to the household of Cornelius. Cornelius worshipped Israel's God and prayed to Israel's God. Cornelius was a devout upright man and loved Israel. Acts 10:2 and 22.

But note Peter's vision. He saw a sheet let down from heaven. "And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: **Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things; and fowls of the air.** And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord: for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean." Acts 10:11 to 14.

Note what was in that sheet. Then note what followed. "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." Acts 11:18.

Those fourfooted animals and wild beasts were all unclean, according to Israel's law, and symbolized Gentiles who were unclean in God's sight. Gentiles were aliens from Israel, alienated from the life of God, no people and a foolish nation. Ephesians 2:11 and 12—Ephesians 4:18 and Romans 10:19. Even the respectable, religious, God-fearing, Jew-loving Cornelius was represented by an unclean fourfooted beast. There were no sheep in that sheet, not even one. A sheep was clean to Israel. Unclean animals typified the Gentiles. God called the Gentiles, "dogs."

So we see that dogs and unclean beasts spoke of Gentiles. Israelites were sheep.

The gods which the Gentiles worshipped were images made like to corruptible man, and to birds and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Romans 1:23.

Note God's statement concerning Israel at the time that people left Egypt. "But made His own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock." Psalms 78:52.

Note also Psalms 79:13 and Psalms 95:7. "So we Thy people and sheep of Thy pasture will give Thee thanks for ever; we will shew forth Thy praise to all generations." "For He is our God; and we are the people of His pasture, and **the sheep of His hand.** Today if ye will hear His voice."

God has much to say about His sheep in, Israel's Scriptures. "**Israel is a scattered sheep;** the lions have driven him away; first the king of Assyria hath devoured Him; and last this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones." Jeremiah 50:17.

"My people hath been **lost sheep:** their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains; they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace." Jeremiah 50:6.

"Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God." "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." Isaiah 40:9 and 11. "I the Lord have spoken it. And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land; and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods." "And they were scattered, because there was no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. **My sheep** wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill; yea, My flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them."

The sheep are going back to the land of Israel. Note carefully Ezekiel 37:24, 25 and 26. "And David My servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments, and observe My statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the

land that I have given unto Jacob My servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever; and My servant David shall be their prince for ever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore."

Now note Hebrews 13:20 and 21. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen."

ISRAEL NEAR AND FAR OFF

The sheep of Israel are divided, in Daniel 9:7, into the two classes, "all Israel, near" and "far off."

On the day of Pentecost Peter said, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts 2:39. This message concerned "all the house of Israel". Acts 2:36.

Peter later wrote to the twelve tribes dispersed. I Peter 1:1. Note John 7:34 and 35: "Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come. Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will He go, that we shall not find Him? will He go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?"

Note James 1:1—"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. "

James and Peter went to Israel. Galatians 2:9. The Lord Jesus said to Peter, "feed My sheep and lambs." John 21:15 to 17.

Note again Galatians 2:9—"And when James, Peter, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision."

After the sheep finally rejected the Shepherd, an Israelite was chosen to go to the Gentiles. He wrote: "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise." "For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office." "For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief." Romans 1:14—Romans 11:13—Romans 11:30.

Note Paul's words to the lost sheep of Israel: "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." Acts 13:46.

Then later on, the Apostle to the Gentiles wrote—"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world; But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, Who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments, contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain One New Man, so making peace." Ephesians 2:12 to 15.

Note Jeremiah 13:17 and 23:1 to 3. "But if ye will not hear it, My soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the

Lord's flock is carried away captive." "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter **the sheep of My pasture!** saith the Lord. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed My people; Ye have scattered My flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them; behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord. And I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase."

It was about this time that Isaiah wrote—"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53:6.

The Gentiles were not sheep that strayed from the Shepherd's flock or fold. They had not been in the fold. They were alienated from the life of God. God had given them up before He even chose Israel, and cut them completely off with the covenant of circumcision. Romans 1:18 to 30 and Genesis 17:8 to 18. Certainly lost Gentiles are not called sheep. Israelites saved or unsaved are called "sheep" in the Bible.

DAVID - CHRIST - THE SHEPHERD KING

David was a shepherd, and became a king. David was Israel's shepherd-king. Jesus Christ came to earth to be Israel's Shepherd-King. He was born in the city of David. This was the message to Israel's shepherds. Luke 2:6 to 14. Christ was born in the house of David, to take the throne of David and be King of Israel. This was Gabriel's message. Luke 1:26 to 33.

In Luke is recorded the parable of the lost sheep. "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?" Luke 15:4. All of the hundred sheep were in the fold. The one sheep here represents the publican. He was a Jew. The only Gentiles who were in the fold were proselytes. This chapter tells of "the lost sheep", "the lost coin", "the lost boy", "the prodigal son". The older son was the Pharisee; the younger son was the publican. If we say that the publican was an unsaved Gentile, we support the teaching of the Universalists, that all are the sons of God. That prodigal spake of his father's house when he was with the hogs in sin.

But note again the words of the Lord Jesus, in Matthew 15:24.

"I AM NOT SENT BUT UNTO THE LOST SHEEP OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL."

Now note His words in Luke 19:9 and 10—"And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. **For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost.** "

Whom did the Good Shepherd come to seek and to save? The lost sons of Abraham.

Note the prophecy of Ezekiel.

"FOR THUS SAITH THE LORD GOD; BEHOLD, I, EVEN I, WILL BOTH SEARCH MY SHEEP, AND SEEK THEM OUT." "I WILL SEEK THAT WHICH WAS LOST." Ezekiel 34:11 and 16. "My sheep," "My people"; Israel.

Now read the story in Ezekiel 34:12 to 14—Ezekiel 34:22 to 25 and Ezekiel 34:5 and 6.

"As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; SO WILL I SEEK OUT MY SHEEP, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the river, and in all the inhabited places of the

country, I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be; there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel.” “Therefore will I save My flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle. And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even My servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them.

The Bible does not refer to unsaved Gentiles as “sheep”. The Shepherd said “I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish.” There are many Christians who believe that when the Gentiles receive Christ they become sheep—They do become joint-sharers with the saved Jews in the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6. All believing Jews and Gentiles are one in Christ. Galatians 3:28. They are altogether with Christ, one flesh. Ephesians 5:31 and 32. They are altogether “One New Man.” Ephesians 2:15.

Now the question, “Is the one flock of John 10:16 the One New Man of Ephesians 2:15?”

The One New Man of Ephesians 2:15 is called “the Joint-Body” of Ephesians 3:6. Ezekiel did not know anything or say anything concerning that Joint-Body (Colossians 1:24 to 27) (Ephesians 3:3 to 5); but Ezekiel did prophecy concerning the one flock and one shepherd.

Some Christians are dogmatically opposed to calling saved Gentiles “spiritual Israel”; but they are not opposed to calling them “spiritual sheep”, because of Acts 20:28—“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.”

Undoubtedly the Lord Jesus was not speaking of “the Church of the Mystery” when He spoke of the one flock or fold in the tenth chapter of John.

MESSAGE NUMBER 29

GOD ALMIGHTY - THE I AM

“AND WHEN ABRAM WAS NINETY YEARS OLD AND NINE, THE LORD APPEARED TO ABRAM, AND SAID UNTO HIM, I AM THE ALMIGHTY GOD, WALK BEFORE ME, AND BE THOU PERFECT.” GENESIS 17:1.

WHEN GOD APPEARED TO MOSES, GOD SAID TO MOSES: “AND I APPEARED UNTO ABRAHAM, UNTO ISAAC, AND UNTO JACOB, BY THE NAME OF GOD ALMIGHTY, BUT BY MY NAME JEHOVAH WAS I NOT KNOWN TO THEM.” EXODUS 6:3.

“AND GOD SAID UNTO MOSES, I AM THAT I AM: AND HE SAID, THUS SHALT THOU SAY UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, I AM HATH SENT ME UNTO YOU:” EXODUS 3:14.

More than 400 years after God appeared to Abraham as “God Almighty,” He appeared to Moses as “JEHOVAH, the I AM.”

Now note the words of the Lord Jesus Christ in Revelation 1:8: **“I am Alpha and Omega the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”**

Note again the words of Christ in John 8:24 and 8:58 and 59:

“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.” “Jesus saith unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.”

Most interesting and significant. statements. They should be studied with John 10:30 to 33. In those verses we learn that the Jews sought to kill Jesus, because He said, “I and Father are one.”

Jesus Christ, the Man, was accused of making Himself God. He called Himself, the I AM. He said, **“if ye believe not that I AM**, ye shall die in your sins.” Then how are we to be saved from our sins? “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Romans 10:9.

Note also I John 5:5—“Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.”

Note again the consequences and penalty of denying the Deity of Jesus Christ.

“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” I John 5:10 to 12.

There have been many arguments “pro” and “con” as to whether the Jehovah of the Old Testament was the Christ of the Four Gospels. We are sure that Christ was God manifest in the flesh. John 1:14, John 14:9 and John 20:28.

THE DEITY OF CHRIST

“IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD.” “HE WAS IN THE WORLD, AND THE WORLD WAS MADE BY HIM, AND THE WORLD KNEW HIM NOT.” John 1:1— John 1:10 and John 1:14.

“But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, **O God**, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom.” Hebrews 1:8.

“And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and **My God**.” John 20:28.

“In Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is **the image of the invisible God**, the firstborn of every creature: For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him; And **He is before all things**, and by Him all things consist.” Colossians 1:14 to 17.

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; Who, being **in the form of God**, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” Philippians 2:5 and 6.

“And now, O Father, glorify thou Me with Thine own self with **the glory which I had with Thee before the world was**.” “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.” John 17:5 and 14:9.

“Which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified **the Lord of glory**.” I Corinthians 2:8.

Speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ John wrote, “that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us!” I John 1:2.

Then again in I John 5:20, “We know that the Son of God is come. This is the true God and eternal life.”

JESUS CHRIST - THE I AM

I AM the Bread of Life.	John 6:35.
I AM the Light of the World.	John 8:12.
I AM the Messiah.	John 4:26.
I AM the Door.	John 10:9.
I AM the Good Shepherd.	John 10:14.
I AM the True Vine.	John 15:1.
I AM the Resurrection.	John 11:25.
I AM the Way.	John 14:6.
I AM the Truth.	John 14:6.
I AM the Life.	John 14:6.

“Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I AM, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things.” John 8:28.

“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins.” John 8:24.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the “I AM” more than twenty times in the Gospel of John.

Thus we see that the Bible clearly teaches that Jesus Christ was God before He became flesh. He was in the form of God and in the bosom of the Father. John 1:18. We also see that the Bible clearly teaches that faith in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ is essential for salvation.

Note Christ’s own words in John 5:22 and 23: “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him.”

Again John 6:47: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life.”

Again Romans 6:23: “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The one and only way to God, salvation, heaven and eternal life, is Jesus Christ.

“Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:12.

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.” I Peter 1:18 to 20.

“And without shedding of blood is no remission.” Hebrews 9:22.

“To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace. Ephesians 1:6 and 7.

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2:13.

“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.” II John 9.

The Lord Jesus Christ is “the Second Man from heaven”; “the Lord of Glory” and “the Prince of Life.” I Corinthians 15:47— I Corinthians 2:7 and 8 and Acts 3:15.

GOD AND CHRIST IN SALVATION

“And all things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. To wit, **that God was in Christ**, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” II Corinthians 5:18 to 20.

“For, God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but hath everlasting life.” God gave His Son. God spared not His own Son, but offered Him up for us all. John 3:15—Romans 8:32.

“For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.” John 3:17.

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” I Timothy 1:15.

“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus: Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” I Timothy 2:4 to 6.

“But we see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” Hebrews 2:9.

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” I Peter 3:18.

Why should any person be ignorant of God’s way to God’s heaven? It is clearly, simply, and dogmatically stated in God’s Book. “Ye which were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2:13.

THE RESURRECTED CHRIST AND SALVATION

“Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Hebrews 7:25.

“But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.” Hebrews 10:12.

“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” Hebrews 9:12.

“Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it.” Acts 2:23 and 24.

“And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a sepulchre. But God raised Him from the dead.” Acts 13:29 and 30.

“And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the

dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, Which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” Ephesians 1:19 to 23.

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” Colossians 3:1 to 3.

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.” I John 2:1.

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.” Hebrews 12:1 to 3.

The same wonderful, supernatural story is woven into every part of the Divine message, from Matthew to Revelation:

1. The incarnation of God in Christ for the specific purpose of dying for sinners.
2. The sinless perfect life of the God-man, Christ.
3. His supernatural miracles to prove His eternal Deity, His unity, and equality with God the Father.
4. His once-for-all sacrifice in fulfillment of prophecy and God’s foreordained redemption for sinners.
5. His triumphant bodily resurrection and ascension into the highest heavens.
6. His work of intercession, forgiveness, keeping, cleansing, for saints as He appears in heaven itself, in the presence of God, as the believer’s Advocate. Hebrews 9:24.
7. The promise that He will come for His redeemed ones and take them in glorified bodies to see and share His glory.

God was with Christ on earth. Acts 10:38. God was in Christ. II Corinthians 5:19. Christ was with God before He became a man. John 1:1 to 3. Christ was in the form of God. Philippians 2:6. Christ was God.

The Holy Spirit caused Isaiah to write concerning the Virgin’s Son. Emmanuel, meaning God with us. Isaiah 7:14. Christ was Emmanuel. Matthew 1:23. Mary, the Virgin was a Jew. So Emmanuel was Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus of Nazareth was a Jew. He worshipped as a Jew. Luke 4:16. He said, “We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.” John 4:22.

Do not forget those solemn words of the Lord Jesus, “if ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins.” John 8:24.

MESSAGE NUMBER 30

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND

Note carefully:

“NOW AFTER THAT JOHN WAS PUT IN PRISON, JESUS CAME INTO GALILEE, PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. AND SAYING, THE TIME IS FULFILLED, AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND; REPENT YE, AND BELIEVE THE GOSPEL.” MARK 1:14 AND 13.

“REPENT YE; FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND.” Matthew 3:2. “FROM THAT TIME JESUS BEGAN TO PREACH, AND TO SAY, REPENT; FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND.” MATTHEW 4:17.

“THESE TWELVE JESUS SENT FORTH, AND COMMANDED THEM, SAYING, GO NOT INTO THE WAY OF THE GENTILES, AND INTO ANY CITY OF THE SAMARITANS ENTER YE NOT; BUT GO RATHER TO THE LOST SHEEP OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL. AND AS YE GO, PREACH, SAYING, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND. HEAL THE SICK, CLEANSE THE LEPERS, RAISE THE DEAD, CAST OUT DEVILS; FREELY YE HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE.” Matthew 10:5 to 8.

“But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another; for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.” Matthew 10:23.

Jesus Christ said, in Mark 1:15, **“THE TIME IS FULFILLED”; “THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND.”**

Then note what Christ did: He healed the sick. Mark 1:34.

Some months later “the Lord appointed other. seventy also.” Luke 10:1. Note His instructions to the Seventy. “Heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.” Luke 10:9.

One of the first duties in preaching the gospel of the kingdom was to heal the sick.

Note again Matthew 10:7 and 8:

“And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give.”

John the Baptist preached, The kingdom of heaven is at hand,

Jesus Christ preached, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

The Twelve preached, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

One of the prophecies that was fulfilled when the King announced His kingdom, was Isaiah 35:4 to 6: “Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence ; He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.”

John the Baptist sent his messengers to the Lord Jesus, with the question, “Art Thou He that should come? or look we for another?” Luke 7:20.

Note the Lord’s answer: “Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.” Luke 7:22.

Thus we see that the Lord performed miracles, in fulfillment of prophecy, to prove that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, in fulfillment of prophecy.

We have learned that the kingdom of heaven, of Matthew 4:17, and the kingdom of God, of Mark 1:14 and 15, were identical.

The kingdom of God is not always identical with **the kingdom of heaven** which was at hand, according to Christ's statement in Matthew. The term **"kingdom of heaven"** is found more than 30 times in Matthew. The exact expression is not found in any other Book in the Bible. But of course it is mentioned in Daniel 2:44 and 45, and in many other Scriptures. And it is sometimes called "the kingdom of God" or "the kingdom."

It is interesting to note the Scriptural setting of the beatitudes, the Sermon on the mount, and the "Our Father" prayer. These are recorded in Matthew, chapters five to eight. Note before and after: Matthew 4:17; "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" for Israel, (Matthew 15:24), with a program of healing and other signs. Matthew 10:5 to 8: the kingdom of heaven is at hand for Israel, (Matthew 10:6) with a program of healing and other signs.

Thus we see that the Sermon and the prayer have decidedly a **"kingdom of heaven"** setting.

The Book of Matthew was perhaps written before Cornelius received the message from Peter.

For some reason the Holy Spirit restrained John from writing his Gospel until many years after Matthew wrote, perhaps until twenty years after the Apostle Paul had died.

In John's Gospel there is no statement, "the kingdom of heaven at hand." There is no Sermon on the Mount, no "Our Father" prayer. No kingdom parables. But we do find these interesting statements in John's Gospel:

"And I knew Him not; but that He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water." John 1:31.

"Though Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples." John 4:2.

"And many resorted unto Him, and said, John did no miracle; but all things that John spake of this Man were true." John 10:41.

John the Baptist baptized, but performed no miracles. Jesus Christ performed miracles, but did not baptize. John baptized and Jesus Christ performed miracles for the same reason. John 10:41 and Acts 2:22.

FROM THAT TIME

Compare and contrast

"FROM THAT TIME Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matthew 4:17.

"FROM THAT TIME forth began Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." Matthew 16:21.

"Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Matthew 21:43.

Note how Matthew is divided by the two statements, "from that time". In Matthew 4:17, the King announced His kingdom at hand. In Matthew 16:21, the King announced His rejection and death at hand. Note how He stated it in Matthew 26:45—"Behold the hour is at hand", and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."

Then note the Messiah's solemn words to His "kingdom" nation, in Matthew 21:43, "the kingdom of God shall be taken from you." Note how this is stated in Matthew 8:12—"But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Now compare Matthew 8:12 with Colossians 1:13 and 14.

“But the children of the kingdom shall be out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son; In Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”

Members of Christ’s Body are children of a different kingdom, and shall never be cast into outer darkness.

Let us compare Luke 16:16 and Luke 13:24 with I Corinthians 12:13—Romans 4:5 and Romans 14:17.

“The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.”

“Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

What a difference between the proclamation of Matthew 10:5 to 8, “the kingdom at hand” for Israel, (go not into the way of the Gentiles), and Titus 2:11, “the grace of God” at hand for all men, including the Gentiles. Healing, miracles and signs accompanied the proclamation of the kingdom of heaven; but these signs had ceased when Paul wrote to Titus. The two programs were quite different.

No member of the Body of Christ has Divine authority to carry on the kingdom program of Matthew 10:5 to 8 in this day of grace.

The Lord Jesus on earth did not say “the Body of Christ is at hand.” Neither did He preach the gospel message of Romans 10:12 and Ephesians 3:6 and Ephesians 2:13.

“There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him.”

“That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the Joint-Body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.”

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

We should study the Book of Matthew in the light of Romans and Ephesians. But as we study the Book of Matthew, let us not forget that the truth of Romans and Ephesians was not made known by Christ and His apostles until some years after His death and resurrection; and that “the kingdom at hand” when Jesus Christ was on earth, differs in many respects from the “kingdom of God” mentioned: in Colossians 4:11. “And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.”

The “kingdom” of Matthew was a prophesied kingdom. The “kingdom” of Ephesians and Colossians was an unprophesied kingdom, the Body of Christ.

Compare the kingdom gospel and healing program of Matthew 10:5 to 8 with I Timothy 1:11 and I Timothy 5:23.

“According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.”
“Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.” I Timothy 1:11 and I Timothy 5:23.

The Messianic kingdom of Jesus Christ which He announced “at hand”, when on earth, will surely be “at hand” again.

But during this present economy God is accomplishing a different purpose while the “kingdom of heaven” is in abeyance.

All Premillenarians, who are “grace” preachers, teach the postponement of the kingdom and that this present Church period is a parenthetical period. But they are not all agreed as to when this present “dispensation of the mystery” began. Ephesians 3:9.

MESSAGE NUMBER 31

“WHEN THERE IS NO LAW” - “THE LAW WAS ADDED”

In Galatians 3:19 we read, “the law was added.” In this lesson we shall answer the question, “to what was the law added?” Think of this question. Can you answer it? Then in Romans 5:20 we read, “the law entered”. In this lesson we shall answer the question, “when did the law enter ?” Of course you know the answer to this. The law was given by Moses. Moses was 80 years old when he received the tables of stone from Jehovah on Mount Sinai. But now these interesting statements in Romans 5:13 and 14.

WHEN THERE IS NO LAW FROM ADAM TO MOSES

“WHEREFORE, AS BY ONE MAN SIN ENTERED INTO THE WORLD, AND DEATH BY SIN; AND SO DEATH PASSED UPON ALL MEN, FOR THAT ALL HAVE SINNED; (FOR UNTIL THE LAW SIN WAS IN THE WORLD; BUT SIN IS NOT IMPUTED WHEN THERE IS NO LAW. NEVERTHELESS DEATH REIGNED FROM ADAM TO MOSES, EVEN OVER THEM THAT HAD NOT SINNED AFTER THE SIMILITUDE OF ADAM’S TRANSGRESSION, WHO IS THE FIGURE OF HIM THAT WAS TO COME.” ROMANS 5:12 TO 14.

“MOREOVER THE LAW ENTERED, THAT THE OFFENCE MIGHT ABOUND. BUT WHERE SIN ABOUNDED, GRACE DID MUCH MORE ABOUND.” Romans 5:20.

Here we note that God has very definitely marked a period in His dealings with the human race, designated “**from Adam to Moses**”. This means, from the day that Adam sinned until the day Moses received the ten commandments for Israel at Sinai. How many years between the sin of Adam and the giving of the law? About 2500 years. How many years from the giving of the law until Jesus Christ, on the cross cried “finished”? About 1530 years. How many years from the day Moses received the law at Sinai until Paul wrote to members of the Body of Christ, “ye are not under the law; ye are under grace,” (Romans 6:14)?” About 1557 years. Until he wrote to Gentile believers, in Colossians 2:13, 14 and 16: “And you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses: **Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.** “

“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days.” About 1562 years.

So we learn that from about 1500 B. C. until after Jesus Christ died on the cross, Israel was under the law.

Note the Holy Spirit’s statement concerning Israel and **the law**:

“But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a school master.” Galatians 3:23 to 25.

Then Paul wrote—“Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Romans 10:4. “For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” Romans 6:14. “Wherefore my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him Who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.” Romans 7:4.

If the law was added and was taken out of the way more than 1500 years later, then we can truly say that the “law dispensation” was both parenthetical and temporary.

BEFORE FAITH CAME—BEFORE LAW CAME

We read in Galatians 3:23, “before faith came”. We read in Romans 5:13, “when there is no law”, or “before law came”. During the 2500 years, from Adam to Moses, death reigned. The human race was under a universal Divine law, “the law of sin and death”. Romans 8:2. About 1656 years after Adam sinned, Noah was in the ark. About 427 years later, Abram left Chaldea at God’s call. About 430 years still later Moses received the law. Galatians 3:16 and 17.

GOD PREACHED TO ABRAM BEFORE

Note this most interesting and important statement: “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed.” Galatians 3:8.

Read it again. God preached the gospel to Abraham **“BEFORE”**. Before what? Before He added the law. Note what Abraham did, and what God did. “Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” Galatians 3:6. When God preached the gospel to Abram (in uncircumcision) the Scripture foresaw that Gentiles would be, saved, from Paul’s time down to the present, without religion or law. Note Galatians 3:17: “And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.” So we see that 430 years before the law was given the gospel of “righteousness by faith without the deeds of the law” was preached to Abram. Then what? Then the question:

“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hands of a mediator.” Galatians 3:19. To what was the law added? It was added to the gospel which God preached to Abraham, 430 years before. Which covenant abides and which covenant has been done away? The Abrahamic covenant abides: the Mosaic covenant has been done away. The gospel abides. The law has been done away. “For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.” “And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face,

that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished. "But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which is done away in Christ." II Corinthians 3:11, 13 and 14. Note II Corinthians 3:14 - "the Old Testament is done away in Christ." Note the same truth in Hebrews 8:13. "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."

Let us change Galatians 3:19 to read the law covenant, which was made old by Christ's death on the cross, was added to the Abrahamic covenant which God made with Abram 430 years before He made the law covenant with Israel, through the mediator, Moses. It was added till. Till when? Till the Seed promised to Abram and Abraham came. That Seed was Christ.

The word "covenant" is the same as the word "testament". God entered into "covenants" or "testaments" with the human race before Moses received the law covenant for Israel, about 2500 years after Adam sinned. Moses received the testament, called "the Old Testament", several centuries after the event recorded in the last verse of Genesis. Note that event; "So Joseph died being an hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt." Genesis 50:26. So Joseph died some years before God made with Israel the covenant now called "the Old Covenant."

Mark well that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Levi, Joseph, and all of the other sons of Jacob (Israel) had died before God gave the (old) covenant to Israel. Therefore, we greatly err when we call any of these men Old Testament characters, or the Book of Genesis "the Old Testament Scripture." They lived during that period, "from Adam to Moses", "when there is no law".

From about 4000 B.C. until about 1700 B.C., that is, for about 2300 years, there were no Israelites. From about 4000 B.C. until 1500 B.C., "from Adam to Moses", the Old Testament was not in effect. There were covenants, but not that covenant, which became "Old".

THE LAW IN CHRIST JESUS

The truth for us is clearly stated in Romans 8:2 to 4: "For **the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus**, hath made me free from **the law of sin and death**. For what **the law** could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Note the three laws—"The law of sin and death"—"the law of Sinai" and "**the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus**". The law of Sinai could not deliver from the law of sin and death. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus can and does. And the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus delivered believing Israelites from the curse of the law of Moses. Romans 7:1 to 6.

The sum total of man's spiritual responsibility to God is to:—

- 1—Appropriate the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.**
- 2—Demonstrate the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.**
- 3—Propagate the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.**

We first believe and appropriate the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Note how this law is stated in II Timothy 1:10 and Romans 8:4.

"But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

That law enables the believer to live Christ.

The believer is expected to demonstrate that law by walking daily in newness of life. "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8:4.

Then note Galatians 5:22 to 25: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; **against such there is no law.** And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

Against such there is no law.

When we have received Christ and have been saved by this Divine law, we are to propagate that law of life by preaching Christ and His redemptive work to others.

Some one has truly said that Christianity is life, love and heaven.

The three general divisions of the Bible which we have seen in this message

1. From Adam to Moses.
2. The law was added till after Christ died on the cross, when the covenant was made old.
3. The reign of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus from the day Paul preached the grace of God until the Lord comes for His Church.

"The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us— "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Titus 2:11 to 13.

The law was given by Moses. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." John 1:17. "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 5:21.

"For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles. If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward. How that by revelation He (Christ) made known unto me the mystery." Ephesians 3:1 to 3.

Members of Christ's Body are not under the law. Romans 6:14.

In What Sense Is Christianity The Religion Of Jesus Christ?

Some time ago a Jewish Rabbi said to a well known Christian preacher, "Dr. Parker, it was not your Jesus Who gave you the Christianity which is generally preached by Christian clergymen. It was the Apostle Paul. Your Jesus was a Jew by birth and by religion."

While we would not fully agree with that rabbi, we would dogmatically affirm that we cannot intelligently interpret and practice true Christianity without interpreting, appropriating and applying the teachings and doings of Jesus of Nazareth, recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, in the light of the later teachings of Jesus Christ, which He revealed to and by the Apostle Paul.

We learn in Luke 2:21 to 39, that even in infancy, when He was presented for circumcision, Jesus Christ began His early life as a religious Jew: "And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth." Luke 2:39.

When Christ was thirty years of age He attended the services in the Jewish synagogue as had been His custom. Luke 4:16. Then He, said, "we know what we worship for salvation is of

the Jews.” John 4:22. One of the last acts of Jesus of Nazareth before His death, was His observance of the Jewish Passover. The Divine Record is that God’s Son was made under the law. Galatians 4:4.

After a careful study of the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and a careful comparison of these messages with Paul’s Epistles, many questions will be in the mind of the student:

1. If a person should obey the teachings of Christ, in Matthew, Mark and Luke, would he not be a Jew by religion?
2. Is it possible for a person to faithfully follow the religious program of Jesus of Nazareth and also believe Paul’s message of grace and obey the instructions to believers in Paul’s Epistles?
3. Did not the Lord Jesus Christ give to Paul a spiritual “grace” program that superseded the program He presented to Israel while on earth?

We shall refer again to the religion of Jesus Christ; but let us note several statements which the infallible Holy Spirit directed Paul to write.

1. **“But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. Galatians 1:11 and 12.**
2. **“Be ye followers of me even as I also am of Christ.” I Corinthians 11:1.**
3. **“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.” I Corinthians 3:10.**
4. **“Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.” I Timothy 1:16.**
5. **“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God.” Colossians 1:25.**
6. **“That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.” Ephesians 2:7 and 8.**
7. **“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24.**
8. **“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words).” Ephesians 3:1 to 3.**
9. **“That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.” Romans 15:16. “For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.” Romans 11:13.**
10. **“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men.” II Timothy 2:2.**

From these Scriptures we learn that the Lord Jesus Christ, from heaven, gave to Paul his apostolic authority.

There is a sense in which the Apostle Paul was the Lord's special apostle. By revelation the Lord Jesus Christ called and commissioned the Apostle Paul. Note Paul's words in I Timothy 1:12: "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, Who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry."

Christ Jesus put Paul in the ministry. When Christ Jesus put Paul in the ministry by revelation, Paul said, "Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me." Galatians 1:17. Paul did not immediately confer with flesh and blood. Galatians 1:16. But later he went to Jerusalem and conferred with those who were apostles before him. But note his testimony: ". . . for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me." Galatians 2:6. "But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter: (For He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) And when James, Peter and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." Galatians 2:7 to 9.

Paul has been truly called "the apostle and preacher of reconciliation." He said, "I am the apostle to the Gentiles." The Lord Jesus Christ gave to Paul the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24), "the dispensation of the grace of God" for Gentiles (Ephesians 3:1 to 3), "the unsearchable riches of Christ" for the Gentiles (Ephesians 3:8). Christ committed unto Paul "the gospel of the uncircumcision" (Galatians 2:7). The Lord Jesus Christ said to Paul, "I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." Acts 22:21.

Note Paul's testimony: "For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed." Romans 15:18. Compare this statement with Galatians 2:8: "For He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles."

Now compare the statement in Acts 22:21, "I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles," with Christ's command to Peter and the Eleven, in Matthew 10:5: "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles."

Note in Acts 10:28, Peter's words some eight years after Christ's orders given in Matthew 10:5. "And he (Peter) said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean." Acts 10:28.

Now let us note Christ's own words in Matthew 15:24: "But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Here we learn that while Christ was on earth no apostle was authorized by Him to be an apostle to the Gentiles, or even to preach to the Gentiles. "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." Romans 15:8.

While Jesus of Nazareth was on earth, neither He nor His apostles preached Romans 11:15.

"For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead."

Because Israel had not been cast away. The Twelve did not preach the ministry of reconciliation to Gentiles even as late as Acts 5:29 to 32.

Note Acts 5:31:

“Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. “ Israel had not yet been cast away.

We learned in Galatians 2:7, that Christ committed unto Peter the gospel of the circumcision. We read in Matthew 10:6 that Peter and the Eleven were to preach to Israel only, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” These Twelve preached “the gospel of the kingdom.” Matthew 9:35 and Matthew 4:23.

It will help us to note in the Book of Acts that the thousands who became Christians, during the first years after Christ died, were all Jews. Note Acts 2:5 and Act 3:26 and Act 11:19.

It will also help us to note that from the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptist, who introduced Jesus of Nazareth into His public ministry at the age of thirty, up to the salvation of Cornelius, only circumcised men were baptized. During these years none of the Twelve asked any Jews to give up the practice of circumcision. Note the advice of the Apostle James as late as 60 A.D. in Acts 21:18 to 25.

In asking the question, “in what sense is Christianity the religion of Jesus Christ,” first of all we must settle in our minds what is meant by “religion.” There is nothing of religion in the Christianity presented in Paul’s last Epistles; Ephesians, Colossians, Titus, Philippians, and II Timothy.

When the Lord gave to Israel the law, He gave to that people with the law a religious system. It is described as meats and drinks, divers baptisms, and carnal ordinances. Note in Hebrews 9:10 that this religious program was imposed upon Israel until the time of reformation.

Jesus of Nazareth, on earth, did not take away from Israel their God-given religion, but, on the contrary, He Himself was a religious Jew in their midst. Moreover, Israel was dealt with as a nation for some years after the death and resurrection of their Messiah; and the Lord did not abruptly take away their religion. That was done gradually.

THE END OF RELIGION

A careful study of the Book of Acts and the Epistles of Paul, from his first Epistle to his last Epistle, will teach us how the Lord gradually eliminated Judaism from His “grace” message and program, until finally all religion had disappeared.

Then Paul said, “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” Philippians 1:21.

“For we are the circumcision which worship. God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” Philippians 3:3.

“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days.” Colossians 2:16.

Note in the Lord’s message and ministry of grace that the believer is taken out of anything that pertains to earthly blessings, or worship in a worldly sanctuary or the religion of Israel: “And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 2:6. “Blessed’ be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” Ephesians 1:3.

Our sanctuary is in heaven. Our citizenship is in heaven. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. We are identified with Christ in His crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. We are joined to Christ, one flesh with Christ. We belong to the One New Man of Ephesians 2:15. We are members of Christ’s Body. Christ is our righteousness, our holiness, our redemption, our life, our peace, our hope.

A very important duty assigned to us is stated in Ephesians 3:9: “And to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.”

There is absolutely nothing left of religion in “the dispensation of the mystery.” This is “according to the eternal purpose which He (God) purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Ephesians 3:11. This eternal purpose is set forth in II Timothy 1:9 and 10: “Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light. through the gospel.”

Most assuredly, in the eternal purpose of God, the Lord Jesus Christ is not the minister of the circumcision, confirming promises which God made to Israel by the prophets. This grace and purpose was given us in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world; and because it is not mentioned by any of Israel’s prophets, it is called “the mystery” or “the secret.”

Our unmixed message of grace is clearly set forth in these two verses in II Timothy 1:9 to 11.

Let us also read concerning the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus in Romans 8:1 to 4. This law sets us free from the law of sin and death and enables us to walk in the Spirit and fulfil the righteousness of the law. The sum total of our spiritual duty is to appropriate and to demonstrate, and to propagate the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Christianity is life, love and eternal glory.

Our message is not the “Christian religion,” but “eternal life through the Lord Jesus Christ”; not a system of religion, but a Divine Person.

Surely no intelligent Christian would say that there is not much of Christianity in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; but the intelligent Christian will rightly divide the Word of Truth and interpret, appropriate and apply the message of Christ in these Gospels in the light of Christ’s clear later revelations, to and through Paul.

In no other way will we ever account for the seeming contradictions and discrepancies between the statements of Jesus of Nazareth and those of the Apostle Paul.

MESSAGE NUMBER 32

IT IS THE LAST TIME

We read in the Bible of “**the end of the age**”, “**the last days**”, “**then cometh the end**”, and “**the last time.**”

We quote I John 2:18 and 19.

“LITTLE CHILDREN, IT IS THE LAST TIME; AND AS YE HAVE HEARD THAT ANTICHRIST SHALL COME, EVEN NOW ARE THERE MANY ANTICHRISTS; WHEREBY WE KNOW THAT IT IS THE LAST TIME. THEY WENT OUT FROM US, BUT THEY WERE NOT OF US; FOR IF THEY HAD BEEN OF US, THEY WOULD NO DOUBT HAVE CONTINUED WITH US; BUT THEY WENT OUT, THAT THEY MIGHT BE MADE MANIFEST THAT THEY WERE NOT ALL OF US.”

There were many antichrists in John's day. There was a falling away. From the time of John, down through the centuries, the Church passed through some perilous times. There were many heretics, false-prophets and corrupt religious leaders in the Church. Even the fundamental doctrine of Christianity was lost to most professing Christians for centuries. But it was recovered when Martin Luther and others proclaimed "justification by faith." All during that dark period of the history of the Christian Church there was a remnant of spiritual faithful saints who knew that their hope was the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ to take the members of His Body to heaven.

"For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." Philippians 3:20 and 21.

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Titus 2:13.

"For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ Who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Colossians 3:3 and 4.

Note what Paul wrote to the saints at Corinth. "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." I Corinthians 1:7 and I Corinthians 15:51 and 52.

Note what was written to the Hebrews "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Hebrews 10:37.

"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Hebrews 9:28.

The Christians of the first century were instructed to wait for, to look for, to confidently expect the Lord Jesus Christ to appear. They believed in the imminent coming of the Lord Jesus for His Church.

It is interesting to note the Greek word translated "shall come" in II Thessalonians 1:10. This word is "**elthe**" and should be translated "**shall have come**." Note in II Thessalonians 1:7 to 9, that the return of the Lord Jesus Christ was expected in the first century. He would come in wrath and destruction upon the disobedient sinners. "When He shall have come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." II Thessalonians 1:10.

Now remember John's statement, "**it is the last time**." Note what John wrote in connection with this—"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." I John 3:2 and 3.

"And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." I John 2:28.

This hope of the coming of Christ was a vital, blessed, purifying hope. And we remember the words of the Lord Jesus, in Luke 14:14—"And thou shalt be blessed for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

At the time the Lord Jesus spoke these words none of His disciples knew any thing of the mystery of I Corinthians 15:51 and 52, or the blessed hope of Titus 2:13.

But all of the saints of the Lord were instructed by the Lord's apostles to wait every day, and to look every moment for the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus for His Church. They believed in the imminent coming of the Lord Jesus for His Church. This is called by some Christians "the any-moment theory". With those Christians it was no theory, but the blessed hope that caused them to be practical Christians. They were not told to wait until Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, and the Emperor of Japan entered into a pact and conspiracy against the rest of the world, in 1940 A.D., before they could expect Christ to redeem their bodies. They were waiting for God's Son from heaven in John's day.

They knew the difference between the blessed hope of Titus 2:13, that Christ would appear for His Body, and the second coming of the Son of man for Israel's redemption, and to judge the world, as recorded in Luke 21:27 to 32, and Matthew 25:31.

THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN

"AND THEN SHALL THEY SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD WITH POWER AND GREAT GLORY. AND WHEN THESE THINGS BEGIN TO COME TO PASS, THEN LOOK UP, AND LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, FOR YOUR REDEMPTION DRAWETH NIGH. AND HE SPAKE TO THEM A PARABLE; BEHOLD THE FIG TREE, AND ALL THE TREES; WHEN THEY NOW SHOOT FORTH, YE SEE AND KNOW OF YOUR OWN SELVES THAT SUMMER IS NOW NIGH AT HAND SO LIKEWISE YE, WHEN YE SEE THESE THINGS COME TO PASS, KNOW YE THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NIGH AT HAND. VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, THIS GENERATION SHALL NOT PASS AWAY, TILL ALL BE FULFILLED." Luke 21:27 to 32.

"When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory." Matthew 25:31.

This has nothing to do with the redemption of the Church. Members of the Body of Christ are already redeemed.

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Ephesians 1:5 to 7.

"Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory." Ephesians 1:14.

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Ephesians 4:30.

The bodies of the members of the Body of Christ will be redeemed by the appearing of Christ for His Church. Christ is not "the Son of man" to His Church.

When Christ comes for His Church He will find more Christians on this earth, and more faith on this earth, than ever before. There are more genuine Christians in Chicago today than ever lived at any one time in Jerusalem, Corinth, Ephesus, Rome, or in any other city. When the Lord Jesus comes for His Church there will be many faithful saints here. But when He comes as the Son of man to the earth, He will not find faith on the earth. Luke 18:8. Christ is not coming to the earth for the Church which is His Body. He is not coming to the earth for His Church. His Church is going to rise to meet Him. Christ is not coming for His Church as "the Son of man."

That is His title to Israel. Note again, Matthew 25:31—“When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory.”

THE LAST DAYS OF ACTS

Now let us consider the last days of Acts 2:16 and 17 and Acts 15:16.

“But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.”

“After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up.”

These verses should have very serious, diligent, prayerful consideration.

Here we have prophecies of Israel’s Old Testament prophets concerning Israel’s last days. The two prophets are Joel and Amos, Read carefully the second chapter of Joel and the last part of Amos, chapter nine, and you will learn that both of these Israelitish prophets wrote concerning the coming kingdom age of Israel. This present age of grace, during which the Body of Christ is being completed, is not Israel’s kingdom age; and therefore, neither Joel nor Amos was referring to this dispensation. Neither Joel nor Amos said one word about the beginning of this age, or about the course of this age, or about the culmination of this age. They were the sons of men in other ages to whom the Holy Spirit revealed nothing concerning “the Church of the Mystery.”

Note Colossians 1:24 to 26.

“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body’s sake, which is the Church: Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints.”

This agrees with Ephesians 3:5 to 8.

“Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. That the Gentiles should be joint-heirs, and of the same (Joint) Body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel; Whereunto I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto Me by the effectual working of His power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”

Truth concerning the Joint-Body, the Church of the Mystery, is called “the unsearchable (unprophesied) riches of Christ.” This truth was God’s mystery, God’s secret at the time Joel and Amos wrote concerning Israel’s “**last days**”. They knew nothing and therefore they wrote nothing concerning the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6, the Church of the Mystery.

Then surely we know that no member of the Body of Christ is receiving the Holy Spirit or any other spiritual blessing in fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy. If members of Christ’s Body are being blessed with all spiritual blessings, in fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy, or are becoming members of the Church of the Mystery, in fulfillment of Amos’ prophecy, then Paul was deluded when he wrote Colossians and Ephesians.

No! Paul did not err. He wrote to save us from the faulty dispensationalism of the present day Fundamentalists who teach that “the Church of the Mystery”, “the dispensation of the mystery” (Ephesians 3:9), “the dispensation of the grace of God for Gentiles” (Ephesians 3:1 to 3), “the unsearchable riches of Christ”, began on a Jewish holy day, Pentecost, when Peter used the keys of the kingdom of heaven to devout Jews from every nation under heaven. (Acts 2:5.)

Note the clear language of Peter in Acts 2:16—Acts 3:24—Acts 15:15.

**“BUT THIS IS THAT WHICH WAS SPOKEN BY THE PROPHET JOEL.”
“YEA, AND ALL THE PROPHETS FROM SAMUEL AND THOSE THAT FOLLOW
AFTER, AS MANY AS HAVE SPOKEN, HAVE LIKEWISE FORETOLD OF THESE
DAYS.”**

**“AND TO THIS AGREE THE WORDS OF THE PROPHETS; AS IT IS
WRITTEN.”**

All that Peter preached to Israel and concerning the salvation of the household of Cornelius was in fulfillment of, in agreement with, Joel, Amos, Moses, Samuel, David, and all of the other prophets who wrote. They foretold the program of Acts 15:14—“Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.” “To this agree the words of the prophets (Amos).”

Therefore this prophecy has no reference to the Church of the Mystery, concerning which Amos knew nothing.

The doctrine of “the any-moment coming of Christ for His Church” is wholly irreconcilable with the teaching that His coming is imminent because of what the Gentile rulers of Europe and Asia are doing at present.

It is a mistake, yea, a serious dispensational blunder to call “**the last days**” concerning Israel’s kingdom, **the first days** of the Church, or Body, of the mystery.

“The dispensation of the mystery” did not begin with Peter, Israel and Pentecost, but with Paul when and because Israel was set aside after the death of one of the twelve apostles. (Acts 12:1 and 2)

As long as the number of apostles remained twelve, (Peter and the eleven), God had a kingdom program for the twelve tribes of Israel. But note Acts 13:2—Acts 13:46 and Acts 14:27.

“As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.”

“Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.”

“And when they were come, and had gathered the Church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.”

A new movement began with Acts 13:46. God has not abandoned His program prophesied by Joel and Amos, concerning Israel’s last days. The kingdom is in abeyance. Israel’s kingdom covenants have been interrupted for a parenthetical “grace” period.

God will fulfill Acts 15:16—“After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up.” Yes, He will pour out His Spirit, in fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy, after the Church of the Mystery has been completed, “the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” Ephesians 1:23.

Note again Acts 3:24:

“Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.”

“These days”. What days? Not the days of the dispensation of the grace of God. Israel’s kingdom days.

THE END TIME

In the light of the foregoing we should be very careful to qualify the question, “Are we living in the end time?” What end time? The members of the Body of Christ will not be here during the “time of the end”, mentioned in Daniel. This present period is a parenthesis. Daniel received revelations and answers from the God of heaven, but nothing concerning the revelation of this age which Christ gave to Paul.

Every member of the Body of Christ should know the difference between **“the signs of the times”** and **“the times of the signs,”**. This is not the “sign” age. We are looking for the Son and not for signs. Let’s keep busy with God’s program as set forth in II Timothy 1:7 to 10 and Titus 2:11 to 14.

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God: Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

We are not told to look to Europe for the coming of Christ. “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.” Philippians 3:20 and 21.

MESSAGE NUMBER 33

GOD’S ECONOMY DURING THIS AGE

THIS PRESENT EVIL AGE

In recent years Bible teachers have talked much of **“dispensationalism”**, “studying the Bible **dispensationally**.” All Bible teachers, who are attempting to teach the Bible **dispensationally**, are sure that they are instructed to employ their method of teaching in II Timothy 2:15, **“study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.”** In this verse, **“rightly dividing”** is translated from the Greek **“orthotomeo”**, which means, **“to cut right,” “to properly dissect.”**

The word “dispensational” is used for the want of a better word. Before we consider the Greek word translated “dispensation” several times in the Bible, let us read concerning.

THIS PRESENT EVIL AGE

“Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from THIS PRESENT EVIL AGE, according to the will of God and our Father.” Galatians 1:3 and 4. Believers are delivered from **“this present evil age”** by the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the will of God.

In II Timothy 4:10 we read, “Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present age.”

In II Corinthians 4:4, we read that Satan is, **“the god of this age.”** Then note II Thessalonians 2:7 to 9. The mystery of lawlessness is working and the culmination of this evil age will be the reign of the lawless one, the man of sin, the servant of the god of this age.

GRACE MORE ABOUNDING

In this present evil age, with the mystery of lawlessness at work, sin is abounding. **“But where sin abounded grace did much more over-abound.”** Romans 5:20. God’s over-abounding grace is sufficient for the salvation of the vilest sinner on the earth.

Certainly then if this age is called “this present evil age”, because of abounding sin and the power of the god of this age, it should also be called “the age of grace”, because of the grace more abounding than the abounding sin. We do know that after God has finished His purpose in this age, the “kingdom age” will follow. Then there will be other ages after the coming “kingdom age.”

“That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus,” Ephesians 2:7.

Then note Colossians 1:26:

“Even the mystery which hath been HID FROM AGES and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints.”

Here we learn that the risen Christ revealed Divine truth which God did not make known to the sons of men in other ages. **“Which IN OTHER AGES was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs (joint-heirs) and of the same Body (Joint-Body), and partakers (joint-sharers) of His promise in Christ by the gospel.”** Ephesians 3:5 and 6.

Noah’s ancestors lived before the flood. We have the right to speak of that period (1656 years) as “the antediluvian age.” “Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.” II Peter 3:6.

We have the Scriptural right to speak of “the dispensation of the law”. “the economy of law”, “the reign of law”, from the day that Moses was on Mount Sinai, about 1500 B.C. until after the death and resurrection of Christ. But we might not speak scripturally correct, if we speak of “the law age.” However, there was a definite period of time when God governed His people, according to the law, under the reign of law. It is not difficult to mark when the “law dispensation” began in Exodus 20, but it is not any simple matter to mark when in the “Acts” period the reign of law ceased. Acts 10:28.

In Matthew 12:32 the Lord Jesus, on earth, spoke of the age in which He lived under the law as, “this age”. Although we say that we are living in 1941 A.D., or 1941 years after the Lord Jesus was born, this present “age of grace” did not begin with the birth of Christ. It began after the resurrection of Christ, after the call of the Apostle Paul.

THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE

“FOR THIS CAUSE I PAUL, THE PRISONER OF JESUS CHRIST FOR YOU GENTILES, IF YE HAVE HEARD OF THE DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD WHICH IS GIVEN ME TO YOU-WARD; HOW THAT BY REVELATION HE MADE KNOWN UNTO ME THE MYSTERY; AS I WROTE AFORE IN FEW WORDS.”
Ephesians 3:1 to 3.

The Lord Jesus Christ committed unto Paul “**the dispensation of the grace of God.**” Note Paul’s testimony, in I Corinthians 9:17.

“For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, A DISPENSATION” is committed unto me.” Note again Paul’s testimony, in Colossians 1:25 and 26.

“WHEREOF I AM MADE A MINISTER, ACCORDING TO THE DISPENSATION OF GOD WHICH IS GIVEN TO ME FOR YOU, TO FULFIL THE WORD OF GOD; EVEN THE MYSTERY WHICH HATH BEEN HID FROM AGES AND FROM GENERATIONS, BUT NOW IS MADE MANIFEST TO HIS SAINTS.”

The Greek word translated, “**dispensation**” is “**oikonomia**”. This literally means “**house-law**”. This word is translated “**stewardship**”, in Luke 16:2, 3 and 4.

In I Corinthians 4:1 and 2, we are told that ministers of Christ are “**stewards**” of the mysteries of God,. and that they should be faithful stewards. The word **stewards** is, “**oikonomos**” This word, in Galatians 4:2, is translated, “**governors**”. Our English for “**oikonomia**” is “**economy**”.

To Paul was committed a Divine “**economy.**” Then note Ephesians 1:10 and 3:9:

“THAT IN THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULNESS OF TIMES HE MIGHT GATHER TOGETHER IN ONE ALL THINGS IN CHRIST, BOTH WHICH ARE IN HEAVEN, AND WHICH ARE ON EARTH; EVEN IN HIM.”

“AND TO MAKE ALL MEN SEE WHAT IS THE DISPENSATION OF THE MYSTERY, WHICH FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD HATH BEEN HID IN GOD, WHO CREATED ALL THINGS BY JESUS CHRIST.”

A DISPENSATION NOT NECESSARILY AN AGE

We see that a dispensation is not necessarily an age. As we might correctly speak of “the law period,” “the dispensation of law,” and mean by either expression, the reign of law for more than 1500 years, we might use either the expression, “**this age of grace**” or “**the present dispensation of grace.**” But in I Corinthians 9:17, when Paul said, “**a dispensation is committed unto me**”, he was not saying, “an age is committed unto me.”

The dispensation, of Colossians 1:24 to 26, committed unto Paul, the faithful steward, was a specific task, “**to complete the Word of God with the Mystery.**”

God wants all Christians to see “**the dispensation of the mystery**”; but when the Father of glory has made the truth known to His child, it is no longer a mystery, or a secret, so far as

that particular child is concerned. "Having made known the mystery of His will." Ephesians 1:9. What the Lord really wants the Christian to know is, when and to whom, and by whom, that secret was revealed, what is its breadth, and length, and depth, and height, what is God's spiritual program for His children who are seated in the heavenlies with Christ. How can the members of Christ's Body walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called (Ephesians 4:1 and 2), if they know not what their vocation is?

"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." Ephesians 3:10.

Think this over seriously and prayerfully.

DISPENSATIONAL BIBLE STUDY

Dispensational Bible students perhaps become confused at times and fail to clarify their teaching concerning "**ages**" and "**dispensations**". God may have more than one dispensation for one age.

All Christians who have gone very far in obedience to II Timothy 2:15, "rightly dividing the Word of truth", have learned that in the ministry of the twelve apostles, from the day Jesus of Nazareth called them (Matthew 10:5 to 8 and 10:23) until the day the same Jesus of Nazareth met Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1 to 15), and for some time thereafter, God was carrying on a two-fold program. He was not baptizing believing Jews and Gentiles into the same Body, according to Ephesians 3:6 and I Corinthians 12:13. God was very definitely presenting the Messianic kingdom to Israel and her rulers, while He was offering salvation to individual Israelites. But remember Matthew 10:5, Matthew 15:24 and Acts 10:28, that during those years the Lord's ministry was not to Gentiles.

We rightly divide the Word of truth, when we speak of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ as "the days of the Son of man." In preaching to Israel and to Cornelius note the Lord's message.

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; JESUS OF NAZARETH, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him IN THE MIDST OF YOU, as ye yourselves also know." Acts 2:22.

"How God anointed JESUS OF NAZARETH with the Holy Spirit and with power; Who went about doing good. and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all things which He did both IN THE LAND OF THE JEWS, and IN JERUSALEM; Whom they slew and hanged on a tree." Acts 10:38 and 39.

It was concerning "**JESUS OF NAZARETH.**" Note Paul's "henceforth" in II Corinthians 5:16.

"Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more."

"The days of the Son of man" are coming again. "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also "IN THE DAYS OF THE SON OF MAN." Luke 17:26.

Unto Peter was given the commission of Matthew 10:5, the so-called "great commission" of Matthew 28:19 and 20, "the keys of the kingdom of heaven" of Matthew 16:16 to 19, "the gospel of the circumcision" of Galatians 2:7. And for some reason he even addressed his Epistle to "the dispersed Israelites." I Peter 1:1 to 3.

But read concerning the Lord's commissions, revelations and messages given to Paul:

CHRIST AND PAUL

“As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.” Acts 13:2.

“Will send thee far hence to the Gentiles.” Acts 22:21.

“That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:16.

“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20: 24.

“But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Galatians 1:11 and 12.

“But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter.” Galatians 2:7.

“Now to Him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began.” Romans 16:25.

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” II Timothy 1:9.

“Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.” II Timothy 1:11.

“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holiday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days.” Colossians 2: 16.

“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Ephesians 3:8.

“And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” Ephesians 6:19 and 20.

“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the Word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints.” Colossians 1: 25 and 26.

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward.” Ephesians 3: and 2.

God instructs His children to test things that differ. Philippians 1:10. Even the superficial student of the Scriptures claims to know the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament; but even the great majority of these teach that the Old Testament began with Adam instead of with Moses, and that the New Testament began with the birth of Jesus Christ instead of after His death and resurrection. All “grace” preachers contend earnestly for the difference between **“the dispensation of law”** and **“the dispensation of grace”**, and they even attempt to show the difference between **“the kingdom age”** and **the dispensation of the grace of God**. Most of them have followed the faulty dispensationalism of the Plymouth Brethren, the Scofield

Bible, and the outstanding Bible Schools of America by ignoring Paul's positive statements, in Ephesians 3:1 to 9, and erroneously teaching that God inaugurated "**the dispensation of the mystery**" on the day of Pentecost, and began on that Jewish feast day to baptize members into the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6, "the Church of the Mystery".

PENTECOST AND THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE

Of course they do not know what to do with the Pentecostal message of Acts 2:38 and Acts 22:16, baptism as a washing and for the remission of sins. They do not sell their houses and lots, put their money in the common treasury, as all of the disciples did during that Pentecostal period. Acts 2:44 and 45 and Acts 4:34. Secretly, of, course, many of them are troubled about the signs, of Mark 16:16 to 18, because they know they are twisting and corrupting the Scriptures when they change the order and preach "**he that believeth and is saved shall be baptized**", and "forget the signs". They do not know what to do with those people in Samaria who received water baptism several days before they received the Holy Spirit. Acts 8:5 to 15. They do not know what has become of the signgifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11, but they get such a blessing putting people under the water they just forget them. They know they have no visitations from angels, no miraculous jail deliverances by angels or earthquakes, no blessed handkerchiefs, or aprons, but they have settled down complacently to these inconsistencies, and they are banded together with a grim determination that no fellow-saint shall proclaim Divine truth that will deliver the Church from such confusion. They boycott, persecute, and disfellowship. They cry "Bullingerism" "hyperdispensationalism", "ultradispensationalism".

In the meantime, the Pentecostalists are capitalizing on the faulty dispensationalism of the "grace" preachers, and they are possessing much land. The "grace" preachers, who begin this present economy on the day of Pentecost, have no Scriptural answer to the Pentecostalists and other healing fanatics.

One leader among the Fundamentalists has been very bitter against Pauline truth. He slams and slanders any brethren who have tried to straighten out the saints that he has led into confusion by mixing Peter's kingdom circumcision message with the Pauline gospel and truth concerning the Church of the Mystery. This man of God was formerly pastor of a large denominational church. He chuckled with delight when he led several hundred of those members out of that denominational organization. He had the right to be delighted when he led them from "under the law". But he led them from "**under the law**" to "**under the water**". He got them partly into the dispensation of grace. But how he did scold, and fuss, and fume, and fight when another servant of the Lord led them from "**under the water**" into the full sunlight of God's grace.

Then he joined in the cry against the rebels, "mark them that cause division", "**Bullingerites**", "**hyperdispensationalism**". And so goes the battle. Thank God for the victories thus far. Many saints are now obeying Ephesians 3:9 who knew nothing of it a few years or a few months ago. What are you doing about it?

"AND TO MAKE ALL MEN SEE WHAT IS THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE MYSTERY, WHICH FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD HATH BEEN HID IN GOO, WHO CREATED ALL THINGS BY JESUS CHRIST." Ephesians 3: 9.

MESSAGE NUMBER 34

FAITHFUL DR. LUKE

Dr. Luke, who wrote the third Gospel and the Book of Acts, was a faithful courageous, uncompromising servant of the Lord. More than thirty years after the Lord Jesus died on the cross Paul wrote to the Colossians, "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you." Colossians 4:4. Some time later Paul wrote to Timothy, "Demas hath forsaken me," **"Only Luke is with me."** Take Mark and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry." II Timothy 4: 10 and 11. Mark and Luke were Gospel writers, but not of the twelve apostles. Luke was faithful to Paul until the end of his life. Undoubtedly Dr. Luke outlived Paul. Note Paul's words in II Timothy 1:15 and 4:16:

"This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes." "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me; I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge."

"All they which are in Asia be turned away from me; all forsook me."

Then Demas forsook Paul. Paul was deserted. Humanly speaking he must have been lonely. **"ONLY LUKE IS WITH ME."** How he appreciated and loved Luke for his faithfulness. Dr. Luke joined the Apostle Paul at the time Paul received his call to go to Macedonia.

"And after he had seen the vision immediately WE endeavoured to go into Macedonia." Acts 16:10.

That was about 53 A. D. By marking **"WE"** in the Book of Acts after 16:10 much can be learned concerning Luke's faithfulness in the Lord's service and his loyalty to Paul. Luke entered Europe with Paul and was with him when he was arrested at Philippi. Acts 16:16. Note this statement, **"these men, being Jews."** Acts 16:20. When Paul went to Jerusalem expecting plenty of trouble and persecution, Luke accompanied him, after Luke had joined with others endeavouring to persuade Paul not to hazard his life in Jerusalem. Acts 21:12. Paul was ready to die for Christ. Acts 21:12. And Luke went with him to face death. Acts 21:14 and 17. Later on, when Paul and many others were shipwrecked on the dark, stormy sea, Luke was with him on part of the wreck that reached shore. Acts 27:19 and 37. Luke was with Paul when he reached Rome. Acts 28:15 and 16.

So we must decide that Dr. Luke was a faithful, courageous and uncompromising servant of the Lord. We cannot understand why the Holy Spirit did not lead some inspired writer to record the virtues and heroic deeds of this remarkable character, but we can understand why he was honored by being himself a chosen inspired servant to write one of the most important Books in the Bible, the Book of Acts, and also the longest message in the New Testament Scriptures, for, although Matthew and Acts each have 28 chapters, yet Luke contains more words than either of those Books. But some man of God said, "Dr. Luke, you got us into plenty of controversy with your Book of Acts."

LUKE—A JEW OR A GENTILE?

We know that all of the sixty-six Books of the Bible were dictated by the same infallible Divine Spirit. In writing sixty-four of these Books, we are sure that the Holy Spirit used Jewish

men. Why make an exception in the case of Luke and Acts? Certainly no one of the Four Gospels is more Jewish than is Luke. Some men believe that Luke was a Gentile because in his Gospel and the Book of Acts he opens with a message to Theophilus. Luke 1:3 and Acts 1:1. Others believe that Luke was a proselyte (a Gentile in the Jews' religion) at the time he became a Christian. Let each carefully study the record and decide for himself.

IS LUKE'S GOSPEL A JEWISH MESSAGE?

Let us carefully note Luke 19:9 and 10:

"And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as HE ALSO IS A SON OF ABRAHAM. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

"And ought not this woman, being A DAUGHTER OF ABRAHAM, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" Luke 13:16.

"And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus he sent unto Him THE ELDERS OF THE JEWS, beseeching Him that He would come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they besought Him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom He should do this: FOR HE LOVETH OUR NATION, AND HE HATH BUILT US A SYNAGOGUE. Then Jesus went with them. And when He was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying unto Him, Lord, trouble not Thyself: for I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof: Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I am also a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard these things, He marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed Him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick." Luke 7:2 to 10.

This incident is one of the keys to the Book of Luke. This Gentile man built a synagogue for Israel. He loved Israel. He was of great faith. He was the only Gentile man who received a blessing from the Lord Jesus on earth according to the Record.

In these incidents surely we have the proof that, in the Gospel of Luke, as well as in Matthew and Mark, Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision.

"Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." (Romans 15:8.) Note Christ's words recorded in Matthew 15:24:

"But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Salvation came to Zaccheus because he was **"the son of Abraham."** The Son of man came to seek and save the sons of Abraham. Later on the same Christ sent the Apostle Paul to seek and to save all the sons of Adam. Acts 22:17 to 21. Romans 15:16. Jesus Christ was Israel's promised Shepherd, Messiah and King. This Shepherd was to seek the lost sheep, Israel:

"And I will set up one Shepherd over them, and He shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the Lord, have spoken it." Ezekiel 34: 23

and 24. “And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them.” “For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. A new heart also will I give you, and new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.” “And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be My people, and I will be your God.” “As the holy flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts, so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men. and they shall know that I am the Lord.” Ezekiel 36:19, 24, 26, 28 and 38. “And David My servant, shall be King over them; and they all shall have one Shepherd. They shall also walk in My judgments, and observe My statutes and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.” Ezekiel 37:24 and 25.

THE EXPECTANCY AND THE REJECTION

It is interesting to read the statement of Luke 3:15:

“AND AS THE PEOPLE (ISRAEL) WERE IN EXPECTATION, AND ALL MEN MUSED IN THEIR HEARTS OF JOHN, WHETHER HE WERE THE MESSIAH, OR NOT.”

Knowing the ninth chapter of Daniel, the Jewish teachers had taught their people that it was about time for their King and Messiah to visit the earth, in fulfillment of Isaiah 34:19. Surely the Lord Jesus was Israel’s Messiah and Shepherd-King. He proved it in every way. He had the Divine right, the human birth-right and the legal right to the throne of David. He was born to take that throne and reign over the house of Jacob forever. Luke 1:27 to 33.

But Israel said, “We will not have this man to reign over us.” Luke 19:14. Then followed those solemn and significant words of Christ to Israel. Let us try to visualize as we hear His words in 19:41 to 45.

“AND WHEN HE (JESUS) WAS COME NEAR, HE BEHELD THE CITY, AND WEPT OVER IT”

“SAYING, IF THOU HADST KNOWN EVEN THOU AT LEAST IN THIS THY DAY, THE THINGS WHICH BELONG UNTO THY PEACE BUT NOW THEY ARE HID FROM THINE EYES.”

Then read the terrible judgment which the Lord Jesus pronounced upon them. Read Luke 19:43 and 44. Then note Luke 21:22 to 24, “These be the days of vengeance,” “There shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.”

“And they shall fall by the edge of the sword and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

Why? Because Israel knew not the time of their visitation. Luke 19:44.

But remember the Shepherd of Israel is coming back, and they shall say, “Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.” Luke 19:35.

JESUS CHRIST ISRAEL’S SHEPHERD KING

David was the Lord's anointed. Saul was rejected. David, the shepherd, was specifically sought out by the Lord and chosen to be the Lord's king. David's throne was moved to Jerusalem, according to the Lord's instructions. - David reigned in Jerusalem over the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

"He chose David also His servant, and took him from the sheep folds." Psalms 78:70. "I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn unto David My servant." "I have found David, My servant; with My holy oil have I anointed him." "Once have I sworn by My holiness that I will not lie unto David." "Lord, where are Thy former lovingkindnesses, which Thou swarest unto David in Thy Truth?" Psalms 89: 3, 20, 35 and 49.

David was the son of Jesse and descended from Judah, from Israel and from Abraham. David was a Jew by race and by religion. He was born in Bethlehem, afterwards known as "the City of David." David was Israel's shepherd-king. Many times in the Scriptures the Israelites are called sheep.,

"My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace." "Israel is a scattered sheep: the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him: and last this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones." Jeremiah 50:6 and 17.

Then note Isaiah 53:6.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

"My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them." "As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." Ezekiel 34:6 and 12.

All Christians love the twenty-third Psalm. All Jews should also love this Psalm. **"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."**

In Luke 1:27 is recorded the fact that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was of the house of David. In Luke 1:69 is recorded the fact that Israel's Horn of salvation was raised up in the house of David. In Revelation 22:16 Jesus Christ is called the root and offspring of David. Note the prophecy concerning King Jesus in Jeremiah 23:5. In Luke 2:10 to 14 is recorded the fact that Jesus the King was born in David's city, Bethlehem. David was anointed with oil. I Samuel 16:13. Jesus Christ was anointed with the oil of gladness. Hebrews 1:9. "Christ" means "the Anointed." In Luke 1:29 to 33 is recorded the fact that Jesus Christ was born to occupy David's throne.

Note the words of the Shepherd-King in Luke 15:4:

"What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost, until he find it?"

Luke 19:9 and 10: "And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost."

Matthew 15:24: "But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

John 10:11 and 14: “I am the Good Shepherd: The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.” “I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of mine.”

Hebrews 13:20: “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.”

I Peter 2: 25: “For ye were as sheep going astray: but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”

I Peter 5:4: “And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

In fulfillment of Ezekiel 34:11 and 12 the Lord Jesus came to be Israel’s seeking Shepherd:

“He shall feed His flock like a Shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those who are with young.” “Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance.” Isaiah 40:11 and 12. “Hear the Word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattereth Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock.” Jeremiah 31:10. “And I will set up one Shepherd over them, and He shall feed them, even My servant David; He shall feed them and He shall be their Shepherd.” Ezekiel 34:23. The Israelites were the sheep of His pasture: “So we Thy people and sheep of Thy pasture will give Thee thanks for ever.”

CHRIST IN THE SYNAGOGUE AND TEMPLE

In the Gospel of Luke we find Jesus of Nazareth in the Jewish temple and in the Jewish synagogue time and again. In fact more is said in Luke’s Record about this particular ministry than in any of the other three Records.

It is in Luke’s Gospel that we have the dedication of Jesus by His Jewish mother, His circumcision, His customary attendance in the Nazareth synagogue. Luke 2:17 to 30. Luke 4:16. But Luke is not the Gentile Gospel, as some have stated. It is Jewish or Israelitish. In Luke there is not even the record of Christ’s ministry in Samaria or his conversation with the Syro-Phoenician Gentile woman. In Luke the Shepherd-King is seeking the sons and daughters of Abraham, the lost sheep of Israel.

To those whom He found and saved He said, **“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give ALMS.”**

When you study Luke write over the first verse “Jesus Christ, the Son of David, Israel’s Shepherd-King.”

MESSAGE NUMBER 35

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AND THE GRACE OF GOD

Note carefully II Timothy 1:8:

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God”

Most Christian preachers and most people are ashamed of Paul and the mystery, and ashamed of the specific testimony of the Lord which Paul here refers to. Only those who suffer for proclaiming the mystery are the partakers of the afflictions of the gospel mentioned in II Timothy 1:8; for in verse nine we are told it refers to that purpose of God which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before Adam was created, but was manifested by the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: “But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.” II Timothy 1:10 and 11. “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Titus 2:11 to 13. So this is saving grace. Note II Corinthians 9:8: “And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.” This is enabling grace. Then this is teaching grace. As members of the Body of Christ, saved by grace, we shall not be ashamed and we shall look for the blessed hope. All of this is quite different from the Lord Jesus as the Son of man, on His earthly throne in Matthew 25:31 to 41. Now let us compare

Matthew 10:5 to 8 and 23

“THESE TWELVE JESUS SENT FORTH, AND COMMANDED THEM, SAYING, GO NOT INTO THE WAY OF THE GENTILES, AND INTO ANY CITY OF THE SAMARITANS ENTER YE NOT: BUT GO RATHER TO THE LOST SHEEP OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL, AND AS YE GO PREACH, SAYING, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND. HEAL THE SICK, CLEANSE THE LEPERS, RAISE THE DEAD, CAST OUT DEVILS, FREELY YE HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE.” “BUT WHEN THEY PERSECUTE YOU IN THIS CITY, FLEE YE INTO ANOTHER; FOR VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, YE SHALL NOT HAVE GONE OVER THE CITIES OF ISRAEL, TILL THE SON OF MAN BE COME.”

Titus 2:11 to 13

“FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGETH SALVATION HATH APPEARED TO ALL MEN, TEACHING US THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY, IN THIS PRESENT WORLD: LOOKING FOR THAT BLESSED HOPE, AND THE GLORIOUS APPEARING OF THE GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.”

I Timothy 1:11 and 5:23

“ACCORDING TO THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL OF THE BLESSED GOD, WHICH WAS COMMITTED TO MY TRUST” (PAUL). “USE A LITTLE WINE FOR THEIR OFTEN SICKNESSES.”

As we compare these programs we wonder why any of God’s people are so foolish as to condemn “dispensational” Bible study. There is only one intelligent Divine principle to be employed by members of the Body of Christ for the interpretation, appropriation, and application of Divine Truth recorded before the Lord Jesus Christ gave Paul, by special revelation, the dispensation of the grace of God. This principle is to study all the Old Testament Scriptures, Genesis, the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms in the light of the Pauline “grace” message contained in Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, II Timothy, and other Epistles.

Jesus Christ, on earth, was a Minister of the circumcision, with a message in fulfillment of Scripture (Romans 15:8). The Holy Spirit led Paul to write II Corinthians 5:16: “Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more.” Therefore, the earthly ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, and the ministry of the twelve apostles, in the first eleven chapters of Acts, must be studied in the light of the same Pauline Truth concerning Christ and the members of His Body. The dispensation of grace was given to Paul to supplement and supersede Christ’s “confirmation” ministry to Israel concerning the kingdom of heaven. This kingdom is in abeyance during this parenthetical period.

This does not mean that any intelligent, spiritual child of God will be guilty of a wholesale discard of God’s Divine messages given before Christ came, during His earthly ministry, or given to the Twelve thereafter. But we must have some better Divine principle for the appropriation or elimination of the truth of God in other ages than the “hit-and-miss” “snatch-grab” method employed by most Christians.

There is a sense in which all Scripture is to be interpreted and applied as to whether it was given before or after the great event declared in Acts 14:27: “And when they were come and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.”

THE MYSTERY OF GOD’S WILL

“Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself.” Ephesians 1:9.

Here we have the fact that God hath made known “the mystery of His will.” In connection with that revealed secret, note the truth of verse eleven: “In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.” Because this particular phase of God’s will was predestinated by God, but not disclosed by Him until it was made known to and by the Apostle Paul, it was called “the mystery of God’s will.”

PROPHESED AND UNPROPHESED

God’s will for His people was expressed in the Old Testament Scriptures. In those Scriptures we find God’s prophesied will; but the will of God given to any generation of His people, or prophesied in the Scriptures for some future generation of His people, would not be

called “the mystery of His will.” **“The mystery of God’s will”** refers to “the eternal purpose” of God in Christ Jesus, the purpose given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. Note again Ephesians 1:4: “According as He hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” Ephesians 3:11: “According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” II Timothy 1:9: “Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” Also note Romans 8:28 to 30.

From generations and ages God withheld His sacred and glorious secret. Colossians 1:26. But after God made known “the mystery,” His desire was, and is, that His servants make all to see what is “the dispensation of the mystery” which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God. Ephesians 3:9. Note the duty of the Lord’s servants expressed in I Corinthians 4:1 and 2: “Let a man so account of us, as the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”

Now let us note Paul’s testimony in Ephesians 3:1 to 6: **“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same Body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.”**

What method did God employ to make known the mystery of His will? “How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery.” Not unto Peter, or any of his fellow-apostles; but unto Paul. “My knowledge in the mystery of Christ.” When other saints read they were to understand Paul’s knowledge in the mystery of Christ, and then make others see it.

The Apostle Paul wanted to tell many others concerning this glorious truth, hence his request for prayer: “And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” Ephesians 6:19 and 20.

SATAN’S OPPOSITION TO THE MYSTERY

Sometimes we wonder at the power of Satan and what success he has in hindering the servants of the Lord. Note Paul’s words to the Thessalonians, in I Thessalonians 2:18: “Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again, but Satan hindered us.”

Paul wrote the Epistle to the Ephesians from the Roman jail. He was the prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ for the Gentiles. He was in jail for the secret. Satan was determined that the secret should not be told. God wanted all to see the dispensation of the mystery: “To the intent that now unto principalities and powers in the heavenlies might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.” Ephesians 3:10. In Ephesians 6:12, we learn that Satan had much to do with the principalities and powers in the heavenlies. It was in that connection that Paul instructed saints to put on the whole armour of God to stand against the wiles of the devil; and he closed by urging every saint in the Body of Christ to pray that utterance might be given unto him to open his mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel. If that courageous

uncompromising, fearless apostle needed prayer for utterance and boldness, surely ordinary saints like us need much more.

But Satan has the great majority of church leaders so interested in their denominational religious program that they are utterly ignorant of the fact that there is such a truth in the Bible, as “the mystery of God’s will,”—“the dispensation of the mystery”—“the mystery of Christ”—“the mystery of the gospel”. And so they never open their mouths boldly, or any other way, to make known “the mystery.”

Other Fundamentalists, who are looked up to as spiritual leaders, and authority on dispensationalism, are like the lawyers of whom Christ on earth spoke. He said, “Ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.” Luke 11:52. These brethren make little or no effort to open their mouths boldly to make known the mystery, but, on the other hand, they help the devil out by opposing the servants of Christ who are seeking to do God’s will in this respect.

Then there are some dear brethren who call themselves “diplomats.” They are like Nicodemus who came to Jesus by night, or like Peter who practiced duplicity at Antioch because he feared them that were of the circumcision. Galatians 2:11 to 15. These brethren keep their mouths closed concerning their knowledge of the mystery to keep peace in the camp, and incidentally to keep themselves in good standing for speaking engagements and financial offerings.

Of course Paul could have been such a diplomat, compromiser, or coward, and kept out of jail; but his motto in Christian service was Galatians 1:10: “For do I now persuade men or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.” He fought a good fight. He kept the faith. In I Timothy 1:16, the Holy Spirit presents Paul as the pattern for believers. In the midst of his afflictions and bonds, Paul wrote from the jail, “Brethren be followers together of me.” Philippians 3:17.

But what is the duty of every child of God, every member of the Body of Christ who claims to be the Lord’s servant? His duty, with respect to this profound and glorious truth, is to open his mouth boldly and to make it known. But before that saint endeavors to make known the mystery of His will, he should be taught it in God’s specific way as given in Ephesians 1:17 to 19:

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; The eyes of your understanding being enlightened: that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.” Ephesians 3:16 to 19: “That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”

May we ask you a few questions?

One—Does not God tell us in Ephesians 1:9 that He has made known His secret, and that that secret has to do with His predestinated purpose, which means, that members of Christ’s Body were chosen in Christ before the world began?

Two—Does not the Apostle Paul tell us that he was the Lord's first human depository of that glorious truth; that he was selected by the Lord to preach this truth, which he calls "the unsearchable riches of Christ"?

Three—Does not God want all members of the Body of Christ to see the dispensation of the mystery which had been hid in God, and hid from generations and ages until made known to Paul by Christ, by revelation?

Four—If you are a saint, does not the Lord want you to know the mystery of God's will and then to open your mouth boldly and so utter this truth that your fellow-saints may know it?

Any intelligent and honest believer, who will carefully read Ephesians, will answer "yes" to these four questions. Then remember God's Word, "to him that knoweth to do right and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

Of course the young preacher feels a timidity in speaking out boldly concerning this truth when he observes that the older Christian leaders, who are supposed to be big Bible teachers, keep their mouths closed, either because of ignorance or cowardice. What a pity! For this truth is the most wonderful truth in the Bible for saints. The devil does not want it made known; he does not want any to see the mystery of the gospel. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit want every saint to know it, and talk it over with other saints, and tell it to other members of the Body of Christ.

Now carefully consider before answering this question: Do you know a loyal, zealous denominationalist who is endeavouring to make known the mystery? Certainly not. Do you know one zealous immersionist or baptizer who is making the mystery known? Certainly not. For none of them know what the mystery is. The knowledge of just one aspect of the mystery is sufficient to deliver any member of the Body of Christ from sectarianism, or any kind of religious water ceremony. The entire truth concerning the mystery of God's will, the dispensation of the mystery, is centered around the making of the One New Man of Ephesians 2:15, the revelation of the secret of Ephesians 5:31 and 32, that members of Christ's Body and Christ are one flesh; that God, under the dispensation of grace, is building one Church, and only one, the Body of Christ, the fulness of Christ, called in Ephesians 3:6, the Joint-Body.

How can any enthusiastic, zealous Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Episcopalian, or Baptist, who is devoting his time to the building up of his denomination, make known the mystery of God's will, when he himself is going contrary to that will by his sectarian activities?

The mystery includes much more than the "oneness" of believers.

Jews and Gentiles in Christ are in one Body. This is one phase of the mystery. The mystery is the remedy for every 'ism' and ill with which the Church of Christ is afflicted, and the Holy Spirit wants the members of the Body to be established in this high and blessed truth so that they will be no longer children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine. Ephesians 4:14.

MESSAGE NUMBER 36

HOW LONG WAS ALL DAY LONG?

Let us read Romans 10:21 and Romans 11:21.

“BUT TO ISRAEL HE SAITH: ALL DAY LONG I HAVE STRETCHED FORTH MY HANDS UNTO A DISOBEDIENT AND GAINSAYING PEOPLE.”

“For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He spare not thee (the Gentiles).”

In answering this most interesting question concerning God’s dealings with Israel, “how long is all day long,” let us note carefully one of the most solemn and significant messages that came from the mouth and heart of the Lord Jesus Christ; namely, “the parable of the vineyard.”

“Then began He to speak to the people this parable; A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time. And at the season, He sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give Him of the fruit of the vineyard; but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty. And again He sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty. And again he sent a third, and they wounded him also, and cast him out. Then said the Lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send My beloved Son: it may be they will reverence Him when they see Him. But when the husbandmen saw Him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the Heir: come, let us kill Him, that the inheritance may be ours. So they cast Him out of the vineyard, and killed Him. What therefore shall the Lord of the vineyard do unto them? He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it they said, God forbid. And He beheld them and said, What is this then that is written, The Stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the Head of the corner? Whosoever shall fall upon that Stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever It shall fall, it will grind him to powder.” Luke 20:9 to 18.

As we look into the Scriptures to find an answer to the question, “how long was all day long,” we know that that long day of God’s longsuffering toward His disobedient and stiffnecked people, Israel, began after the birth of that nation. Perhaps we should mark the beginning of that day from the month that Israel left Egypt.

CALLED OUT OF EGYPT

About 1500 B.C. the children of Israel were under the tyrannical oppression of Pharaoh in Egypt. God sent Moses to Pharaoh with signs and wonders. Then the Lord commanded Moses to lead His people out of that land: “And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children. And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle.” Exodus 12:37 and 38.

“And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will shew to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more for ever.” “And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.” “And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.” “And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.” Exodus 14:13 to 31.

Then followed the song of Moses and the children of Israel. Exodus 15:1 to 19. But in that same chapter we read, “. . . and the people murmured,” and we find this same statement in Exodus 16:2 and Exodus 17:3. Then in Exodus 32:7, God had something to say,

“And the Lord said unto Moses, get thee down; for thy people which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves.”

The children of Israel were worshipping Aaron’s golden calf. God threatened to destroy them and Moses said, “Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, to whom Thou swarest.” Exodus 32:13. God did. God will again remember these men to whom He sware.

But note God’s Word in Exodus 32:9:

“And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people.”

So Israel was a stiffnecked and disobedient people from 1495 B.C. up to the time that Jesus Christ came unto His own, and then what? “His own received Him not.”

Read again “the parable of the vineyard” and get the full force and meaning of those words of Christ.

What are we to understand by this statement, “Christ came. unto His own, and His own received Him not?” We read in John’s Gospel several times, “many of the Jews believed on Him,” “many of the people believed on Him.” But this significant question was asked in John 7:48:

“Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?” And then this significant statement in John 12:37. **“But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him.”**

Then we are told in I Corinthians 2:7 and 8, that the rulers crucified the Lord of glory. Again we read in I Thessalonians 2:14:

“The Jews who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men to fill up their sins alway; for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.”

Let us consider God’s dealings with Israel in three different periods:

First—From Egypt to the coming of John the Baptist.

Second—During Christ’s days on earth.

Third—From the resurrection of Christ until the Divine judgment recorded in the eleventh chapter of Romans.

Let us note one statement of the Lord to Moses about 1495 B. C. and another to Israel by Stephen about 35 A. D.:

Exodus 33:5: “For the Lord had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee.”

Acts 7: 51 to 53:

“YE STIFFNECKED AND UNCIRCUMCISED IN HEART AND EARS, YE DO ALWAYS RESIST THE HOLY GHOST: AS YOUR FATHERS DID, SO DO YE. WHICH OF THE PROPHETS HAVE NOT YOUR FATHERS PERSECUTED? AND THEY HAVE SLAIN THEM WHICH SHEWED BEFORE OF THE COMING OF THE JUST ONE; OF WHOM YE HAVE BEEN NOW THE BETRAYERS AND MURDERERS: WHO HAVE RECEIVED THE LAW BY THE DISPOSITION OF ANGELS, AND HAVE NOT KEPT IT.”

Here we note that Israel's gainsayings and disobedience began in the days of Moses and continued until the days of Stephen. Note what they did to the second messenger: "When they heard these things they were cut to the heart." Acts 7:58. They rushed on Stephen and stoned him to death. All during those 1530 years God was stretching forth His hands to a gainsaying and disobedient nation. God still stretched forth His hands to that nation for some years after they killed the Prince of Life (Acts 3:14 to 17) and after they killed Stephen. Then note Acts 12:1 to 3, that it pleased the House of Israel when one of Christ's twelve apostles was murdered.

In Luke 19:41 to 44 we learn that Jesus Christ, weeping, pronounced an awful judgment upon Israel. Then in Luke 23:34 it is recorded that He prayed on the cross that His Father would forgive them. So years after Christ called them "serpents," He sent Paul to them to warn them: **"Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; behold, ye despisers and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you."** Acts 13:40 and 41.

ISRAEL'S GREAT SIN

The history of Israel, from Egypt to Isaiah, was one of some glory and honour but more of disgrace and dishonour. Then the history of Israel, from Isaiah until the day they said to Pilate concerning their own Messiah, "let Him be crucified" (Matthew 27:23), was one of sin, disgrace, judgment and sorrow. They asked for the blood of Christ to be upon them; and it has been.

Hear the words which the Lord Jesus spoke to them: "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Matthew 23:32 and 33. Then He wept over His people and their city. Luke 19:41 to 4:3. His people did not know the time of their visitation, that is, the King's visit. Note the judgment He pronounced: "But when the King heard thereof He was wroth: and He sent forth His armies and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." Matthew 22:7. After that they "killed the Prince of Life." Acts 3:12 to 18.

What a scene! The Lord of Glory hanging on Barabbas' cross. Hear His words "... Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34. Christ had said in Matthew 12:30 to 32 that Israel's sin against the Son of man would be pardonable, but that if they sinned against the Holy Spirit, their sin would be unpardonable. They sinned against the Son of man when they persuaded Pilate to kill Him. They sinned against the Holy Spirit when they rejected the testimony of Stephen and stoned him to death. Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:55) and said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of Clod." Acts 7:56. Note carefully the words of Acts 5:29 to 32: "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance TO ISRAEL, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him."

The Holy Spirit here is the witness of Peter's statement to all the House of Israel in Acts 2:36: "Therefore let all the House of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Let us not follow the blunder of Christians who teach that Israel was set aside at Calvary and that Paul's dispensation of grace began on the clay of Pentecost.

On the day of Pentecost twelve men stood up. Acts 2:14. Their audience was made up of devout Jews from every nation under heaven. Acts 2:5. There were some Gentile proselytes in the audience. Acts 2:10. The message was for all the House of Israel, twelve tribes. Acts 2:36. One of the Twelve later addressed a message to the twelve tribes of Israel. James 1:1. We have also read, in Acts 12:1 and 2, that James, the brother of John, was killed, and that reduced those who were apostles before Paul to ELEVEN. When the number ceased to be "TWELVE" the Lord ceased to record, in Acts, the activities of Peter and the Ten except as they had dealings with Paul. In the last sixteen chapters of Acts Paul is mentioned more than 100 times.

We find, in Acts 13:7 to 17, the record of the dispensational miracle, the salvation of a Gentile, because of the blindness of a Jew sent by God. This was the beginning of the turning away from Israel as a nation. This turning away is stated in Acts 13:46. We learned that Peter's message in Acts 5:29 to 12 was addressed to Israel. In the warning of Acts 13:40 and 41 we learn that God's judgment upon Israel, as a nation, had not yet taken place. Let us see by studying the Book of Acts that God deferred for nearly 40 years the awful judgment pronounced upon Israel in Luke 21:20 to 24. It is true that Christ, in Matthew 23:30 to 39, called them "serpents" and announced the desolation of Israel. But in Luke 21:20 to 24 we learn that that desolation would be when armies were surrounding Jerusalem.

The Lord deferred His wrath and gave Israel another chance. Christ, on the cross, prayed for their forgiveness. Then note the message of love and mercy delivered to them in Acts 3:12 to 26. Later on Israel committed the unpardonable sin and because of that sin and God's judgment salvation was sent to the Gentiles.

ISRAEL SET ASIDE

Some Christians teach that God ceased His dealings with "the House of Israel" as a nation, when Christ was crucified and that "the House of God" of I Timothy 3:15 had its historical beginning on the day of Pentecost, or a few weeks before that day. You will observe that "the House of God" in I Timothy 3:15 and 16, is mentioned in connection with a great mystery. Others teach that the Lord dealt with "the House of Israel" as a nation and as an Israelitish church up to the close of Acts and then, "the House of God" of I Timothy 3:15 began. The careful student of the Book of Acts will note that the casting away of Israel and the reconciling of the Gentiles was gradual rather than abrupt.

"The House of God" in Ephesians 3:6, is called the Joint-Body and a Secret not made known to Israel's prophets (3:5). Certainly it was not made known to the Twelve in their ministry in the first chapters of Acts. The Eleven contended with Peter for preaching to a Gentile. Acts 11:1 to 7. Peter himself said it was unlawful until God gave him the housetop vision. Acts 10:28. Certainly no "mystery" began on the day of Pentecost when everything was in fulfillment of Scriptures. There was not yet the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6 when Cornelius was converted. Not one of the Twelve ever used the word "Body" in referring to the Church. The Body is the Church of God. But the Church of God was not necessarily the Body.

THE END OF ISRAEL'S DAY

God's all day long to the Jews, extended this side of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. In Acts 3:26 Peter said to the Jews, "unto you first." In Acts 13:46 and Acts 18:5 and 6, Paul said to the Jews, "unto you first."

Surely Acts 28:25 to 28 marked a crisis in the history of Israel. So did the stoning of Stephen in the seventh chapter of Acts. But Romans 11:15 marked the end of Israel's day, so far as their priority rights, special privileges and any Kingdom offer were concerned. Israel was cast away and reconciliation was sent to Gentiles.

Today God could truly say, "all day long have I given Gentiles the opportunity to be saved by grace." Let us remember, "If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He spare not thee (Gentiles)." When will God's day of grace end? He knows. We can only say, "it may be today."

BUT AS TO ISRAEL'S FUTURE

We have looked into Israel's past. Let us see something of their glorious future. Read carefully Ezekiel 37:22 to 28. We quote a few of God's promises to and concerning Israel:

"I will save them"—"I will cleanse them"—"So shall they be My people, and I will be their God."—"David My servant, shall be king over them. —"They shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob wherever your fathers have dwelt . . . They shall dwell therein, they and their children and their children's children for ever."

Read also Ezekiel 36:24 to 38, for some very interesting information concerning Israel's future. Note the Lord's statement in Ezekiel 36:37:

"Thus saith the Lord God; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock."

In this chapter we read,

"I will take you from among the Gentiles and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you to your own land." "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." "And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden . . ."

Here we are reminded of God's promise in Isaiah 62:1 to 4:

"For Zion's sake will I not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see Thy righteousness, and all kings Thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighted in thee, and thy land shall be married."

In contemplating the wonderful future of Israel and Jerusalem, let us remember the Word of the Lord in Ezekiel 36:22 and Romans 11:26 to 28:

"Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went." Ezekiel 36: 22.

"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is My Covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sake." Romans 11:26 to 28.

Thus we see that the Lord is to do wonderful things for Israel and Jerusalem for His own holy name's sake and because His gifts and calling are without repentance.

About 1495 B.C. the children of Israel were led out of Egyptian bondage. Why?

“AND GOD HEARD THEIR GROANINGS AND GOD REMEMBERED HIS COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, WITH ISAAC AND WITH JACOB. AND GOD LOOKED UPON THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, AND GOD HAD RESPECT UNTO THEM.” Exodus 2:24 and 25.

God remembered His covenant with Abraham. He will do that again and again deliver Israel. Romans 11:26 to 29.

Note again Jeremiah 23:7 and 8: “Therefore behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But the Lord liveth, which brought up and led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land. “

Yes, we can surely believe that things are going to happen for Israel and for Jerusalem. But until the coming, and reign of the Messiah and King, Whom they rejected and put to death, the individual unbelieving Jews are headed for an awful judgment. Note God's Word in Romans 2:6: “. . . God; Who will render to every man according to His deeds.” “Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.” Romans 2:9.

Here is God's message for Jews and Gentiles in this day of grace: “For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed. 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. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Romans 10:11 to 13.

MESSAGE NUMBER 37

THE CHRISTIAN—THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT—AND THE BODY OF CHRIST

Many Christians have been confused and perplexed as to whether or not the Lord's instructions in Matthew, chapters 5 to 8, are for the obedience and practice of members of the Body of Christ, whether or not the spiritual program outlined in these chapters will fit into “the dispensation of the grace of God for you Gentiles?” Ephesians 3:1 and 2.

Let us first note this important and significant fact: that the Apostle Paul wrote about one half of the Books of the so-called New Testament Scriptures. In all of his messages there is a pronounced silence concerning the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. There must be a meaning to the truth of II Corinthians 5:16 that none of us has fully comprehended: “Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more.”

Whatever the meaning of this verse, it is a fact that in his oral and written ministry the Apostle Paul said little or nothing in detail about what Christ did on earth during the years He was under the law, a Minister of the circumcision, sent only to the house of Israel. Galatians 4:4—Romans 15:8—Matthew 15:24.

Paul was the only servant of the Lord who wrote of “the Church which is Christ’s Body,” concerning “the dispensation of the grace of God for Gentiles,” who gave specific instructions as to the heavenly position, hope and calling of members of Christ’s Body.

Paul never once referred to the Sermon on the Mount, the Golden Rule, The “Our Father” prayer, or to any of the kingdom parables spoken by the Lord Jesus in Matthew, Mark and Luke, the Synoptic Gospels.

However, the Holy Spirit by the mouth and pen of the Apostle Paul, presented to the members of the Body of Christ a spiritual standard as high as that presented by the Lord Jesus to His disciples on earth. The difference between the two programs is the fact that the program which Jesus of Nazareth presented on earth had a “kingdom on earth” legalistic setting, while the program which the Lord Jesus gave to the members of the Body of Christ, through the Apostle Paul, was distinctly a “grace” program for saints in the heavenlies.

By way of contrast, let us note that the word “grace” is not found once in the twenty-eight chapters of the Gospel of Matthew. The Lord Jesus displayed much grace in Matthew but His message was concerning “the kingdom of heaven”, an expression found more than thirty times in Matthew. The Epistle to the Ephesians is concerning the Body of Christ, and the fact that believing Gentiles and believing Jews constitute a Joint-Body. (Ephesians 3:6) They are united to the risen Christ by an inseparable and eternal union, seated with Him in the heavenlies, saved by grace through faith, without religious practices, ceremonies, or deeds. Ephesians 2:6 to 16. In Ephesians “grace” is found twelve times.

Let us compare Ephesians 4:32 with Matthew 6:12, 14 and 15:

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you,” Ephesians 4:32.

“And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses:” Matthew 6:12, 14 and 15.

What a difference! By grace believers have been forgiven, for Christ’s sake, in Ephesians 4:32 and they therefore should be gracious and forgive their fellowmen. This is all grace.

But note the contrast: “if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses”. What did the Lord say in giving the ten commandments to Israel? “If you do, I will do.” This is the “law” of Divine forgiveness in the “Our Father” prayer.

Now let us compare “thy kingdom come,” in Matthew 6:10, with the believer’s position in Colossians 1:13:

“Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” Matthew 6:10.

“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.”

Members of Christ’s Body are already in the spiritual kingdom of Colossians 1:13. Note “And Jesus which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellow-workers unto **the kingdom of God**, which have been a comfort unto me.” Colossians 4:11.

Note how believers get into this spiritual kingdom:

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” I Corinthians 12:13.

“And that He might reconcile both unto God in one Body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.” Ephesians 2:16.

“That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same Body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.” Ephesians 3:6.

The Body of Christ is a part of the kingdom of God. But the kingdom of God, in the Bible, is not always the Body of Christ. Note in Matthew 8:12 that the Lord Jesus referred to Jews, saved and unsaved, as “the children of the kingdom.”

In the petition, “thy kingdom come”, the Lord Jesus was not referring to the kingdom to which members of Christ’s Body belong. “The kingdom of heaven,” to which the Lord Jesus referred in His “Our Father” prayer, will be established at the close of the great tribulation, when the Son of man shall come to deliver Israel, in accordance with Luke 21:24 to 33. Should we pray “Thy kingdom come” while we remain on earth; which means, let us go through the great tribulation?

The hope of believers is expressed in Titus 2:13: “Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” This blessed hope will be realized by members of the Body of Christ before the great tribulation comes, before the petition is answered, “Thy kingdom come.”

Now let us compare Matthew 5:5 and 9 with Ephesians 2:6 and Colossians 1:20:

“Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.” “Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.” Matthew 5:5 and 9.

“And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 2:6.

“And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.” Colossians 1:20.

The “meek” of Matthew 5:5 are to inherit the earth. The meek of Ephesians 2:6 are seated in the heavenlies in Christ. In Matthew 5:9 men are peacemakers, and therefore the children of God. In Colossians 1:20 Jesus Christ is the Peacemaker. And note Galatians 3:26:

“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” Note what believing Gentiles, are by grace; “the children of God.” Note what unbelieving Gentiles are without Christ, “by nature the children of wrath.” Ephesians 2:2 and 3. And yet Christian preachers ask a mixed audience of believers and unbelievers to pray the “Our Father” prayer. These preachers are responsible for the lie of the unbelievers. God is not the Father of those who reject Jesus Christ as Saviour.

GOD’S SPIRITUAL PROGRAM

If we study the spiritual walk and conversation presented to members of the Body of Christ, in Romans 12, 13, 14 and 15, in Galatians, Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians and in Paul’s other Epistles, we shall learn of God’s very high standard for Christians under the dispensation of grace.

We quote several verses from the different Epistles

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” Romans 12:1 and 2.

“Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.” Romans 12: 20.

“Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” Romans 13: 10.

“Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.” Romans 14: 13.

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.” Romans 15: 1.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.” Galatians 5:22 to 26.

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one Body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Ephesians 4: 1 to 6.

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit.” Ephesians 5:15 to 18.

“That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.” Philippians 1:10.

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” Philippians 4:8.

“That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.” Colossians 1:10 and 11.

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” Colossians 3:1 and 2.

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one Body; and be ye thankful. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.” Colossians 3:15 to 17.

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Titus 2:13 and 14.

Every member of the Body knows or should know, that in these Pauline messages are given the Lord’s spiritual instructions for the obedience and practice of such members.

Then the Scriptural and intelligent principle is to interpret, appropriate and apply the kingdom teachings of Jesus of Nazareth in the light of the revelations which He later gave from heaven to the Apostle Paul. Note carefully.

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to youward: How that by revelation He made known unto me the Mystery; as I wrote afore in few words.” Ephesians 3:1 to 3.

“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the Word of God.” Colossians 1:25.

We have seen the **dispensational** setting of Paul’s instructions to members of the Body of Christ, for what we call, “practical Christianity.”

Now let us see the **dispensational** setting of the Sermon on the Mount and the kingdom teachings of Jesus of Nazareth in Matthew 5 to 8.

Note the statement in Matthew 4:17 and 23:

“From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.” Matthew 4:17 and 23.

Now again Matthew 10:7 and 8:

“And as ye go preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.”

What is the setting? “The kingdom of heaven” at hand and a program of physical healing and miracles. It is in such a setting that we find the Sermon on the Mount. For instance, note Matthew 8:3 and 4:

“And Jesus put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.”

How can this be applied or appropriated under the present reign of grace? It can not. Must we eliminate it without apology or explanation? No. God has a Divine principle: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.” II Timothy 2:15.

Study Matthew and all other messages in the Bible in the light of Pauline truth, that is. Divine Truth, which Christ gave to Paul. Note Paul’s words in II Corinthians 13:3 and I Corinthians 12:4.

“Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me. which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you.” II Corinthians 13:3.

“How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” II Corinthians 12:4.

It is so important to compare the truth of Romans 15:8 and Matthew 15:24 with the truth of Romans 11:13, and know that Jesus Christ was the Apostle of Israel and that Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles.

Read carefully Matthew 6:17, and ask yourselves if we obey this by anointing our heads with oil when we fast. If not, why not? Why select a few of the Lord’s instructions and wholly ignore the others? This hit-and-miss, snatch-grab method must be very displeasing to the Lord. Note the instructions in II Timothy 1:7: “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

Note again Matthew 5:23 to 25:

“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly.”

“And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee.” “And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee.” Matthew 5:29 and 30.

Note again: “And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.” “Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.” Matthew 5:40 and 42.

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:48.

Now again we ask this question: “By whose authority do Christians today select a few instructions that may be included in their church creed and reject others that they may not consider important?”

Moreover, let us never forget that no man can practice the ethics of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount until he goes first to Calvary to get the nature of Christ.

Let us, as members of the Body of Christ, hold fast to every spiritual truth that we can be sure is for the obedience and practice of members of Christ’s Body, because that truth fits into God’s “grace” program.

MESSAGE NUMBER 38

RAISED WITH CHRIST

“KNOWING THAT CHRIST BEING RAISED FROM THE DEAD DIETH NO MORE; DEATH HATH NO MORE DOMINION OVER HIM. FOR IN THAT HE DIED, HE DIED UNTO SIN ONCE: BUT IN THAT HE LIVETH, HE LIVETH UNTO GOD.” ROMANS 6:9 AND 10.

“I AM HE THAT LIVETH, AND WAS DEAD; AND, BEHOLD, I AM ALIVE FOR EVERMORE. AMEN; AND HAVE THE KEYS OF HELL AND OF DEATH.” REVELATION 1:18.

When the Lord Jesus was here on earth He said, “Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father.” John 10:17 and 18.

Then we read in I Corinthians 15:17 and 20 to 23: “And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.” “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order **CHRIST THE FIRSTFRUITS**; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming.”

Then let us note in Hebrews 6:19 and 20 that Jesus Christ is called “our Forerunner.”

“Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither **THE FORERUNNER** is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.” Hebrew 6:19 and 20.

The Lord Jesus Christ is in heaven. The glorified Divine-Man. He became the **Firstfruits** of them that slept. He is the believer's **Forerunner**. The Greek word is "Runner-ahead". Christ ran ahead into death, and then He ran ahead in a resurrected body into heaven.

Note what Christ did by His death and resurrection:

1. **He abolished death.** "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." II Timothy 1:10.
2. **He spoiled principalities and powers.** "And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it." Colossians 2:15.
3. **He destroyed him that had the power of death.** "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Hebrews 2:14 and 15.

The Lord Jesus appeared ONCE to put away sin, by ONE offering, and then entered ONCE into heaven having obtained eternal redemption for us. Hebrews 9:26, Hebrews 10:12, Hebrews 9:12.

In that He died unto sin, Christ died ONCE. He is alive forevermore. Death hath no more dominion over Him.

The Holy Spirit says to the believer, "We thus judge, that if One died for all, then all (believers) have died." Note also Colossians 2:20, Colossians 3:3 and 4, and Romans 6:7 and 8 and Romans 6:2 and 3. "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?"

"For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

"For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him."

THE BELIEVER IS DEAD WITH CHRIST

"HOW SHALL WE THAT ARE DEAD TO SIN, LIVE ANY LONGER THEREIN? KNOW YE NOT, THAT SO MANY OF US AS WERE BAPTIZED INTO JESUS CHRIST WERE BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH?"

We ask two most important questions:

1—Just when is the believing sinner baptized into the death of Christ?

2—How many times can the believing sinner be baptized into the death of Christ ?

Then we turn to Galatians 3:27 and 28 "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." The believer is baptized into Christ once-for-all.

What does baptism into Christ do for believers? It makes them all ONE. Note how this is stated in I Corinthians 12:12 to 14

"For as the Body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one Body, being many are one Body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the Body is not one member, but many."

When the believing sinner receives Christ, he is immediately baptized into the death of Christ and into the Body of Christ by one Divine baptism.

ONE BAPTISM—ONE SPIRIT—ONE BODY

Note again Romans 12:4 and 5—“For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office So we, being many, are one Body in Christ, and every one members one of another. “

Note again Ephesians 2:14 to 18—“For He is our peace, Who hath made both **ONE**, and hath broken down the middle-wall of partition between us; Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments, contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain **ONE NEW MAN**. So making peace; And that He might reconcile both unto God in **ONE BODY** by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through Him we both have access **BY ONE SPIRIT** unto the Father.”

Very interesting. Believing Jews and believing Gentiles, with Christ, make up **ONE NEW MAN**. Both reconciled unto God in **ONE BODY** by the **ONE** sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. **ONE NEW MAN-ONE BODY**-All baptized by **ONE SPIRIT** into **ONE BODY**.

ONE FLESH

Then let us compare Genesis 2:23 and 24 with Ephesians 5:31 and 32. “And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be **ONE FLESH**.”

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they **TWO SHALL BE ONE FLESH**. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.”

Adam is the Old Man. Eve was one flesh with Adam. Christ is the New Man. The Church, which is the Body, is **ONE** flesh with Christ.

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:13.

The Body is called “the fulness of Christ.” Ephesians 1:23.

BY ONE MAN

We have quoted I Corinthians 15:22: As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

Note also verses forty-seven and forty-five “The first man is of the earth, earthy: the Second Man is the Lord from heaven.” “The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a life-giving spirit.”

We learn here of the first man and the Second Man; the first Adam and the Last Adam.

Now note in the fifth chapter of Romans how many times the word **ONE** occurs. Thirteen times.

“**BY ONE MAN** (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:” Romans 5:12.

“Through the offence of one many be dead.” “The judgment was by one to condemnation.” “By one man’s offence death reigned by one.” “By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation.” “By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.” Romans 5:15,16,17, 18 and 19.

Yes, in Adam all die. In Adam all are already dead in trespasses and sins. Ephesians 2:1. All in Adam are under the universal law of sin and death. By Adam judgment and condemnation have passed upon all men. By Adam is the entrance of sin. By Moses and the Law of Sinai sin abounds.

But now the good news of Romans 5:20 and 21:

“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Adam was disobedient unto death. Christ was obedient unto death. Adam brought the curse. Christ bore the curse. Adam brought the thorns. Christ wore the thorns.

By Adam came ruin. By Christ came redemption. By Adam came death. By Christ, the resurrection of the dead.

Christ is the one Mediator between God and men. Christ died once. By His one offering believing sinners are sanctified and perfected. Hebrews 10:10 and 14. When the sinner believes in the once-for-all sacrifice of the One Mediator he is baptized by One Spirit into the one and only Bible church, the One Body. There is one Body, one Spirit and one baptism.

The believer is baptized into the death of Christ, and puts on Christ, the very moment he receives Christ. At that same moment he is buried with Christ by baptism, he is raised with Christ to walk in newness of life Romans 6:3 and 4.

“Raised to walk in newness of life.” The believer is a new creation in Christ Jesus. II Corinthians 5:17. The believer is risen with Christ, to seek those things which are above where Christ is seated. Colossians 3:1 and 2. The believer is seated with Christ in the heavenlies and there blessed with all spiritual blessings. Ephesians 2:6 and 1:3.

The believer is complete in Christ. Colossians 2:10. All of this is accomplished by the one Divine baptism of Colossians 2:12, Romans 6:3, Galatians 3:27, 28 and Ephesians 4:5.

MESSAGE NUMBER 39

CAESAR—THE GENTILES—AND THE JEWS

Note these three statements which Christ made when He was here on earth.

- 1. “YE WORSHIP YE KNOW NOT WHAT: WE KNOW WHAT WE WORSHIP: FOR SALVATION IS OF THE JEWS.” JOHN 4:22.**
- 2. “THEN SPAKE JESUS TO THE MULTITUDE, AND TO HIS DISCIPLES, SAYING THE SCRIBES AND THE PHARISEES SIT IN MOSES’ SEAT: ALL THEREFORE WHATSOEVER THEY BID YOU OBSERVE, THAT OBSERVE AND DO; BUT DO NOT YE AFTER THEIR WORKS: FOR THEY SAY, AND DO NOT.” Matthew 23:1 to 3.**
- 3. “SHEW ME A PENNY. WHOSE IMAGE AND SUPERScription HATH IT? THEY ANSWERED AND SAID, CAESAR’S. AND HE SAID UNTO**

THEM, RENDER THEREFORE UNTO CAESAR THE THINGS WHICH BE CAESAR'S, AND UNTO GOD THE THINGS WHICH BE GOD'S." Luke 20:24 AND 25.

The Jews sat in Moses' seat. Caesar, the Gentile, sat in Rome. The Jews were under political domination of Rome. Note Luke 2:1, Matthew 17:26 and 27. Jesus of Nazareth grew up to manhood under Caesar's political government. But note His religious practice: "And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read." Luke 4:16.

Caesar was an ungodly heathen. But was he any worse than the corrupt religious rulers who sat in Moses' seat? They were fools, hypocrites, blind leaders, and inwardly corrupt. Read these charges against them by Jesus Christ. Matthew 23:13 to 32, and the climax, in verse 33, "ye serpents, ye generation of vipers."

Now the two commands of Jesus Christ:

1. Do what the religious rulers tell you to do.
2. Render unto the political rulers the things that are theirs.

Jesus Christ taught His disciples, "government is of the Gentiles"; "salvation is of the Jews."

Both government and salvation had once been in the hands of the Jews. God had warned them that they would not be the head if and when they failed to keep His commandments. In their spiritual declension they were to be the tail and the Gentiles the head. Read Deuteronomy 28:36 to 44.

In the last two chapters of Jeremiah and the last two chapters of II Kings we read how government passed from the Jews to the Gentiles. Then and there "the times of the Gentiles" (politically) began. Luke 21:24. After the facts revealed in Romans 11, "the times of the Gentiles" (spiritually) began. But note Daniel's Divine message to the first Gentile world ruler over the Jews (Nebuchadnezzar).

"Thou, O king, art a king of kings; for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath He given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron; forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise." Daniel 2:37 to 40.

Then in Daniel 2:44, we are told how "the times of the Gentiles" will end, by the coming of the King from heaven. A stone is to descend from heaven, become a mountain and fill the whole earth.

Jesus Christ was born under the fourth (iron) kingdom. He was tried and sentenced to death by that government after the authorized representative said, "I find no fault in Him." After he had washed his hands of his unjust decision, he said, "I am free from the blood of this innocent man."

From Nebuchadnezzar to the days of Christ, salvation was not only of the Jews, but any Gentile who desired spiritual blessings had to become a Jew. When the Jews were slaves to the Persians the record is, that many of the Persians became Jews. Esther 8:17.

THE GENTILES CAST AWAY

In Romans 1:17 to 32 we learn how God had cast away the Gentiles. In Romans 11:1 to 33 we learn how God, centuries later, cast away the Jews. When God cast away the Gentiles (about 1900 B.C.) He began a new movement; Israel and the Jews. When God cast away Israel (about 60 A.D.) God had begun a new movement with the Gentiles. Note Ephesians 3:1—"For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles."

Note the condition of the Gentiles at the time God began the new movement mentioned in Romans 11:30, Romans 11:11 and Romans 11:15.

"For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief."

"I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles for to provoke them to jealousy."

"For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?"

The predicament of the Gentiles at the time Paul was sent to them is told in Ephesians 2:11 and 12, Ephesians 2:2 and 3 and Ephesians 4:18. They were aliens. Aliens from Israel. Alienated from God.

Note the words of Christ to an earnest seeking Gentile—"He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me. But He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." Matthew 15:24 to 27.

The Jews were lost sheep. The Gentiles were dogs. The Jews who sat in Moses' seat were serpents. The ruler at Rome was a heathen. We know then that the world religiously and politically was corrupt when the Lord of glory came down from heaven to visit humanity.

THE LORD JESUS AND THE APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES

Note the testimony of the Apostle Paul.

"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office." Romans 11:13.

"And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; And saw Him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; for they will not receive thy testimony concerning Me." "And He said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." Acts 22:17, 18 and 21.

"That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:16.

Paul had orders from heaven to go to the Gentiles. He received his message for Gentiles by revelation.

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Galatians 1:11 and 12.

He wrote to the Gentiles that salvation was of the Jews. "It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things." Romans 15:27.

THE TURNING-POINT

Note the words of Paul in Acts 13:46, Acts 18:6 and Acts 28:28.

"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, LO, WE TURN TO THE GENTILES."

"And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles."

"Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it."

"Lo, we turn to the Gentiles." Do not fail to mark this in your Bible. This marks a radical change.

Note the good news for Gentiles that followed.

"AND WHEN THEY WERE COME, AND HAD GATHERED THE CHURCH TOGETHER, THEY REHEARSED ALL THAT GOD HAD DONE WITH THEM, AND HOW HE HAD OPENED THE DOOR OF FAITH UNTO THE GENTILES." Acts 14:27.

Who opened the door of salvation to the Gentiles ? When?

Then followed the good news of Ephesians 2:19, Ephesians 2:17 and Ephesians 3:6.

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."

"And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh."

"That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same Body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel."

Paul's last message was to a man who was half Jew and half Gentile, Timothy. (Acts 16:1 to 5.) Since the death of Paul and Timothy, God's spiritual affairs have been in the hands of Gentiles; and God's order has no longer been "to the Jew first." The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." Titus 2:11. "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all." Colossians 3:11.

During the ministry of Paul to the Gentiles, Jerusalem and the Jews were under the iron rule of Caesar, and finally the words of the Lord Jesus were fulfilled; Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jews were scattered. Luke 21:20 to 24. Note the Lord's words: "For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side. And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of my visitation." Luke 19:43 and 44.

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." "For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled." "For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem

shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” Luke 21:20, 22, 23 and 24.

“The times of the Gentiles” await fulfillment in 1941 A.D.

PAUL AND CAESAR

Acts 21:30 to 32

“And all the city was moved, and the people ran together; and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut. And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them; and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.”

Acts 22:25 and 26

“And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.”

Acts 25:10 and 11

“Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar’s judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. For if I be an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal to Caesar.”

Romans 13:1 to 7

“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained by God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.”

CAESAR AND THE CHURCH

Note these four statements of Paul: “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God.” Romans 13:1.

“For this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.” Romans 13:6.

“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” I Timothy 3:15.

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable, in the sight of God our Saviour.” I Timothy 2:1 to 3.

Here we see the clear demarcation between Church and State, and the Scriptural responsibility of the Christian to both of these powers which are ordained of God.

God had put the carnal sword of government in the hands of Caesar. But to those with spiritual authority He said:

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.” II Corinthians 10:4.

“For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Hebrews 4:12.

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” Ephesians 6:17.

The Word of the Lord Jesus is still binding: “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar’s and unto God the things which be God’s.” Luke 20:25.

We are living in “the times of the Gentiles” politically. This began with Nebuchadnezzar about 600 B. C. We are living in “the times of the Gentiles”, spiritually. This began after Saul became Paul.

MESSAGE NUMBER 40

ADAM - NOAH - ABRAHAM - PAUL

With Adam God began the human race. With Noah God began the human race anew. With Abraham God began the Jewish race. With Paul God began “the dispensation of the grace of God” for Gentiles. Ephesians 3:1 to 3.

Let us compare what God said to Adam with what He said to Noah.

“SO GOD CREATED MAN IN HIS OWN IMAGE, IN THE IMAGE OF GOD CREATED HE HIM; MALE AND FEMALE CREATED HE THEM. AND GOD BLESSED THEM, AND GOD SAID UNTO THEM, BE FRUITFUL, AND MULTIPLY, AND REPLENISH THE EARTH, AND SUBDUE IT; AND HAVE DOMINION OVER THE FISH OF THE SEA, AND OVER THE FOWL OF THE AIR, AND OVER EVERY LIVING THING THAT MOVETH UPON THE EARTH. AND GOD SAID, BEHOLD, I HAVE GIVEN YOU EVERY HERB BEARING SEED, WHICH IS UPON THE FACE OF ALL THE EARTH, AND EVERY TREE, IN THE WHICH IS THE FRUIT OF A TREE YIELDING SEED; TO YOU IT SHALL BE FOR MEAT.” Genesis 1: 27 to 29.

“AND GOD BLESSED NOAH, AND HIS SONS, AND SAID UNTO THEM BE FRUITFUL, AND MULTIPLY, AND REPLENISH THE EARTH. AND THE FEAR OF YOU AND THE DREAD OF YOU SHALL BE UPON EVERY BEAST OF THE EARTH, AND UPON EVERY FOWL OF THE AIR, UPON ALL THAT MOVETH UPON THE EARTH, AND UPON ALL THE FISHES OF THE SEA; INTO YOUR HAND ARE THEY DELIVERED. EVERY MOVING THING THAT LIVETH SHALL BE MEAT FOR YOU; EVEN AS THE GREEN HERB HAVE I GIVEN YOU ALL THINGS.” Genesis 9:1 to 3.

God very definitely began things with Adam. Adam was given headship by God. Satan appeared on the scene. The serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty. II Corinthians 11:3. Adam sinned with Eve. Note the Divine judgment “And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field.” Genesis 3:17 and 18.

What happened?

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Romans 5:12. With Adam sin began.

The first man born of woman (Cain) was of the devil and murdered his brother. I John 3:12. After sixteen centuries, what was the condition of the human race?

“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth Me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.” Genesis 6:5 to 8.

Note then what God did:

“And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.” II Peter 2:5.

“And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons’ wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood.” Genesis 7:7.

“And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven, and they were destroyed from the earth; and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.” Genesis 7:23.

God began anew with Noah and his family. But then note what happened to the human race within a few centuries.

“And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech:” Genesis 11:1.

“And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do; and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language; that they may not understand one another’s speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth; and they left off to build the city.” Genesis 11:6 to 8.

“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” Romans 1:22.

“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy,

murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.” Romans 1:28 to 32.

They became alienated and enemies by wicked works. Colossians 1:21. They were alienated from the life of God. Ephesians 4:18.

ABRAM CALLED

Out of the human wreck God called a man who lived in Ur of the Chaldees. His name was Abram. With Abram God began a new movement for the human race. God said to Abram,

“And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, And curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall fall families of the earth be blessed.” Genesis 12:2 and 3.

Then God gave to Abram the covenant of circumcision. Acts 7:8—Genesis 17:10 to 17. Then Isaac was born. From Isaac came Jacob (Israel) and his twelve sons, the nation Israel.

“But thou, Israel, art My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham My friend.” Isaiah 41:8.

“But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.” Isaiah 43:1.

“I am the Lord, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.” Isaiah 43:15.

“Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art My servant: I have formed thee; Thou art My servant; O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of Me.” Isaiah 44:21.

“For Jacob My servant’s sake, and Israel Mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name; I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known Me.” Isaiah 45:4.

“In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.” Isaiah 45: 25.

God declared in Isaiah 43:7 that Israel was created for His glory. Then we read in Luke 2:32 that Jesus Christ was the glory of Israel.

Note carefully Romans 9:4 and 5.

“Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, Who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.”

Something new very definitely began with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The rest of the human race was cut off. They became aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. Ephesians 2:12. They were alienated from the life of God.

ISRAEL IN THE SCRIPTURES

The first eleven chapters of Genesis deal with the human race from Adam to Abram, 2083 years. The remaining 39 chapters of the first Book of the Bible and all of the other thirty-eight Books, from Genesis to Malachi, deal with the one people, Israel, the children of Abraham; and only such other nations and individuals as had dealings, during those centuries, with Israel.

This is likewise true concerning the contents of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. In this connection note Romans 15:8, Matthew 15:24 and John 1:11.

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.”

“He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

“He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.”

We quoted Romans 9:5 concerning Christ and Israel, “of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, Who is over all, God blessed for ever.” Here we learn the truth, that God was a Jew on this earth for about 33 years. Christ was born King of the Jews. Matthew 2:2. Christ was saluted “King of Israel.” John 1:49.

Note Christ’s instructions to His twelve Jewish messengers. “These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Matthew 10:5 and 6.

“But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another; for verily I say unto you, ye shall (may) not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.” Matthew 10:23.

Plain instructions these, “go not into the way of the Gentiles”, the children of Adam. “Go to the children of Abraham.” “Ye may not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come.”

Then note again, those twelve apostles remained in Jerusalem. Acts 8:1. Those twelve apostles are yet to sit upon twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Matthew 19:28.

After the twelve apostles had preached in Jerusalem something happened. In the Jerusalem temple the Apostle Paul was met by the Lord Jesus Christ. Note what happened

“And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; and saw Him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.” “And He said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.” Acts 22:17-18 and 21.

A new movement this. Christ spoke to Paul:

“I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.”

Note Galatians 2:7:

“But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter.” No such program had ever been carried on before. This man of God, who was born out of due time (I Corinthians 15:8), received orders from the Lord Jesus Christ to go to uncircumcised Gentiles with “the gospel of the uncircumcision.”

Then Paul made known the truth of Romans 4:9 and 10 and Galatians 3:8, the fact that Abram was declared righteous by faith, years before he was circumcised. That was 430 years before the law was added.

“And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.” Galatians 3:17.

“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom, the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.” Galatians 3:19.

This truth, that Abram was declared righteous by faith, without works or religion, when he was Abram and not Abraham, 24 years before he was circumcised. and 430 years before God gave the law to Israel, was revolutionary truth when Paul went forth to proclaim it. Genesis 12:1 to 6, Genesis 15:4 to 8, Galatians 3:8, Romans 4:9 to 11.

Since the time of Genesis 17:10-17, no uncircumcised Gentile could have fellowship with God or His people. God gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision. Acts 7:8.

A NEW MESSAGE

But now what? Christ, by revelation, gave Paul a new message. Galatians 1:11 and 12. What did Paul do? He went up to Jerusalem.

“And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I - preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.” Galatians 2:2.

When Paul went up to Jerusalem he did not receive his gospel from those who were apostles before him. “But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter.” Galatians 2:7. Do not lose the force of **“But contrariwise”**. Then and there Peter and the other Jewish disciples of Christ learned that Paul had received a new and different message. It was not that any one had ever been, or ever would be, saved apart from the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. But in the Lord’s revelation to Paul He told him why Abram, the heathen, was justified in uncircumcision.

Note again Galatians 3:8—**“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.”** Abram was 75 years old when he was called by God. Genesis 12:1 to 5.

Note Genesis 15:6:

“And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness.” Genesis 15:6.

Then note Genesis 17:13, 14 and 24:

“He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised; and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant.” “And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.”

All of this is so important for us to know, if we are to understand Galatians 2:7.

When Abram was called and justified years before he was circumcised and became “Abraham”, the Scriptures foresaw the new message and ministry that Paul was to receive by revelation from Christ to inaugurate “the dispensation of grace.” The Scriptures foresaw that God would declare heathen righteous by faith, without circumcision or religion, during the time the circumcision people were set aside. Although the Scriptures foresaw this, no man foresaw it. Paul learned it by revelation. He went forth to proclaim “the gospel of the uncircumcision”. But everywhere he went other missionaries followed him and preached the gospel of the circumcision.

“And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.” “But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.” Acts 15:1 and 5.

“Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment.” Acts 15: 24.

In spite of that conference and the important decisions there reached, the zealous, religious preachers continued to mix law and circumcision with grace.

Note Paul’s words—**“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel; Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.” Galatians 1:6 and 7.**

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is debtor to do the whole law.” “Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything.” Galatians 5:1 to 3 and 15.

Concerning these religious missionaries with their perverted gospels, Paul wrote:

“And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased. I would they were even cut off which trouble you.” Galatians 5:11 and 12.

WHAT A DIFFERENCE

In Genesis 17:10 to 17, we learn that those who did not preach and practice circumcision were to be cut off. In Galatians, we learn that those who did preach and practice circumcision were to be cut off. What is the explanation? Different Divine economies, with different Divine programs. The Greek text of Philippians 1:10, is, “test things that differ.”

Another example, note Colossians 2:16—“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days.”

What would have happened to any man who had preached such a doctrine while Israel was under the law, from Moses to John the Baptist? He would have been stoned to death. Jesus Christ Himself was made under the law. Galatians 4:4. No one was authorized by Him to preach Colossians 2:16 while He was on earth.

Paul wrote to members of the Body of Christ “For as we have many members in one Body, and all members have not the same office; So we, being many, are one Body in Christ, and every one members one of another.” Romans 12:4 and 5.

“For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” Romans 6:14.

In closing this message, let us compare Romans 15:8 and Luke 2:21, Luke 4:16 and Matthew 5:17, with Paul’s words in Galatians 2:7, Romans 11:13 and Romans 1:14.

CONCERNING JESUS ON EARTH

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.” Romans 15:8.

“And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, His name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before He was conceived in the womb.”

“And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.”

“Think not that I am come to destroy, the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.”

CONCERNING PAUL’S MINISTRY

“But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter.”

“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.”

“I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.”

A great difference between “the Minister to the circumcision” and “the apostle to the Gentiles.”

MESSAGE NUMBER 41

THE BLIND JEW

Samson was a blind Jew. The Gentiles put out his eyes. Judges 16:21. “But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house.”

Zedekiah was a blind Jew. The Gentiles put out his eyes. Jeremiah 52:11.

“Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death.”

Both Samson and Zedekiah were captives of the Gentiles until they died. They disgraced and dishonored the name of the Lord.

With the blindness of Zedekiah, “the times of the Gentiles” (politically) began—about 600 B.C. Note what the Lord Jesus declared concerning “the times of the Gentiles”. “And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” Luke 21:24. “The times of the Gentiles” began with Zedekiah’s blindness and Nebuchadnezzar’s conquest of Jerusalem.

What happened?

A Jew blinded. God turned governmental and political affairs over to the Gentiles. From 600 B.C. down to the present time, the Jews have been prisoners, servants or subjects of the Gentile governments.

ANOTHER BLIND JEW

Note what God said by the mouth of a Jew, who had been blinded by God for three days (Acts 9:9), to another Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus. Acts 13:6.

“O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season.

And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.” Acts 13:10 and 11.

“O full of all subtilty.” This word “subtilty” is the same Greek word translated “guile”, in John 1:47. “Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and saith unto Him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!”

Nathanael was without guile. Bar-jesus was full of guile. A great difference. Each of these Jews had significant names “Nathanael”, the “gift of God.”

Note Romans 11:29—“The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” If you will read carefully Romans 11:25 to 29, you will learn that Israel is blind; but Israel is going to be saved because the gifts of God are without repentance. God declares—“For this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.” Romans 11:27.

Note how Israel’s blindness is to be taken away. “But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.” Malachi 4:2. Jesus, Israel’s Messiah, is coming as “the Sun of righteousness.” Until then a blindness has come upon Israel. They will not see the Sun for a season.

Now note Paul’s words to Bar-jesus:

“And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the Sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.” Acts 13:11.

“Bar-jesus” had a splendid name. But he was “the child of the devil.” “Barjesus” means, “the son of Jehovah the Saviour”. The nation Israel was Jehovah’s “Bar-jesus.” Isaiah 64:8—Isaiah 43:1.

“The son of Jehovah the Saviour” was the child of the devil. Bar-jesus was a Jew, but a false-prophet. He sought to turn the Gentile away from the faith. Israel was chosen to be God’s witness to the Gentiles. Isaiah 43:12. They were to turn the Gentiles to the faith. Bar-jesus should have helped Paul turn Paulus to Israel’s Messiah, but he did all that he could to keep the Gentile from believing, in spite of his good name (Bar-jesus).

GENTILE SALVATION

Why did Paul turn from the Jews to the Gentiles?

“Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” Acts 13:46.

When and why did God send salvation to the Gentiles?

“For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief.” Romans 11:30.

“I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid; but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.” Romans 11:11.

“According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear; unto this day.” Romans 11:8

Who sent blindness upon the Jews? God. Who has miraculously preserved the Jews scattered among all the nations of the earth? God. What is going to happen when the fulness of

the Gentiles comes in? Israel will be saved. Of course not Israelites who reject the gospel during the age of grace.

Note how Bar-jesus' blindness and unbelief brought faith and salvation to Sergius Paulus.

"Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord." Acts 13:12.

God's past and present dealings with the Jews is enough to cause all Gentiles, as well as all Jews, to be astonished at the doctrine of the Lord; to believe and be saved.

Most assuredly the Jews are now where the Lord Jesus said they would be, in Luke 21:24. So also is Jerusalem. "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21:24

"The times of the Gentiles," which began with blind Zedekiah will be fulfilled when the Sun of righteousness arises with healing in His wings to take away Israel's blindness. "Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Luke 21:27.

The Sun of righteousness is coming as the Son of man to save the Jews in the great tribulation. Luke 21:27 to 32.

Blind Samson at the end of his life took the Gentiles with him to destruction. (Judges 16:30.) So will Jacob's time of trouble engulf the unbelieving Gentiles. Remember that Samson's hair grew a little before this destruction. Judges 16:22.

In connection with these three blind Jews there is a message concerning, and to, the Gentiles.

THE GENTILES' OBLIGATION TO THE JEWS

Notice how the obligation has been reversed

"For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy." Romans 11:30 and 31.

NATHANAEL AND BAR-JESUS

Nathanael, "the gift of God", was under the "fig tree". John 1:48. The "fig" tree in the Bible, speaks of Israel. Christ said, "behold an Israelite in whom is no guile." What did Nathanael say? "Nathanael answered and saith unto Him, Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel." John 1:49.

By carefully reading Ezekiel 36 and 37, we will learn that the Lord is going to take all guile out of Israel, and they will then say to Jesus Christ, Whom they rejected and killed, "Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel."

But until the Son of man comes to redeem and purify His nation, Israel will continue to be as Bar-Jesus. "O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" Acts 13:10.

But what about the Gentiles? "Well; because of unbelief they (Israel) were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear; For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee." Romans 11:20 and 21.

When and because God sent blindness to Israel, God sent His messenger of reconciliation to the Gentiles.

“For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?” Romans 11:15. Dispensationally this is one of the most important verses in the Bible. It brought the message of II Corinthians 5:16 to 21.

Since that time we have been living in “the times of the Gentiles” **spiritually**. We are also in “the times of the Gentiles”, **politically**.

Read the morning papers to see what the Gentile rulers are doing to and for humanity. What a mess! We need a change. We need the Prince of Peace. Politically we are in an awful predicament.

Well, is the spiritual or religious condition any better? Take an inventory. God recognizes one and only one true Bible Church during this age. And His desire for the members of this one true Church is, that they walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called, and obey Ephesians 4:3 to 6:

“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism; One God and Father of all, Who, is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

Where is this unity? Divided unity is a sad paradox.

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Titus 2:11 to 14

How we should praise God for His reign of grace for the human race. Jews and Gentiles should be so eager and ready to receive God’s grace, trust in the shed blood of the Son of God and be saved by grace, without religion or good deeds. But alas! the human heart is desperately wicked and deceitful. Many are incurably religious and self-righteous. Not believing God’s Word, “he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.”

Then, of course, the devil is very, very busy.

“If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this age hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, Who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” II Corinthians 4:3 and 4.

To some church members the Lord has written this message

“Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou are wretched, and miserable and poor, and blind, and naked.” Revelation 3:17.

MESSAGE NUMBER 42

THE EUNUCH - CORNELIUS - SERGIUS PAULUS

Philip preached to the eunuch. Acts 8:30.

Peter preached to Cornelius. Acts 10:25.

Paul preached to Paulus. Acts 13:7.

What kind of a Gentile was the eunuch? What kind of a Gentile was Cornelius? What kind of a Gentile was Sergius Paulus?

Before we answer these questions it is interesting to note that during the years of the earthly ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, as recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, we find mentioned only one Gentile man to whom the Lord Jesus ministered. He was the Roman official, mentioned in Matthew 8:1 to 12 and in Luke 7:1 to 10. That centurion asked the Jews to ask the Saviour for the healing of his loved one. Luke 7:3. Note what the Jews told Jesus concerning that Roman official. "For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue." Luke 7:5.

CORNELIUS

Then note that Cornelius was a Roman official that loved the Jews. **"And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nations of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee."** Acts 10:22.

"There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band. A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway." Acts 10:1 and 2.

SERGIUS PAULUS

Then note that Sergius Paulus was a Roman official.

"Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man." Acts 13:7.

THE EUNUCH

Then note concerning the eunuch.

"And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship." Acts 8:27.

All of these men were servants of kings and queens.

During the years that Jesus of Nazareth was preaching on earth, and at the time Philip preached to the eunuch, and Peter preached to Cornelius, what was the status of the Gentiles with God?

1. **"Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."** Ephesians 2:11 and 12. **"Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."** Ephesians 4:18. **"And came and preached peace to you which were afar off:"** Ephesians 2:17.
2. **"No people"—a "foolish nation."** Romans 10:19.

3. **“A wild olive tree:” Romans 11:17.**
4. **“But He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children’s bread and cast it to dogs:” Matthew 15: 26.**

THE STATUS OF GENTILES WITH JEWS

Note what happened when Jesus of Nazareth, in the synagogue of the Jews, told how God had blessed two Gentiles “But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian. And all they in the synagogue, **when they heard these things**, were filled with wrath. And rose up, and thrust Him out of the city, and led Him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong.” Luke 4:26 to 29.

Although these Jews were assembled in their synagogue to worship God, murder was in their heart because One Who claimed to be their Messiah told that the Lord had blessed two Gentiles.

Then more than thirty years later Paul was in the Jewish temple at Jerusalem, and the worshipping Jews rushed upon him because they held him responsible for the presence of a Gentile in their temple. “Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. (For they had seen before with him in the city, Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)” Acts 21:28 and 29.

In the year 60 A. D., more than 25 years after the death of Christ on the cross, a Gentile in the Jerusalem temple meant that their religious temple was polluted. “And they went about to kill him (Paul).” What a great sin for a Jew to be responsible for the presence of a Gentile in the Jerusalem temple.

But note Paul’s defense, and the new outbreak against him.

“And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance.” Acts 22:17 “And He said unto me, Depart; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles. And they gave him audience unto his word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth; for it is not fit that he should live.” Acts 22:21 and 22.

“And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.” Acts 23:14.

What a guilty criminal was Paul in their estimation! Why? Because he declared that Jesus, their Messiah, appeared to him in their holy temple to send him to the despised Gentiles. He was not fit to live. He must be murdered.

This shows us something of the attitude of the non-Christian Jews against the Gentiles. Now let us consider the attitude of the Jewish disciples of Christ against the Gentiles.

“And. He said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” Acts 10:28.

“Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the Word to none but unto the Jews only.” Acts 11:19.

“But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us:” Matthew 15:23.

“These Twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Matthew 10:5 and 6.

“But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Matthew 15:24.

“Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.” Acts 3:25 and 26.

“And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the Word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision, contended with him, Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.” Acts 11:1 to 3.

“Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” Acts 13:46.

“But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.” Galatians 2:11 to 13.

“I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.” Romans 11:11.

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” Ephesians 2:19.

Surely we shall learn from all that we have said that Jesus Christ was not preaching the gospel of the grace of God to Jews and Gentiles while He was on earth. In this connection compare Paul's two statements

“NOW I SAY THAT JESUS CHRIST WAS A MINISTER OF THE CIRCUMCISION FOR THE TRUTH OF GOD, TO CONFIRM THE PROMISES MADE UNTO THE FATHERS.” Romans 15:8.

“THAT I SHOULD BE THE MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST TO THE GENTILES, MINISTERING THE GOSPEL OF GOD, THAT THE OFFERING UP OF THE GENTILES MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE, BEING SANCTIFIED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.” Romans 15:16.

What a difference! Now remember that the first, if not the only Gentile man to whom Jesus of Nazareth ministered, while on earth, was a Roman official who built a synagogue for the Jews.

The next Gentile man was a centurion at the cross of Jesus Christi who said, “Truly this was the Son of God.” Matthew 27:54.

The next Gentiles who received the Lord's message are called proselytes, in Acts 2:10. But the “proselyte” Gentiles are called “Jews” in Acts 2:5. The word “Jew”, as used in Acts and

the Epistles, refers to the religion of the people rather than the race or nationality. Note in Esther 8:17: “Many people (Persians) became Jews.”

But note carefully Genesis 17:14—“And the uncircumcised man-child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant.”

THE EUNUCH—A PROSELYTE

Now let us think of this command of God when we ask what kind of a Gentile was the eunuch? Where had he been? To Jerusalem to worship. Then what? He was circumcised. Therefore he was a proselyte. Consider the eunuch in the light of Acts 11:19—Acts 10:28 and Acts 11:1 to 3.

“Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the Word to none but unto the Jews only.”

“And He said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.”

“And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the Word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision, contended with him, Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.”

CORNELIUS FEARED GOD-LOVED THE JEWS

Now note carefully a statement of the apostles, some months after Philip preached to the eunuch: “When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” Acts 11:18.

Let us remember what kind of a Gentile Cornelius was. Acts 10:2 and 22.

What must we decide? We must decide that Cornelius was the first uncircumcised Gentile, in the “Acts” period, to receive salvation, so far as there is any record in Acts. Note what Peter preached to Cornelius. “In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness.” Acts 10:34 to 36.

Then note the agreement of Paul and Peter concerning their different ministries:

“But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles;) And when James, Peter, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.” Galatians 2:7 to 9.

Then note Paul’s testimony: “For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.” Romans 11:13.

“Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.” I Timothy 2:7.

“Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.” II Timothy 1:11.

PETER FEARED THE CIRCUMCISION

Then note again Peter's attitude toward saved Gentiles: **"For before that certain (Peter) came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself fearing them which were of the circumcision."** Galatians 2:12.

Peter was the only one of the Twelve who preached to Gentiles, so far as there is any record in Acts. And do we suppose that the Lord would have kept Peter in that ministry with such an attitude toward the Gentiles, no fellowship with Christian Gentiles, because he was afraid of Christian Jews? The answer is Galatians 2:9—"And when James, Peter, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision."

But later on they all learned the blessed truth of Ephesians 2:13 to 18 and Colossians 3:11.

"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, Who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain One New Man, so making peace; And that He might reconcile both unto God in one Body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

"Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all."

But let us, as Gentiles, see what we were by nature. "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others," Ephesians 2:2 and 3.

Let us see what we received because of the Jews' unbelief: "For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief." Romans 11:30.

Let us note Paul's message to Gentiles, "To him that worketh not (righteousness) but believeth." Romans 4:5.

And now God's desire for us is recorded in Ephesians 4:17 and 18: "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."

Then let us learn of the great turning-point in God's program, when Saul became Paulus, when he preached to Paulus the Gentile: "Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord." Acts 13:12.

Something happened to a Jew—blindness. Something happened to a Gentile—salvation.

That is the story of the great dispensational chapter, the eleventh of Romans, and Acts 28:25 to 28. It's a great story. More of the blind Jew in another lesson.

MESSAGE NUMBER 43

WHAT ABOUT THE SIGNS OF MARK 16?

Who Is Right—the Plymouth Brethren, the Baptists, the Campbellites, or the Pentecostals?

THE TIMES OF THE SIGNS

First let us ask this question, “have you ever met a zealous, sectarian Christian who was like the noble Bereans of Acts 17:11 who were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so?” There are very few unprejudiced Bible teachers, or Bible students, even among those who call themselves non-sectarian Christians. Perhaps all of us are agreed that more than ninety-five per cent of all Christians let their religious, denominational or spiritual leaders do most of their thinking for them. Because of this there are more than four hundred sects in Christendom. Let us ask this personal question, “have you followed the good example of the noble Bereans in reaching a decision as to what you believe and practice as a Christian?” Will you endeavor this one time to be a Berean as you read this message?

Our question is, “what about the signs of Mark 16?” Let us note every word in Mark 16:14 to 18:

“AFTERWARD HE (CHRIST) APPEARED UNTO THE ELEVEN AS THEY SAT AT MEAT, AND UPBRAIDED THEM WITH THEIR UNBELIEF AND HARDNESS OF HEART, BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED NOT THEM WHICH HAD SEEN HIM AFTER HE WAS RISEN.” “AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE. HE THAT BELIEVETH AND IS BAPTIZED SHALL BE SAVED; BUT HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT SHALL BE DAMNED.” “AND THESE SIGNS SHALL FOLLOW THEM THAT BELIEVE; IN MY NAME SHALL THEY CAST OUT DEVILS; THEY SHALL SPEAK WITH NEW TONGUES; THEY SHALL TAKE UP SERPENTS: AND IF THEY DRINK ANY DEADLY THING, IT SHALL NOT HURT THEM; THEY SHALL LAY HANDS ON THE SICK, AND THEY SHALL RECOVER.”

Before we deal with these five verses in detail, let us note some words which the Holy Spirit led the Apostle Paul to write to Timothy more than thirty years after the resurrected Christ gave to the Eleven the commission and program of Mark 16:14 to 18. “According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.” I Timothy 1:11. “Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might skew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern do them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.” I Timothy 1:16. “Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities (sicknesses).” I Timothy 5:23.

Note “the glorious gospel of the blessed God”; use wine for thine oft sicknesses.

Note Timothy’s faith and Paul’s gospel “When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee .” “Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God: Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according

to His own purpose and grace; which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” II Timothy 1:5 to 9: This message of Paul was quite different from the message of Mark 16.

“Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to MY gospel: Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the Word of God is not bound.” II Timothy 2:8 and 9.

Then the Holy Spirit led Paul to thus instruct believers: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.” II Timothy 2:15.

Note Paul’s last words to Timothy: “But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.” II Timothy 4:5.

Note the fact that Timothy was a Christian of unfeigned faith and that he was instructed to take medicine for his oft sicknesses. Any one who has read these two Epistles to Timothy has learned that Timothy was a faithful courageous uncompromising soldier of Jesus Christ. And any student of these Epistles will surely know that when Paul told Timothy to do the work of an evangelist, or preach the gospel, he did not tell Timothy to lay hands on the sick and they would recover, because faithful Timothy was told to take a physical remedy for his own sickness. Had Timothy endeavored to miraculously heal others, he would have been as inconsistent as was one of our well known Chicago “healing” preachers. While he was speaking over the radio telling Christians about physical healing in the atonement, his false teeth fell out. Moreover he was wearing glasses because of weak eyes. There was also a defect in his hearing. But none of these ailments seemed to convince him, or any of his devotees, of his inconsistency and his erroneous teaching. He continued to preach Mark 16:14 to 18 as God’s program for members of the Body of Christ, telling his listeners that the lack of faith in the atoning work of Christ kept them from being made physically whole no matter what physical afflictions had caused their suffering.

Think of the confusion and the controversy among Christians because of the lack of agreement concerning Mark 16:14 to 18.

Several nights ago I heard on the radio the voice of a preacher in Del Rio, Texas. I soon learned that he was a follower of Alexander Campbell. He would call himself a member of “the Christian Church,” or say that he belonged to “the Disciples of Christ.” When we speak of “Campbellites,” it is that we might be specific and distinguish between these “Christians” and the other Christians we have mentioned in our heading. This radio preacher was pleading and urging, with sincerity, pathos, and fervor, as a loyal “Campbellite,” that his radio listeners hurry to some preacher of his denomination and be immersed in water for the remission of sins before it was too late.

There is no doubt about it, that preacher was in earnest. Moreover, he was more consistent than another zealous preacher of his denomination who, for ten nights, was conducting a revival in his church. He preached every night that it was not possible for any one to be saved without belief and baptism. He quoted Mark 16:16, “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” During the first five or six nights a number of men and women responded to his invitation. Then, on Sunday, after seven days of the evangelistic campaign, he announced that on the following Wednesday night all who had come forward in the meetings would be immersed. A friend of mine said to him, “brother, you are not consistent.” “If what you have been preaching is true, any one of these converts may die before Wednesday night and, according to what you have taught concerning water salvation or baptismal regeneration, that one would go to hell.” “Why don’t you practice what you preach?”

The Campbellites agree with the Plymouth Brethren, with most Pentecostals and with the Premillennial Baptists, that the Christian Church began on the day of Pentecost. All of these groups believe and teach that the Church which began on the day of Pentecost is the one Body of Christ mentioned in Ephesians 4:4 and described in Ephesians 1:19 to 2:21. And they are generally agreed that the Lord gave no commission to the Apostle Paul that superseded the commission of Mark 16:14 to 18, and that in 1941, A.D., God's servants are still working under Christ's orders in Mark 16:15 to 18.

The Campbellites affirm that if this is true, then the salvation message for Jews and Gentiles alike, in the day of grace, is Acts 2:38 ". . . Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Note carefully the order. It does not read, repent, be saved and then be baptized with water after you receive the Holy Spirit.

Read carefully again Mark 16:16: "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Then compare with Peter's message on the day of Pentecost: "repent, and be baptized for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:38. If the Campbellites thus prove, by Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38, that their salvation message is scriptural, can we prove that it is unscriptural? We shall proceed to prove that, if the Lord Jesus did not give to the Apostle Paul a commission which superseded Mark 16:14 to 18, that is, if this Mark 16 commission sets forth the program for evangelists who are members of Christ's Body, the Campbellites are far more consistent than are the Plymouth Brethren or the Baptists. Also we will show that if this is true, then the only consistent group among the four we have mentioned, is the Pentecostal group; that even the Campbellites are not.

Before we present this proof, we ask one thought-provoking question. We note in I Corinthians 11:1, that Paul wrote, "be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." Now, do you know a preacher who is in good standing in any of the four groups who follows Paul in two of his statements in I Corinthians? Note the first statement: "I thank my God I speak with tongues more than ye all." I Corinthians 14:18. Then turn to I Corinthians 1:14 to 17: "I thank God that I baptized none of you but . . ." "For Christ sent me not to baptize." No Campbellite would thank God for either experience. They do not speak with tongues, and they baptize every one they can get their hands on. Remember we are to follow Paul. What about it?

But now to the program of Mark 16:16 to 18, which the Lord Jesus gave to the Eleven, and we would emphasize "the Eleven." Mark 16:14. Note the pillars who represented the Eleven. "And when James, Peter and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me (Paul) they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision" Have you carefully studied Galatians 2:7 to 9 to note the difference between the ministry of the Twelve and Paul?

Here we learn that James, Peter and John represented the twelve apostles and that nearly twenty years after Christ spoke the words of Mark 16:15 to 18, Peter and his associates agreed to go to the Jews and leave with Paul the evangelization of the Gentiles. Note Galatians 2:8: "For He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles." Here we learn that even before the agreement of Galatians 2:9 that the Lord had wrought mightily in Peter. To whom? To the circumcision. Not to the Gentiles, except to the household of Cornelius.

Why does the Holy Spirit mention Peter in Galatians 2:8 and not the other eleven? Peter was the chief representative of the Twelve. Note how he was also selected according to Acts 15:7. It is strange that the most prejudiced Christians do not like to read Galatians 2:7, and if

they do, under protest, they will not believe the statement after they read it. You read it now, and believe it. Why is it that most Christians will not believe this truth? Why do they insist on changing “Of the Circumcision” to “To the Circumcision?”

Every Bible teacher in any of the four groups mentioned would have to do some adjusting, and some confessing of their erroneous teaching, if they should begin to believe and teach the truth of Galatians 2:7. Note it very carefully. “But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me (Paul) as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter.”

In this connection let us note Peter’s message of Acts 5:29 to 33 and his confession of Acts 10:28.

“The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand be a Prince and a Saviour, for TO GIVE REPENTANCE TO ISRAEL and forgiveness of sins.” Acts 5:30 and 31.

“Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” Acts 10:28 Here we note a turning-point about seven years after the commission given in Mark 16.

What do we learn from these Scriptures? We learn that, for several years, perhaps seven, after Christ gave the “Mark 16:14 to 18” commission to the Eleven, it was not lawful for the Twelve to preach to the Gentiles. Also Peter preached that God had raised Christ from the dead to be a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance and remission. To whom? To ISRAEL. The Lord was mighty in Peter to the apostleship of the Jews. Galatians 2:8. The Lord committed unto Peter the gospel of the circumcision.

Now, the question: “Does your denomination believe and teach this?” Yes or No? How, about you individually? Now a very pointed question: If you know that your denomination is not standing for Divine Truth as it is set forth in the Scriptures, rightly divided, will you continue laboring in that denomination and keep silent as to what you know to be Divine Truth? Just answer this to the Lord, not to me. Some preachers compromise for personal advantages. Read Galatians 1:10.

BELIEF—BAPTISM—SALVATION—SIGNS

But now to Mark 16:15 to 18: **“And he said unto them, go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: in My Name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”**

In the writings of the apostles, Paul. Peter and John, the Holy Spirit presents God’s saving message, the gospel by which the believing sinner is saved. And then he so instructs the believer that he may know that he is saved, that is, the Lord wants the believer to have the proof of his salvation. When the Lord Jesus wanted Israel to believe that He was their Messiah He came with SIGNS. Note John 5:36 and Acts 2:22: “. . . The same works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent Me.” “. . . Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.”

When the Lord wanted Israel to know that He had sent the Twelve, He performed miracles by the Twelve. Hebrews 2:4: "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will." The Lord also wanted Jews and Gentiles to believe that Paul was a special apostle, hence II Corinthians 12:12: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs and wonders, and mighty deeds." We see that signs were God-given credentials to prove that the movement was Divine.

Thus we see signs accompanied or followed the apostolic claims.

In Mark 16:17 we read, "**And these signs shall follow them that believe.**" How were the people to be saved? "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Note the order:

1. Believeth,
2. Is baptized,
3. Saved,

And then what? **Signs!** The Campbellites and Pentecostalists preach this message as it is. They do not wrest it as do the Baptists and the Plymouth Brethren, who preach, "he that believeth and is saved shall be baptized." Who gave them the right to put "saved" before "baptized"? They are compelled to reverse the order there to support their denominational teachings. It is sad, but true, that prejudices, or preconceived opinions, are such hindrances that it is next to impossible to persuade most Bible teachers to be sufficiently intelligent and honest to acknowledge that in following the saving message of Mark 16:15 and 16, the Campbellites and the Pentecostalists are right and the Baptists and Plymouth Brethren are wrong. This is true also concerning Acts 2:38, Peter's message on the day of Pentecost. But what do the Plymouth Brethren, the Baptists and the Campbellites do with the signs of Mark 16:17 and 18? These signs here seem to be the proof of salvation.

Note the proof:

1. "they shall cast out devils;
2. "they shall speak with new tongues;
3. "they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them;"
4. "they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Mark 16:17 and 18.

Recently a Bible teacher in England wrote, "if the individual today must prove that he is a believer and is saved, because he practices the signs of Mark 16:17 and 18, there is not one single Christian in this generation and there has not been one since the day that the last apostle died." Whether or not we believe this statement we do know that the accepted Bible teachers among Campbellites, Baptists and Plymouth Brethren make no attempt to prove that they are genuine Christians by performing the miracles of Mark 16:17 and 18. But the Pentecostalists do. The Campbellites, Baptists and Plymouth Brethren say belief and water baptism are linked together by the Holy Spirit in Mark 16:16 and they say, "what God hath joined together let no man put asunder." The Pentecostalists say "Amen, but you are inconsistent, if not dishonest." God hath joined the signs of Mark 16:17 and 18 with the belief and baptism of Mark 16:16. Let the reader be the juror, a real honest juror. Are not the Pentecostalists consistent when they attempt to carry on the "signs" program of Mark 16:17 and 18, if this is the Lord's commission for this age of grace?

If Mark 16:14 to 18 is the Lord's program for this age, then the Campbellites, working under Mark 16:14 to 18, are right as to Mark 16:16, but not as to Mark 16:17 and 18. The Plymouth Brethren and Baptists, who think their ministry and program is in line with the Lord's commission and program of Mark 16:14 to 18, are much mistaken, for they neither preach "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved", nor have the signs following.

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION

Now let us consider the teaching of the Campbellites and the Pentecostals as to "salvation by water", with several of Paul's statements. We quote I Corinthians 9:22: "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." Romans 9:3: "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." Galatians 4:19: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."

Every spiritual, intelligent student of the Scriptures knows that the Apostle Paul ranked first as a "soul winner". He sacrificed and suffered more than any other apostle or disciple in his desire and endeavor to bring men and women to Christ for salvation. Note his claim in I Corinthians 15:10. He agonized for them. And yet he said, "I thank God I baptized none of you except . . ." (a few). I Corinthians 1:14. Remember. this statement is in the same Epistle in which Paul wrote, "I am become all things to all men that I might win some."

Now paraphrase Paul's statement in I Corinthians 1:14 to 16 to harmonize with the teaching of preachers who teach water as a factor in salvation, "I thank God I performed for very few of you that ceremony that would have been a factor in your salvation." Then he added a statement which had to do not only with the city of Corinth but with Paul's ministry in general. He said: "Christ sent me not to baptize." Note Paul's testimony in I Timothy 1:12 and 16.

Christ Jesus put Paul in the ministry and chose him to be a pattern for believers. Christ Jesus put Peter in the ministry and was mighty in him to the apostleship of the circumcision. Christ sent Peter to baptize. Matthew 28:19 and 20. Hear Paul's testimony, "Christ sent me not to baptize." In Philippians 1:10, the Holy Spirit, according to the Greek, instructs members of Christ's Body to "test things that differ".

SIGNS AMONG THE CORINTHIANS

Now let us note several facts concerning the saints to whom Paul wrote I Corinthians.

"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able." I Corinthians 3:1 to 3.

"I speak to your shame." I Corinthians 6:5.

"Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren." I Corinthians 6:8. Here we learn that these Corinthian saints were not "super-spiritual". They were not like the very faithful saints whom Paul addressed in his Epistle to the Ephesians. The Corinthians were carnal. Paul could not teach them deep spiritual truths. They were able to take only the milk of the Word. But in I Corinthians 12:8 to 11 we learn that among those carnal Corinthians there was no lack of signs. Note first Acts 18:8: ". . . many of the Corinthians hearing believed and were baptized." They believed and were baptized. They became saints. Then those saints exercised their sign gifts: "to one the gifts of healing," "to another the discerning of spirits," "to another the working

of miracles,” “to another divers kinds of tongues,” “to another the interpretation of tongues.” I Corinthians 12:9 and 10.

Perhaps the Corinthian saints were not given these sign gifts in fulfillment of Mark 16:17 and 18; but the fact is, that these different signs were found among them. These sign gifts are not found among Christians today, except in the counterfeit. Then, of course, comes the question, why? Why were those supernatural demonstrations found among those carnal saints in Corinth when not one of these sign gifts is exercised by the most gifted, spiritual Bible teacher of this generation?

Any absolute proof that the sign gifts have been found among any group of God’s people since the death of the apostles is lacking. We may not agree with the belief of Dr. C. I. Scofield but he seems to agree with the Bible. He believed “the sign gifts of I Corinthians 12 were operative only during the “Acts” period”. Any student of Paul’s Epistles, written after the period covered by the Book of Acts, will learn that there is no reference to “tongues”, “signs” and “miracles” in those Epistles. We note in Acts 19:11 and 12, that Paul himself accomplished miraculous physical healings, whereas, in I Timothy 5:23, he instructed Timothy, a faithful saint, to use a physical remedy for his sickness. Moreover, Paul wrote in II Timothy 4:20. “Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick”. Why? Why didn’t he heal Trophimus? Why didn’t someone heal Paul? God’s Divine healing for today is set forth in Philippians 2:27.

MESSAGE NUMBER 44

GOD IS NOT THE AUTHOR OF CONFUSION

In I Corinthians 14:33 we read this very interesting statement:

“GOD IS NOT THE AUTHOR OF CONFUSION.”

In this same Epistle, we read in verse twenty-five of chapter twelve, **“that there should be no schism in the Body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.”** With this statement let us read Ephesians 4:4:

“THERE IS ONE BODY.” And let us also read I Corinthians 12:12 and 13.

“FOR AS THE BODY IS ONE, AND HATH MANY MEMBERS, AND ALL THE MEMBERS OF THAT ONE BODY, BEING MANY, ARE ONE BODY: SO ALSO IS CHRIST. FOR BY ONE SPIRIT ARE WE ALL BAPTIZED INTO ONE BODY, WHETHER WE BE JEWS OR GENTILES, WHETHER WE BE BOND OR FREE; AND HAVE BEEN ALL MADE TO DRINK INTO ONE SPIRIT.”

Then note the question, in I Corinthians 1:13—**“IS CHRIST DIVIDED?”** There is one Christ. There is one Body of Christ. That Body is called, “the fulness of Christ.” In Ephesians 5:31 and 32, we learn that Christ and His Body are one flesh. They are called in Ephesians 2:15, **“ONE NEW MAN.”** Then we read in Ephesians 4:7 to 14, that every member of the Body is given grace to help in God’s work, **“for the edifying (building up) of the Body of Christ.”** Ephesians 4:12. All the members of that one Body, who have special gifts, are:

“FOR THE PERFECTING OF THE SAINTS, FOR THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY, FOR THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST: TILL WE ALL COME IN THE UNITY OF THE FAITH, AND OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON OF GOD,

UNTO A PERFECT MAN, UNTO THE MEASURE OF THE STATURE OF THE FULNESS OF CHRIST.” Ephesians 4: 12 and 13.

“Unto a perfect man”, “unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” God will accomplish His purpose. The Perfect Man will be a reality. The Body of Christ is the fulness of Christ. This is what God is doing during this age of grace—If you are a labourer together with God, this is what you should be doing.

Now it must be apparent to any intelligent spiritual Christian that God is not building two or three churches, to say nothing of two or three hundred churches. No; God is interested in completing His own one Building.

“In Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In Whom ye also are building together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Ephesians 2:21 and 22.

Now remember that God is not **the author of confusion**. But there is plenty of confusion. God’s desire is that there should be no division in the Body. In God’s purpose and program Christ is not divided. The Body is one. So also is Christ. Just as true as there is one God the Father, God recognizes but one Church in this age; and God does not look with favor and approval upon the sectarian churches of men. There is one Body, even as there is one Christ, the Lord, one Spirit and one baptism. God is building “One New Man”, and not 300 New Men, except as every member of the One Body has put on the new man.

God’s will is, that all the members of His one Church should believe and practice the truth of Ephesians 4:1 to 7; that they should recognize the seven-fold unity mentioned in those verses and keep the unity of the Spirit.

We emphasize the fact that all saved people are members of Christ’s one Body, members one of another, all one in Christ Jesus, with Him, “one flesh” and, “One New Man.” Romans 12:4 and 5—Galatians 3:27 and 28.

By one Spirit all believers are baptized into One Body. God’s will is, that there should be no division in the Body. The members of Christ’s Body are growing up into Him in all things, which is the Head, Christ. Ephesians 4:15. How many Christians give any heed to Colossians 2:19, “holding the Head, from which all the Body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit. together, increaseth with the increase of God?”

Members of Christ’s Body are labourers together with God. I Corinthians 3:9. Spiritual, intelligent, obedient believers will not create or contribute to confusion by labouring to build up a sectarian church. Sectarianism is confusion. God demands unity. God is not the author of confusion. But confusion exists. There are more than three hundred sectarian churches, with different denominational creeds and church programs. Think of the Christians who glory in “our Baptist denomination”, “our great Methodist church”, “our great Lutheran church.”

Most Christians are indifferent as to the pitiable state of affairs. Others see the malady, but they see no remedy. They say, “we are helpless”; “denominations will continue and any endeavor to better the predicament only makes it worse.” What a revolution would take place if Christians would learn and propagate the truth of Ephesians and Colossians.

Many advocate union meetings and join interdenominational organizations with the understanding that no mention be made of doctrinal differences. But God is not interested in building up a united interdenominational organization. God is more interested in breaking it up. God is building into, and building up, one Building, and that Building is the one Bible Church which is the Body of Christ, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. That Church in Ephesians

and Colossians was truly “the Church of the Mystery”, but the mystery has been disclosed and God wants all of His children to see it. Ephesians 3:9.

Church officers and sectarian leaders receive members into their church organization; but God never by the Holy Spirit baptized any individual into the Lutheran Church, or the Baptist Church, or the Methodist Church, or the Presbyterian Church, or into any other sectarian church. Not one of those churches is mentioned in the Bible. God baptizes believers into the Body of Christ, all in one Body. God wants no division in the Body. In most communities, the Lutherans and the Baptists have very little fellowship in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lutherans receive their little children by sprinkling into Lutheran Church membership. The Baptists declare such teaching and practice to be unscriptural and heretical. They declare that immersion is the only true Bible form of baptism, and the individual must first exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ before being immersed. There are other doctrinal differences. All saved Lutherans and all saved Baptists have been baptized into the death of Christ, into the Body of Christ, have been buried with Christ, raised up with Christ, and all together seated in the heavenlies in Christ. They are members one of another in God’s sight. But they do not endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit, in obedience to Ephesians 4:3, principally because they have added a sectarian water ceremony to the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5. Anyone who brings water baptism into the dispensation of the mystery attempts to make God the author of confusion.

We might also consider the Church of the Disciples and the Presbyterian Church. They have very decided differences in doctrines. But the principal reason why they do not endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit is because they have added their sectarian baptism to the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5. The Disciples teach baptismal regeneration by immersion. The Presbyterians practice sprinkling and teach that a little water on the head now takes the place of circumcision in the flesh. They sprinkle parents and children. They have overlooked the fact that girls were not circumcised. Unity is impossible because one of the conditions of the unity of Ephesians 4:3 to 6 is one baptism; and that one baptism has nothing whatever to do with any human religious ceremony. God’s one circumcision today is the Divine circumcision of Colossians 2:11, not made with hands. God’s one baptism is the very same and man has nothing to do with it except to receive it by faith.

Every intelligent member of the Body of Christ, who obeys II Timothy 2:15, knows that he is living under God’s reign of grace when sinners are saved “by grace through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Ephesians 2:8 and 9.

From any such student of the Word you will receive a dogmatic, hearty, negative answer to any of these questions:

1. Does a person have to join any organized company of believers to be saved, or to reach heaven?
2. Does a person have to be baptized with water, in any manner, to be saved ?
3. Is water baptism necessary to become a member of the one and only true Bible Church during this clay of grace?
4. Is water baptism a Scriptural requirement for Christian fellowship?

The messenger of grace will say “no” to every one of these questions. And most of them will then join some sectarian or non-sectarian church organization where some form of water baptism is required for membership in the organization, and then refuse to fellowship on the basis of the Divine baptism of Ephesians 4:5. If the “grace” preachers are not to endeavor to

clear up the confusion by taking an uncompromising stand for the truth of Ephesians, who will do anything about it?

RECOVERY OF TRUTH

During one of the recent Founders' Week Bible Conferences, in the auditorium of the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, one of the speakers who is a spiritual servant of the Lord and a "grace" preacher, gave a very interesting message on "The Recovery of Lost Truth." He said, "the first blessed truth lost in the first century, was truth concerning the Church of the Mystery, the believer's union and unity in the Joint Body of Ephesians 3:6; the second truth was the blessed hope, the Lord's return; the third lost truth was justification by faith." Then he remarked that they are being recovered in inverted order. "Martin Luther," he said, "recovered justification by faith." John Darby recovered the Blessed Hope and something of Church Truth. "But," said the speaker, "God is still waiting for the recovery of the Truth of the Mystery, as revealed in Ephesians and Colossians."

In spite of this beloved brother's knowledge concerning the lost truth, and his apparent convictions, he continues his popular ministry among the Premillenarians with scarcely a mention of the truth that got Paul behind prison doors. It would be interesting to have his answer to the question, "why?"

PAUL'S "MY GOSPEL"

Paul was chosen by the Lord to be a pattern for believers. Then we referred to his testimony, in Philippians 3:4 to 16, that he had given up his religion for Christ. He adds this, in verse 17, "Brethren, be followers together of me," "ye have us for an ensample." Again we read in I Corinthians 11:1, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

It is utterly impossible for any member of the Church of Jesus Christ, under the present reign of grace to intelligently interpret, appropriate and apply the Holy Scriptures unless he follows Paul as an ensample and pattern, and is guided by the writings of this man who magnified his office, the apostle to the Gentiles. Romans 11:13. Note the Holy Spirit's instructions, by the pen of Paul in Romans 16:25 and 26:

"Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to MY gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the Mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."

Members of the Body of Christ are not stablished unless they are stablished according to "MY" gospel of the Apostle Paul. Glorious profound truths were revealed to the Apostle Paul by the Lord Jesus Christ to give to members of His Body, for the specific purpose mentioned in Ephesians 4:14.

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

Christians who are babes tossed to and fro are not stablished. The Divine Truth, which Paul designated "MY GOSPEL," "the revelation of the Mystery," is the message concerning the Son of God that will keep Christians from being "tossed about babies." Not only does Paul

exhort Christians to be “followers together of me,” but he instructs them to be “builders together with me.”

“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth (together) thereupon.” I Corinthians 3:10.

Note the Greek of this word “buildeth” is “**sun-oiko-domeo**,” meaning literally “to build a house together.” In the glorious profound truth of Ephesians that will keep the Christian from being a “tossed baby” we learn that God’s purpose, during this present reign of grace, is to build a House. In order that this definite and specific work might be accomplished, the risen Christ gave gifts unto men: “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying (House building) of the Body of Christ till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God. unto a Perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Ephesians 4:12 and 13.

Let us emphasize that. God’s will is to “build up the Body of Christ.” Christians are labourers together with God in the “House-building” business. But if they are to build intelligently and well pleasing to God, they must build together with Paul, the wise masterbuilder. Christian laborers are thus instructed in I Timothy 3:15: “how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the House of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

Every member of the Body of Christ should desire to know how to behave in the House of God, which is the Body of Christ. Every member of the Body of Christ should desire to know how to build up that House while they are preaching the grace of God to get sinners to believe and go into the House of God once for all.

MESSAGE NUMBER 45

PENTECOST—THE KINGDOM—AND THE BODY OF CHRIST

First, let us carefully note two statements of the Apostle Paul: “But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter.” Galatians 2:7. “For, this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles. If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward.” Ephesians 3:2.

There are many zealous religious people, among whom are a number of splendid spiritual saints, who have formulated their creeds and adopted their religious programs on the assumption that Israel had been set aside “when the day of Pentecost was fully come” (Acts 2:1), and that the dispensation of the grace of God, mentioned in Ephesians 3:1 to 9, began the day that Peter and the Eleven stood up in Jerusalem.

They speak much of the “Apostolic Church,” “the Pentecostal Church,” but never of the “Joint-Body” of Ephesians 3:6, “the Church of the Mystery,” “the One New Man” of Ephesians 2:15, “the Body which is the fulness of Christ,” Ephesians 1:19 to 23. They never give any Scriptural proof that the Pentecostal Church of Acts Two is identical with “the Church of the Mystery.”

In referring to the Body of Christ, and God's spiritual program under the dispensation of grace, Paul mentions "the Mystery" in Ephesians and Colossians. It should be obvious to any intelligent student of the Scriptures that anything that has to do with "the Pentecostal dispensation" has nothing to do with "the dispensation of the Mystery." Believers are to "make all men see what is the dispensation of the Mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God;" but those who begin the dispensation of the "Secret" with Peter and the Pentecost of Acts Two never attempt to obey Ephesians 3:9.

"The dispensation of the Mystery" is "Gentilish," Ephesians 3:1,2 and 8. Pentecost is Israelitish. There can be no genuine Pentecost without the Jewish priests, the Jewish temple, the Jewish city, and the Jewish people. The Gentiles in the day of grace have no Pentecost.

About twenty-five years after Peter and the Eleven, in Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, addressed devout Jews from every nation under heaven, Paul said, "I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost." I Corinthians 16:8. In Acts 20:16 are words concerning Paul that will throw light on his statements to the Corinthians: "For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus because he would not spend the time in Asia, for he hasted, if it were possible for him to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost." Acts 20:16. Peter and the Eleven addressed the Jerusalem Jews fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Peter and the Eleven were in Jerusalem tarrying, after the command of Christ: "And behold, I send the promise of My father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." Luke 24:49. Then Christ added, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of earth." Acts 1:8.

Concerning the apostles, we read "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." Acts 1:14 and 2:1. Let us keep in mind that the tarrying-place was in Jerusalem. About twenty-five years later Paul wanted to be in Jerusalem on another day of Pentecost. In Acts 2:1 Pentecost was fully come. Pentecost was observed annually, but the phenomena of Acts two was not repeated.

When Paul reached Jerusalem the last time, about 60 A.D. (Acts 21:17), he found his people Israel conducting their Covenant ceremonies in their temple. Even after that time Paul apologized after he had spoken disrespectfully to Israel's Jerusalem high-priest, whom he had not recognized as priest. Acts 23:3 to 8. God permitted Israel to remain in their land, and use their temple, years after Christ announced the city's and the people's doom in Matthew 23:30 to 39.

After the Pentecost of Acts 2, the twelve apostles had entered into the temple with their message concerning Israel's rejection and the resurrected Messiah "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." Acts 5:42.

From these facts we are taught that for some reason God extended extra years of grace to Israel and Jerusalem and deferred the execution of the judgment pronounced by Christ, in Matthew 22:7 and 24:1 and 2. Undoubtedly the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross brought the amnesty and postponement of Jerusalem's destruction. Christ prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." It is true, that even before His death the Messiah said to Israel, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Matthew 23:33 and 38. But let us read, with this judgment, Luke 21:20: "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know

that the desolation thereof is nigh.” The desolation of the holy city was to take place when armies surrounded it.

Jerusalem was not compassed with armies when Peter and the Eleven preached to the rulers of Israel on the day of Pentecost. Peter’s message to them was one of tenderness and mercy. “And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it as did also your rulers.” “Ye are the children of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham. And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.” Acts 3:17, 25 and 26. What a contrast between these words and the awful judgment of Matthew 23:28 and 29: “. . . within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Woe unto you. scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” “Ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? . . . Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

What is the only intelligent explanation of God’s change of attitude toward Israel? God, in the Book of Acts, was giving Israel another chance. The kingdom of heaven was presented to Israel in the first chapters of Acts as much as it was while Jesus Christ was on earth.

Israel sinned against the Son of man. Luke 12:9 and 10. Now they were given the opportunity to either repent or to sin against the Holy Spirit and thus commit the unpardonable sin. Matthew 12:30 to 33. Note carefully God’s message to them “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Spirit, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him. When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.” Acts 5:29 to 32. They sinned against the Holy Spirit. They again sinned against the Holy Spirit when Stephen saw the Son of man standing in heaven. Acts 7:43 to 60.

The resurrected Christ was Israel’s Prince and Saviour. Where did the Gentiles come in? They didn’t come in. You may ask how about Acts 2:39. “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and TO ALL THAT ARE AFAR OFF, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” You may answer this question yourself by reading Acts 10:28 and Daniel 9:7: “And he said unto them, Ye know that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” Acts 10:28. “O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, AND THAT ARE FAR OFF, through all the countries whither Thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against Thee.” Daniel 9:7.

If seven years after Christ was raised from the dead, it was not lawful for the twelve apostles to preach to Gentiles, we may be sure that the “far off” of Acts 2:39, referred to the “far off” Israelites of Daniel 9:7. Also Acts 11:18 is proof of this, with Acts 10:28.

In II Corinthians 3:9 to 16 we learn why the religious Jews were still holding on to Pentecost and other Old Testament feasts after Acts 2:1. “There was a veil over their eyes.” There is a veil over the minds of many Pentecostalists today.

TWELVE MEN (AND NO WOMEN) STOOD UP. ACTS 2:14:

In Matthew 10:5 to 8, the twelve apostles were especially instructed by Christ to stay away from Gentiles and go to Israel. Twelve men (and no women) stood up on the day of Pentecost and addressed all the house of Israel (twelve tribes). Acts 2:14 and 36. Years later they agreed with Paul that they would continue to do the same thing. Galatians 2:9. Every student of the Word of God should understand the important truth of Galatians 2:7 to 9. Read these verses very carefully. Then think of the great blunder the Roman Catholics have made because they have ever been ignorant of the difference between Peter's keys of the kingdom and Paul's dispensation of grace. Note Paul's words in I Corinthians 3:10.

In Matthew 10:23 the Lord Jesus said to the Twelve, "Ye may not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come." In the Book of Acts we learn that the Twelve remained in Jerusalem. Acts 8:1. So far as there is any record in the Book of Acts, not one of the Twelve preached the gospel in places other than in the cities of Israel. Note, in Acts 7:47 to 60, that Stephen saw the Son of man standing in heaven. Then and there Israel committed the unpardonable sin. This they repeated in the Thirteenth, Eighteenth and Twenty-eighth chapters of Acts.

Now carefully consider the truth of Galatians 2:7—"But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter." The important point here is that the gospel **OF** the circumcision was committed to Peter after the death and resurrection of the Son of man. Unto Paul was committed the gospel **OF** the uncircumcision. After Saul became Paul Israel was set aside. The ministry of reconciliation for Gentiles was committed to Paul. Romans 11:15—II Corinthians 5:18 and 19. Read II Corinthians 5:19 with Acts 20:24, Romans 15:16 and Ephesians 3:8, and you will learn the great commission under which Paul labored.

And then if you will compare "disciple all nations" with Acts 10:28 and Galatians 2:9, you will have plenty of food for thought and the realization of the need for obedience of II Timothy 2:15, "rightly dividing the Word of Truth." If it was unlawful for the Twelve to preach to Gentiles about seven years after they received the great commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20, and then they later agreed to confine their testimony to Jews, then what meaneth "disciple all nations" in the so-called great commission? In Galatians 2:9, were the Twelve and Paul all out of the will of God, or, rather, is there not something wrong with the general teaching of the great commission and the Body of Christ?

TO VISIT THE GENTILES

Compare Acts 15:13 to 15 with Galatians 2:9—"And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets."

"And when James, Peter, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision." Note, the same two men who declared that God's will and purpose was to visit the Gentiles agreed to go to the Jews.

Now apply II Timothy 2:15. In applying the Divine principle we learn that the ministry of the twelve in the first eleven chapters of Acts, was in agreement with the words of Israel's Old Testament prophets. This included the salvation of Cornelius and his household. To this company of Gentiles Peter and James referred in Acts 15:7 and in Acts 15:13 to 15. But Israel's

Old Testament prophets said nothing, and knew nothing, about God's spiritual program for the Gentiles about which Paul wrote in Ephesians 3:1 to 11 and Colossians 1:24 to 28. All of this was hid in God. And therefore the Holy Spirit called it "the secret hid in God," not made known to other ages, "the unsearchable (unprophesied) riches of Christ," "the dispensation of the mystery." Read Colossians 1:24 to 26 and Ephesians 3:3 to 11. In Philippians 1:10 (in the Greek) God says, "distinguish between things that differ." Then we should know that the Divine movement of Acts 15:13 to 15, which agrees with the words of the prophets, is different from the Divine movement of Ephesians 3:8 to 11 and Colossians 1:24 to 27, which was not in agreement with the words of the prophets.

In the first eleven chapters of Acts, the Lord, by the Twelve, presented a kingdom program different from the present "Body" program. Note that twelve men stood up on the day of Pentecost of Acts 2, and presented a message to the twelve tribes of Israel. Acts 2:14 and Acts 2:36. The resurrected Christ was presented as Israel's Prince and Saviour. Acts 5:29 to 32. How different is the message from the truth of Christ far above, Head unto His Body. Ephesians 1:19 to 23.

In Acts 3, if Israel would repent, God would send Christ back to earth to establish His Messianic earthly kingdom. Acts 3:19 to 21. Unless we know that God was carrying on a two-fold program in the first chapters of Acts, we will not rightly divide the Word of Truth. God was offering salvation to individuals, Jews and proselytes, the kingdom to the nation. Christ was raised from the dead to sit on David's throne, Acts 2:27 to 33.

Note Acts 3:24—"Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after as many as have spoken, have likewise FORETOLD OF THESE DAYS." What a contrast with Colossians 1:24 to 26 and Ephesians 3:8 to 11.. All of Israel's prophets knew of the days of Acts 2 and 3. None of Israel's prophets knew of the days of Colossians and Ephesians. Do you think it is pleasing to the Lord to confuse them? Even the babe in Christ should know the difference between Peter's keys of the kingdom of heaven and Paul's dispensation of the grace of God. The messages that Peter preached in the first chapters of Acts were in fulfillment of the Prophecies of Moses, Samuel, David, Joel, Amos, and others. None of this had anything to do with Ephesians 3:8: "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." "Unsearchable" means "untraceable" or "unprophesied."

Do you think it is pleasing to the Lord or satisfying to the earnest spiritual student of the Word to teach or believe that the Jewish feast day (Pentecost) marked the beginning of the Divine Gentilish movement described as a "mystery"? Note again Ephesians 3:1 to 3—"For this cause I Paul the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation He made known unto me the Mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words.)"

Now read II Peter 3:15 and 16—"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction."

Are you numbered with those who wrest Paul's writings? You certainly are, if you are following the interpretation of the Pentecostalists, or even the (anti-Pentecostalist) Fundamentalists, who teach that this present Divine economy began on a Jewish feast day.

Pentecost, Leviticus And Joel's Prophecy

ACTS-PETER AND THE ELEVEN

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.” Acts 2:1.

“And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.” Acts 2:5.

“But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: for these are not drunken as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on My servants and My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy; and I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Acts 2:14 to 21.

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” Acts 2:36 to 39.

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.” Acts 3:19 to 21.

“Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have like. wise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.” Acts 3:24 and 25.

“The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” Acts 5:30 and 31.

LEVITICUS AND JOEL

“In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's passover.” Leviticus 23:5.

“And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the waveoffering: seven sabbaths shall be complete; Even unto the

morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat-offering unto the Lord.” Leviticus 23:15 and 18.

JOEL

“Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly.” Joel 2:15.

“And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil.” Joel 2:13.

“Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will do great things.” Joel 2:21,

“Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God; for He hath given you the former rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.” Joel 2:23.

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My Spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered; for in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.” Joel 2:28 to 32.

“Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat; for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.”

“So shall you know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.”

“But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation.” Joel 3:12, 17 and 20.

In the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus the feasts of Jehovah are recorded. First came the feasts of Passover, Unleavened Bread and Firstfruits. These pointed forward to the once-for-all death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who put away sin when He appeared ONCE in the end of the ages. Hebrews 9:26. This was accomplished by offering Himself once. Then He arose from the dead and became the firstfruits of them that slept.

One of the great blunders, the spiritual crime of the Roman Catholics is that in their eucharist they re-sacrifice the Lord Jesus Christ, keeping Him in the chalice for that purpose in their mass. The letters I.H.S. mean “Jesus the Saviour of Man.” God’s Word is clear. “There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” Hebrews 10:26 and 10:18. The Roman priests have overlooked Hebrews 9:25 and 26—“Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”

The Pentecostalists blunder in that they claim to perpetuate, duplicate, or re-enact the Pentecost of Acts Two. In Leviticus 23:15 and 16 we learn of the feast of Jehovah on the fiftieth day after the feasts of Passover and Firstfruits. In Acts 2:1 we learn that the feast day is called the day of Pentecost. Pentecost comes from “Pentekonta.” “Pentekonta” means “fifty.” “Pente”

means “five.” As the Lord Jesus, our Passover (I Corinthians 5:7), was sacrificed for us once-for-all, so the phenomena of Acts 2, in the city of Jerusalem, with the advent of the Holy Spirit, is not to be re-enacted during the dispensation of grace, outside the city of Jerusalem. Neither is there to be another Pentecost movement in the closing days of this age of grace.

In Acts 20:16 and I Corinthians 16:8, we learn that the Jews at Jerusalem were still keeping Pentecost in that city. Why? Because “their minds were blinded; for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Covenant which is done away in Christ.” II Corinthians 3:14. Like those ignorant blinded Jews, the Pentecostalists today, with the vail untaken away, have a counterfeit Pentecost.

In their interpretation, application and appropriation of the prophecy of Joel, they certainly wrest the Scriptures. They do exceedingly err in taking certain promises of that prophecy completely out of their dispensational setting and force them “undispensationally” into what little they know of “the dispensation of the grace of God” and “the dispensation of the mystery.” Ephesians 3:1 and 2 and 3:9. This present age of grace is a parenthetical period unknown to all of God’s servants until the glorified Christ revealed it to Paul.

Joel’s prophecy foretells Israel’s tribulation, the battle of Armageddon, God’s judgment upon Israel’s Gentile adversaries, and Israel’s deliverance and restoration and kingdom blessings. One key of the prophecy of Joel, that should keep any student of the Word of God from the fallacy and folly of Pentecostalism, is Joel 2:18—“Then will the Lord be jealous for HIS LAND and pity HIS PEOPLE.” Palestine and Israel cannot mean America and the Gentiles. Note also Joel 2:21 and Joel 3:17 and 20: “Fear not, O Land; be glad and rejoice; for the Lord will do great things.” “So shall you know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain; then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.” “But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation.”

What has any of this to do with the members of the Body of Christ in the United States? We are not Israel. The United States is not Israel’s land.

How absurd, when Pentecostalists claim the dreams and visions of Joel 2:28 and 29, “the former and latter rain” of Joel 2:23, but make no claim to the abundant material harvests and wealth of Joel 2:24 that are to be produced by the former and latter rain, which have nothing to do with the Holy Ghost’s work in the believer.

They interpret the former and the latter rain spiritually and claim that in the last days, before the coming of the Lord, the modern Pentecostalist movement is fulfilling prophecy. One can frequently hear the chorus in one of their unscriptural tarrying-meetings, “this is that,” repeating what Peter said on the day of Pentecost, more than 1900 years ago. “But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.” Acts 2:16.

Then note the first part of the statement in Acts 2:17—“And it shall come to pass IN THE LAST DAYS.” Peter declared “this is that.” This is what? Something that was to happen in what LAST DAYS? In the LAST DAYS of the Body of Christ? Certainly not. Joel did not know one thing, or say one thing, about the last days of the Body of Christ, or about the first days, or about any other days that had anything to do with the Body of Christ. The LAST DAYS of Joel spake of Israel’s LAST DAYS, their tribulation and millennium. The truth concerning “the Body of Christ,” “the Church of the Mystery,” was not made known to them. Colossians 1:24 to 27. The LAST DAYS in fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy most assuredly were not the FIRST DAYS of the Body of Christ.

God’s message by Peter was a message to Israel. Twelve men stood up. No women. The number “twelve” is very significant in the Bible and speaks of Israel. When religious people cry

“back to Pentecost” they should demand that twelve Pentecostal preachers, all men, stand up. No women. They should see to it that in the assemblies, when the Pentecostals are speaking with tongues, the women keep silent, I Corinthians 14:34. Some one has truly said, if you take the women out of the Pentecostal tongues movement, it would stop moving.

But the Pentecostals are not the only deluded ones, who have the last days of Israel, in Acts 2:17, mark the first day of the Body of Christ. What confusion and misunderstandings result when the endeavor is made to begin the Body of Christ with Peter’s keys of the kingdom of heaven instead of with Paul’s dispensation of grace and ministry of reconciliation, after His name was changed to Paul. How important are the messages of Acts 13:46— Acts 14:27— Acts 18:5 and 6 and Romans 11:15. Read these, and do not begin the dispensation of the grace of God and reconciliation for Gentiles or open the Gentile door of faith before God did.

The postponement of the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy, the tribulation, and the Messianic kingdom, meant the beginning of the dispensation of the mystery and the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:5 and 6. But neither the death of Christ, nor the sermon of the Twelve in Acts Two, marked that postponement. Acts 5:29 to 32 is God’s answer to the foolish statement that Israel had been set aside on the day of Pentecost. On the other hand, Romans 11:15 and II Corinthians 5:16 to 19 is the answer to the foolish statement that the Body of Christ did not have its historic beginning until after the close of the “Acts” period, after the judgment of Acts 28:25 to 28.

It does seem that God is using the rod of Pentecostal fanaticism to bring to their senses the “grace” preachers, among Fundamentalists, who teach that the dispensation of the mystery began with Peter on a Jewish feast day, instead of with Saul, after his name was changed to Paul. They will still say that there was no difference between the gospel **OF** the circumcision committed to Peter and the gospel **OF** the uncircumcision committed to Paul (Galatians 2:7). They add to the confusion by teaching that Paul perpetuated the same message and spiritual program which began with Peter and Pentecost.

The answer to Pentecostalism, Seventh Day Adventism, Anglo Israelism, and every ill and “ism” with which the Body of Jesus Christ is afflicted, is Pauline Grace Truth, the understanding of Ephesians 3:1 to 11 and 4:1 to 14.

Note one reason why these truths are written:

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.” Ephesians 4:14.

MESSAGE NUMBER 46

APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

The study of the number “twelve” in the Bible is a very interesting one. For some reason God ordained that there should be twelve tribes of Israel, so Jacob (Israel) had twelve sons.

Then in Matthew 10:2 to 5 we learn the names of the twelve apostles chosen by Christ. Among the twelve was Judas Iscariot.

Note these words of the Lord Jesus concerning Judas:

“BUT THERE ARE SOME OF YOU THAT BELIEVE NOT. FOR JESUS KNEW FROM THE BEGINNING WHO THEY WERE THAT BELIEVED NOT, AND WHO SHOULD BETRAY HIM.” “JESUS ANSWERED THEM, HAVE NOT I CHOSEN YOU TWELVE, AND ONE OF YOU IS A DEVIL? HE SPAKE OF JUDAS ISCARIOT THE SON OF SIMON: FOR HE IT WAS THAT SHOULD BETRAY HIM, BEING ONE OF THE TWELVE.” John 6:64, 70 and 71.

Note again in the prayer of the Lord Jesus:

“WHILE I WAS WITH THEM IN THE WORLD, I KEPT THEM IN THY NAME: THOSE THAT THOU GAVEST ME I HAVE KEPT, AND NONE OF THEM IS LOST, BUT THE SON OF PERDITION; THAT THE SCRIPTURE MIGHT BE FULFILLED.” John 17:12.

Christ said to the twelve apostles, including Judas: “Ye have not chosen Me but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you.” John 15:16.

Then note Matthew 10:5 and 6: “These twelve Jesus sent forth and commanded them saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. “

The twelve apostles were sent to the twelve tribes of Israel. Then after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus we find, in Acts 2:14, that twelve apostles stood up on Israel’s feast day, Pentecost, and addressed “all the house of Israel.” Acts 2:36.

When eleven other apostles stood up that day with Peter to address the twelve tribes of Israel, Matthias stood in the place of Judas. Judas was dead. And surely no intelligent student of the Bible will teach or believe that Judas became a saint by accepting Christ as his Saviour and then became a lost sinner by betraying Christ. Judas was the son of perdition when he was chosen and he was the son of perdition when he died.

JUDAS’ SUCCESSOR

Note the very interesting account of the selection of Judas’ successor:

“MEN AND BRETHREN, THIS SCRIPTURE MUST NEEDS HAVE BEEN FULFILLED, WHICH THE HOLY GHOST BY THE MOUTH OF DAVID SPAKE BEFORE CONCERNING JUDAS, WHICH WAS GUIDE TO THEM THAT TOOK JESUS. FOR HE WAS NUMBERED WITH US, AND HAD OBTAINED PART OF THIS MINISTRY.” “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.” “THAT HE MAY TAKE PART OF THIS MINISTRY, AND APOSTLESHIP FROM WHICH JUDAS BY TRANSGRESSION FELL, THAT HE MIGHT GO TO HIS OWN PLACE. AND THEY GAVE FORTH THEIR LOTS; AND THE LOT FELL UPON MATTHIAS; AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH THE ELEVEN APOSTLES.” Acts 1:16, 17, 20, 25 and 26.

God’s approval was upon the selection of Matthias. Note Acts 2:1: “all with one accord,” Acts 2:46: “with one accord;” Acts 4:32: “with one heart,” There was complete unity.

Matthias was the Lord’s choice to succeed Judas. But now the question; why was a successor necessary? When the Lord Jesus gave His commission to His apostles after His death, in the so-called great commission, Judas had died and the number had been reduced from “twelve” to “eleven”. Matthew 28:16. Mark 16:14. Why did not the Lord Jesus leave the number

“eleven?” Why did they again select the twelfth apostle to Israel? Twelve tribes-twelve apostles. That was the Lord’s plan and program.

So on the day of Pentecost, devout Jews from every nation under heaven were gathered in Jerusalem. Peter and the Eleven stood up. What God inaugurated on that Jewish feast-day was for Israel. Yes, it was by twelve apostles for Israel. These apostles had been instructed not to go to Gentiles. And it is very significant that when many of the Jewish Christians were driven out of Jerusalem, the twelve apostles remained there. Acts 8:1. They were told in Matthew 10:23 “the Son may come before ye have gone over the cities of Israel.”

Peter, James and John were considered the pillars of that Jewish Church at Jerusalem. Note their agreement with Paul some fifteen years after the day of Pentecost: “And when James, Peter and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen and they unto the circumcision.” Galatians 2:9.

Not one of the twelve apostles preached outside of the land of the Jews, so far as there is any record in the Book of Acts. Of the Twelve, Peter preached to the household of Cornelius, the Gentile. When Peter did leave the land of the Jews he got into serious trouble. Galatians 2:11 to 15.

Cornelius loved Israel’s God. Cornelius worshipped Israel’s God. Cornelius loved Israel and gave them money. Acts 10:1, 2 and 22. The other eleven apostles condemned Peter for preaching to Cornelius and his loved ones. Acts 11:1 to 3. This was about seven years after the day of Pentecost when the Twelve stood up together.

Note very carefully Acts 11:19: “Now they that were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the Word, **to none but unto the Jews only.**”

This should make very clear the fact that up to this time the Jewish disciples of the Lord Jesus had preached to no Gentile. Phillip preached to the eunuch, but the eunuch was a proselyte.

The one and only case of apostolic succession is Matthias for Judas.

NO SUCCESSOR FOR JAMES

Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the Church, And he killed James, the brother of John with the sword.” Acts 12:1 and 2.

James was the second one of the original twelve apostles to die. Judas was the first. Judas died and a successor was chosen. James died, and no successor was chosen.

And observe these most important and significant facts: Up to the death of James, in Acts 12:1 and 2, the “Acts” record is filled with the spiritual activities of Peter and the Eleven, Peter and John, the testimony of the Twelve. From Acts 13:2 to Acts 28:28, the “Acts” record is filled with the spiritual activities of another man, Saul, who became Paul. In these later chapters Paul is mentioned more than one hundred times and there is no record of the words or doings of Peter or any of the Twelve except as they had dealings with this chief human actor, Paul.

Therefore, when we learn that through the years covered by the first eleven chapters of Acts, the Lord kept the number of apostles at “Twelve,” we should know there was a Divine purpose in it, and that God was dealing with Israel in a manner different than His dealings with that Nation after the new commission of Acts 13:2. Then the new Divine Movement was declared in Romans 11:15.

Now let us note the Lord’s promise to the twelve apostles:”

“And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Matthew 19:28.

Meditate upon this and believe it. Get the future earthly glory of the Twelve **fixed in your mind.**

Now let us read carefully the description of the heavenly city in Revelation 21. We quote two verses: “And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are **the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.**” “And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them **the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.**” Revelation 21:12 and 14.

No successor was chosen to take the place of James. The Lord was no longer interested in twelve apostles. Therefore the Lord’s attitude toward the twelve tribes was changing. Israel was going to be set aside and a radical change in God’s spiritual program was to begin. God required twelve apostles from the day of Pentecost to the death of James. After Acts 13:2, God no longer required twelve apostles.

A NEW COMMISSION

“As they ministered and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

Separate unto me Saul (Paul).

Note Paul’s testimony:

“But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” “Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.” Galatians 1:11, 12 and 17. “But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were it maketh no matter to me; God accepted no man’s person): for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me; But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter.” Galatians 2:6 and 7.

Then this further testimony

“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.” Romans 11:13.

“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24.

“That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.” Romans 15:16.

UNTO PETER

Unto Peter were committed “the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 16:16 to 19. Unto Peter was committed “the gospel of the circumcision.” Galatians 2:7. We must study the first eleven chapters of Acts with these facts in mind.

UNTO PAUL

What was committed to Paul?

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation He made known unto me the Mystery (as I wrote afore in few words).” “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Ephesians 3:1 to 3 and 8. “Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” “Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.” II Timothy 1:9 and 11.

If we do not know the difference between Peter’s keys of the kingdom and Paul’s dispensation of the grace of God, we should be ashamed workmen. If we don’t know the difference between Peter’s gospel of the circumcision and Paul’s gospel of the uncircumcision, we have ignored II Timothy 2:15.

Note Peter’s words in Acts 3:24 and compare them with Paul’s words in Ephesians 3:8: Peter, in Acts 3:24, referred to the prophesied “Kingdom” days of Israel. But Paul’s declaration was altogether different. “Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Ephesians 3:8.

Note Peter’s declaration:

“Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.” Acts 3:24.

All the prophets of Israel spoke of Peter’s message. Not one of them knew anything about Paul’s “unsearchable riches of Christ.” “Unsearchable” means “unprophesied.”

Something new began with the new commission of Acts 13:2.

After that Israel committed the unpardonable sin and the truth of Romans 11:25, 26 and 15 was revealed

“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits: that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” “For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead.”

Israel was not set aside while there were eleven other apostles associated with Peter. In the first eleven chapters of Acts we have something of the kingdom program which the Lord will carry on after God’s purpose during this age has been accomplished.

Everything that Peter and the Eleven preached according to the first eleven chapters of Acts was in fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures, and therefore that spiritual program had nothing to do with “the dispensation of the mystery” which had been hid in God from before the foundation of the world: Ephesians 3:9.

Let us always recognize the difference between the prophesied Kingdom of heaven and the unprophesied “Body” of Christ: Ephesians 3:5 to 9 - Colossians 1:24 to 27.

MESSAGE NUMBER 47

THE FIVE HORSEMEN OF REVELATION

FAMINE THE UNFAILING ALLY OF WAR.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was on earth He presented Himself to Israel as their promised King and Messiah. But the sad story is, “He came unto His own and His own received Him not.” Pilate the heathen judge asked Israel’s rulers, “shall I crucify your King?” They answered, “we have no king but Caesar.” Jesus Christ was despised and rejected of men. He was indeed the Man of sorrows acquainted with grief. He was the Stone rejected by the builders.

When Israel rejected the Lord Jesus He called their attention to the prophecy, that the builders would reject the Stone, and that Stone would become the Head of the corner. Matthew 21:40 to 43. When Israel rejected Christ, God rejected Israel and sent Paul to the Gentiles.

In order that we may clearly understand what is generally called “The New Testament Scriptures,” we must see the two-fold rejection of Christ by Israel; once in His incarnation and again in His resurrection. In rejecting Israel Christ pronounced some awful judgments upon them, in Matthew 21:11 to 46—Matthew 22:7—Matthew 23:29 to 39, and Luke 21:20 to 31.

Because of Israel’s rejection of Christ in incarnation, Divine punishment would fall on them. That punishment is also stated in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, in answer to the question of Christ’s apostles. “What shall be the sign of Thy coming and the end of the world (age)?” Matthew 24:3. That chapter deals with Israel’s great tribulation, prophesied by Jeremiah, Daniel and other prophets. That tribulation is described in Revelation.

Because of Israel’s rejection of Christ in resurrection, Divine judgment would fall on them, which would mean rich, spiritual blessings for the Gentiles. That punishment is told in the eleventh chapter of Romans, in answer to the question, “hath God cast away His people (Israel)?” The answer is:

“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” Romans 11:25 and 26.

Since the words of Romans Eleven Israel has been an outcast nation for nearly 1900 years, a God-forsaken people, but a remnant has been supernaturally preserved.

During Israel’s blindness and rejection the grace of God. that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, and all Gentiles who have been wise enough to be the recipients of God’s grace, and have taken advantage of the free gift, have learned something of the meaning of Romans 11:30 and 11:15. “For as ye (Gentiles) in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their (Israel’s) unbelief.” “For if the casting away of them (Israel) be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?”

Here we learn that the Gentiles have obtained mercy because of Israel’s blindness and unbelief. Here we learn that the message of reconciliation was sent to Gentiles when and because Israel was set aside.

But, of course, individual Israelites may trust in the redemptive work of Christ, and be justified “without a cause by God’s grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

Romans 3:24. In every way we are living in “the times of the Gentiles.” In the last three chapters of II Kings, and the last three chapters of Jeremiah, we are told how and why “the times of the Gentiles” (politically) began, In the eleventh chapter of Romans we are told how and why “the times of the Gentiles” (spiritually) began. We must mark these two radical changes in our Bibles, if we would understand God’s program and purpose during this age, past ages, and in the ages to come.

THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

In Luke 21:20 to 33, we are told how “the times of the Gentiles” will end. This is also told in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew. It is very interesting and instructive to observe that the times of the Gentiles began with war and famine, Note II Kings 25:3 and 4 and Jeremiah 52:6 and 7: “On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land. And the city was broken up and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king’s garden: (now the Chaldeans were against the city round about:) and the king went the way toward the plain.” II Kings 25:3 and 4: “In the fourth month, in the ninth day of the month, the famine was sore in the city so that there was no bread for the people of the land. Then the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled, and went forth out of the city by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king’s garden; (now the Chaldeans were by the city round about:) and they went by the way of the plain.” Jeremiah 52:6 and 7.

And in Matthew 24:3 to 13 we learn that. the times of the Gentiles will end with war and famine: “Many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars; see that ye be not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not. yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. Matthew 24:5 to 7.

Now let us note in Revelation 6:1 to 9, concerning the anti-Christ movement. war, famine, and pestilence:

“AND I SAW WHEN THE LAMB OPENED ONE OF THE SEALS, AND I HEARD, AS IT WERE THE NOISE OF THUNDER, ONE OF THE FOUR BEASTS SAYING, COME AND SEE. AND I SAW, AND BEHOLD A WHITE HORSE; AND HE THAT SAT ON HIM HAD A BOW; AND A CROWN WAS GIVEN UNTO HIM; AND HE WENT FORTH CONQUERING, AND TO CONQUER. AND WHEN HE HAD OPENED THE SECOND SEAL, I HEARD THE SECOND BEAST SAY, COME AND SEE. AND THERE WENT OUT ANOTHER HORSE THAT WAS RED; AND POWER WAS GIVEN TO HIM THAT SAT THEREON TO TAKE PEACE FROM THE EARTH, AND THAT THEY SHOULD KILL ONE ANOTHER; AND THERE WAS GIVEN UNTO HIM A GREAT SWORD. AND WHEN HE HAD OPENED THE; THIRD SEAL, I HEARD THE THIRD BEAST SAY, COME AND SEE. AND I BEHELD, AND LO A BLACK HORSE; AND HE THAT SAT ON HIM HAD A PAIR OF BALANCES IN HIS HAND. AND I HEARD A VOICE IN THE MIDST OF THE FOUR BEASTS SAY, A MEASURE OF WHEAT FOR A PENNY, AND THREE MEASURES OF BARLEY FOR A PENNY; AND SEE THOU HURT NOT THE OIL AND THE WINE. AND WHEN HE HAD OPENED THE FOURTH SEAL, I HEARD THE VOICE OF THE FOURTH BEAST SAY, COME AND SEE. AND I LOOKED, AND BEHOLD A PALE HORSE;

AND HIS NAME THAT SAT ON HIM WAS DEATH, AND HELL. FOLLOWED WITH HIM. AND POWER WAS GIVEN UNTO THEM OVER THE FOURTH PART OF THE EARTH, TO KILL WITH SWORD, AND WITH HUNGER, AND WITH DEATH, AND WITH THE BEASTS OF THE EARTH. AND WHEN HE HAD OPENED THE FIFTH SEAL, I SAW UNDER THE ALTAR THE SOULS OF THEM THAT WERE SLAIN FOR THE WORD OF GOD, AND FOR THE TESTIMONY WHICH THEY HELD."

It is interesting to know that famine is mentioned more than ninety-eight times in the Bible. About twenty-five times sword and famine are mentioned in the same Scripture. Jeremiah 5:12—14:2, 15 and 16—21:7—24:10—27:8 and 13—29:17 and 18—32:24 and 38—34:17—38:2—42:17 and 22—44:3 and 12—Ezekiel 6:11 and 12—7:15—12:16—14:19 and 21—28:23—33:27—38:22—Habakkuk 3:5—Matthew 24:7—Luke 21:11.

We note that the "red horse" rider of Revelation has a great sword for war and that the "black horse" rider has a pair of balances in his hands to weigh food. Famine follows the war. Famine has always followed war. War has always followed a spiritual famine, a time of spiritual declension, or some anti-Christ religious movement.

SWORD AND FAMINE

We have often heard the statement "experience is a great teacher," "we profit by experience." And we also hear the expression "history repeats itself." The sinful people of 1941 A.D. are very much like the sinful people of 600 B.C. "For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against Me, saith the Lord. They have belied the Lord and said, It is not He; neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword nor famine." Jeremiah 5:11 and 12. But note God's answer: "Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that prophesy in My name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land; By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed. And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; and they shall have none to bury them, them, their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters: for I will pour their wickedness upon them." Jeremiah 14:15 and 16.

"And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers." Jeremiah 24:10.

Note the awful judgment which God pronounced upon His own people because of their sins:

"And I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence, and will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and an hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven them. Because they have not hearkened to My words, saith the Lord, which I sent unto them by My servants, the prophets, rising up early and sending them; but ye would not hear, saith the Lord." Jeremiah 29:18 and 19.

Now God gives this warning to the Gentiles: "For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee." Romans 11:21. Why should God spare the sinful and ungodly Gentile rulers and people if He spared not His own nation, Israel?

Behold today the Germany that gave us the Reformation with the message of justification by faith, and the beginning of a new era! Think of the corruption of Rome, which boasts of being the chief city of Christendom, with the holy see. What may we expect to follow the present outrages of the blood-thirsty tyrants of Europe?

We say that famine has always been the unfailing ally of war, and if famine is not to be the ally of war in the present world conflict, this war will certainly be the exception.

Note the order

1. spiritual declension.
2. war
3. Famine
4. pestilence.

Many Christian preachers were sure that the world war, famine, and pestilence of 1914 to 1919 would cause multitudes to turn to God and the Bible. We do thank God, that, as the result of what transpired, many Christians saw the folly of Postmillennialism, and became Premillenarians. But there never has been more worldliness and apostacy among church members than there has been during the past twenty years, and God has again permitted an awful war to be waged.

Now every day the reports are coming from Europe that the inhabitants of that country are facing the spectre of famine. They very much fear that there will be a real shortage of food in most of the invaded and conquered lands. Where there is not a short harvest there is a shortage of men; men who should be out in the fields of wheat, with agricultural implements, are on the bloody battle fields with their hellish implements of war.

Now the question which is in the minds and hearts of so many of God's people today, is whether the present European conflict has anything to do with the fulfillment of Matthew Twenty-four or Revelation Six. Has the red horse and his rider of Revelation 6:3 and 4 arrived? Will the black horse and his rider appear on the scene before this war is over?

If history is to repeat itself, most assuredly famine and pestilence will follow this awful war. And in addition to these sorrows undoubtedly there will be insurrection, rebellion and revolution. Only God knows the horrors ahead. But the intelligent, spiritual, diligent student of the Bible knows that the four horsemen of the Apocalypse will not ride while the Body of Christ is in the making. God's definite specific purpose during this present dispensation of grace, is to complete the Body of Christ. Ephesians 4:10 to 14.

The Messianic Kingdom of Christ is to be established after this present dispensation has been brought to an end. The Kingdom is to be established when Jesus Christ comes as the Son of man and King, to deliver Israel from their great tribulation.

During this present parenthetical period, the dispensation of the mystery is to be made known. Ephesians 3:9. When the child of God knows this great truth concerning the Church of the Mystery, he will not expect the white horse rider of Revelation Six, or the white horse rider of Revelation Nineteen, until after the rapture of the Body.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

In order that we may understand the five horsemen of Revelation, let us study the verses with some verses in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew and the twenty-first of Luke.

REVELATION

“And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went

forth conquering, and to conquer: And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and to a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine. And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held." Revelation 6:1 to 9.

"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind." Revelation 6:12 and 13.

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat on him was called Faithful and True and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God" Revelation 19:11 to 13.

"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, against His army." Revelation 19:19.

The beast and the false prophet were cast into the lake of fire.

MATTHEW AND LUKE

"For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for My name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another." Matthew 24:5 to 10.

"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Matthew 24:21.

"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matthew 24:30.

"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. And He spake to them a parable; behold, the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and care of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." Luke 21:24 to 34.

We can understand the meaning of the five horsemen of Revelation by carefully studying the order in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew.

Note the order:

1. Anti-Christ.
2. Wars
3. Famine
4. Pestilence
5. Persecution of saints
6. Earthquakes
7. Signs in the heavens
8. The coming of the Son of man - the fifth Horseman. Revelation 19:11 to 19.

It would seem, from this order, that the great tribulation will begin with the appearance and doings of the first white horse rider, and that the appearance and doings of the second white horse Rider will bring an end to the great tribulation. The great tribulation was prophesied in Jeremiah 30:6 to 9. "Ask ye now and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that. none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out. of it. For it shall come to pass in that. day, saith the Lord of hosts, that. I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them."

Thus we learn that the great tribulation is prophesied concerning Israel; and inasmuch as God's spiritual program concerning the Body of Christ was not prophesied by Jeremiah, or any of Israel's prophets, the sixth chapter of Revelation and the twenty-fourth of Matthew have nothing to do with this present dispensation of grace or the Body of Christ.

Again, note Luke 21:28 to 31: "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads: for your redemption draweth nigh. And He spake to them a parable; Behold, the fig tree, and all the. trees: When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." Whose redemption will be nigh when the signs begin to come to pass? What kingdom of God will he nigh when these signs are seen? Israel's redemption will be at hand. Israel's prophesied Messianic kingdom will be at hand.

THIS GRACE ECONOMY

In the meantime, what is at hand? “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” Titus 2:11. “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.” Romans 14:17. “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: In Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” Colossians 1:13 and 14. “And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” Ephesians 4:30.

Those who are in the kingdom of the Son of God’s love, during this dispensation of grace, are members of the JointBody of Ephesians 3:6, and they are sealed with the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption. As to this day of redemption we read, in I Corinthians 15:51, “Behold, I shew you a secret, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” The day of redemption for members of the Body of Christ means the resurrection of their bodies. They will receive bodies of glory to appear with Christ in glory. Therefore they are looking for His glorious appearing, Philippians 3:20 and 21, Colossians 3:3 and 4—Titus 2:13. None of the signs of Luke Twenty-one, Matthew Twenty-four or Revelation Six will precede the redemption mentioned in Ephesians 4:30. But they will all precede the redemption mentioned in Luke 21:28, Israel’s redemption.

The coming of the Son of man in power and great glory will follow the great tribulation. This coming and tribulation have nothing to do with “the dispensation of the Mystery (Secret)” mentioned in Ephesians 3:9. The Lord Jesus Christ is not the Son of man to the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6, of which He is the Head. This Church of the Mystery will be safe with Christ in glory before Israel and the nations are plunged into their time of sorrow.

The coming of the Fifth Horseman is not His coming for the Church, but His coming to deliver Israel at the time of Armageddon.

But this does not mean that famine and pestilence and anarchy will not follow the present wars, whether or not members of Christ’s Body leave the earth or remain here. Many who know the conditions in Europe are sure that a great famine is not far off. We read in Ezekiel 6:11 and 12: “. . . they shall fall by the sword, by the famine and by the pestilence . . . he that is near shall fall by the sword and he that remaineth . . . shall die by the famine.” So in every dispensation famine and war are allies.

So war and famine are allies and always come after a spiritual famine: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor of thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.” Amos 8:11.

MESSAGE NUMBER 48

ONE BODY - ONE BAPTISM - DIVIDED UNITY

AND UNSAVED CHURCH MEMBERS

Very frequently we hear the remark I heard this week, “It does not make any difference whether we are Catholics or Protestants, whether we are Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, or Lutherans, if we try to do right, we are all going to the same heaven.” Frequently the question is asked, “to what church do you belong?” Or, “wouldn’t you like to join

our church?" There are many people who think they are Christians because they have joined some church organization. If there are as many varieties of Christians as there are sectarian churches, there are quite a number.

In the Bible we read about Christians and Churches, but we do not find one word about Catholics, Protestants, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians or Lutherans. In the Bible we read about heaven and learn how to get there. The only genuine Christian is the "Bible" Christian. The only genuine heaven is the "Bible" heaven. The only sure way to become a Christian and to get to heaven is the "Bible" way. The Bible declares, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof are the ways of death." What a delusion! What a disaster! What a serious mistake! Just think of it! A man thinks he is saved and on the way to eternal glory when he is really lost and on the way to eternal perdition. A person can ill afford to make: Such a blunder and most assuredly he cannot correct his mistake after he has reached his eternal destiny. We can afford to make other mistakes, but not this one.

Did you ever read these words in the Bible, "Yea, let God be true, though every man a liar"? God is infallible. Man is fallible. God has provided man with an infallible Guide, His infallible Word, the Bible. In that Book we can learn of the whence and the whither of the human race: how men became sinners and how they can become righteous. The Bible records the story of death by Adam, and life by Christ.

We read in this infallible, Divine Record, of these two outstanding unique men, "Adam" and "Christ." "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the Second Man is the Lord from heaven." I Corinthians 15:47. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 5:19 and 21.

In Adam all men are sinners, alienated from God. But there is good news for alienated sinners in Romans 5:10: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." And II Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Then it is interesting to compare Genesis 2:21 to 24 with Ephesians 5:31 and 32:

"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof: And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Genesis 2:21 to 24.

Note now Ephesians 5:31 and 32:

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

As Eve was a part of Adam and joined to him as one flesh, so the Church is a part of Christ and joined to Him as one flesh. Then we read in I Corinthians 6:17: "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." Then note I Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free: and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

God has but one place of salvation, safety, and security for the children of Adam, that is, “in Christ”; in the Church of Christ, that-is, in the Body of Christ. There is no salvation apart from Christ, apart from the death of Christ. God demands faith in the crucified and resurrected Christ for salvation, for entrance into heaven: “For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Any and all men are eligible for salvation. Any and all rational men can exercise “God-given” faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thereby receive from God His free gift, which is eternal life.

God has but one Church into which He baptizes believing sinners, and that Church is the “Bible” Church, a non-sectarian Church, called “the Body of Christ.” A group of church officials can receive a person into some sectarian religious organization or denominational church, and that person may, or may not, be saved; but even the superficial student of the Bible knows that God does not baptize any person into any sectarian organization. Joining such a religious organization neither assures the “joiner” of salvation from sin, nor guarantees him heaven. The Bible does not say, “if any man be in the Catholic Church, or in the Protestant Church, he is a new creation,” but, “if any man be in Christ Jesus.”

For the man in Christ Jesus, God has wonderful, blessed, glorious good news. Colossians 2:10: “And ye are complete in Him, Which is the Head of all principality and power.” Ephesians 1:6, 7, and 3: “To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ.”

Stop! Consider! Meditate! Then praise the Lord! “Complete in Christ”—“Accepted in Christ”—“Redeemed and forgiven”—“Blessed with all spiritual blessings.”

Then note the blessed union and unity of all redeemed sinners:

“For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one Body in Christ, and every one members one of another.” Romans 12:4 and 5.

Is it any wonder then we read in I Corinthians 12:25: “That there should be no schism (division) in the Body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.” In this same Epistle Paul asks this question: “Is Christ divided?” I Corinthians 1:13.

ONE CHRIST-ONE BODY

How many Christs are there? One. This is stated in Ephesians 4:5: “One Lord, one faith, one baptism.” Christ is a Man. How many bodies does a man have? One This is stated in Ephesians 4:4: “There is One Body and One Spirit, even as ye are called in One Hope of your calling.”

Every intelligent Christian, who studies the Bible, is fully aware of these plain, positive and pertinent statements. They know that there is one, and only one, true Bible Church for this age, and that there is one, and only one, baptism for this age. But at the same time they are aware of the fact that there are more than 300 sectarian churches and more than 30 different baptisms. They grieve over this divided unity, but confess that they are powerless to remedy the situation; so they just look on helpless and hopeless waiting till the Lord comes to clear up the confusion.

When the one Body is complete and the Lord comes for His one Body, they will appear with Him in glory. Colossians 3: 3 and 4. According to Ephesians 2:15— Ephesians 1:23—and Ephesians 4:13, Christ and His Body will be One New Man, the Perfect Man, the fulness of

Christ. None of the sectarian names will have any place in heaven. There will be no Catholics, Protestants, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Lutherans, as such, in heaven; only those who are new creatures in Christ Jesus: "That in the ages to come He might skew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Ephesians 2:7.

Every gift of God to man, and for man, is for one specific, definite purpose in this age

"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying (building up) of the Body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Ephesians 4:12 and 13.

GOD'S BUILDING

God is building saints (sinners saved by grace) into the Body of Christ, and then building them up in that Body; and every member of that Body is thus instructed in Ephesians 4:7: "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." This grace is given to members of the Body of Christ that they may obey Ephesians 4:3 to 6:

"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Most sectarian Christians make no attempt to obey the will of God expressed in these verses. Some sectarian Christians tell us they can be loyal sectarians, still have their different denominational creeds and programs, their different baptisms, and obey Ephesians 4:3 to 6. But they have not prayerfully studied the third and fourth chapters of Ephesians. The Divine Truth in these chapters is God's death-blow to sectarianism and sectarian baptismal ceremonies. No man can be clever enough to wrest the meaning of Ephesians Three and Four to mean many sects and several baptisms, when God says positively and plainly "One Body" and "One Baptism."

When the Lord Jesus was on earth He prayed so earnestly for the unity of His disciples:

"That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

The Epistle to the Ephesians contains a message of union and unity. Members of the one Body are one flesh with Christ. God is making One New Man. and God is building one Temple, which is being fitly framed together, "buildd together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Ephesians 2:21 and 22. The Body-members are to grow up into Christ in all things, which is the Head. Ephesians 4:15. The whole Body is fitly framed together, making increase of the Body unto its building up. Ephesians 4:16. Only one Head of the Bible Church. He is far above in the heavenlies. Ephesians 1:19 to 23.

Are Catholics, Protestants, Methodists, Baptists. Presbyterians and Lutherans fitly joined together, making increase of the Body unto its building up They are unfitly torn asunder and in competition making increase of their denominational membership. Note main Ephesians 4:12:

"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ."

Building up of sectarianism is in opposition to God's will expressed in Ephesians.

In all the Bibles used by all of these denominations, the truth of Ephesians 4:12 and 13 is clearly set forth, that the Lord is not building any denominational organizations, but one spiritual organism, the Body of Christ: and this will continue, not until the Church brings in the millennium, but

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a Perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:13.

Members of Christ’s Body are exhorted, in Ephesians 4:1 and 2, to walk worthy of the calling wherewith they are called. They are instructed in I Corinthians 3:10 to take heed how they build together. They are told in I Timothy 3:15 and 16, how to behave in the House of God. They are instructed in II Timothy 2:19 to 21, how to be vessels of honor in God’s Great House. Members of the Body are told, in II Timothy 2:15, that one of the requisites to be such a vessel, is to rightly divide the Word of Truth. In fact, a member of Christ’s Body will not, and cannot, obey any of these instructions unless he rightly divides the Word of Truth. This is the division that the Lord desires instead of the sectarian divisions which are wholly contrary to the will of God.

In Paul’s later ministry he was chosen to preach among the Gentiles the UNSEARCHABLE riches of Christ (Ephesians 3:8) and to complete the Word of God with the UNSEARCHABLE riches of Christ, the Mystery. Colossians 1:25 and 26. For his obedience to the Lord for preaching this distinctive Divine (Pauline) message, Paul landed in jail. Ephesians 6:19 and 20—Colossians 4:3 and 4—II Timothy 2:8 and 9. For preaching the UNSEARCHABLE riches of Christ to Gentiles, Paul suffered as an evil doer unto bonds. II Timothy 2:8 and 9.

The Mystery had been God’s Secret before the foundation of the world. Ephesians 3:9. This glorious Truth was not made known to, or by, any servant of the Lord until revealed to, and through, Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles. Romans 11:13, Romans 16:25 and 26. Therefore, the Holy Spirit called this different message “the UNSEARCHABLE (UNTRACEABLE) riches of Christ.” It was truth separate and distinct from any spiritual program concerning Christ and His people, revealed to Israel’s prophets and prophesied by any of them.

The member of the Body of Christ who does not recognize the difference between the prophesied and the unprophesied riches of Christ, and who fails to subject himself to this difference in creed and conduct, will be a workman that needeth to be ashamed. And most assuredly he will not obey Ephesians 3:9: “And to make all men see what is the dispensation of the Mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.” Should not every Body-member obey this specific instruction? What are you doing about it?

The member of the Body of Christ who does not contend for the “ONE BODY,” the “ONE SPIRIT,” the “ONE HOPE,” the “ONE LORD,” the “ONE FAITH,” the “ONE BAPTISM,” the “ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL,” of Ephesians 4:4 to 6, will certainly disobey Ephesians 4:3: “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Think of the responsibility of the spiritual leaders of God’s people! Think of those among these leaders who know this glorious Truth of the One Body and the One Baptism, but who, by their silence and compromise, for personal advantage, make no attempt to open their mouths boldly to preach the Mystery. Ephesians 6:19 and 20. They can read in their Bibles Paul’s words of Colossians 1:25 and 26. Some of them cowardly acquiesce to the attitude and action of the zealous denominationalists, or baptizers, who malign, abuse, disfellowship, ridicule, or boycott those who oppose their unscriptural sectarianism and their undispensational baptism theories.

The Unity that the Bible clearly teaches is, “there is ONE and only ONE BODY, ONE and only ONE BAPTISM.” Grace preachers are agreed that salvation is by grace, that no water ceremony is required for the believing sinner’s salvation and membership in the Body of Christ. But the persecuting baptizers, after acknowledging that a believing sinner can be joined to Christ

in an inseparable and eternal union, and become a member of His Body without water, declare “you can’t join me without some kind of a water ceremony, sprinkling, pouring or immersing.” One by one they are being forced, by their own inconsistencies, to teach that the One Baptism of Ephesians 4:5, is water.

Then they are in a predicament, for if the One Baptism of Ephesians 4:5 is the act of a man, the very contest proves that the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5, makes the believer a member of the One Body of Ephesians 4:4. Therefore water baptism is required for salvation and Body-membership; and therefore, salvation is by grace, plus a religious ceremony.

Every honest and intelligent student of the Scriptures knows that the baptism of Romans 6:3 and 4, Galatians 3:27, Colossians 2:12, and Ephesians 4:5, is as efficacious as the baptism of I Corinthians 12:13, and transforms the sinner. Therefore every such student, who is consistent, will either join with the Campbellites and Pentecostals in “water regeneration,” or acknowledge that religious baptism ceased when God’s religious nation, Israel, was set aside.

THE HOUSE OF GOD

J. C. O’Hair

**God’s building a house, a Temple Divine;
Not a temple of stone, nor an earthly shrine;
Not a building of brick, with steeple and dome,
But a spiritual House, called God’s Home.
The Body of Christ this House is named,
By the Spirit of God this House is framed:
A place on earth for God to dwell;
Christ gave to Paul this Truth to tell.**

**God’s purpose in grace, His eternal plan;
The fulness of Christ, called “the One New Man:”
The Mystery of God for centuries sealed,
Unknown, untold; but at last revealed.
Christ told it to Paul, unto Paul alone;
Now the Secret was his, to make it known.
In the heavens above, Christ has His seat;
There to remain ‘till His Body’s complete.**

**A structure of men, of women, yea, all
Who hear God’s voice and obey His call;
Called out by Him from the human race,
Chosen in Christ and redeemed by grace;
By faith alone in God’s holy Son,
Because of His work on Calvary done.
In the Saviour, Christ, they are creatures new,
Dead with Christ and buried too.**

**Risen with Him Who is far above;
Redeemed by His blood, God’s mercy and love;**

Complete in Christ, God's risen Son,
This company of saints, with Him, are one.
One Spirit, one flesh, saved and secure;
The foundation of God is standing sure;
Joined to Christ, Head over all,
The Mystery of God revealed to Paul.

This Secret Divine, this Truth profound,
Was told by Paul, the prisoner bound.
For telling this Truth the jail was his home,
But he continued to tell it from his cell in Rome.
"Pray," wrote Paul, "yea, God implore
For an open mouth and an open door;
That this glorious Truth all men may see
This Secret of God revealed to me."

The unity will come, 'tis the Father's plan
The Stature of Christ, the perfect Man;
The capstone of Truth, to complete God's Word;
By saints today, is seldom heard.
As builders with God, by His wisdom and might
Let us study His Word and divide it aright;
As He completes His Church, His Temple Divine,
The House of God, your home and mine.

Let us join with Paul and earnestly pray
That the Father of glory in His own way,
May reveal to many His purpose and plan
The Head and the Body, One New Man.
Make all men see what God wants shown,
Many years ago to Paul made known,
The Secret of God, to gather in One
All things in Christ, His beloved Son.

GRACE

Wonderful, marvelous, infinite grace, abounding more than sin;
When Christ at Calvary took our place, He was man; but God within.
The worldly rulers never knew God's mystery revealed,
The Lord of glory there they slew, Him Whom God had sealed.

Rich was He in heaven above, in the form of God up there;
Bosomed in His Father's love. He saw us in despair,
Ruined, hopeless, helpless, weak; like sheep all gone astray;
He will come the lost to seek, to put our sin away.

In tender mercy down He came; came to save the lost;
Creator here with human frame; see what sin has cost.
Not all the silver and the gold could for guilt atone;
No scheme of man that's new or old; but Christ Himself alone.

Yes, lower than the angels made, made to suffer death;
All our sins on Him were laid, when He yielded up His breath,
Willing all our guilt to bear, to die for you and me;
"Finished" cried the Saviour there, nailed to Calvary's tree.

Now what work must man supply beside what Christ hath done?
Our God will freely justify all who trust His Son,
This is grace, yes grace Divine, sufficient grace indeed;
Abounding grace that knows no line: for the vilest sinner's need.

Every claim Christ satisfied to clear the human race;
Between two thieves He bled and died. O what matchless grace
Death with Him was but a spell; He took up the life He gave,
God did not leave His soul in hell, nor His body in the grave.

Death abolished, He has its key, and the key of hades too;
Such a Christ for you and me, a living Saviour true.
A risen Christ at God's right hand, Whose love has never ceased;
All power known at His command, an interceding Priest.

In heaven, on His Father's throne, that blessed throne of grace,
Pleading ever for His own, He's never lost a case.
He's never lost a single one, never failed to keep
All the Father gives the Son, that Shepherd of the sheep.

He seals them with the Holy Ghost, unto redemption day:
Saves them to the uttermost; Hear the Saviour pray,
My glory, Father, let them see; My glory let them share,
Where I am, pray, let them be; God has heard that prayer.

Grace is this, and nothing less; only grace can tell
Why a sinner God should bless, and save his soul from hell.
In Adam none will heaven reach, not a single man,
In Christ alone Who healed the breach, believing sinners can.

While with patience here below we run for Christ the race,
What a blessed fact to know, sufficient is His grace.
Here surrounded by our foes, with conflicts all around;
In the midst of all our woes He makes His grace abound.

If in fervent prayer we ask, we'll never be denied;

For every trial, every task, grace shall be supplied.
Whatever sickness or distress, sorrow, wound, or ache.
When heavy burdens sorely press, from that supply we take.

Exceeding riches of His grace, in ages after this
When we've reached that heavenly place to enjoy eternal bliss.
God the Father then will show, in kindness through His Son,
There in glory we shall know, know every chosen one.

No matter what your temporal gain, if your soul you lose;
All this life will prove but vain, if Christ you do not choose.
This is still the day of grace, the door is open wide;
Faith will find for you a place, a place with Christ inside.

Answer then the Spirit, yes, as He convicts of sin,
Christ, as Saviour, then confess; and He will enter in.
Eternal life with Him above, victory here and peace;
Dwelling in eternal love, His grace shall never cease.

MESSAGE NUMBER 49

RECONCILIATION – NEW CREATION - IDENTIFICATION

Note how these blessed doctrines are linked together in God's Book. We quote Romans 5:10 and 11:

“FOR IF, WHEN WE WERE ENEMIES, WE WERE RECONCILED TO GOD BY THE DEATH OF HIS SON, MUCH MORE, BEING RECONCILED, WE SHALL BE SAVED BY HIS LIFE. AND NOT ONLY SO, BUT WE ALSO JOY IN GOD THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, BY WHOM WE HAVE NOW RECEIVED THE RECONCILIATION.”

And Romans 6:3 and 4:

“KNOW YE NOT, THAT SO MANY OF US AS WERE BAPTIZED INTO JESUS CHRIST WERE BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH? THEREFORE WE ARE BURIED WITH HIM BY BAPTISM INTO DEATH; THAT LIKE AS CHRIST WAS RAISED UP FROM THE DEAD BY THE GLORY OF THE FATHER, EVEN SO WE ALSO SHOULD WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE.”

Believers are reconciled to God by the death of Christ. They have received “reconciliation” by Christ. At the very moment they are reconciled by Christ they are baptized into His death, buried with Him and raised to walk in newness of life.

Note, concerning the believer in Romans 6:6 and 8, “our old man was crucified;” “we be dead with Christ;” “we shall also live with Christ.”

So in Romans, chapter five, Christians have reconciliation, justification and eternal life by, and through, the Lord Jesus Christ. In Roman's chapter six, Christians are new creatures, identified with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection.

Following the proclamation of reconciliation in Romans 5:10 and 11, we read, in Romans 5:12, “By Adam.” Then in Romans 5:14 to 21, we read “by Adam,” and “by Christ.” By Adam “sin,” “condemnation,” “alienation,” “death.” By Christ “righteousness,” “justification,” “grace,” “eternal life.”

We shall consider these contrasts presently. But now let us note how **“reconciliation,” “the new creation”** and **“identification”** are linked together in the fifth chapter of II Corinthians. Note in Romans 5:14, “we thus judge, that if One died for all, then all have died.” Believers have died with Christ.

Then note Romans 5:17 to 19:

“THEREFORE IF ANY MAN BE IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATURE; OLD THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY; BEHOLD, ALL THINGS ARE BECOME NEW. AND ALL THINGS ARE OF GOD, WHO HATH RECONCILED US TO HIMSELF BY JESUS CHRIST, AND HATH GIVEN TO US THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION; TO WIT, THAT GOD WAS IN CHRIST, RECONCILING THE WORLD UNTO HIMSELF, NOT IMPUTING THEIR TRESPASSES UNTO THEM; AND HATH COMMITTED UNTO US THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION.”

The new creature in Christ Jesus is dead: “How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” “For He that is dead is freed from sin.” Romans 6:2 and 7 “For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” Colossians 3:3. “Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?” “Dead with Christ”—“Dead unto sin”—“Crucified unto the law”—Galatians 2:20. “Crucified unto the world.” Galatians 6:14.

Note the former condition of saints: “And you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.” Colossians 2:13 “Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace are ye saved).” Ephesians 2:5.

The unbeliever is dead **IN** sins; the believer is dead **TO** sins. The believer is alive unto God.

“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:11. “And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.”

Now note again Ephesians 2:5 and 6:

“Even when we were dead in sins, hath made us alive together with Christ (by grace are ye saved) and hath raised us up together in the heavenlies in Jesus Christ.”

What identification! The believer is seated with Christ in the heavenlies “far above.” Note again Ephesians 4:15 and 16: “But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: From Whom the whole Body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body unto the edifying of itself in love.” “And not holding the Head, from which all the Body by joints and bands have nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.” Colossians 2:19.

This is indeed “identification.” Note again Ephesians 5:31 and 32 and I Corinthians 12:12:

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.” Ephesians 5:31 and 32.

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many. are one body so also is Christ.” I Corinthians 12:12.

Note again Ephesians 2:21 and 22: “In Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto all holy temple in the Lord: In Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

Oh, what wonderful truth! And what a blessed experience most Christians have missed; that is, the doctrine and the joy of the experience of “identification.”

There have been literally thousands of arguments and controversies by religious Christians over the question of water baptism—“yes” or “no,” in the sixth chapter of Romans. But very few messages concerning the blessed doctrine and experience of “identification.”

The baptism of Romans Six produces the “identification” of Romans Six and if there is any water there, it is meritorious and efficacious.

RECONCILIATION

Note the statement in Colossians 1:20 and 21, also Ephesians 2:16 and 17.

“AND HAVING MADE PEACE THROUGH THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS, BY HIM TO RECONCILE: ALL THINGS UNTO HIMSELF; BY HIM, I SAY, WHETHER THEY BE THINGS IN EARTH, OR THINGS IN HEAVEN. AND YOU THAT WERE SOMETIME ALIENATED AND ENEMIES IN YOUR MIND BY WICKED WORKS, YET NOW HATH HE RECONCILED.” Colossians 1:20 and 21.

“AND THAT HE MIGHT RECONCILE BOTH UNTO GOD IN ONE BODY BY THE CROSS, HAVING SLAIN THE ENMITY THEREBY.” “AND CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHICH WERE AFAR OFF, AND TO THEM THAT WERE NIGH.” Ephesians 2:16 and 17.

ALIENATION

“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.” Ephesians 4:18.

WHEN DID GENTILE RECONCILIATION BEGIN?

“FOR IF THE CASTING AWAY OF THEM BE THE RECONCILING OF THE WORLD, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?” Romans 11:15.

Here we have the story of “before” and “after.” **Before**—“alienated from the life of God”—“alienated by wicked works”—“afar off from God.” **After**—“reconciled because Christ made peace by the blood of His cross”—“reconciled unto God in one Body by the cross.”—“reconciled Gentiles when and because Israel was cast away.”

Note this last fact—“Gentiles reconciled when and because Israel was cast away.”

“For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief.” Romans 11:30.

Note Acts 13:46. Paul was preaching God’s message to the Jews, “Lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” He had said to them, in Acts 13:40 and 41: “Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work

a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.”

This had not yet happened. Then they rejected and despised and Paul said, “seeing ye put it from you. **LO, WE TURN TO THE GENTILES.**” Acts 13:46.

Why did God turn Paul to the Gentiles? Because Israel put it from them. Why was mercy shown the Gentiles? Because of Israel’s unbelief. Then the message of Ephesians 2:13: “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” The Jews were near. The Gentiles were afar off. They were both reconciled unto God in one Body by the precious blood of Christ.

But note I Timothy 2:6 and 7: “Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.”

We must not fix the Gentiles “due time of reconciliation” before the act of God described in Romans 11:1 to 15. Let us quote Romans 11:15 in this language “The casting away of the children of Abraham brought reconciliation for the other children of Adam.”

ABRAM—AND THE GENTILES

When God called Abram, about 1900 B.C., as recorded in Genesis 12:1 to 5, and gave him the covenant of circumcision, twenty-four years later, as recorded in Genesis 17:3 to 15, God cast off, or cast away, the other children of Adam. The giving up of the Gentiles was according to Romans 1:21 to 31.

Then Divine blessing was conditioned upon circumcision and associated with the children of Abraham. Some of the children of Adam, who did not descend from Abraham, became circumcised Jews by religion, or proselytes. Note that many Persian Gentiles became Jews. Esther 8:17. Read the covenant of circumcision in Genesis 17:5 to 18.

When the Lord Jesus’ ministry was recorded in the first Book, Matthew, the Holy Spirit began, “The Book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, **the Son of Abraham.**”

Then note Luke 2:21—Luke 4:16—Romans 15:8—Luke 19:9—Luke 13:16—Acts 3:25 and 26. In these verses we learn that Jesus Christ was circumcised, that He attended the Jewish synagogue on the Jewish Sabbath, that He and His twelve apostles were ministers to the circumcision. Christ, the circumcised Son of Abraham, was the Minister to the circumcised children of Abraham. Romans 15:8.

Note the condition of the Gentiles while Jesus Christ was among the Jews: “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands.” Ephesians 2:11. And note Christ’s specific command to His twelve messengers

“These Twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying. **Go not into the way of the Gentiles,** and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Matthew 10:5 and 6. Go to no children of Adam who are not children of Abraham.

To the children of Abraham Jesus Christ said, “**Ye must be born anew.**” In the ministry of reconciliation to the other children of Adam the Holy Spirit said, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision. but a new creature,” “A new creation.” “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

THE CHILDREN OF ADAM, THE CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM

We learn in Romans 1:21 to 31 that when God called Abraham He cast away the other children of Adam, or we might put it this way, when God cast away the other children of Adam, He called Abram and then cut off all the nations with the covenant of circumcision.

Then in Romans 11:15 we learn that when God cast away the children of Abraham (as a nation) He sent a message of reconciliation to the other children of Adam. Paul was the “**reconciliation**” apostle. We may call Matthew 28:19 and 20, “the great commission” but II Corinthians 5:18 to 21 is a greater commission, so far as members of the Body of Christ are concerned. The unmixed reign of grace did not begin until Israel was set aside. The dispensation of grace began with the ministry of reconciliation.

Before that time Gentiles were alienated from God and from the commonwealth of Israel. Ephesians 2:12—Colossians 1:21—Ephesians 4:18.

Alienated from the life of God in Adam and by Adam—“In Adam all die.” Note Romans 5:10 and 11:”

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

Then note the connecting “wherefore” in Romans 5:12 - “**RECONCILIATION**”; “**Wherefore by Adam.**”

The Lord Jesus Christ on earth was the Minister of the circumcision. Adam was not circumcised. “Jesus Christ, the Son of Abraham.” Matthew 1:1. Christ made no reference to Adam. He was sent only to the children of Abraham. Matthew 15:24.

The twelve apostles were sent to the children of Abraham. Matthew 10:6. After the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the first nine chapters of Acts, the Twelve preached to the children of the covenant. Acts 3:25. They made no reference to Adam. They preached repentance and restitution, “baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins.” Acts 2:38.

But with the casting away of Israel, “**reconciliation**,” “**the new creation**,” and “**Adam**” are mentioned together years after the day of Pentecost. It is interesting to note that with the first mention of “**Adam**” and “**Reconciliation**,” in Paul’s ministry, there is no further record that any Gentile received water baptism. Divers baptisms were included with circumcision and carnal ordinances and meats and drinks, in Israel’s religious program. Hebrews 9:10. Israel was God’s religious nation. Israel was not cast away at the cross. That casting away was some years later. There was an overlapping of God’s religious and “sign” program until after Israel was set aside. God was through with religion when He was through with His religious nation.

With the ministry of “**reconciliation**” the Lord’s apostle of “**reconciliation**” proclaimed the “death” baptism of Romans 6:3 and Colossians 2:12, the one Divine baptism of Ephesians 4:5.

Then Paul wrote concerning “**THE DISPENSATION OF THE SECRET**”—“**THE JOINT-BODY**”—“**THE MYSTERY OF GOD’S WILL**”—“**THE MYSTERY AMONG THE GENTILES**”—“**GOD’S ETERNAL PURPOSE**”—“**THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL**.”—“**THE ONE NEW MAN.**”

All of these blessed truths reveal the hidden purpose of God concerning members of the Body of Christ, chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, seated with Him in the heavenlies and blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies.

Blessed identification with the glorified Christ far above, Head of the Church which is His Body, THE FULNESS OF HIM THAT FILLETH ALL IN ALL. Ephesians 1:19 to 23. All of this is by the one Divine baptism of Ephesians 4:5. There were several baptisms during the “Acts” period. But one baptism for members of the Church of the Mystery.”

MESSAGE NUMBER 50

SANCTIFYING TRUTH

Let us compare the words of the Lord Jesus, in John 17:17, with the statement of the Holy Spirit by the Apostle Paul, in II Thessalonians 2:13.

“SANCTIFY THEM THROUGH THY TRUTH: THY WORD IS TRUTH.”

“BUT WE ARE BOUND TO GIVE THANKS ALWAY TO GOD FOR YOU, BRETHREN BELOVED OF THE LORD, BECAUSE GOD HATH FROM THE BEGINNING CHOSEN YOU TO SALVATION THROUGH SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT AND BELIEF OF THE TRUTH.”

In the seventeenth chapter of John we read these words of the Lord Jesus concerning His disciples: “Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given Him.” “While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name; those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled.” John 17:2 and 12.

The Lord Jesus had given unto His disciples eternal life, and then had kept them. Now He was praying for them that they might be in the world but not of the world.

“I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine.” “I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the-world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil.” John 17:9 and 15.

HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

Some time after this prayer of the Lord Jesus, after He had died and come forth in His resurrection body, He said to these same disciples: “John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence.” Acts 1:5.

Note what John the Baptist said about four years before the death of Christ: “I indeed have baptized you with water; but He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” Mark 1:8.

Then note the statement of John 7:39—“The Holy Spirit was not yet given.” Again, “If I go not away, the Holy Spirit will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.” John 16:7.

While Christ was on earth no one experienced the baptism into the Body of Christ, mentioned in I Corinthians 12:13.

We may call the Lord’s earthly ministry “the days of the Son of man.” During those days the Son of man was under the law observing with the Jews their God-given religious ceremonies, carrying on their “law” program. The Scribes and Pharisees sat in Moses’ seat. Matthew 23:1 to 3. During those days the Holy Spirit had not yet been sent down from heaven. It was during those days, months before the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, that the apostles were

baptized with water unto repentance for the remission of sins. Note the testimony concerning John the Baptist: “And I knew Him not; but that He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.” John 1:31. “And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.” Luke 3:3.

Concerning His own death and resurrection note what the Lord Jesus told His baptized disciples about two years after they were baptized with water: “And they shall scourge Him, and put Him to death; and the third day He shall rise again.” Luke 18:33.

Then note their reaction: “And they understood none of these things; and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken,” Luke 18:34.

In Luke 12:48 to 51 the Lord Jesus referred to His approaching death as His baptism. Years later the risen Lord revealed the truth of Romans 6:3 and 4: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

The Divine baptism of Romans 6:3 and 4 is efficacious. It transforms the believer from a sinner to a saint; takes him out of Adam and puts him into Christ, a new creation, and identifies him with the Lord Jesus Christ in death, burial and resurrection.

Some Christians read two baptisms into Romans 6:3 to 6, and insist that the transformed believer should be immersed to witness to the world that he has died with Christ, been buried with Him, and raised to walk in newness of life. But this is a mere human supposition as there is not one verse of Scripture stating that water baptism is for a witness to unbelievers. In the light of plain Scriptural facts we must all admit that none of the twelve apostles received water baptism as a witness to the world that they were identified with Christ in His death and burial.

Then hear Paul’s testimony concerning his baptism: “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and **wash away thy sins**, calling on the name of the Lord.” Acts 22:16.

This is in accord with Peter’s message, on the day of Pentecost

“THEN PETER SAID UNTO THEM, REPENT, AND BE BAPTIZED EVERY ONE OF YOU IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS: AND YE SHALL RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.” Acts 2:38.

Here water baptism first, then Holy Spirit baptism.

And Peter’s command in Acts 2:38 is in agreement with the “baptism” message which John the Baptist had proclaimed about four years before Peter preached to devout Jews from every nation under heaven. Acts 2:5.

The Twelve received John’s baptism many months before they received the Holy Spirit; months before they knew that Christ would receive His death baptism and be buried. Luke 12:50 to 53.

If Christian water baptism began with the resurrection of Christ, the twelve apostles did not receive that baptism. They received Holy Spirit baptism.

HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM AND SANCTIFICATION

The Scriptural facts we have thus far presented are to refute the arguments of Christians who teach that we are justified and saved when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, when we are baptized with water; but we are not sanctified until we are baptized with the Holy Spirit. Some call this a second work of grace.

They offer the experience of the twelve apostles, or that of the one hundred and twenty disciples in the upper room, on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came down from heaven, in support of their “sanctification” theory. They seem to forget that these disciples were saved in the days when the Son of man was under the law, before He died on the cross, while the Jewish priests were still offering their sacrifices on their altars with God’s approval, before the Holy Spirit was yet given.

They could not have received the Holy Spirit when they believed. Neither could the twelve men of Acts 19:1 to 7, have received the Holy Spirit when they believed. They, too, were baptized “unto John’s baptism”. Paul asked them, “**Believing (pisteusantes) received ye the Holy Spirit?**” Their answer was “No”. They had not believed the new message. They had not heard whether the Holy Spirit had yet been given.

Note the contrast in Ephesians 1:13 “**Believing, (pisteusantes) ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit.**” They received the Holy Spirit the very moment they believed the gospel. We of today were not saved before the Son of man died on the cross, but 1900 years later. We were never told to tarry in Jerusalem or in any other city to wait for the advent of the Holy Spirit.

Note the question which Paul put to the foolish Galatians: “This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” Galatians 3:2 and 3. Then in verses 13 and 14 we are told that Christ died on the cross that believers might receive the Holy Spirit.

ETERNAL LIFE—THE HOLY SPIRIT—SANCTIFICATION

Note the order in I Corinthians 6:11, “washed,” “sanctified” and “justified.”

Eternal life is God’s free gift to believing sinners. Romans 6:23. So also is the Holy Spirit. Romans 5:5. The believing sinner does not have to tarry for, or work for, or agonize for, or pray for, or ask for the gift of eternal life, or for the gift of the Holy Spirit in this day of grace. Neither does the believer receive eternal life or the Holy Spirit on the installment plan. The Holy Spirit is a Person. He has been sent down from heaven. I Peter 1:12. But He had not been sent down from heaven at the time the twelve apostles received John’s water baptism. Let us not be confused when we read in Acts 8:5 to 15, that the believers, in the city of Samaria received the Holy Spirit several days after they were baptized with water, and Cornelius received the Holy Spirit before he was baptized with water. Cornelius was the first Gentile to whom the Twelve preached. God gave him the Holy Spirit, so Peter would accept him and baptize him.

All of this transpired while Peter had the keys of the kingdom of heaven and the gospel of the circumcision. Galatians 7 and 8. This was before Paul declared the truth of Romans 10:12, I Timothy 2:4 and Romans 3:24.

“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.”

“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

In connection with Paul’s grace message he said, “For Christ sent me not to baptize.” I Corinthians 1:17.

GOD OPENED THE DOOR

All Scripture must be interpreted, appropriated and applied as to whether the recorded event or spiritual program, under consideration, took place before or after the important fact stated in Acts 14:27

“AND WHEN THEY WERE COME, AND HAD GATHERED THE CHURCH TOGETHER, THEY REHEARSED ALL THAT GOD HAD DONE WITH THEM, AND HOW HE HAD OPENED THE DOOR OF FAITH UNTO THE GENTILES.”

And then we must see the changes in God’s program from Acts 14:27 to Ephesians 3:1 to 4:12.

All Divine truth must be studied in the light of developments, and God’s revealed spiritual program after the words of Paul in Acts 13:46, “Lo we turn to the Gentiles.” We do greatly err when we have the door of faith opened before God opens it. So let us mark the change of Acts 14:27.

SANCTIFIED BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

Note carefully these plain statements:

“Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate.” Hebrews 13:12.

“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” “For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” Hebrews 10:10 and 14.

“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ; Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.” I Peter 1:2.

How are believing sinners sanctified? By the blood of Christ, as that blood is applied by the Holy Spirit.

Now note I Corinthians 1:30: “But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and **sanctification**, and redemption.” Here, as in all Scriptures, “sanctification” is the same word elsewhere translated “holiness”. Which comes first, “sanctification” or “redemption”? Read it—“sanctification” and “redemption”.

Read I Corinthians 6:11—“And such were some of you; but ye are washed, **but ye are sanctified**, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

Why has the Holy Spirit here placed “**sanctified**” before “**justified**”? This is the answer to the unscriptural teaching that justification precedes sanctification.

Believers are sanctified once for all by the offering of the body of Christ on the cross. Hebrews 10:10. “Sanctified” or “holy”, both in the Hebrew and the Greek words, means “to be set apart by God or set apart for God.”

HOLY MEAT AND THINGS

Note I Timothy 4:3 and 5 begins with word “meats” in I Timothy 4:3. Here we learn that beef, mutton, or even pork can be sanctified or made holy by the Word of God and prayer. Pork could not have been holy meat for a Jew under the law. It was unholy. But we are not under the law.

Now note Revelation 11:8, that Jerusalem, the holy city, is called “the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.”

Jerusalem is called “the holy city”. “Holy” does not mean “sinless”. Meat is neither sinful nor sinless, but it is holy by prayer and the Word of God.

In Colossians 2:16, we read that members of Christ’s Body have nothing to do with holy days. Israel had **sanctified** days and **sanctified** animals. Time and again the same Levites had to be re-sanctified for service in the Lord’s sanctuary. The sanctuary was the Lord’s appointed place for the service and worship of the priest. The sanctuary was “the holy place.”

“Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of Divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.” Hebrews 9:1. “But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people.” Hebrews 9:7. “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” Hebrews 9:24. “A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.” Hebrews 8:2.

Then note Ephesians 2:6 and 1:3 “And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

“BLESSED BE THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO HATH BLESSED US WITH ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST.” Ephesians 1:3.

Every member of the Body of Christ is seated in the heavenlies with Christ. And how is he blessed 9

BLESSED WITH ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN THE HEAVENLIES IN CHRIST

What folly for a member of the Body, seated in the heavenlies, complete in Christ (Colossians 2:10), blessed with ALL spiritual blessings, to look for a second blessing.

Then note Ephesians 1:19 and 20.

“And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.”

Think of such an one seeking more power!

RAISED TO WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE

“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour; for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath; Neither give place to the devil.” Ephesians 4:22 to 27.

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth,” Colossians 3:1 and 2.

“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created Him. Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Seythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel

against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.” Colossians 3:10 to 14.

GOD’S WAY OF VICTORY

“LIKEWISE RECKON YE ALSO YOURSELVES TO BE DEAD INDEED UNTO SIN, BUT ALIVE UNTO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.” “NEITHER YIELD YE YOUR MEMBERS AS INSTRUMENTS OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS UNTO SIN; BUT YIELD YOURSELVES UNTO GOD, AS THOSE THAT ARE ALIVE FROM THE DEAD, AND YOUR MEMBERS AS INSTRUMENTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS UNTO GOD.” Romans 6:11 and 13.

“And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Romans 12:2.

Hear this important truth—“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.” Acts 20:32.

God, our heavenly Father, calls His children unto “separation” and unto Christian service.

Note how the truth is stated in II Thessalonians 2:13 and I Thessalonians 1:9 and 10 “Chosen unto salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” “Turned to God from idols to serve the living and the true God and to wait for His Son from heaven.”

But what about I Thessalonians 5:23—II Corinthians 7:1 and Hebrews 12:14? “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”

We have already learned that Jesus Christ is the believer’s holiness. The man who has Christ has holiness and is holy. Now note II Corinthians 1:21-22. “Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.”

“Christ” is, in the Greek, “the Anointed”. When the believer receives the anointing He abides with him (I John 2:26 to 28), for he is sealed with the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption. Ephesians 4:30.

A Christian is a “Christ one”. He is a Christian by grace through faith; not of himself, not of works. Ephesians 2:8 What is the evidence? “The sealing of the Holy Spirit”, “the earnest of the Spirit in the heart”. Every Christian has the Holy Spirit in his heart. He receives the Holy Spirit the very moment he becomes a Christian by believing the gospel of salvation, and receiving Christ. No matter how religious, moral or sincere a person may be, he is not a Christian if he is not indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

Now note Ephesians 1:14.

“Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.”

What kind of a body does the believer have? “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.” This word “perish” is

literally “rot thoroughly”. The body of the believer is called “the body of humiliation”. Philippians 3:21. When Christ shall appear, the purchased possession will be redeemed; then the believer will have a glorified body. In the meantime “if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” I John 1:8.

II THESSALONIANS 2:13

“BUT WE ARE BOUND TO GIVE THANKS ALWAY TO GOD FOR YOU, BRETHREN BELOVED OF THE LORD, BECAUSE GOD HATH FROM THE BEGINNING CHOSEN YOU TO SALVATION THROUGH SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT AND BELIEF OF THE TRUTH.”

Read this—Study it—Believe it. Salvation is the result of sanctification and belief. Sanctification first, and salvation the result.

There are several physical laws that must be observed and obeyed if man would develop physically.

- 1—Good air.
- 2—Good food.
- 3—Good water.
- 4—Proper exercise.
- 5—Proper rest.

There are several spiritual laws that must be observed and obeyed if man would develop spiritually.

- 1—The worship of God.
- 2—Regular Bible study.
- 3—Regular and constant prayer.
- 4—Assembling with God’s people.
- 5—Testimony and service for the Lord.

With all of this there must be obedience to II Timothy 2:15 and 1:7—”Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.” “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

In closing, we quote Colossians 1:9 and 10 and Philippians 1:10 and 11.

“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding: That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.” “That ye may approve things that are excellent: that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.”

There is no short cut to a spiritual separated life.

MESSAGE NUMBER 51

DID THE CHURCH BEGIN WITH PENTECOST OF ACTS TWO?

If one believes that the Body of Christ began historically with the advent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, he is given the right hand of fellowship by the “regular” Fundamentalists. If one believes that the Body of Christ began after the close of the “Acts” period, the “regulars” brand him as an “**ultradispensationalist**” and from their camp goes up the cry “**Bullingerism**.” If one disagrees with both of these groups, he receives the anathema from both directions. Of course all of these groups believe that the Body of Christ was purposed by God before the foundation of the world and was the secret purpose of God until Christ made known the secret to the apostle Paul.

There are some Christians who think they can prove that the Church of God began with John the Baptist. They support their claim with Luke 16:16: “The law and the prophets were until John since that time the Kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.” They claim this “Kingdom of God” was the Body of Christ, or the New Testament Church.

But the great majority of Christians have definitely fixed Pentecost of Acts Two as the birthday of the Church, and most of them are not only dogmatically opposed to any fellow-believers, who fix that time of beginning later on, but they ungraciously ridicule, condemn and malign them. One of their favorite expressions is “divisive teaching.” Many of these condemning brethren, who teach “Premillennialism,” “Eternal Security” and “The Postponement of the Kingdom,” know full well that some spiritual saints consider these doctrines “divisive” and even worse, but they continue to teach what they believe.

We give the Scriptures that are generally used to prove that the Church of God of Acts 2 and the Body of Christ of Ephesians 3:6 are one and the same Church, the New Testament Church which began on the day of Pentecost with Peter and the Eleven and their fellow-disciples, the one hundred and twenty of Acts 1:15.

I Corinthians 12:13

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

Acts 2:4

“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Acts 2:38

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Acts 2:47

“Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.”

Galatians 1:13 and 22

“For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it.” “And was unknown by face to the churches of Judaea which were in Christ.” Also I Corinthians 15:9 and Philippians 3:6.

Acts 9:4

“And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?”

Acts 11:18

“When they heard these things they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance Unto life.”

Acts 15:14

“Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name.”

Ephesians 2:20

“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner Stone.”

Ephesians 2:16

“And that He might reconcile both unto God in one Body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.”

Inasmuch as the twelve apostles received Holy Spirit baptism on the day of Pentecost, and inasmuch as the Church of God is composed of Jews and Gentiles baptized by the Holy Spirit into one Body, the Twelve, and their fellow-disciples, must have been baptized into the Body on the day of Pentecost and they must have been the first members of the New Testament Church, the Church of God which He purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28), “the Joint-Body” of Ephesians 3:6.

When the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Peter described the phenomena as a fulfillment of Joel 2:28 and 29: “And it shall come to pass afterward that I shall pour out My spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.” Now note Peter’s words in Acts 2:17: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.”

Observe that Peter specially applied the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy to “the last days.” To whose last days? To Israel’s last days. The spiritual, intelligent student, who carefully studies the Prophecy of Joel, knows that Joel wrote of Israel’s tribulation and kingdom and God’s wrath upon the Gentiles. And yet the brethren, who have the Body of Christ begin on the day of Pentecost, tell us that at that time God’s dispensation of grace and blessing for both Israel and the Gentiles began.

If the Body of Christ began on an Israelitish feast day, with the fulfillment of Israel’s prophecy concerning Israel’s “last days,” we must decide that the “first days” of the Body were the “last days” of Israel, that Israel and the Body are one and the same and that Paul was either deluded, or he deliberately falsified when he wrote in Colossians 1:24 to 26 and Ephesians 3:3 to 11, that Joel knew nothing, and said nothing, about the dispensation of the grace of God and the Mystery, the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6.

Then note Acts 2:45: "And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." And Acts 4:34 and 35: "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold. And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." Was this an Israelitish kingdom program or part of the Lord's program for the Body described in Ephesians? Perhaps you have heard the evasive answers or uncertain explanations of those who are asked, why, if they are sure that the Body of Christ began on the day of Pentecost, they do not preach "repent and be baptized for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit?" Acts 2:38. We ask them why they do not sell all their property and give their money to their religious leaders; and why they do not teach that believers today receive the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy? If we today receive Holy Spirit baptism in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, then there is no truth to Paul's statement in Ephesians 3:1 to 11.

THE LORD ADDED TO THE CHURCH

But it certainly does say that "the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." While the word Church, in Acts 2:47, is missing in all of the original texts, yet Acts 8:1 speaks of "the Church at Jerusalem." Paul, in Galatians 1:22, speaks of the Churches in Judea. Before Paul was saved he persecuted "the Church of God," therefore, "the Church of God" existed before Saul was converted. At the time of Saul's conversion the Lord asked, "why persecutest thou ME?" Inasmuch as Saul was persecuting the Lord's disciples they must have been a part of Christ and therefore members of His Body. So reason those who prove that the Body of Christ began at Pentecost.

By the same argument they could prove that the Kingdom of Matthew 25:3 to 41 is the Body of Christ. Note Matthew 25:40: "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto ME," which has no reference to the Body of Christ. This of course invalidates the argument that "why persecutest thou ME?" proves that the Body existed.

But how about Acts 5:14: "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." These believers were added to the Lord. Does this not prove that they were joined to the Lord in the same union that is described in Ephesians 5:31 and 32? To be sure Galatians 1:13 proves that the Church of God began before Saul was converted. This leads us to the question:

IS THE CHURCH OF GOD AND THE BODY OF CHRIST ONE AND THE SAME?

"The Church of the living God," in I Timothy 3:15 and 16, is described as the ground and the pillar of the truth in connection with a great mystery. This establishes this Church of God as identical with the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6. Therefore "the Body of Christ" is "the Church of God"; but "the Church of God" is not necessarily "the Body of Christ."

Now for the proof of this statement. It is most unfortunate that we have such a word in our vocabulary as "church"; for its meaning is vague, and it is a mistranslation of the Greek word. The word "church" is found in the New Testament Scriptures about 80 times in the singular and about 35 times in the plural. With one single exception the Greek word is "ecclesia," or "ekklesia." Why was this word translated "Church" by the translators? We may

never know until we see them and ask them. “Church” is from “**Kurios**,” meaning “**the Lord**” “**Ecclesia**” does not mean “the Lord.” The word is from “Ek”, “from” or “out of”. “Kaleo”, “call.” “Ecclesia”, “called out.” The Church is “the Called Out.” Paul persecuted “**the called out of God.**” This word “ecclesia” is found three times in Acts 19:32 to 41, and is there translated three times “assembly.” You join with me in a “Why.” Why did the translators speak of the “ecclesia” of ungodly heathen in Acts 19:32 as “an assembly” and then translate the “ecclesia” of saints as “the Church?” Nobody knows, but it certainly has brought much confusion into the Christian camps. But if we are to learn the difference between the Body of Christ and other assemblies, we must forget the word C-H-U-R-C-H.

This word “ecclesia” is found a number of times in the Septuagint, or Greek translation of the Old Testament Scriptures. Note the word in Nehemiah 13:1. It is there translated “the congregation of God.” In the Greek it is “the ecclesia of God.” By reading Nehemiah you will learn that Saul of Tarsus was not the first of the Lord’s enemies to persecute “the Church of God.” We say to you very frankly that you must forget the word “church” in the Bible, if you want to know the Bible Truth concerning the Body of Christ.

But what about Ephesians 2:16 and 20, considered with the fact that Peter’s mouth was not only chosen by the Lord for the message on the day of Pentecost, but also to first preach to Gentiles (Acts 15:7). Consider this with Matthew 16:16 to 19: “And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

Did not Peter use one key on the day of Pentecost in preaching to Jews and the other key in the tenth of Acts, when he preached to the Gentiles, the household of Cornelius? Most Christians believe this. But were the keys to the kingdom of heaven used by Peter to inaugurate the dispensation of the grace of God of Ephesians 3:1 and 2? Cornelius and his relatives received the Holy Spirit while Peter was preaching to them. The argument is that they must have been then and there baptized by the Holy Spirit into the same Body with the twelve apostles and the thousands of Jews who were saved before Peter preached to Cornelius?

It is true that Peter declared that God used his mouth first to preach to Gentiles. Acts 15:7. It is true that Peter declared that God began with Cornelius to gather a people from the Gentiles.

But Peter declared that both were in fulfillment of prophecy.

Now note Ephesians 3:1 to 3: “For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words).” Just how are we to understand Peter’s words in Acts 15:7 in the light of Paul’s words in Romans 11:15, I Timothy 2:6 and 7, II Timothy 1:11, and II Timothy 4:171

First note Peter’s words: “And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

In Romans 11:13 Paul said, “I am the apostle of the Gentiles.” In Romans 11:11 Paul declared that he was sent to the Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy. Peter was very careful to see that Israel was not provoked to jealousy, so careful, in fact, that he would not eat with Chris-

tian Gentiles when Jews were around. Galatians 2:11 to 14. Peter agreed to confine his testimony to Jews. Galatians 2:9. Now note this most important statement marking a radical change in God's dealings with Israel and the Gentiles.

“FOR IF THE CASTING AWAY OF THEM BE THE RECONCILING OF THE WORLD, WHAT SHALL THE RECEIVING OF THEM BE, BUT LIFE FROM THE DEAD?” Romans 11:15.

“Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not) a teacher of the Gentiles, in faith and verity.” I Timothy 2:6 and 7.

“Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.” II Timothy 1:11.

“Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.” II Timothy 4:17.

Then we have to reconcile Acts 15:7, with Galatians 2:9:

“And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel and believe.” Acts 15:7.

“And when James, Peter and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.” Galatians 2:9.

This leads us to ask this question, “Were Peter's keys used to inaugurate the dispensation of the grace of God and the dispensation of the mystery for Gentiles?” If so, we must conclude that Paul was chosen to perpetuate the ministry of Peter and the Eleven. But we learn in the study of Paul's Epistles that this is contrary to fact.

Note again Galatians 2:7:

“BUT CONTRARIWISE, WHEN THEY SAW THAT THE GOSPEL OF THE UNCIRCUMCISION WAS COMMITTED UNTO ME, AS THE GOSPEL OF THE CIRCUMCISION WAS UNTO PETER.”

This gospel of the circumcision was committed to Peter after the resurrection of Christ and is not only quite different from the gospel of the uncircumcision, which Christ committed to Paul, but altogether different from the dispensation of the grace of God for Gentiles. The utter confusion of the leaders among Fundamentalists as to Pentecost and the Church of the Mystery is reflected in these contradictory statements of their outstanding champion.

We quote from two or three of his several books. In one of his books, in referring to the Pauline distinctive message, he wrote—

“It is of vast importance that every child of God be instructed as to its true character.”

Again he wrote,

“The mystery of the Church as the Body of Christ was never made known in Old Testament times, nor yet when our Lord was on earth. The Divine method of making it known was by a special revelation to the Apostle Paul, committed to him to pass on to saints.”

Again,

“To the Epistles of Paul ALONE do we turn for the revelation of the mystery.”

“It was a special revelation given not to the Twelve, but TO PAUL ALONE, as the apostle of the new dispensation.”

“How earnest was the Apostle (Paul) in seeking to lead Christians into the knowledge of this precious truth.”

So far so good. Wonderful statement of facts, concerning the preciousness of the Pauline distinctive gospel and ministry. It should be made known. God says so in Ephesians 3:9. Paul was “the apostle of the new dispensation.”

But what confusion the brother has wrought by his contradictory statements in his late book.

He there writes,

“ACCORDING TO GOD, THE NEW DISPENSATION, THAT IN WHICH WE LIVE, THE DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD, OTHERWISE CALLED THE DISPENSATION OF THE MYSTERY, BEGAN THE MOMENT THE SPIRIT DESCENDED AT PENTECOST.”

And now note another of his statements:

“ONLY WHEN A NEW REVELATION FROM GOD IS GIVEN DOES A DISPENSATION CHANGE.”

When does a dispensation change? With a revelation. Who received the revelation? If Paul was “the apostle of the new dispensation,” and the Body mystery was not revealed to any of the Twelve, only to Paul, and the new dispensation began with the revelation, how did the dispensation begin with Peter and Pentecost ?

Again the brother states in the same book:

Paul received the revelation concerning the Body and the new dispensation in Acts 9 when the Lord said, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me ?”

Then he makes two more contradictory statements. He writes that Peter got the revelation of the mystery, in Acts 10, when Peter received the vision authorizing him to go to Cornelius. That was several years after Saul’s experience.

Then the confused writer states,

“John as an apostle of Jesus Christ received the revelation of the mystery even before the Apostle Paul did.”

Truly you have never heard of greater confusion. Yet there are multitudes who follow this man of God in his contradictions and utter confusion, as well as in his abuse and condemnation of those who try to lead his followers from such faulty dispensationalism.

It requires grace, humility, and courage, after you have taught error so long, to confess your blunders. It seems to be less humiliating to try to cover up. But here is a case where that cannot be done with Bereans.

Let us compare Colossians 1:24 to 26 with Peter’s statement in Acts 3:24 and 5:31.

Colossians 1:24 to 26

“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body’s sake, which is the Church: Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the Word of God: Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints.”

Acts 3:24 and 5:31

“Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.”

“Jesus hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.”

Take a few moments and prayerfully intelligently compare Jesus exalted in Acts 5:31 with His exaltation as Head of His Body in Ephesians 1:20 to 23.

“Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, Which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” Ephesians 1:20 to 23.

Paul very definitely declared that he received the dispensation of God for a specific purpose and that purpose was to add to the law and the prophets and the confirmation ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles, to complete the Word of God with the Mystery which Paul received by revelation from Jesus Christ. This Mystery, or Divine Secret, was to complete the Word of God. It has truly been called “the Capstone of Truth.” It was God’s own Secret, His own eternal purpose, purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began. God intentionally withheld any knowledge of this special truth from any and all of His servants and witnesses until His own good time arrived to have His Son reveal it to Paul. It was not made known to the sons of men in other ages. Therefore, Moses and Samuel and those that followed after, have (not) likewise foretold these days.

PAUL AND PETER

How different concerning the Divine program of Acts 3:19 to 24. “Spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.” Acts 3:21, It is a great blunder to confuse the kingdom program of Peter with the Joint “Body” in Paul’s messages.

Now another comparison of Paul’s statement with Peter’s.

Ephesians 3:1 to 11

“For this cause I PAUL, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given me to you-ward: How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I said afore in few words, Whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same Body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I am made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power. Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavens might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Acts 15:13 to 18

“And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon Whom My name is called, saith the Lord, Who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.”

Galatians 2:9 to 12

“And when James, Peter and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. Only they would that we should remember the poor, the same which I also was forward to do. But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come; he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.”

After you have read of Peter’s conduct in Galatians 2:9 to 12 answer whether or not you think the Lord gave to Peter the gospel of the grace of God for Gentiles!

In Ephesians 3:1 to 11 and Colossians 1:24 to 26 we find “the Mystery”, which Christ revealed to Paul centuries after it had been hidden from Israel’s prophets. Before the risen Lord revealed “the Mystery” to Paul, Peter was as ignorant of that Divine truth as were Israel’s Old Testament prophets. What Amos foretold in Amos 9:11 to 15, (Acts 15:13 to 17) had not one thing to do with “the Church of the Mystery.” Amos was wholly ignorant and silent concerning the truth of Ephesians 3:1 to 11. Note Ephesians 3:11, “God’s eternal purpose in Christ.” This eternal purpose of God was altogether different from Israel’s kingdom and kingdom salvation promised the Gentiles. Because there is no hint or trace of “the Mystery” or the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6, in any former inspired writings, the Apostle Paul calls this particular truth **“the Unsearchable Riches for Gentiles.”** “Unsearchable” means “untraceable” or “unprophesied.” So once again we see that Israel’s kingdom program was prophesied; but that God’s “grace” dispensation and “Body” program was not prophesied. Therefore the visitation of Gentiles mentioned in Acts 15:13 to 17, was different from Ephesians 3:5, 6.

In declaring the program of Acts 15:13 to 18, James and Peter affirm **“and to this agree the words of the prophets.”** This has special reference to Amos 9:11 to 15. When the Holy Spirit moved upon Amos to write the prophecy of chapter nine He did not have in mind one thought concerning the Joint-Body, but the kingdom of heaven, which Peter and his fellow-apostles proclaimed. Do not forget Galatians 2:7 and the fact that Christ committed this “circumcision” gospel to Peter after His resurrection.

We learn, in Acts 2:14 to 17, that the Holy Spirit came in fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy concerning Israel’s last days or “kingdom” days. In Acts 2:27 to 33, we learn that Christ was raised from the dead to take David’s throne in fulfillment of King David’s prophecy. We learn of the prophesied Kingdom days in Acts 3:19 to 21. We learned in Acts 5:29 to 32 that God raised Christ from the dead to be Prince and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel. We learned that Peter preached to Cornelius and his household concerning Jesus of Nazareth, the Word sent unto the children of Israel; that Cornelius loved Israel, and was seeking the Kingdom of God.

We learned that the Lord Jesus gave to Peter the gospel of the circumcision. Note what Peter preached to Cornelius "But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him." Compare and contrast Romans 4:4 and 5: "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to Him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

Then we learned that after Peter preached to Cornelius the twelve apostles were reduced to eleven apostles by the death of James. Then any record of the acts of the Eleven in the Book of Acts ceases, except as they have dealings with Paul. In conference with him they agreed to go to the Jews. Galatians 2:9.

GOD CHANGED HIS PROGRAM

In the first nine chapters of Acts we find the residue of Israelites fulfilling Amos 9:12, by seeking after the Lord. In those chapters we find no message addressed to Gentiles. Then it is admitted by most Christians that Peter used the key of the kingdom to let in Cornelius the Gentile. Those Gentiles were seeking the Lord in fulfillment of Amos 9:12. In the ministry of reconciliation after Israel was set aside God sought the Gentiles.

After the number of the apostles ceased to be "twelve" God began a new Divine movement and the Israelitish Kingdom of Heaven was postponed. So in the first ten chapters of Acts we have a suggestion of what God's Divine program will be when the Lord comes to be King on David's throne.

It has been thought by some men of God that Cornelius and the centurion of Luke 7:1 to 8, were one and the same. No one can prove this, but note Luke 7:4 and 5:

"That he was worthy for whom He should do this: For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue."

Now note Acts 10:22: "And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nations of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into this house, and to hear words of thee."

Whether or not they were different or one and the same we learn in the study of the Four Gospels and the Book of Acts this interesting fact: so far as there is any record in the Scriptures, the Roman centurion of Luke 7 and Matthew 8 is the only Gentile man to whom Christ on earth gave a kingdom blessing. Remember our words, "so far as the record is concerned."

So far as the record in Acts is concerned the household of Cornelius is the only company of Gentiles to whom any of the twelve preached. After that the Jerusalem pillars agreed to go to Jews. Galatians 2:9.

Then the first Gentile to whom Paul preached, according to the "Acts" record, was a Roman official by the name of "Paulus" (Acts 13:6 to 14) and Saul then became "Paulus" or "Paul." Because of the blindness of an unbelieving Jew, Paulus believed and was saved. Then Paul was sent to preach salvation to the Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy. Peter never preached salvation to Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy.

The Lord Jesus gave the so-called "great commission" of Matthew 28:19 to 20, to the Twelve. They were given the gospel of the circumcision. They agreed to go to Israel. So we ask what this commission had to do with the Truth of Romans 11:15 and II Corinthians 5:18? A new commission was given when God sent blindness upon Israel. May the Holy Spirit anoint our eyes to know the difference between Peter's message of "repentance and restitution" before

God's judgment fell upon Israel and Paul's "reconciliation" message after the truth of Romans 11:15.

"FOR IF THE CASTING AWAY OF THEM BE THE RECONCILING OF THE WORLD, WHAT SHALL THE RECEIVING OF THEM BE BUT LIFE FROM THE DEAD?" Romans 11:15.

"AND ALL THINGS ARE OF GOD, WHO HATH RECONCILED US TO HIMSELF BY JESUS CHRIST, AND HATH GIVEN TO US THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION." II Corinthians 5:18.

It is ridiculous, in the light of Galatians 1:11 to 17, Galatians 2:1 to 15, Romans 11:11 to 30 and Ephesians 3:1 to 11, to teach that Paul perpetuated the ministry, message, and program which Christ committed to the Twelve.

THE TRANSFER OF CHURCHES

In the Church of Christ we hear of "Amillennarians," "Postmillennarians," "Pre-Tribulation Premillennarians," and "Post-Tribulation Premillennarians." But whether a "Post" or a "Pre," all Christians are dispensationalists. The Premillennarians may have a few more dispensations than the others but the Postmillennarians divide God's spiritual programs into "The Old Testament" and "The New Testament." They invariably start off with the great blunder of teaching that the Old Testament (Covenant) began with the first chapter of Genesis, instead of with the twentieth chapter of Exodus, 2500 years later. God made a new Covenant with Israel in Exodus 20. It became "old" after Christ died. The Postmillennarians do not agree as to when the New Testament dispensation began. Most of them say, on the day of Pentecost; but many say, in the Book of Matthew. But they all agree that at some definite or indefinite time, the living saints under the Old Covenant became saints under the New Covenant. Therefore there was a transfer from the Old Testament Church into the New Testament Church.

The so-called "Ultra-dispensational Premillennarians teach that the saints, who were alive at the close of the "Acts" period, became members of the Body of Christ, which they teach had its historic beginning after Paul reached Rome. Virtually one hundred per cent of them teach that the Bride of Christ is Israel, or Israelitish. They claim, of course, that the Body of Romans 12:4 and 5 is not identified with the Body of Ephesians 3:6. But the point is, they teach the transfer of Churches. But because of Matthew 19:28 most of them doubt if the twelve apostles ever became members of the Church of the Mystery.

Virtually all of the Premillennarians in the "regular" camp teach that while Jesus of Nazareth was on earth, the Body did not exist, except in the predestinated purpose of God. They know that during the earthly ministry of Christ, many Jews were saved and received kingdom baptism into the kingdom. Their teaching is that these "**Kingdom of Heaven**" saints became "**Church**" saints, or members of Christ's Body, on the day of Pentecost. They at least claim this for the one hundred and twenty of Acts 1:15; although they say nothing about the great number of other Jews and the company of saved Samaritans mentioned in John 4:39 and 41. But the point is, they believe in the transfer either from "the Kingdom" to "the Church," or from the Old Church to the New Church. All Christians believe in a transfer, whether they begin the Body in Matthew or with John 20, Acts 2, Acts 7, Acts 28, or any other chapter of Acts.

What do you believe? Be a Berean and remember I John 2:27, that the Holy Spirit is the only infallible teacher.

MESSAGE NUMBER 52

DIVINE HEALING—WATER BAPTISM—THE LORD'S SUPPER

Perhaps no two men of God have done more, by their writings, to aid Christians to get an intelligent, working knowledge of the Bible, than have Mr. John Darby, considered the founder of the Plymouth Brethren, and Dr. C. I. Scofield, the author of the Scofield Reference Bible, and also the author of a pamphlet entitled, "Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth."

We understand that the original cost of the plates of Dr. Scofield's Bible was paid by one who was affiliated with the Plymouth Brethren in New York.

Mr. Darby was positive that the so-called "great commission," of Matthew 28:19 and 20, was not the marching order for the Lord's messengers during this age of grace. He was also positive that in Acts 3:19 to 21, the nation Israel was given another opportunity to receive Jesus of Nazareth as their King and Messiah. If Israel's rulers had repented God would have sent Jesus Christ back from heaven to bring about the restitution of all things, spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began. Acts 3:21.

Several years after the Scofield Reference Bible was published, Mr. A. E. Bishop, a missionary, under the Central American Mission, of which Doctor Scofield was the founder, published a pamphlet showing that the signs and miracles of Mark 16:17 and 18 and the "sign" gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11 ceased after the close of the "transition" period of about thirty years, covered by the Book of Acts. The Moody Colportage Association has printed several editions of this pamphlet. They are still printing and selling it. In the front of this pamphlet is printed Doctor Scofield's unreserved endorsement of the contents of the book.

This message got me into plenty of trouble, for which I most heartily praise the Lord. Presently I shall explain the reason. Let us read several statements from the Bishop pamphlet.

"There is no foundation in the Word of God for the prevailing popular doctrine of 'Divine Healing'."

"A careful study of the Epistles, especially of the latest Epistles of Paul, which give the normal course of the Church during the present dispensation, would dismount all from their hobbies, eliminate the last vestige of Judaism from their lives."

"After repeated study of the Epistles written after Paul's arrival at Rome, I am convinced that in them is found a curative teaching for all of the present-day delusions and Fanaticisms found among many of the most sincere saints in the Church."

"The sign gifts of I Corinthians 12 were operative only during the Book of Acts period."

In 1922 I was teaching the Bible in the city of Indianapolis, Indiana. There was a splendid spiritual work of the Lord established there, but there was considerable disturbance and division because of two different groups of "sinless perfection" people who were attending the meetings, and propagating their peculiar "holiness" doctrines among the people; the "Nazarenes" and the "Pentecostals." It was at that time that a gentleman handed me Mr. Bishop's pamphlet.

I became acquainted with several of the preachers affiliated with those two groups. One evening I observed that the Pentecostal preacher passed the Nazarene preacher, with whom he was acquainted, but, turned away to avoid greeting him. Upon investigation I learned that the Nazarene preacher had severely criticized the Pentecostal preacher because the Pentecostalist claimed two more of the sign-gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11 than the Nazarene preacher

claimed. The two additional gifts were “tongues,” and the “interpretation of tongues.” The Nazarene preacher had ridiculed the “tongues” meetings carried on by the Pentecostalist.

Let us carefully and prayerfully read I Corinthians 12:8 to 13 and I Corinthians 12:28.

“For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

“And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.” I Corinthians 12:28.

“ALL these worketh that one and selfsame Spirit.” I Corinthians 12:11. “God set some in the Church,” “miracles,” healings,” “kinds of tongues.” I Corinthians 12:28.

If those sign-gifts were to be exercised by members of the Body of Christ, how many of them were to be exercised? Who was right, the Nazarene or the Pentecostalist, if either was right? Of course, the Pentecostalist.

In I Corinthians 11:1 Paul wrote: “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” Did either the Nazarene or the Pentecostal preacher join with Paul in two of his declarations in I Corinthians? In I Corinthians 14:18, Paul wrote, **“I thank my God I speak with tongues more than ye all.”** The Nazarene preacher, who was opposed to “tongues,” could not Say this. The Pentecostalist might have said it.

Then Paul said, in I Corinthians 1:14 to 17, **“I thank God I baptized very few of you;” “I know not whether I baptized any other;” “For Christ sent me not to baptize.”** Neither the Nazarene nor the Pentecostalist would thus thank God. So neither of them obeyed God by following Paul as their example.

Before again referring to the Indianapolis meeting, let us consider

THE SIGNS AND SIGN-GIFTS

Speaking of these signgifts, of I Corinthians 12:8 to 12, we know that the Corinthians had been washed, sanctified and justified. I Corinthians 6:11. They had been baptized into the Body of Christ. They were with Christ” one spirit” and “one flesh.” I Corinthians 6:16 and 17. They were temples of the Holy Spirit. (I Corinthians 6:6:19) They were saints who are yet to judge the world and angels.” (I Corinthians 6:6:1 to 4). But Paul wrote to them,

“I speak to your shame.” (I Corinthians 6:5). “There is utterly a sin among you;” “Ye do wrong and defraud your brethren” (I Corinthians 6:7 and 8); “Ye are yet carnal: whereas there is among you envying and strife, and divisions”; “Ye walk as men”; (I Corinthians 3:3) “It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you” (I Corinthians 5:1); “He that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh judgment to himself; for this cause many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep.” I Corinthians 11:29 and 30.

Some of those Corinthian saints sat at the table where meats were offered to idols (I Corinthians 8:10). Some of them said, there would be no resurrection of the dead. I Corinthians 15:12.

Note Paul's words to those "washed," "sanctified" and "justified" Corinthians

"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able." I Corinthians 3:1 and 2.

Now how would you say those first-century Corinthian saints compare with the saints of 1941 A. D., who are members of the same Body, for believers are still being baptized by one Spirit into one Body?

Today among the different "sinless-perfection" or "miracle-working" or "healing" groups, it is generally taught that if we were as faithful and as spiritual as were those first-century Church members, we would be exercising all of the sign-gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11.

There are today some splendid, godly, spiritual, redeemed men and women who are earnestly endeavoring to please the Lord by yielding to Him for separation and service as they give forth their testimonies concerning the marvelous saving and keeping grace of God. They love the Lord Jesus Christ and as members of His Body they are trying to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called. Not one of these spiritual saints, with a grace testimony, does, or can, perform any of these miracles. They make no claim to these sign-gifts. They should claim and obey the truth of Ephesians 4:7. but in that program the miracles and signs are absent.

The gifts of "miracles," "healings," "tongues," and "interpretation of tongues," are not found in the Body of Christ today, except in the counterfeit. Is this because members of the Body of Christ in 1941 are less spiritual and less faithful than those carnal Corinthians, or for the reason presented by Doctor Scofield?

"THE SIGN-GIFTS OF I CORINTHIANS 12 WERE OPERATIVE ONLY DURING THE BOOK OF ACTS PERIOD."

PHYSICAL HEALING

It is significant, that after the close of the "Acts" period, even at the end of Paul's career, he wrote concerning a faithful saint: "Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick." II Timothy 4:20.

If ordinary Christians in 1941 can heal the sick surely that extraordinary man of God would have healed Trophimus, if God's program had not changed.

Then Paul wrote to another saint, who was a genuine, faithful, uncompromising, spiritual, fruitful saint: "Drink no longer water. but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities (sicknesses) ". I Timothy 5:23.

Then he wrote of another such saint: "Yet I supposed it necessary to send unto you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier, but, your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants, For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness. because that ye had heard that he had been sick. For indeed **he was sick nigh unto death but God had mercy on him**; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow." Philippians 2:25 to 27.

Here then is something of God's "signless" program after the close of the Book of Acts. Physical remedies for physical diseases mixed with prayer. Some saints were raised up to the glory of the Lord some were left sick to the glory of the Lord.

“For which cause we faint not; for though our outward man decay thoroughly the inward man is renewed day by day.” II Corinthians 4:16. “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28.

Praying saints are still having the same experience in 1941.

Let us never forget the truth of Romans 8:23.

“And not only they but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”

We groan as Christians, because we have bodies of humiliation, corruptible bodies, bodies which are daily decaying thoroughly. No matter whether saint or sinner resorts to physical remedies, to religious cures, or to Divine healing, the death rate will continue to be one apiece until the Lord Jesus appears to change the bodies of His saints that they may be fashioned like unto His own glorious body,

That our Heavenly father does hear prayer for saints who are sick, and does restore some of them, no child of God will deny, but this is so different from certain members in the Body of Christ with the special gift of healing. And no intelligent Christian, taught by the Holy Spirit, would teach that general physical healing is in the atonement.

‘The careful student of the Scriptures knows that there is no Bible record that any servant of the Lord anointed a single Gentile with oil. Neither is there a single record proving that any Gentile Christian had the Divine right to place hands upon any other saint or sinner.

FROM MARK 16 TO ACTS 28

We quote Mark 16:14 to 18 and Acts 28:25 to 28:

“AFTERWARD HE APPEARED UNTO THE ELEVEN AS THEY SAT AT MEAT, AND UPBRAIDED THEM FOR THEIR UNBELIEF AND HARDNESS OF HEART, BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED NOT THEM WHICH HAD SEEN HIM AFTER HE WAS RISEN. AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD, AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE. HE THAT BELIEVETH AND IS BAPTIZED SHALL BE SAVED; BUT HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT SHALL BE DAMNED. AND THESE, SIGNS SHALL FOLLOW THEM THAT BELIEVE; IN MY NAME SHALL THEY CAST OUT DEVILS; THEY SHALL SPEAK WITH NEW TONGUES; THEY SHALL TAKE UP SERPENTS; AND IF THEY DRINK ANY DEADLY THING, IT SHALL NOT HURT THEM; THEY SHALL LAY HANDS ON THE SICK, AND THEY SHALL RECOVER.” Mark 16:14 to 18.

“For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.” Acts 28:27 and 28.

Each of these messages was spoken to a company of Jews. The first company was a group of eleven saved Jews in the land of the Jews. The second company was a group of unsaved Jews in the Gentile city, Rome.

Now the question—did the Lord have one program from Mark 16 to Acts 28 and then change His spiritual program? Some one has called Acts 28:25 to 28 Israel’s Ichabod—Israel’s

fall. Did Paul's final words in the last chapter of Acts mark a crisis in the history of God's nation Israel?

It is most significant that the last sixteen chapters of the Book of Acts records the activities of one man and mentions only such other persons as had dealings with that man, Paul.

Note his testimony in Romans 11:13.

“FOR I SPEAK TO YOU GENTILES, INASMUCH AS I AM THE APOSTLE OF THE GENTILES I MAGNIFY MINE OFFICE.”

It is also significant that about one-half of Paul's Epistles were written before the Divine judgment of Acts 28 and the other half thereafter. This should cause us to ask this question, “If the Book of Acts is the record of the acts of the apostles, and if the last sixteen chapters tell of the acts of Paul, why does the Book suddenly stop right in the midst of Paul's activities several years before his death? Paul certainly was unceasingly active right up to the last moment of his life. It is generally believed that he experienced two imprisonments at Rome—the first time for “the hope of Israel” (Acts 28:20) and the second time for “the Mystery among the Gentiles.” Ephesians 6:19 and 23—Colossians 4:3 and 4 and Colossians 1:24 to 27.

“The careful student of the Book of Acts, and the “Acts” period, will learn that during the first nine chapters of Acts, God's order was, “to the Jews, and not to the Gentiles” (Acts 5:29 to 32 and Acts 10:28 and Acts 11:19). Then from acts 13 to Acts 28:28, God's order was “to the Jews first and also to the Gentiles.” Acts 13:46—Acts 18:5 and 6—Romans 1:16 and Romans 11:11 and 30.

Then in Ephesians and Colossians, Philippians, Titus and II Timothy, written after the close of Acts, God's order was no longer “to the Jews first.”

It was certainly not an oversight on the part of the Holy Spirit that He made no mention of “signs,” “miracles,” “tongues,” and “healings,” in Paul's Epistles, written after Acts 28:28. There is a marked absence of signs and the sign gifts in Paul's prison Epistles. In this connection we should study in I Corinthians 13:8 and 13 what was to pass away and what was to abide.

THE SIGNS OF MARK 16:17 AND 18

“AND THESE SIGNS SHALL FOLLOW THEM THAT BELIEVE: IN MY NAME SHALL THEY CAST OUT DEVILS; THEY SHALL SPEAK WITH NEW TONGUES; THEY SHALL TAKE UP SERPENTS; AND IF THEY DRINK ANY DEADLY THING, IT SHALL NOT HURT THEM; THEY SHALL LAY HANDS ON THE SICK, AND THEY SHALL RECOVER.” Mark 16:17 and 18.

Some man of God truly said, “if these signs following in these verses are the credentials of a Christian, then no Christians have lived on the earth since the first century.”

It is most amusing, if it were not sad, to hear the explanations and twistings of Mark 16:14 to 18, by men of God who are leaders among aggressive evangelical Christians.

Many of these brethren corrupt and change the Scriptures to fit into their denominational or church creeds and programs. They do not preach,

“he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” “with signs following.”

But they preach,

“he that believeth and is saved shall be baptized.” “Then forget the signs.”

When a modernist thus twists the Scriptures they publicly condemn him. But they wink at their own twisting. What God hath joined together let no man put asunder, unless we can prove that God later on separated them.

Get out your Bible; read carefully and find one chapter where water baptism is mentioned without some sign, miracle, or Jewish symbol recorded in the same chapter. Then carefully compare Matthew 26:28 with Luke 3:3 and Acts 2:38:

. “For this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many **for the remission of sins.**” Matthew 26:28.

“And He came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance **for the remission of sins.**” Luke 3:3.

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **for the remission of sins** and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

“FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS.”

This is stated in very plain language, which no man has the right to alter.

It is so difficult to be unprejudiced, even if we do resolve that we will be honest. We have been so hindered from being open, honest, sincere, unafraid Bereans, because of denominational loyalty or obstinate wills or preconceived opinions based upon traditions. Some one has said that the three most difficult words for a preacher to say are, “I was wrong.”

What “grace” preacher today preaches water baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins? Is Acts 2:38 our “grace” message? Read it:

“REPENT AND BE BAPTIZED EVERY ONE OF YOU IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS, AND YE SHALL RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST.”

JOHN’S BAPTISM

Now let us read carefully John 1:31:

“And I knew Him not: but that He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.”

Why did John the Baptist baptize with water?

“That Christ might be made manifest to Israel”; “for the remission of sins.”

What was the significance of the water baptism received by Saul of Tarsus who was converted some months after Christ died on the cross? Hear his own testimony:

“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” Acts 22:16.

“BE BAPTIZED AND WASH AWAY THY SINS.” Very plain language this. Paul was not buried to witness to the world that he had been buried with Christ in baptism. W-a-s-h does not spell b-u-r-y.

Note the order in Acts 8:5 to 15: Philip presented the message of Mark 16:14 to 18 in Samaria. The people believed Philip and God’s Word. Then Peter and John came several days later and laid hands on those baptized believers and they received the Holy Spirit.

WHEN WERE THE TWELVE BAPTIZED?

Some dispensational Bible teachers teach that the Jews; including the twelve apostles, who were converted while Jesus Christ was on earth, received “**kingdom**” water baptism. They say “**Christian**” baptism began on the day of Pentecost when the Body of Christ began. Then

they claim that the twelve apostles, with the one hundred and twenty, were the first believers to be baptized into the Body of Christ. But then they run into trouble, because they admit that the Twelve were not re-baptized. Of course, they have more trouble with the message of Peter on the day of Pentecost and the sale of their houses and lots. Acts 2:41 to 43— Acts 4:34.

These brethren, without Divine authority, twist Acts 2:38 as they do Mark 16:14 to 16. They preach “**repent and receive the Holy Spirit and be baptized with water,**” not even quoting the words “**for the remission of sins.**” They forget about “**the sale of their property.**” They say that was a kingdom program. They preach “he that believeth and is saved shall be baptized”—“no signs.”

You may ask any intelligent spiritual “grace” preacher, “Does water baptism help to save a sinner?” “Will water baptism help get any one into the true Bible Church?” “Does water baptism have any merit or value to help the believer’s standing in Christ?” “Does the believer have to prove to God or to man that he is saved by receiving water baptism?” To every question there will be a prompt, dogmatic, unmistakable “no.” If there had been any value whatever to water baptism in connection with the Pauline gospel of grace by which we are saved, that greatest of all soul -winners, instead of saying “I thank God I baptized only a few of you” would have baptized every believer he saw and he would have boasted about it.

‘There is something radically wrong with all of the different water ceremonies practiced by evangelical Christians. It is high time that some of the Bible teachers in the groups of Fundamentalists, who are not afraid of men, should rescue their fellow Fundamentalists from their inconsistencies and faulty dispensationalism. and learn why Christians are wholly disregarding Ephesians 4:3 to 6.

FOLLOWING CHRIST IN BAPTISM

Now and then some “grace” messenger calls upon his followers to follow the Lord Jesus in baptism. The Lord Jesus was circumcised thirty years before He was baptized. Luke 2:17 to 27. Right after He was baptized He went on the Jewish sabbath into the Jewish synagogue, as had been His custom. Luke 4:16. He told the Jews to whom He ministered to obey the law and find the priest and present a gift. Matthew 8:1 to 4. Matthew 23:1 to 3.

While Jesus Christ was on earth He was a minister of the circumcision, under the law, sent only to Israel, preaching “the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” healing the sick. Romans 15:8—Matthew 15:24—Galatians 4:4—Luke 19:9—Matthew 10:5 to 8. While Jesus of Nazareth was being, approved by God in the midst of Israel with sins and miracles, (Acts 2:22), so far as the Divine Record is concerned, only one Gentile man received a blessing from Him and that man loved the Jews and built them a synagogue. Luke 7:1 to 8. Should we tell believers to follow Jesus in circumcision or to the Jewish synagogue on the Jewish sabbath, or just in the matter of baptism?

Note Matthew 10:5, “go not to Gentiles.” If we are to go back to Jesus on earth for our program, we will certainly run into an Old Testament religious Jewish program. Going the other side of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus we shall find the priests, offerings, sacrifices, the scribes and Pharisees in Moses’ seat. We shall not find the dispensation of grace for Gentiles or membership in the Body of Christ. Let us not join with those whose slogan is “back to Jesus,” for we are seated with Him in the heavenlies where He is far above. Let us not go back to the land of the Jews under the law. Shall we go back to where Jesus called the Gentiles “dogs”? Matthew 15:25 to 27.

Some years after Christ died God opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles. Acts 14:27. Paul was “the apostle to the Gentiles.” He said, **“Christ sent me not to baptize.”** Paul never once intimated that water baptism was a witness to the world that a member of Christ’s Body had been baptized into the death of Christ, buried and raised with Him. The baptism of Romans 6:3 and 4 is both meritorious and efficacious and if there is any water there, water baptism made saints out of sinners.

We quote Romans 6:3 and 4:

“Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

With these verses read Colossians 2:11 and 12:

“In Whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands in putting off the Body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead.”

“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Galatians 3:27.

Then note Ephesians 4:5:

ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM”

All of these baptisms refer to one and the same Divine baptism by which a believer is baptized into Christ, into the death of Christ, into the resurrected Christ, into the Body of Christ. Colossians 2:11. Is God’s explanation of the baptism of Colossians 2:12, “without hands”? This Divine baptism makes the believer a member of the true Bible Church and makes him complete in Christ. Colossians 2:10.

SEVERAL BAPTISMS—ONE BAPTISM

Most “grace” preachers claim that we are working under the “great commission” of Matthew 28:19 and 20 and that we are to baptize with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, after believers are made members of the Body of Christ by Holy Spirit baptism. But they do not know what for. Many defend their practice because “it is too late to change.” But not one of the dozen or more water baptism theories can be proved by the Bible rightly divided.

They cannot prove their practice by the Bible, except by corrupting some Scriptures and wholly ignoring other Scriptures. In addition to the baptism of Matthew 28:19 and 20, which most Christians claim to be “Christian” baptism, note the three baptisms of Luke 3:16:

“JOHN ANSWERED, SAYING UNTO THEM ALL, I INDEED BAPTIZE YOU WITH WATER, BUT ONE MIGHTIER THAN I COMETH, THE LATCHET OF WHOSE SHOES I AM NOT WORTHY TO UNLOOSE: HE SHALL BAPTIZE YOU WITH THE HOLY GHOST AND WITH FIRE.”

“WATER”—“HOLY SPIRIT”—“FIRE”—THREE BAPTISMS.

Now note the fourth baptism of Luke 12:50:

“But I have a baptism to be baptized with: and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.”

This is Christ’s baptism on the cross **“DEATH”**. Including Matthew 28 we have five baptisms. But we read in Ephesians 4:3 to 6:

“ENDEAVOURING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE. THERE IS ONE BODY AND ONE SPIRIT, EVEN AS YE ARE CALLED IN ONE HOPE OF YOUR CALLING: ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM, ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL, WHO IS ABOVE ALL AND THROUGH ALL, AND IN YOU ALL.”

Which of the five baptisms of Luke and Matthew is the **ONE BAPTISM** of Ephesians 4:5? The one Divine baptism of Ephesians 4:5 is the “death” baptism of Romans 6:3 and Colossians 2:12.

It is significant that when Christ mentioned His **“death”** baptism He gave this order to His apostles

“Then charged He His disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ.” Matthew 16:20. Christ, in the twelfth chapter of Luke, mentioned His “death” baptism. Death baptism is mentioned in Romans 6:3 and 4.

Now check up on this interesting fact, there is no water baptism in the last twelve chapters of Luke, after Christ mentioned His **“death”** baptism. There is no record that any one received water baptism after Paul wrote of the **“death”** baptism of Romans 6:3 and 4.

Why did John baptize with water? “And I knew Him not: but that He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.” John 1:31. What did Christ say in Matthew 16:20? “Then charged He His disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ.” After that there was no need for water baptism as long as this order stood.

But later on, what happened! “Then said Jesus, Father forgive them; for they know not what they do.” After this prayer the same Jews who were denounced as “serpents,” “vipers” and “hypocrites” in Matthew 23 were tenderly and affectionately addressed as children of the covenant in Acts 3:17 and 25.

Christ’s order of Matthew 16:20 was rescinded. The Lord began anew with Israel on the day of Pentecost. Note Acts 2:36:

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” Surely the Lord began anew with Israel on the day of Pentecost. Strange! Here the twelve apostles did the very thing they were told not to do in Matthew 16:20. They testified to Israel that Jesus was Christ. So did Paul in Acts 9:20 and in Acts 17:3 and 4. Why? Because of Christ’s prayer on the cross.

FROM PENTECOST TO ROMANS 11:15

With Israel’s new opportunity to accept Jesus as Christ and King, water baptism was again in order, in line with John 1:31, until the rejection was announced in Romans 11:1 to 15. Note Romans 11:15

“FOR IF THE CASTING AWAY OF THEM BE THE RECONCILING OF THE WORLD, WHAT SHALL THE RECEIVING OF THEM BE, BUT LIFE FROM THE DEAD?”

Here we have a radical change indicated: the casting away of Israel meant the reconciling of Gentiles. This is one of the most important dispensational verses in the Bible. Pause.

Meditate. Catch the full significance of the truth of Romans 11:15 and Romans 11:30. Here we learn the all important truth, the sons of Abraham lost their place of special privilege. Racial and religious barriers were removed and now the other children of Adam were justified without a cause by God's grace. Romans 3:24.

Paul was the Lord's **"reconciliation"** preacher. WITH THE FIRST MENTION OF "RECONCILIATION" in Paul's Epistles, there was no further record of any water ceremony. God was through with ceremonial washings and all religious practices when He was through with His religious nation. Note Hebrews 9:10:

"Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers baptisms, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation:"

With the ministry of reconciliation the reformation came.

There were no religious baptisms until God gave them to Israel at Sinai. Members of Christ's Body today are united to the Head in the heavenlies, baptized with His baptism and are complete in Him, and have nothing to do with water baptism.

SIGNS AND BAPTISM AFTER ACTS 28

Back to the meetings at Indianapolis. One night in that city, when a number of Pentecostals were present, including two of their preachers, I preached on the subject, "Why Tongues Ceased When Paul Reached Rome."

The next night one of the Pentecostal preachers came back to the meeting. He said, "Brother, I am thoroughly convinced, and I am giving up "Pentecostalism, but it seems to me that the same five reasons you gave last night will prove that water baptism ceased at the same time." At first I said "no." But after hours of prayerful, diligent study of the Bible I saw that that Pentecostalist was right. Water baptism and signs are found together in the New Testament Scriptures, except that John the Baptist performed no miracles and Christ did no baptizing. In Paul's Prison Epistles we find no water baptism and neither signs nor tongues nor sign healings. We find different gifts to the Body and one Divine baptism in Ephesians chapter four. Certainly the Holy Spirit knew that it would be out of the question for believers with such water baptism confusion to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit.

HOW ABOUT THE LORD'S SUPPER?

I was ordained by the Presbytery and became a Presbyterian minister. Presbyterian "teaching" elders are expected to teach that water baptism by sprinkling superseded circumcision, and that the Lord's Supper superseded the Passover.

Even the superficial student of the Bible knows that Abram was declared righteous in uncircumcision. Romans 4:7 to 10. At that time the Scriptures foresaw that God would justify heathen, in Paul's day, by faith without religion, law, or circumcision. Galatians 3:8 and Romans 4:7 to 10. Therefore, such an argument would rule out baptism for Gentiles. And again, no girls were circumcised. Therefore, no girls should be baptized. But men and women were baptized, in Acts 8. Again while Jesus Christ was on earth, no man was baptized who had not first been circumcised. Peter got into trouble for baptizing uncircumcised Cornelius. Acts 11:1 to 6. Circumcision was practiced among Christian Jews just as far into the "Acts" period as was water baptism.

Most Presbyterian preachers, who are Premillenarians, know that they are preaching and practicing error concerning water baptism; but they see they are just as scriptural as are any of the “immersionists.” They must hold on to water baptism of some kind if they are to hold their positions and so the leaders continue to lead their followers in their unscriptural water theory. Sectarianism has played havoc with “Body” truth.

The “grace” immersionists are really becoming liberal and gracious. They are now giving the right hand of fellowship to sprinklers. But they know, and you know, and I know, that there is as much difference between the significance which the Baptists or Plymouth Brethren attach to water and that taught by the Presbyterians as there is between black and white. If one is Scriptural, the other is absurd. But as one man of God said to me, “It is too late to change. I’ll take them in “sprinkled,” “immersed” or “dry.” But he admitted that after years as an outstanding Fundamentalist, he didn’t understand the “why” of water baptism.

PASSOVER AND THE LORD’S SUPPER

Several months before the Lord at Sinai entered into that new covenant (the law) with Israel, which is now “the Old Covenant,” made old by Christ’s work on the cross, the Lord instructed Israel, in Egyptian bondage, concerning the Passover. These instructions are recorded in the twelfth chapter of Exodus. They took the lamb, without blemish, on the tenth day of the first month. It was killed on the fourteenth day in the evening. Exodus 12:3 to 6. The blood was sprinkled on the door post.

“And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.” “And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste; it is the Lord’s Passover.” Exodus 12:8 and 11.

“WHEN I SEE THE BLOOD, I WILL PASS OVER YOU.” Exodus 12:13.

Then note I Corinthians 5:7 and 8:

“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

Surely the “Passover” lamb spoke of Jesus Christ the Lamb of God. For centuries the Jews annually observed the Passover. One of the last acts of the Lord Jesus, before His death, was to observe the Passover with His disciples. Let us read very carefully Matthew 26:17 to 20 and 26 to 29.

“NOW THE FIRST DAY OF THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD THE DISCIPLES CAME TO JESUS, SAYING UNTO HIM, WHERE WILT THOU THAT WE PREPARE FOR THEE TO EAT THE PASSOVER? AND HE SAID, GO INTO THE CITY TO SUCH A MAN, AND SAY UNTO HIM, THE MASTER SAITH, MY TIME IS AT HAND; I WILL KEEP THE PASSOVER AT THY HOUSE WITH MY DISCIPLES. AND THE DISCIPLES DID AS JESUS HAD APPOINTED THEM; AND THEY MADE READY THE PASSOVER. NOW WHEN THE EVEN WAS COME, HE SAT DOWN WITH THE TWELVE.”

“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body, and He took the cup, and gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is My blood of the New Testament,

which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

We might ask what has bread, with the fruit of the vine, to do with roast lamb, bitter herbs, and unleavened bread?

And then there are some certain brethren who ask why Gentile members of the Body of Christ should have anything to do with the New Covenant, inasmuch as God's Word plainly states, in Jeremiah 31:31 to 35, and in Hebrews 8:7 to 11, that both the Old Covenant and the New Covenant are "Israelitish."

These certain brethren affirm that the Lord's Supper is not for members of "the Church of the Mystery," "the JointBody" of Ephesians 3:6. They quote II Corinthians 3:6—Ephesians 2:12 and I Corinthians 11:25.

"Who also hath made us able ministers of THE NEW TESTAMENT; not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."

"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers FROM THE COVENANTS of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world"

"After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is THE NEW TESTAMENT in My blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Their argument is, that the Gentiles, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, are referred to as non-covenant Gentiles and therefore, God was dealing with them in a manner different from His dealings with them during the "Acts" period when Paul said, **"we are able ministers of the New Covenant."**

These brethren follow the dispensationalism of Dr. E. W. Bullinger of England, and his successor, Mr. Charles Welch, and teach that not only did God change His spiritual program after Acts 28:28, but that an entirely new and different Church began after that Divine judgment. They claim that the Body of Ephesians 3:6 is a Body different from the Body of Romans 12:4 and 5 and I Corinthians 12:13. They use Romans 15:27, Acts 28:20, Acts 26:22 and Romans 11:24 to prove that the Church of the "Acts" period was an Israelitish kingdom Church, and the hope of the members of that "Acts" Church was "the hope of Israel." Acts 28:20.

They claim that the Lord's Supper was the continuation of Israel's Passover and because it was mentioned in connection with Israel's New Covenant, the members of the Body of Ephesians have nothing to do with that Israelitish ordinance. They teach that in the economy and message of grace, Gentiles are saved by the blood of Christ and not by the blood of the New Covenant. Ephesians 2:15 and Colossians 1:20.

THE LORD'S SUPPER AND SIGNS

Another argument they present for the elimination of the Lord's Supper from "the dispensation of the mystery" (Ephesians 3:9) is, that, with the revelation of the mystery, after Acts 28:28, signs ceased. Before that time there were "sign" judgments upon those who unworthily sat at the table. Note I Corinthians 11:29 and 30:

"For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."

They argue that inasmuch as the signs ceased, the Lord's Supper also ceased. By the same unsound argument we could prove that the gospel is no more to be proclaimed.

Note the similarity in the language of Paul, in I Corinthians 15:3 and 4 and I Corinthians 11:23:

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”

“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread.”

Then note Romans 15:18 and 19 and 11 Corinthians 12:12:

“To make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders—I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.”

“Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.”

Mighty signs accompanied the proclamation of the gospel of grace by Paul during the “Acts” period. Signs ceased after Acts 28:28. Then by the same foolish argument of these brethren, who would rule out the Lord's Supper after Acts 28:28 because signs ceased, the gospel should not have been proclaimed after Acts 28:28.

“These brethren have been called “**ultra-dispensationalists**” or “**hyper-dispensationalists**” because of these extreme views concerning two Bodies, the elimination of the Lord's Table, and the teaching that Israel and not the Body of Christ is to be the Bride of Christ.

They claim that the Lord's Supper will be in God's program in the coming kingdom age, when Luke 22:29 and 30 and Matthew 26:29 are fulfilled.

“And I appoint unto you a kingdom as My Father hath appointed unto Me; that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

“But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.”

But we ask of these brethren, why confuse “after the King comes” with the expression in I Corinthians 11:26, “till He come”?

TILL HE COME

Let us look at I Corinthians 11:26:

“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death TILL HE COME.” The expression here “**come**” is in the Greek “**elthe**” and means “**shall have come**.” Then the members of Christ's Body were and are to remember the death of the Son “**till He shall have come**.” That event is still future. So we are still to break bread and drink of the cup, “**till He come**.”

CHRIST AND THE NEW COVENANT

All dispensational students of the Scriptures believe that wonderful things are going to happen to Israel under the guarantee of the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31 to 38. They also believe and teach that the “kingdom” promises in the Davidic and Abrahamic covenants have been interrupted, and that we are now living in a parenthesis, a grace dispensation. Of course we

know that there is a difference between “the kingdom of heaven” presented by Christ on earth, and to Israel in Acts 3:19 to 21, and the “JointBody” of Ephesians 3:6. But most assuredly no sane, intelligent, spiritual student of the Scriptures would teach that Gentile believers today do not receive any benefits and blessings, mentioned in God’s covenant with Abram, and that they have absolutely no benefits from the blood of the New Covenant. Such an argument would rule out the blessings of Hebrews 10:10 to 14, and would leave the members of Christ’s Body without a Mediator, since Christ is the Mediator of the New Covenant. Hebrews 9:15.

The very next step that is taken by many of these extremists, who rule out the Lord’s Supper, because of the mention of the blood in the New Covenant, is invariably to rule out Christ as a Mediator. When pressed they are compelled to relegate Paul’s First Epistle to Timothy to the “Acts” Israelitish kingdom age, because Christ is our Mediator, in I Timothy 2:3 to 7. So they affirm that I Timothy cannot be considered a prison Epistle unless Paul wrote it before he received the revelation of the mystery of Colossians 1:24 to 27. But verse 7 is the Holy Spirit’s answer to their folly.

“Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.” This is Paul’s language in connection with “the mystery.”

By the same argument these brethren have relegated the rapture of the Church, as recorded in I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18, to that same Church of the “Acts” period. Of course this means that Paul will not receive at the rapture what he mentioned in I Thessalonians 2:19: “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?” They teach that this coming (parousia) was the hope of the “Acts” Church but is not the hope of the Church of the Mystery. Therefore, Paul will not receive the crown of joy at the “parousia” for his hope was changed from the “parousia” to the blessed hope of Titus 2:13 after Acts 28:28.

This teaching of course would imply that Christ at the close of the “Acts” period abdicated as Israel’s High Priest and ascended “far above.” Ephesians 4:10.

THE LORD’S TABLE--THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

We quote Acts 20:7 and Acts 2:46 and Acts 27:35:

“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.”

“And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.”

“And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all; and when he had broken it, he began to eat.”

This last breaking of bread was for sinners during the shipwreck.

Now the question, have we any Scriptural proof that Acts 2:46 and Acts 20:7 refer to the Lord’s Table? Are we to prove by these Scriptures that it is the Scriptural duty of members of Christ’s Body to break bread at the Lord’s Supper every Sunday?

Surely we shall not attempt to prove by Revelation 1:10 that the first day of the week, Sunday, should be called “the Lord’s day,” as some Bible teachers have done, especially those who have virtually made the Lord’s Supper an obligatory Sunday morning ordinance. There is no Scriptural proof that “the first day of the week” is “the Lord’s day.” Every day is the Lord’s

day with members of Christ's Body who are seated with Him in the heavenlies and blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies.

It is a question whether or not it is Scriptural to speak of the Lord's Supper as an ordinance. Now and then we hear some brother trying to prove that the Lord has linked water baptism and the Lord's Supper together as the two ordinances to be practiced or observed by the members of the Lord's Body. They quote I Corinthians 11:2.

"That ye remember Me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered to you." The word here translated ordinances is "paradosis", meaning "traditions." This is an entirely different Greek word than the word "ordinances" in Colossians 2:14.

Every intelligent student of the Scriptures knows that it is not God's will that members of the Body of Christ should be divided into clergymen and laymen. There is no Scriptural proof that a man must be an ordained "reverend" before he is Scripturally qualified to baptize a fellow-believer, or to preside when members of the Body of Christ take the bread and wine in remembrance of the death of Christ.

While God does want things done decently and in order, He certainly does not want any member of Christ's Body to consider the Lord's Supper as something religious. We are not a race of servants, as were the people of God under the law. We are a race of sons. God wants us to be righteous and spiritual but He does not want us to be religious. If the Lord's Supper is a religious ordinance, it has no place in the dispensation of the grace of God.

Now note I Corinthians 11:26:

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till He come."

Now the question, "how often is 'as often'"? If the Lord's Supper is a memorial, there is no specified time or place where believers are to gather to remember the Lord. It is not a compulsory, legal ordinance that must be observed in a church building at a regular time on Sunday or any other day. The language of I Corinthians 11:26, studied in the light of the dispensation of grace, grants to the saints of God the privilege of gathering in a home, or any kind of a building, at any time saints care to gather to remember the Lord. It cannot be proved that the expression, "breaking bread," used in several verses in Acts, referred to "the Lord's Supper."

Among the brethren that would rule the Lord's Table out of the dispensation of grace because it was a religious Jewish ordinance, associated with Israel's New Covenant, a continuation of Israel's Passover, there are some who say that even during the "Acts" period no Gentile Christian in the "Acts" Body sat at the Lord's Table; but only Jews. And they gathered at Passover time, on the fourteenth day of Israel's first month.

No man of God has produced any valid Scriptural reason for the elimination of the Lord's Table from "the dispensation of the mystery" mentioned in Ephesians 3:9. Those who have attempted to give the Scripture for their refusal to sit at the Lord's Table have gotten into rather serious trouble with other doctrines and they have done anything but rightly divide the Word of God. It has not been division but subtraction.

The Word stands, that the Apostle of the Gentiles received his authority from the risen Christ, to present to members of the Body of Christ the blessed privilege of partaking of the bread and wine until the Lord Jesus shall have come.

We may be troubled and divided as to whether the members of the Body of Christ should use leavened or unleavened bread, fermented or unfermented wine, and just how often they should shew forth the Lord's death by taking the bread and wine, but before relegating this

memorial to a former dispensation let us have some sane Scriptural exegesis which thus far has not been presented.

MESSAGE NUMBER 53

THE CHURCH IN THE WILDERNESS—THE PROPHESIED CHURCH

THE CHURCH OF THE MYSTERY

The seventh chapter of Acts records Stephen's message to Israel in Jerusalem. In reviewing Israel's history Stephen made reference to "the Church in the wilderness."

"THIS IS HE, THAT WAS IN THE CHURCH IN THE WILDERNESS WITH THE ANGEL WHICH SPAKE TO HIM IN THE MOUNT SINAI, AND WITH OUR FATHERS: WHO RECEIVED THE LIVELY ORACLES TO GIVE UNTO US." Acts 7:38.

Then in Hebrews 2:12 we find a fulfillment of the prophecy of Psalm 22:22 concerning God's Church or Congregation. Note first, Psalm 22:22 and then, Hebrews 2:12.

"I will declare Thy name unto My brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee."

"I WILL DECLARE THY NAME UNTO MY BRETHREN, IN THE MIDST OF THE CHURCH WILL I SING PRAISE UNTO THEE."

Now, by way of comparison, read Colossians 1:24 to 26 and Ephesians 3:4 to 6

"WHO NOW REJOICE IN MY SUFFERINGS FOR YOU, AND FILL UP THAT WHICH IS BEHIND OF THE AFFLICTIONS OF CHRIST IN MY FLESH FOR HIS BODY'S SAKE, WHICH IS THE CHURCH: WHEREOF I AM MADE A MINISTER, ACCORDING TO THE DISPENSATION OF GOD WHICH IS GIVEN TO ME FOR YOU, TO FULFIL THE WORD OF GOD; EVEN THE MYSTERY WHICH HATH BEEN HID FROM AGES AND FROM GENERATIONS, BUT NOW IS MADE MANIFEST TO HIS SAINTS."

"Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same (Joint) Body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel."

Before we consider these three "CHURCHES" let us read Acts 19:32, 37, 39 and 41.

"Some therefore cried one thing, and some another; **for the assembly was confused**; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together."

"For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither **robbers of churches**, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess."

"But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined **in a lawful assembly**."

"And when he had spoken, **he dismissed the assembly**."

The disciples of Christ were in the midst of an angry mob of idolatrous heathen, in the theatre at Ephesus. The mob was called **“an assembly.”** The Greek word translated **“assembly”** is **“ekklesia.”** You and I have just as much right to call that mob of heathen **“a church”** as the translators had to call God’s company of saints **“a church.”** The word **“church”** or **“churches”** is found about 117 times in the New Testament Scriptures. With the single exception of Acts 19:37, every time the word **“church”** is found in the Bible the Greek word is, **“ekklesia.”** Note the expression, **“robbers of churches,”** in Acts 19:37. This expression is translated from two Greek words: **“sulao”** meaning **“to rob,”** and **“heiron,”** meaning **“temple.”** More than fifty times in the New Testament Scriptures the temple at Jerusalem is in the Greek **“heiron.”**

I am sure then that you would like to join with me in asking the translators why they have left us in such confusion. Why did they translate **“heiron,” “churches”**? Why did they translate **“ekklesia”** three times **“assembly”** in Acts 19, and 116 times **“church”**? Where did they get such a word as **“church”**? **“Ekklesia”** should never have been translated **“church.”** The word **“church”** is a form of **“Kurios.”** **“Kurios”** is translated many, many times **“Lord.”** So see how indefinite and vague is the translation of **“Ekklesia,” “of the Lord”** To be sure **“the assembly”** at Ephesus in the theatre was **“of the devil,”** but it was an **“ekklesia.”** The **“ekklesia”** described in Ephesians 1:22 and 23 is **“of the Lord.”** Note these verses

“AND HATH PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIS FEET, AND GAVE HIM TO BE HEAD OVER ALL THINGS TO THE CHURCH, WHICH IS HIS BODY, THE FULNESS OF HIM THAT FILLETH ALL IN ALL.”

“Ekklesia” is from the Greek **“kaleo,” “call,” “ek,” “out.”** **“The Church”** means **“the called-out.”**

Now note I Timothy 3:15 and 16

“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in THE HOUSE OF GOD, which is THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH. And without controversy great is the mystery.”

Here we read of **“the Church of the living God,” “the Ekklesia of the living God,” “the pillar and ground of the truth,” “the House of God,” “the mystery.”** There is no reference here to an assembly-hall or meeting place. **“The House of God”** is a building made of human beings. **“The Church of God,”** during this present Divine economy, is called, **“the Body of Christ,” “the fulness of Christ.”**

You and I know perfectly well that no building of stone, brick, or wood, could be the fulness of Christ. Think of the utter confusion of the religious world today. A meeting-place is called **“a church.”** The majority of the people who attend the meetings in the building, as well as the preacher, may be unsaved. The name **“church,” “of the Lord,”** is misleading when applied to unsaved human beings gathered in a so-called **“church”** building. Many people seem to associate the building in some way with God, though God may have nothing to do with it.

When one of the denominations, near Chicago, was rebuilding their beautiful expensive religious edifice, their contractor had a large sign on the temporary barricade, **“Danger, Keep Out.”** Some man of God said, **“What a pity they did not leave that sign there after the building was completed.”** Why? Because God had nothing to do with that **“church.”** The pastor did not believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ or salvation by the once-for-all sacrifice of the Son of God. He was a modernist, and his people followed him with his new theology. He wholly ignored Acts 20:28. **“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.”**

Not once does the word “**church**,” in the New Testament Scriptures, refer to the assembly-hall. The word “**ekklesia**” could not be correctly translated “an assembly-hall.” There is a very great difference between “an assembly-hall” and “**the assembly**.”

There was a building, in the Old Testament, known as “**the house of God**.” The Psalmist was glad when they said, “**let us go into the house of God**.” Every person should rejoice at such an invitation today, but it would mean something entirely different. Some Israelites went many times into “**the house of God**,” but a believing sinner, in the day of grace, enters once-for-all into “**the House of God**,” to indeed dwell forever.

Note this House in Ephesians 2:17 to 22:

“AND CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHICH WERE AFAR OFF, AND TO THEM THAT WERE NIGH. FOR THROUGH HIM WE BOTH HAVE ACCESS BY ONE SPIRIT UNTO THE FATHER. NOW THEREFORE YE ARE NO MORE STRANGERS AND FOREIGNERS, BUT FELLOW CITIZENS WITH THE SAINTS, AND OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD; AND ARE BUILT UPON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF CORNER STONE IN WHOM ALL THE BUILDING FITLY FRAMED TOGETHER, GROWETH UNTO AN HOLY TEMPLE IN THE LORD.”

How do we enter the House of God today? “**For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.**” I Corinthians 12:13. Then note Ephesians 4:4 to 6.

THE CHURCH IN THE WILDERNESS

Now let us consider Acts 7:38. Here we read of an “**ekklesia in the wilderness**.” So we see that God had a “Church” long before Christ said, “on this rock I will build My Church.” Matthew 16:16 to 18.

God’s people were “**called-out**” of Egypt to go to Canaan. On the way they had a sanctuary in the tabernacle, and God met with them and communed with them from above the blood sprinkled mercy-seat.

More than 25 times, in the Book of II Chronicles, God referred to the gatherings of His covenanted people as “**the ekklesia**.” We read in the authorized version of the Bible the word “congregation.” But in the Greek Septuagint the word is “**ekklesia**,” the same Greek word found 116 times in the New Testament Scriptures. In Nehemiah 13:1 we read of the “**ekklesia of God**”; and in that Book we learn that the enemies of God persecuted “**the ekklesia of God**.” Therefore the Apostle Paul was not the first man to persecute “**the Church of God**.” Galatians 1:13.

A very simple but important lesson for us to learn is that “**the Body of Christ**” is “**the Church of God**”; but “**the Church of God**” is not necessarily “**the Body of Christ**.”

THE PROPHESED CHURCH

We have quoted Psalm 22:22 and Hebrews 2:12. The Psalmist prophesied concerning “**the ekklesia**” (the congregation). In Hebrews 2:12 the prophesied “**ekklesia**” is “**the Church**.” Thus we see that we must some times give a general meaning to the word “**ekklesia**” (Church), and sometimes a very definite and specific meaning. God’s prophets foretold “**a Church**” but not one of them foretold “the Joint-Body” of Ephesians 3:6.

If you will read Isaiah 43:5 to 7, Jeremiah 31:10 and Jeremiah 31:31 to 36 and Jeremiah 32:37 and 38, and Ezekiel 36:24, and Amos 9:11 to 15, you will learn that God is to have a “called-out” people, “an **ekklesia**,” after this present dispensation has been brought to an end. We quote Ezekiel 36:24 and Jeremiah 32:37 and 38.

“I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.”

“Behold I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely; And they shall be My people, and I will be their God.”

There is yet to be a great church in the land of Canaan.

THE UNPROPHESED CHURCH

But now again note Colossians 1:24 to 26. “This was the Church of the Mystery.” By comparing this with Ephesians 3:1 to 11, we learn that any other “ekklesia” (church), in the Scriptures, was a church different from “the Church of the Mystery.” The prophets of Israel knew about the “**ekklesia of God**”; but they knew nothing about “**the Body of Christ**.” All during the days of Israel’s commonwealth and captivity “the Body of Christ” was God’s own unrevealed secret, not made known to the sons of men in other ages.

At last the Lord Jesus disclosed to the Apostle Paul the new Divine movement, called “the dispensation of the mystery.” Ephesians 3:9. “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.” Here we see that God wants you and me to do the same thing.

Note Ephesians 1:9—“Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself.” God has made it known. God wants it made known.

MESSAGE NUMBER 54

HOUSEHOLD BAPTISM

Every Christian believes in “household baptism” and every Christian should believe in “household baptism” because the Bible teaches “household baptism,” but Christians are by no means agreed on this “household baptism.”

All Christians should be agreed that sectarianism is not Scriptural, that God’s purpose during this present economy of grace is to build into, to build up, and to complete the Church which is the Body of Christ. Note how definitely this is stated in Ephesians 4:11 to 13:

“And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some pastors and teachers: For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry for the edifying of the Body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ”

This Body, when completed, will be with Christ, the Perfect Man, the Fulness of Christ. Now note Ephesians 2:15 to 19:

“Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain One New Man, so making peace; And that He might reconcile both unto God in one Body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD: And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner Stone.”

Believing Jews and believing Gentiles, together with Christ, will be “One New Man,” both reconciled unto God in “one Body,” “the Household of God.” Now note I Timothy 3:15 and I Corinthians 12:13:

“But if I tarry long that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in THE HOUSE OF GOD, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth.”

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into ONE BODY; whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free: and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

Here we learn that “the Household of God” is called “the House of God,” “the Church of the living God,” “the pillar and ground of the truth.” How are believers made members of “the Household of God,” the Body of Christ? By baptism. Baptized by one Spirit into one Body.

Now note Galatians 3:27—Romans 6:3 and 4—Colossians 2:11—and Ephesians 4:4 and 5:

“FOR AS MANY OF YOU AS HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST HAVE PUT ON CHRIST.” Galatians 3:27.

“KNOW YE NOT THAT SO MANY OF US AS WERE BAPTIZED INTO JESUS CHRIST WERE BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH? THEREFORE WE ARE BURIED WITH HIM BY BAPTISM INTO DEATH THAT LIKE AS CHRIST WAS RAISED UP FROM THE DEAD BY THE GLORY OF THE FATHER, EVEN SO WE ALSO SHOULD WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE,” Romans 6:3 and 4.

“IN WHOM ALSO YE ARE CIRCUMCISED WITH THE CIRCUMCISION MADE WITHOUT HANDS, IN PUTTING OFF THE BODY OF THE SINS OF THE FLESH BY THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST.” Colossians 2:11.

“THERE IS ONE BODY AND ONE SPIRIT, EVEN AS YE ARE CALLED IN ONE HOPE OF YOUR CALLING; ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM.” Ephesians 4:4 and 5.

There is one Christ. The believer is baptized into Christ. There is one way of salvation. The believer is baptized into the death of Christ; buried with Him by baptism and raised to walk in newness of life. There is one Body. There is only one baptism that will make a believer a member of that Body. That is the one Divine baptism with which man has nothing to do except to receive for himself by faith and then preach it to others.

Inasmuch as it is impossible to get into “the Household of God” without the Divine baptism, every member of Christ’s Body has received this “Household baptism,” God’s baptism that brings him into God’s Household.

HOUSEHOLD - WATER BAPTISM

The Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians and others, including the Reformed and Christian Reformed churches, believe in “household baptism,” that is, they sprinkle with water little children. The pastors of most of these churches sprinkle only the children of parents who are members of their denominations.

The Reformed and Christian Reformed churches generally agree with the Presbyterians that sprinkling is the New Testament ordinance which superseded Old Testament circumcision. Inasmuch as baby boys, eight days old, whose parents were God’s covenanted people were circumcised, the little boys and girls of members of the New Covenant Church should be sprinkled. We can’t see just how or why the baby girls are included,

We quote what an outstanding theologian in the Reformed denomination has written, Dr. Albertus Peters

“The Bible is entirely silent about infant baptism, either pro or con. We admit it. We do not profess to get infant baptism from its pages.” “We would not find infant baptism in the Bible, because it is not there, and cannot be gotten out of the Bible.”

The Lutherans are not unanimous in their doctrine, but generally they believe that the children of Lutheran parents are made both Christians and Lutherans by infant baptism.

The Roman Catholics do not accept the sprinkling of any other denomination as valid or efficacious. The sprinkling must be by a Roman Catholic, with blessed, holy water. This ceremony is a cleansing that takes care of original sin, according to their unscriptural “baptism” theory.

BAPTIZED BOTH MEN AND WOMEN

Note Acts 8:12:

“But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”

Here we learn that both men and women were baptized. As to whether this baptism was by sprinkling, pouring or immersing, we may not agree, but there is no reference to the baptizing of the children.

Note Hebrews 9:10:

“Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers BAPTISMS, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.”

We have changed the word translated “washings” to read “baptisms.” Israel’s baptisms were generally by sprinkling or pouring, and the children of the Israelitish parents were included under the covenant with their parents. The word in Hebrews 9:10 is “baptizo.”

Can we not prove household baptism by Acts 10:2 and 48—Acts 16:15— Acts 16:34—I Corinthians 1:16? Note these verses.

“A DEVOUT MAN, AND ONE THAT FEARED GOD WITH ALL HIS HOUSE, WHICH GAVE MUCH ALMS TO THE PEOPLE, AND PRAYED TO GOD ALWAY.”

“AND HE COMMANDED THEM TO BE BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF THE LORD. THEN PRAYED THEY HIM TO TARRY CERTAIN DAYS.” Acts 10:2 and 48.

“AND WHEN SHE WAS BAPTIZED, AND HER HOUSEHOLD, SHE BESOUGHT US, SAYING, IF YE HAVE JUDGED ME TO BE FAITHFUL TO THE LORD, COME INTO MY HOUSE, AND ABIDE THERE. AND SHE CONSTRAINED US.” Acts 16:15.

“AND HE TOOK THEM THE SAME HOUR OF THE NIGHT, AND WASHED THEIR STRIPES; AND WAS BAPTIZED, HE AND ALL HIS, STRAIGHTWAY.”

“AND WHEN HE HAD BROUGHT THEM INTO HIS HOUSE, HE SET MEAT BEFORE THEM, AND REJOICED, BELIEVING IN GOD WITH ALL HIS HOUSE.”
Acts 16:33 and 34.

“AND I BAPTIZED ALSO THE HOUSEHOLD OF STEPHANAS: BESIDES, I KNOW NOT WHETHER I BAPTIZED ANY OTHER.” I Corinthians 1:16.

Yes, we can certainly prove household baptism by these statements but can we prove that infant baptism is here proved? ‘The argument is that there must have been some real young children in some of these households.

PLYMOUTH BRETHREN HOUSEHOLD BAPTISM

Among the several doctrines that have divided the Brethren, generally called “the Plymouth Brethren,” is the question of water baptism. Few, if any of them, believe in sprinkling or pouring. They agree with the Baptists that “**baptizo**” means “**immerse**” and so they are almost unanimous that water baptism means to be submerged, to be put completely under the water. Like all other baptizers they do not know why they practice the water ceremony. They are unanimously agreed that there is not one iota of saving value in the water. They know that water baptism is work, man’s work. They know and emphasize that man has nothing to do with his own salvation except to believe and receive that it is not of works, but altogether by grace. They know that water baptism is not required for membership in the Household of God, the Body of Christ. But they arbitrarily and unscripturally make water baptism a requirement for fellowship in their circle. They thus have built a religious fence around their circle, whereas their founder, Mr. John Darby, purposed the very opposite.

But this circle has been broken, their fellowship has been disturbed by two “**baptism**” theories. One is called “**believer’s baptism**,” and the other is called “**household baptism**.” Those who hold for “**believer’s baptism**” teach that only those who can, and do, intelligently exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ should be immersed. They generally quote Romans 6:3 and 4:

“Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized in to death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

But a very careful unprejudiced study of the sixth chapter of Romans should cause the student to agree with Mr. Kenneth Wuest, of the Moody Bible Institute

“The mechanical meaning of the word, namely, the introduction of something in a new environment or into union with something else, is in view of Romans 6 and I Corinthians 12:13. It is set in a context of supernaturalism. It refers to the act of God placing us in Christ. This precludes any suggestion of water baptism as a means whereby a believing sinner is joined to Christ. It is a question, of course, as to what the inspired writer had in mind when he used the word, and certainly Paul was not thinking of the rite of water baptism, but of the act of God uniting a believing sinner with Christ, thus using the word in its original meaning rather than its ritualistic connotation. Thus one could render Romans 6:3 “Introduced into Jesus Christ . . . were introduced into His death,” and I Cor-

inthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit we are all introduced into one body." This is translation here, not transliteration."

The Brethren who teach **"household baptism"** represent the minority group. But they are positive that their "immersion" water theory is Scriptural. They stand or fall with their interpretation of I Corinthians 10:1 to 3:

"MOREOVER, BRETHREN I WOULD NOT THAT YE SHOULD BE IGNORANT, HOW THAT ALL OUR FATHERS WERE UNDER THE CLOUD, AND ALL PASSED THROUGH THE SEA; AND WERE ALL BAPTIZED UNTO MOSES IN THE CLOUD AND IN THE SEA; AND DID ALL EAT THE SAME SPIRITUAL MEAT."

Before we comment on this theory, we ask you to read Exodus 12:37, giving the record of the number of Israelites who left Egypt about 1495 B.C.

"And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children. Exodus 12:37.

"And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them:

"And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.

"And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided." Exodus 14:19 to 21.

"AND THE WATERS RETURNED, AND COVERED THE CHARIOTS, AND THE HORSEMEN, AND ALL THE HOST OF PHARAOH THAT CAME INTO THE SEA AFTER THEM: THERE REMAINED NOT SO MUCH AS ONE OF THEM.

BUT THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. WALKED UPON DRY LAND IN THE MIDST OF THE SEA; AND THE WATERS WERE A WALL UNTO THEM ON THEIR RIGHT HAND, AND ON THEIR LEFT."

"Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore.

"And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses." Exodus 14:28 to 31.

Note carefully Exodus 14:31. The great miracle of God caused the Israelites to believe in Him and in His servant Moses.

Compare this with Acts 2:22 and John 5:36:

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know."

"But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me."

The wonderful works that God did by Jesus were to persuade Israel to accept Him as Messiah. The wonderful works that God did by Moses was to make Israel accept Moses as leader.

Thus they were baptized unto Moses by the cloud and the Red Sea.

But not one of the Israelites, parents or children, got wet. It was indeed a dry baptism for Israel, but a real submergence into death for the Egyptians. But this could not be symbolic of the burial in Romans 6:3 and 4, because the Egyptians were not raised to walk in newness of life.

MESSAGE NUMBER 55

PAUL THE SUFFERING PRISONER

In the first chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Philippians he referred several times to "my bonds." Philippians 1:7, 13, 14, and 16. Note Philippians 1:13. **"So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places."**

Paul was Caesar's prisoner in the jail at Rome. But he was in reality the prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hear his testimony.

"FOR THIS CAUSE I PAUL, THE PRISONER OF JESUS CHRIST FOR YOU GENTILES." Ephesians 3:1.

The prisoner of Jesus Christ. For whom? For Gentiles. I wonder how many, or rather how few, of us appreciate Paul's imprisonment and sufferings for us.

Paul wrote Philippians and Ephesians from his prison home. Note his prayer request in Ephesians 6:19 and 20.

"And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."

Here we learn that in spite of the fact that Paul was in jail for special Divine truth, he was exceedingly eager to open his mouth and proclaim that truth.

If Christians of 1941 A. D. had any adequate appreciation of what Paul's sufferings meant for them, they would show that appreciation by opening their mouths boldly and speak forth "the mystery of the gospel." But of course they should learn the difference between the gospel by which they are saved and "the mystery of the gospel."

Paul also wrote Colossians and II Timothy from the Roman jail. The jail door had opened to receive him for proclaiming "the mystery". But he wanted other doors opened for the proclamation of that truth which was so precious to his own heart.

Note Colossians 4:3 and 4.

"Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak."

So we see that Paul wanted all saints to join with him in prayer for an open mouth and for an open door where the Divine truth that got him into serious trouble might be uttered.

Paul was in jail for telling a Secret. He was the prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ, suffering as a criminal. For what? For the mystery. Remember he was the prisoner for Gentiles. Paul writes, in Colossians 1:27, of the mystery among the Gentiles, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." If this mystery meant the Gentiles' hope of glory, how intensely interested those Colossians should have been in knowing every phase of that blessed truth. We should be just as eager today to know it.

In connection with that mystery among the Gentiles, in Colossians 1:27, note in the preceding verses that Paul was in prison because a dispensation of God had been given to him for Gentiles. His God-given, Christ-revealed duty was to fill up. To fill up, what?

First—note Colossians 1:24:

“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body’s sake, which is the Church.”

Second—note Colossians 1:25 and 26:

“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, TO FULFILL THE WORD OF GOD; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints.”

Paul had to fill up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ. Paul had to fill up (complete) the Word of God with the mystery. Paul was a genuine sufferer. “My sufferings for you. “

In II Timothy 1:12, Paul declared—“For the which cause **I also suffer these things**: nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep **MY DEPOSIT**.” Note how we have quoted this verse. The Greek is “my paratheke”. Paul suffered because he had a **deposit** from Christ, **the mystery**. Paul practiced what he preached. Note what he preached in I Corinthians 4:1 and 2.

“Let a man so account of us, as, of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”

Paul was a faithful steward. He was an uncompromising, fearless, faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Note his stand in Galatians 1:10.—“**For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.**”

Note the difference concerning Peter—“For before that certain (Peter) came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, **fearing them which were of the circumcision.**” Galatians 2:12. Peter never forgot that rebuke. He wrote later—“And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that, are unlearned, and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.” II Peter 3:15 and 16. In this same second chapter of Galatians we read again concerning Paul’s uncompromising, bold stand—“To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.” Galatians 2:5.

Paul suffered for “the mystery”, for “my deposit”. Concerning “the mystery” Paul wrote—**“How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; as I wrote afore in few words.”** Ephesians 3:3. The mystery was given to Paul by special revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Note Paul’s desire concerning the knowledge of this mystery.

“And to make all men see what is THE DISPENSATION OF THE MYSTERY, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.” Ephesians 3:9.

Paul had referred to “my gospel” and “the mystery” even before he reached the Roman jail. “In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.” Romans 2:16. Note particularly Romans 16:25.

According to “my gospel”. According to the revelation of “the mystery”.

Note how they are again mentioned, in II Timothy 2:7 to 9.

**“MY GOSPEL”—WHEREIN (FOR WHICH) I SUFFER AS AN EVIL DOER
EVEN UNTO BONDS.**

The mystery of the gospel was God’s eternal purpose in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 3:11.

Note II Timothy 1:9 and 1:11” Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” “Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.”

Again note Ephesians 1:4 and 5 and 1:11—“According as He hath chosen us in Him **before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; **having predestinated us** unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.” “In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, **being predestinated according to the purpose** of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.” What God purposed in eternity before the world began was indeed God’s Secret from before the foundation of the world. It was according to the good pleasure of God’s will which He purposed in Himself, and in Christ Jesus, that members of the Body of Christ were chosen in Christ before the world began, and were predestinated to be conformed to the image of God’s Son and to be children in God’s family. Read Romans 8:29 and 30—“Foreknow”, “Predestinate”, “Called”, “Justified”, “Glorified.”

It is because of this eternal purpose of God that we can believe Romans 8:28 to 30. “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified.” It is true that this Secret of the Father of glory was not made known before the deposit and dispensation was committed to Paul but we learn in Romans and in I Corinthians that it was revealed to Paul before he reached the Roman jail.

Then he wrote—“**Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself.**” Ephesians 1:9.

So now the question to all saints, “Why should this Divine truth still be a Secret, if it has been made known?” God’s children have been blinded with sectarianism and religion, and have made no attempt to obey Ephesians 4:3 to 6—“Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

The Mystery is God’s repudiation of all sectarianism and God’s refutation of any and all arguments to include any part of Israel’s religious program in His spiritual program for members of the Body of Christ, under the dispensation of the grace of God.

And then we need to pray the prayer of Ephesians 1:17 to 23, and receive the spirit of wisdom and revelation from the Father of glory, and have the eyes of our understanding enlightened to comprehend the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. If we let God, by the Holy Spirit, make known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself, we can say, Amen, to Romans 8:28 because when we are the called, according to His purpose, we know that His purpose is an eternal purpose “from foreknowledge to glorification”.

It is an eternity of grace. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." II Timothy 1:9.

"That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Jesus Christ." Ephesians 2:7.

What a glorious privilege to live under the present reign of grace, if we are the recipients of that over-abounding grace of "the God of all grace".

Then as we bow and give thanks to our heavenly Father for the sufferings of the apostle to the Gentiles we should be ready to suffer with him and know what it means to become partakers of the sufferings of Christ, remembering II Timothy 2:12, "if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."

"But be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." II Timothy 1:8.

MY GOSPEL

Perhaps all of us were surprised when first we learned, by studying Paul's ministry in the Book of Acts and in his Epistles, that he speaks of himself in the first-person pronoun more than 1000 times. We note his humility in Ephesians 3:8: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

No one can carefully study the testimonies of Paul and truthfully say that he was presumptuous, egotistical or deluded. We say that he was the greatest of all saints. Why did Paul speak of MY gospel?

He declares that the secrets of men's hearts will be judged by MY gospel. Romans 2:16. In Romans 16:25 we read "Now to Him that is of power to establish you according to MY gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began." Now note II Timothy 2:8 and 9: "According to MY gospel, Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds."

If the Lord Jesus Christ commanded John the Baptist, the Seventy whom He sent out (Luke 10:1), or the Twelve, either before or after His death, to proclaim the same gospel that he committed unto Paul, why did Paul call this particular message MY gospel?

In Galatians 1:11 and 12 we learn how and from Whom Paul received his gospel: "the gospel which was preached of me is not after man: For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

"And Jesus went about all their cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM, and healing every sickness, and every disease among the people." Matthew 9:35.

In Matthew 10:5 to 8 we read that Christ told the Twelve to preach the same kingdom gospel and to carry on the same program of miracles; but to Jews only. By way of contrast note I Timothy 1:11 and 5:23 . . . "the Glorious Gospel committed to MY trust" . . . "use a little wine for thine oft sicknesses." Note II Timothy 4:20: "Trophimus have I left at Miletum SICK."

When Paul wrote that he was suffering as an evil doer for “MY gospel”, he also wrote that he was in the Roman prison for “THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL.” Ephesians 6:19 and 20 and Colossians 4:3 and 4. II Timothy 2:8 and 9.

The “MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL” belongs to an entirely different Divine dispensation than does “THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM” and the preacher who proclaims to the Gentile, during this present reign of grace, the gospel of the kingdom for his salvation, is not only ignorant of God’s purpose for this age, but he is guilty, in God’s sight, of a spiritual crime. “There be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.” Galatians 1:7.

Please do not misrepresent us and say that we teach that nothing in the so-called Four Gospels is for sinners and saints of this age. We say dogmatically that the gospel of the kingdom is not the same as the gospel of the grace of God, which Christ, by special revelation, gave to Paul. Acts 20:24. Moreover we state emphatically that we must intelligently study Matthew, Mark and Luke in the light of Paul’s “MY GOSPEL”, if we would intelligently interpret, appropriate and apply the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth during this present reign of grace.

THE CIRCUMCISION AND THE UNCIRCUMCISION GOSPELS

“But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was committed unto Peter.” Galatians 2:7.

How many gospels are here mentioned, in Galatians 2:7?

While it is true that no sinner, Jew or Gentile, in any dispensation, was ever saved on any other grounds than the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is also true that any man who declares there is only one gospel in the Bible is much mistaken.

Paul was not a prisoner in the Roman jail for preaching that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. He was in jail for preaching “the mystery of the gospel.”

MESSAGE NUMBER 56

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST—WHO?

Students of the Word of God who are agreed on what are called Christian fundamentals, such as the plenary inspiration of the Bible, the eternal Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and salvation by grace through faith in His redemptive work on the cross, are not agreed as to who is, or who is to be, the Bride of Christ.

In Revelation 19:7 to 9 we read these words: **“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is, come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And He with unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And He saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.”** The following footnote appears in the Scofield Reference Bible, explaining these verses in Revelation

“The Lamb’s wife” here is the “bride” (Rev. 21:9), the church, identified with the “heavenly Jerusalem” (Hebrews 12:22, 23) and to be distinguished from Israel, the adulterous and repudiated “wife” of Jehovah yet to be restored (Isaiah 54:1 to 10; Hosea

2:1 to 17), who is identified with the earth (Hosea 2:23). A forgiven and restored wife could not be called either a virgin (II Corinthians. 11:2, 3), or a bride.

In connection with the verses in Revelation 19:7 to 9, we should read Revelation 21:9 and 10 and 12: “And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, **Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife.** And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of **the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.**”

Dr. Scofield’s explanatory note gives us the “Plymouth Brethren” interpretation of these verses and their teaching; that the Church, which is the Body of Christ is also to be the Bride of Christ. This is what might be called the general teaching among Premillennial Fundamentalists. A few of these brethren teach that the overcomers among the members of the Body will be the Bride. All of these Premillennarians, who are sure that the Body of Christ in Ephesians is also the Bride of Christ, strenuously object to calling the “Body” Church, “Israel.” However, they see no difference between the Church of “Acts 2” Pentecost and the Body of Ephesians.

There are other Premillennarians, equally as fundamental, who think that this “Plymouth Brethren” interpretation of Scripture will not stand the Berean test. They think it is inconsistent to object to the Church being Israelitish and at the same time locate the Lamb and His wife in a city that is quite Israelitish in description. That city, according to Revelation 21:9 to 14, is to have the names of the Twelve Tribes of Israel written on the gates, or walls and the names of the Twelve Apostles on the foundations. Abraham was not in the Body of Ephesians, but he looked for such a city. The twelve apostles were ministers unto Israel, with the word which God sent to Israel; and they are to sit on twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Galatians 2:9; Matthew 19:28.

Moreover, according to the Greek word in Revelation 19:8, the fine linen of the wife, who hath made herself ready, is “dikaïoma” which means “equitable deeds.” This seems to contradict the grace message of Ephesians, in which Epistle the Body of Christ is likened unto a “wife.” Ephesians 5:31 and 32. But the members there have not made themselves ready by righteous acts to become the Bride of Christ.

Some teach that Israel will be the restored wife of Jehovah and the Body of Christ will be the Bride of Christ, the Bridegroom. This is supported by the fact that Eve was part of Adam’s body and also his wife. They also use the Song of Solomon to support their teaching. Also by certain marriages they seek to prove by type, such as Isaac and Rebecca, Joseph and Asenath, Moses and his wife.

There are some who teach that the Church of the “Acts” period will be the Bride of Christ, because the blessings of that Church were on Israelitish grounds. Romans 11:17 to 24. **Those members were the seed of Abraham and the Israel of God.** Others teach that the Bride will be another remnant of Israel.

It is generally taught that the Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Christ of the New. Then the question: Can Jehovah have two wives, if Israel and the Church are separate and distinct?

For your prayerful study and decision we give the Scriptures. Be a Berean

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES

“SING, O BARREN, THOU THAT DIDST NOT BEAR; BREAK FORTH INTO SINGING, AND CRY ALOUD, THOU THAT DIDST NOT TRAVAIL WITH CHILD: FOR MORE ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE DESOLATE THAN THE CHILDREN OF THE MARRIED WIFE, SAITH THE LORD.”

“FOR THY MAKER IS THY HUSBAND; THE LORD OF HOSTS IS HIS NAME; AND THY REDEEMER THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL; THE GOD OF THE WHOLE EARTH SHALL HE BE CALLED.”

“FOR THE LORD HATH CALLED THEE AS A WOMAN FORSAKEN AND GRIEVED IN SPIRIT, AND A WIFE OF YOUTH, WHEN THOU WAST REFUSED, SAITH THY GOD.”

“FOR A SMALL MOMENT HAVE I FORSAKEN THEE; BUT WITH GREAT MERCIES WILL I GATHER THEE.” Isaiah 54:1 to 7.

“FOR AS A YOUNG MAN MARRIETH A VIRGIN, SO SHALL. THY SONS MARRY THEE; AND AS THE BRIDEGROOM REJOICETH OVER THE BRIDE, SO SHALL THY GOD REJOICE OVER THEE.” Isaiah 62:5.

“THEY SAY. IF A MAN PUT AWAY HIS WIFE, AND SHE GO FROM HIM, AND BECOME ANOTHER MAN’S, SHALL HE RETURN UNTO HER AGAIN? SHALL NOT THAT LAND BE GREATLY POLLUTED? BUT THOU HAST PLAYED THE HARLOT WITH MANY LOVERS; YET RETURN AGAIN TO ME, SAITH THE LORD.”

“TURN, O BACKSLIDING CHILDREN, SAITH THE LORD; FOR I AM MARRIED UNTO YOU; AND I WILL TAKE YOU ONE OF A CITY, AND TWO OF A FAMILY AND I WILL BRING YOU TO ZION.”

“SURELY AS A WIFE TREACHEROUSLY DEPARTED FROM HER HUSBAND, SO HAVE YE DEALT TREACHEROUSLY WITH ME, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL, SAITH THE LORD.”

“RETURN, YE BACKSLIDING CHILDREN, AND I WILL HEAL YOUR BACKSLIDINGS.” Jeremiah 3:1, 14, 20, 22.

“NOT ACCORDING TO THE COVENANT THAT I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS IN THE DAY THAT I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO BRING. THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; WHICH MY COVENANT THEY BRAKE, ALTHOUGH I WAS AN HUSBAND UNTO THEM, SAITH THE LORD.” Jeremiah 31:32.

“... SEEING THOU DOEST ... THE WORK OF AN IMPERIOUS WHORISH WOMAN.”

“BUT AS A WIFE THOU COMMITTETH ADULTERY, WHICH TAKETH STRANGERS INSTEAD OF HER HUSBAND.” Ezekiel 16:30 and 32.

“PLEAD WITH YOUR MOTHER, PLEAD; FOR SHE IS NOT MY WIFE, NEITHER AM I HER HUSBAND; LET HER THEREFORE PUT AWAY HER WHOREDOMS OUT OF HER SIGHT, AND HER ADULTERIES FROM BETWEEN HER BREASTS.” Hosea 2:2.

“AND SHE SHALL FOLLOW AFTER HER LOVERS, BUT SHE SHALL NOT OVERTAKE THEM; AND SHE SHALL SEEK THEM, BUT SHALL NOT FIND THEM; THEN SHALL SHE SAY, I WILL GO AND RETURN TO MY FIRST HUSBAND; FOR THEN WAS IT BETTER WITH ME THAN NOW.” Hosea 2:7.

“LAMENT LIKE A VIRGIN GIRDED WITH SACKCLOTH FOR THE HUSBAND OF HER YOUTH.” Joel 1:8.

“GATHER THE PEOPLE, SANCTIFY THE CONGREGATION, ASSEMBLE THE ELDERS, GATHER THE CHILDREN, AND THOSE THAT SUCK THE BREASTS; LET THE BRIDEGROOM GO FORTH OUT OF HIS CHAMBER, AND THE BRIDE OUT OF HER CLOSET.” Joel 2:16.

NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES

“AND, JESUS SAID UNTO THEM, CAN THE CHILDREN OF THE BRIDECHAMBER MOURN, AS LONG AS THE BRIDEGROOM IS WITH THEM? BUT THE DAYS WILL COME, WHEN THE BRIDEGROOM SHALL BE TAKEN FROM THEM, AND THEN SHALL THEY FAST.” Matthew 9:15.

“AND JESUS ANSWERED AND SPAKE UNTO THEM AGAIN BY PARABLES, AND SAID, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE UNTO A CERTAIN KING, WHICH MADE A MARRIAGE FOR HIS SON.” Matthew 22.1 and 2.

“THEN SHALL THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN BE LIKENED UNTO THE VIRGINS, WHICH TOOK THEIR LAMPS, AND WENT FORTH TO MEET THE BRIDEGROOM.”

“WHILE THE BRIDEGROOM TARRIED THEY ALL SLUMBERED AND SLEPT, AND AT MIDNIGHT THERE WAS A CRY MADE, BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH; GO YE OUT TO MEET HIM.”

“AND WHILE THEY WENT TO BUY THE BRIDEGROOM CAME; AND THEY THAT WERE READY WENT IN WITH HIM TO THE MARRIAGE; AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT.” Matthew 23:1, 5, 6 and 10.

“HE THAT HATH THE BRIDE IS THE BRIDEGROOM; BUT THE FRIEND OF THE BRIDEGROOM, WHICH STANDETH AND HEARETH HIM, REJOICETH GREATLY BECAUSE OF THE BRIDEGROOM’S VOICE; THIS MY JOY THEREFORE IS FULFILLED.” John 3:29.

“WHEREFORE, MY BRETHREN, YE ALSO ARE BECOME DEAD TO THE LAW BY THE BODY OF CHRIST; THAT YE SHOULD BE MARRIED TO ANOTHER, EVEN TO HIM WHO IS RAISED FROM THE DEAD, THAT WE SHOULD BRING FORTH FRUIT UNTO GOD.” Romans 7:4.

“FOR I AM JEALOUS OVER YOU WITH GODLY JEALOUSY; FOR I HAVE ESPOUSED YOU TO ONE HUSBAND, THAT I MAY PRESENT YOU AS A CHASTE VIRGIN TO CHRIST.” II Corinthians 11:2.

“BUT JERUSALEM WHICH IS ABOVE IS FREE, WHICH IS THE MOTHER OF US ALL.” Galatians 4:26.

“ABRAHAM THE FATHER OF US ALL.” Romans 4:16.

“FOR IT IS WRITTEN, REJOICE THOU BARREN, THAT BEAREST NOT; BREAK FORTH AND CRY, THOU THAT TRAVAILEST NOT, FOR THE DESOLATE HATH MANY MORE CHILDREN THAN SHE WHICH HATH AN HUSBAND.” Galatians 4:27.

“FOR THIS CAUSE SHALL A MAN LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, AND SHALL BE JOINED UNTO HIS WIFE, AND THEY TWO SHALL BE ONE

FLESH. THIS IS A GREAT MYSTERY, BUT I SPEAK CONCERNING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.” Ephesians 3:31 and 32.

“LET US BE GLAD AND REJOICE, AND GIVE HONOR TO HIM; FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB IS COME, AND HIS WIFE HATH MADE HERSELF READY.”

“AND TO HER WAS GRANTED THAT SHE SHOULD BE ARRAYED IN FINE LINEN, CLEAN AND WHITE; FOR THE FINE LINEN IS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF SAINTS, AND HE SAITH UNTO ME, WRITE, BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH ARE CALLED UNTO THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB.”

“AND HE SAITH UNTO ME, THESE ARE THE TRUE SAYINGS OF GOD.” Revelation 19:7 to 9.

“AND I JOHN, SAW THE HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM, COMING DOWN FROM GOD OUT OF HEAVEN, PREPARED AS A BRIDE ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND.” Revelation 21:2.

“AND THERE CAME UNTO ME ONE OF THE SEVEN ANGELS WHICH HAD THE SEVEN VIALS FULL OF THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES, AND TALKED WITH ME, SAYING, COME HITHER I WILL SHOW THEE THE BRIDE, THE LAMB’S WIFE.”

“AND HE CARRIED ME AWAY IN THE SPIRIT TO A GREAT AND HIGH MOUNTAIN, AND SHEWED ME THE GREAT CITY, THE HOLY JERUSALEM, DESCENDING OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD.” Revelation 21:9 and 10.

“AND THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE SAY, COME. AND LET HIM THAT IS ATHIRST COME. AND WHOSOEVER WILL, LET HIM TAKE OF THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY.” Revelation 22:17.

We are sure that God’s principle for Bible study is to interpret, appropriate and apply all Scripture in the light of the last message of grace which the risen Lord Jesus gave to Paul by revelation. Those last messages had much to say about “the Body of Christ,” But Paul never wrote or spoke of the Church as “the Bride of Christ.” Paul wrote of the members of Christ’s Body as being married to the risen Christ, as the wife of Christ. Romans 7:4.

Note II Corinthians 11:2: **“For I have espoused you to one husband.”**

It is most interesting to compare Genesis 2:23 and 24 with Ephesians 5:31 and 32. In Genesis we learn that Adam said his wife was taken out of man and the two were one flesh. Very much the same language is used concerning the Mystery of Christ and the Church, one flesh, in Ephesians.

‘Then we observe that Paul referred to the serpent and the wife of Adam when he espoused the believers to one Husband. Certainly Eve was the wife of Adam, one flesh with Adam, of Adam’s body. Certainly the Church of Ephesians was the wife of Christ, one flesh with Christ, of Christ’s Body.

In the light of this truth note John 3:29: **“He that hath the Bride is the. Bridegroom.”** In Matthew 9:15: **“And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn as long as, the Bridegroom is with them?”**

Then note carefully Matthew 25:1 to 10.

“Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto.” “At that time” the Kingdom shall be likened. “At that time” refers to Israel’s tribulation. The kingdom of heaven is not the Church of the Mystery. **“BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH.”** Who will go out to meet the Bridegroom, according to Matthew 25:1 to 10? Israel.

We believe that Christ will come for His Church before He comes with His Church, before He comes to Israel. If Christ will be joined to His Church, married to His Church, then, of course, we must explain how Israel can be Christ's Bride when He already has a wife.

The Bible teachers, who teach that Israel is the Bride of Christ, do not all use the same arguments to reach their decisions. Every Christian who has not read "The Silence of God" by Sir Robert Anderson, should do so. It is a splendid book which provokes the reader to search the Scriptures.

Sir Robert Anderson taught that Israel is the Bride of Christ. Like all other brethren, who have taught that restored Israel, is to be the Bride of Christ, Sir Robert Anderson taught definitely that the nation Israel had not been set aside when the twelve apostles addressed Israel on the day of Pentecost.

We quote from his book, "The Silence of God":

"My contention is that the Acts, as a whole, is the record of a temporary and transitional dispensation in which blessing was again offered to the Jew and again rejected."

"As indicated in these pages, it gives the clue to the right understanding of the Acts of the Apostles—a book which is primarily the record, not, as commonly supposed, of the founding of the Christian Church, but of the apostacy of the favoured nation."

"It has been further argued that, so far as their evidential force was concerned, the 'Christian Miracles' were for that favoured people 'of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came.' And if this be well founded we shall be prepared to find that so long as the kingdom was being preached to Jews, miracles abounded, but that when the Gospel appealed to the heathen world, miracles lost their prominence, and soon entirely ceased."

In agreement with this teaching we quote from a Bible message, printed some time ago, in the Moody Monthly, from the pen of Pastor George Douglas. We understand that this same Mr. Douglas is now pastor of the Baracca Baptist Church in Philadelphia

SPIRIT MANIFESTATIONS—A WORD OF WARNING

By Rev. George Douglas, Cardiff, Wales "Only as we recognize and understand the place which Israel holds in the divine scheme of revelation, can we read and understand aright the Book of Acts.

"It is a common error to assume that the rejection and crucifixion of Christ was the historical crisis at which Israel was set aside.

"When we come into the Acts we at once discover that a place of repentance was granted to Israel, and a 'blotting out of sins' was preached to them through the Messiah whom they had rejected and crucified. Acts 2:14, 22, 36. Doubtless repentance would have brought them 'times of refreshing' and 'the times of restitution of all things' spoken of by all the 'prophets since the world began,' Acts 3:19 to 21. That was the Pentecostal proclamation of the Divine amnesty for the guilty people of Jerusalem, and their answer to it was the stoning of Stephen. Acts 7.

"But that crowning sin of Jerusalem was not laid upon the Jews of the dispersion and so the disciples who were scattered abroad by the persecution which followed, carried the Pentecostal gospel to them, for in the first period of the Pentecostal dispensation the preaching was 'to the Jews only.' And in the second part of the Pentecostal period or

dispensation, they still enjoyed a distinctive priority for now it was ‘to the Jew first.’ But in this Christian dispensation, ‘there is no difference between Jew and Gentiles.’

“The simple answer is that in this Book (Acts), we have the Divine record of the Pentecostal dispensation, and that transition period was now ended. And here we notice a very significant fact, which surely can not be said to be accidental, that in the New Testament Books written after the date of Acts 28, there is not a word to be found about Spirit manifestations except as a warning, such as I Timothy 4:1 and 2.

“That explains why the Apostle Paul performed no miracles in Rome, did not even speak in tongues.”

We cannot decide, from this article, whether Pastor Douglas believes that Israel is the Bride of Christ, or not. But virtually every Bible teacher who propagates this extreme teaching, that the Pentecostal dispensation ran to the end of Acts and then the Christian (Body) dispensation began, does teach that Israel, or an Israelitish Church, is the Bride of Christ.

Among those who teach that Israel is the Bride, beside the Denver Bible Institute, and one other little group of believers in California, I do not know of any men of God who teach that the Body of Christ began on the day of Pentecost. Those who dogmatically affirm that the “Joint-Body” of Ephesians 3:6 could not be both the “Bride of Christ” and “the Church of the Mystery,” likewise dogmatically affirm that the Body of Christ is not prefigured in type or shadow in the Bible history of Israel.

However, they have a real problem on their hands when they endeavor to explain away Ephesians 5:31 and 32:

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great Mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.”

MESSAGE NUMBER 57

WHAT IS THE MYSTERY OF GOD’S WILL?

GOD’S ETERNAL PURPOSE IN CHRIST JESUS?

In studying the Scriptures we learn that “**predestination**” has to do with God’s eternal purpose in Christ Jesus, that the Holy Spirit refers to those associated doctrines as “**the mystery of God’s will**,” and that all have to do with the fulness of Christ, the One Body.

In Ephesians 1:11 we find “predestinated,” “purpose,” “will” linked together:

“IN WHOM ALSO WE HAVE OBTAINED AN INHERITANCE, BEING PREDESTINATED ACCORDING TO THE PURPOSE OF HIM WHO WORKETH ALL THINGS AFTER THE COUNSEL OF HIS OWN WILL.” Ephesians 1:11.

Now note Ephesians 1:9:

“HAVING MADE KNOWN UNTO US THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL, ACCORDING TO HIS GOOD PLEASURE WHICH HE HATH PURPOSED IN HIMSELF.”

Here the statement is made that God has made known “**THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL**,” His purpose. Note Ephesians 3:11, “**GOD’S ETERNAL PURPOSE.**” Then God’s will

in His eternal purpose should no longer be a mystery, that is, a secret. If God has made known His precious, glorious secret, which He purposed for us in Christ before the foundation of the world, why should any child of God be ignorant concerning the mystery of God's will? Perhaps the ministers of Christ have not read I Corinthians 4:1 to 3. One answer to this "why" is given in I Corinthians 3:1 to 4. "Carnal Christians who can take only milk." Note I Corinthians 2:7 and 8:

"BUT WE SPEAK THE WISDOM OF GOD IN A MYSTERY, EVEN THE HIDDEN WISDOM, WHICH GOD ORDAINED BEFORE THE WORLD UNTO OUR GLORY: WHICH NONE OF THE PRINCES OF THIS WORLD KNEW: FOR HAD THEY KNOWN IT THEY WOULD NOT HAVE CRUCIFIED THE LORD OF GLORY."

This was about all that Paul could say to the Corinthians concerning this blessed, glorious Truth. Note the reason:

"And I, brethren, could not speak to you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able." I Corinthians 3:1 and 2.

This wisdom of God ordained before the world to our glory, had been hidden. Hence it was a mystery. It was altogether concealed from the rulers of this world, from the wisdom of this world. This Divine wisdom ordained before the world unto the glory of members of the Body of Christ which is revealed in detail in the Epistle to the Ephesians, is addressed to the faithful in Christ Jesus, who knew the Truth of the One Body. They knew what was the hope of His calling and the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, because they had received the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, and the eyes of their understanding had been enlightened. Ephesians 1:16 to 18.

On the other hand the Corinthians were interested in sectarianism and were satisfied with "baby" truth and milk. Such believers were mentioned in Hebrews 5:12 to 14: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

It is sad, but true, that most Christians today, with their preachers and leaders, including the majority of the leaders in organized "Fundamentalism", are like the Corinthians. They are not only indifferent and ignorant concerning the Body Truth of Ephesians, but they do not want their followers to hear it, or even study it, **because it is the death blow to their denominationalism and their faulty dispensationalism.**

But again we quote, **"HAVING MADE KNOWN THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL, WHICH HE HATH PURPOSED IN HIMSELF."** Then note what the members of Christ's Body are to do with this glorious Divine Truth

"AND TO MAKE ALL MEN SEE WHAT IS 'THE DISPENSATION OF THE MYSTERY,' WHICH FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD HATH BEEN HID IN GOD: TO THE INTENT THAT NOW UNTO THE PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS IN THE HEAVENLIES MIGHT BE KNOWN BY THE CHURCH THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD, ACCORDING TO THE ETERNAL PURPOSE WHICH HE PURPOSED IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD."

How will principalities and powers in the heavenlies know the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose of God, if the Church does not make it known? How can the young believers know and enjoy and propagate this truth, if the old believers not only remain

ignorant of it but warn others not to listen to it? In this connection note Ephesians 6:12: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies." Now we see Satan's spiritual activity in the heavenlies. He does not want the truth concerning Christ and the Church in the heavenlies, known. But God does. That is why God has made known the mystery of His will. Whom shall we obey? Satan or God? Remember God wants all to see what is the dispensation of the mystery, which from the beginning was hid in God until it was revealed by Christ to Paul, and by Paul, in Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, and other Epistles. Remember Paul's words in Galatians 1:10: "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." Go thou and do likewise.

Now let us quote, in one long paragraph, some of the plain statements concerning the mystery of God's will, in connection with "**predestination**" and "**the eternal purpose**" of God

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified."

"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." "Who hath saved as and called us with any holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will" . . . "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself." "In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." . . . "How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same Body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel": "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES AND THE DISPENSATION OF THE MYSTERY

Now again read carefully Ephesians 3:8 to 11:

"Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ: And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God. To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

VERSE 8—THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST AMONG THE GENTILES.

VERSE 9—THE DISPENSATION OF THE MYSTERY HID IN GOD.

VERSE 10—TRUTH CONCERNING THE HEAVENLIES.

VERSE 11—ACCORDING TO GOD’S ETERNAL PURPOSE IN CHRIST JESUS.

Here we have the mystery and the unsearchable riches of Christ among the Gentiles mentioned with “the heavenlies.” This was the eternal purpose of God in Christ Jesus.

We repeat the word “**unsearchable**” means “**not-to-be-traced**” or “**Untraceable**.” Here Paul especially refers to unprophesied truth concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, a Divine spiritual program untold in the thirty-nine Books from Genesis to Malachi. It is truth concerning “the heavenlies.”—“Christ in the heavenlies”—“members of Christ’s Body raised up and seated in the heavenlies”—“members of Christ’s Body blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies”—“members of Christ’s Body in a conflict with principalities and powers, in the heavenlies”—“by members of Christ’s Body God’s manifold wisdom to be made known to principalities and powers in the heavenlies.”

God has made known the mystery of His will. The risen Lord has disclosed His secret to the Apostle to the Gentiles. All of this was according to God’s eternal purpose in Christ Jesus; according to God’s predestinated will, grace and purpose given members of the Body of Christ in Christ Jesus before the world began, those who were predestinated by God to be conformed to the image of His Son. II Timothy 1:9. Romans 8:29.

PROPHESIED SEARCHABLE TRUTH

In the days of the law and the prophets the Spirit of Christ was in the prophets and told aforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. I Peter 1:11 and 12. They foretold the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we are told that Christ died for our sins “**according to the Scriptures**,” and he was raised the third day, “**according to the Scriptures**.” We have a more sure word of prophecy. II Peter 1;19. Not one jot or one tittle shall pass away until all be fulfilled. Therefore Christ shall yet occupy David’s throne and as a reigning King He shall bring about the restitution of all things. This will be according to the Scriptures, in fulfillment of the prophesies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Amos, Joel, Zechariah and others. Israel shall again be called “the people of God” and they shall have peaceful possession of the land of Canaan. They shall be planted in their land and no one shall pluck them up again. For this, we are told in Amos 9:13 to 15, in Ezekiel 34 to 38, and in many other Old Testament Scriptures. Wonderful things are to take place on this earth in the coming kingdom age, In the Seed of Abraham all of the families of the earth shall be blessed. All of this will be a part of God’s prophesied program. Gentiles shall receive salvation and kingdom blessing. This Israel’s prophets knew and made known.

The prophets of Israel knew and foretold that Jesus the Messiah would be despised and rejected by Israel, that the builders would reject the Stone and that the Stone would become the Head of the corner. The prophets foretold that God would not suffer His Holy One to see corruption, neither would He leave His soul in hell. Israel’s prophets foretold Israel’s great tribulation.

But not one of Israel’s prophets knew one thing about “the dispensation of the mystery,” about “the dispensation of the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6,” about “the predestinated purpose of God” concerning the hope and calling of members of Christ’s Body, seated with Him in the

heavenlies and blessed with Him and in Him with all spiritual blessings. All of this was according to the riches of God's grace and the riches of God's glory.

Because these riches in Christ for Gentiles were not made known until the risen Lord revealed them to Paul, they could not be traced back to the Old Testament prophets or traced from there to their fulfillment in the days of Paul, therefore, they were unsearchable. These glorious truths were hid in God, and were according to God's eternal purpose in Christ.

THE TREE—THE TRIBULATION—THE THRONE

When the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross that redemptive work was not only "according to the Scriptures" but, we are told in I Peter 1:18 to 20 and Acts 2:22, that it was according to God's predestinated or eternal purpose. This is one great Divine truth that was both predestinated and prophesied.

Then we learn this interesting fact that "the tribulation" and the coming kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ "the throne," with all the attendant blessings for Jews and Gentiles, will be "according to the Scriptures." This Messianic Kingdom will mean the restitution of all things written by the prophets; but not according to the eternal purpose of God mentioned in Ephesians.

Note the contrast. The present position of Christ "far above in the heavenlies" and His present relationship to and ministry for the members of the Body and their identification with Him, the risen Head, the union and unity of Ephesians, is not in fulfillment of prophecy. But is "according to God's predestinated will. "Because it was hid in God before the days of Adam, through the days of Jesus of Nazareth on earth, and through the ministry of the twelve apostles in the first half of the Book of Acts, this predestinated purpose of God was called **"the mystery"—"the mystery of God's will"—"the dispensation of the mystery"—"the mystery of Christ"—"the mystery of the gospel."**

After God made it known to Paul and Paul passed it on to others it was no longer a secret. Thus we learn in studying the Pauline message we must rightly divide the Word of Truth, by separating Paul's "confirmation ministry"—"the searchable (prophesied) riches of Christ"—from Paul's "revelation ministry"—"the unsearchable (or unprophesied) riches of Christ."

We have already observed that the death of the Lord Jesus Christ for the redemption of sinful humanity, is the one Divine truth that was both in fulfillment of prophecy and in fulfillment of God's predestinated will, or both "according to the Scriptures" and "according to the eternal purpose of God." And we have observed that the mystery revealed by Christ to Paul was a spiritual program different from anything ever given by the Lord to any of His holy prophets, including the twelve apostles.

Now again observe carefully Colossians 1:25 to 26

"Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to complete the Word of God: Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, and now is made manifest to His saints."

Here then we have the definite statement that the mystery revealed by Christ to Paul was to complete the Word of God, that the revelation of God's eternal purpose, added to the law, the prophets and to the fulfillment of prophecy, completed the Word of God. The mystery revealed in Ephesians and Colossians has been called "the capstone of Divine truth."

MESSAGE NUMBER 58

VESSELS OF HONOUR IN THE HOUSE OF GOD

“BUT IN A GREAT HOUSE THERE ARE NOT ONLY VESSELS OF GOLD AND OF SILVER, BUT ALSO OF WOOD AND OF EARTH; AND SOME TO HONOUR AND SOME TO DISHONOUR.” IF A MAN THEREFORE PURGE HIMSELF FROM THESE, HE SHALL BE A VESSEL UNTO HONOUR, SANCTIFIED AND MEET FOR THE MASTER’S USE, AND PREPARED UNTO EVERY GOOD WORK.” II Timothy 2:20 and 21.

“. . . THAT THOU MAYEST KNOW HOW THOU OUGHTEST TO BEHAVE THYSELF IN THE HOUSE OF GOD, WHICH IS THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH. AND WITHOUT CONTROVERSY GREAT IS THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS: GOD WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH, JUSTIFIED IN THE SPIRIT, SEEN OF ANGELS, PREACHED UNTO THE GENTILES, BELIEVED ON IN THE WORLD, RECEIVED UP INTO GLORY.” I Timothy 3:15 and 16.

“FOR WE ARE LABOURERS TOGETHER WITH GOD: YE ARE GOD’S HUSBANDRY, YE ARE GOD’S BUILDING. ACCORDING TO THE GRACE OF GOD WHICH IS GIVEN UNTO ME, AS A WISE MASTER. BUILDER, I HAVE LAID THE FOUNDATION, AND ANOTHER BUILDED THERE. ON. BUT LET EVERY MAN TAKE HEED HOW HE BUILDETH THEREUPON.” I Corinthians 3:9 and 10.

It is very interesting to note that in the Greek the word “house” is “oiko”. The word “build” is “oikodomeo” literally “build a house”. The word “edify” is the same Greek word “oikodomeo”.

In I Corinthians 3:14, Ephesians 2:20, Colossians 2:20 and Acts 20:32, the Greek prefix “epi” is placed before the word; it is “epi oikodomeo”. But in I Corinthians 3:10 note carefully that the prefix “sun” is placed before “oikodomeo”. The word is “sun oikodomeo”. This means “build a house together”.

Now who is the wise masterbuilder with whom Christians must build if they are to please God? How many houses is God building during this economy? We all answer, one. If Christians want to build with God intelligently they must go to Paul’s writings for the blue prints and build together with the wise masterbuilder.

IN A GREAT HOUSE

Members of the one true Bible Church, called, in Paul’s Epistles, “the House of God,” are indeed vessels in a great House. Every member should earnestly desire and diligently endeavor to be a vessel of honour, sanctified and meet for the Master’s use. “Vessels in a great House.” Every member of the Body of Christ is a laborer together with God, a builder together with Paul, the wise masterbuilder, and as members of the Body we should heed how we build together.

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is building a Great House. He is the Great Architect and Builder. His plan and program, during the period of grace, is to build into, and to build up the Body of Christ. As there is only one God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, there is one and only ONE Body of Christ. This fact must be recognized by all believers who desire to

know how to behave in the House of God and to be vessels of honor meet for the Master's use. Those, who desire and attempt to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called, who really want to take heed how they build together, should diligently, prayerfully and thoroughly study every verse of Scripture that describes the Body of Christ and thus study God's blue prints.

Note the Lord's gifts and His purpose in giving those gifts unto men:

“BUT UNTO EVERY ONE OF US IS GIVEN GRACE ACCORDING TO THE MEASURE OF THE GIFT OF CHRIST. WHEREFORE HE SAITH, WHEN HE ASCENDED UP ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE, AND GAVE GIFTS UNTO MEN.” “AND HE GAVE SOME APOSTLES; AND SOME, PROPHETS; AND SOME, EVANGELISTS; AND SOME, PASTORS AND TEACHERS; FOR THE PERFECTING OF THE SAINTS, FOR THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY, FOR THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST: TILL WE ALL COME IN THE UNITY OF THE FAITH, AND OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON OF GOD, UNTO A PERFECT MAN, UNTO THE MEASURE OF THE STATURE OF THE FULNESS OF CHRIST: THAT WE HENCEFORTH BE NO MORE CHILDREN, TOSSED TO AND FRO, AND CARRIED ABOUT WITH EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE, BY THE SLEIGHT OF MEN, AND CUNNING CRAFTINESS, WHEREBY THEY LIE IN WAIT TO DECEIVE; BUT SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE MAY GROW UP INTO HIM IN ALL THINGS, WHICH IS THE HEAD, EVEN CHRIST: FROM WHOM THE WHOLE BODY FITLY JOINED TOGETHER AND COMPACTED BY THAT WHICH EVERY JOINT SUPPLIETH, ACCORDING TO THE EFFECTUAL WORKING IN THE MEASURE OF EVERY PART, MAKETH INCREASE OF THE BODY UNTO THE EDIFYING OF ITSELF IN LOVE.” Ephesians 4:7, 8, 11 to 16.

Here again we learn God's plan and program in this age: **“THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST.”** Yes, God is in the House-building business. We are labourers together with God. I Corinthians 3:9.

The whole Body is fitly joined together making increase of the Body unto the **EDIFYING** of itself in love.

The word **“EDIFYING”** is literally “building up.” Believers who labor intelligently with God, and please God with the use of the given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ, preach the evangel of grace to sinners, the gospel by which they are saved. And then follows the “perfecting of the saints” “for the work of the ministry.” Thus sinners saved by grace are added to Christ, added to His Church, and then they are built up.

All of this means that God's intelligent co-laborers must know what is meant by “the dispensation of the grace of God” and “the dispensation of the mystery” as presented in Ephesians 3:1 to 11 and must know what it means to grow up into Christ in all things. The Body is edified, or built up, by edifying individual members of the Body, **“which is the fulness of Him that FILLETH ALL IN ALL.”** Ephesians 1:23.

This is to continue

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:13.

Let us carefully study the Lord's messages through the Apostle Paul concerning the “Church of the ‘Mystery’” that we may know how to behave in the House of God and know how to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in obedience to Ephesians 4:3 to 6:

“Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one Body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

Sectarianism has played havoc with the members of the Body of Christ, and with them thrown the outsiders into utter confusion. God will surely hold every one of the members of Christ's Body responsible for their contribution to this confusion.

In his farewell message, the greatest of all Christians. the Apostle Paul, wrote these words

“BUT IN A GREAT HOUSE THERE ARE NOT ONLY VESSELS OF GOLD AND SILVER, BUT ALSO OF WOOD AND OF EARTH; AND SOME TO HONOUR AND SOME TO DISHONOUR. IF A MAN THEREFORE PURGE HIMSELF FROM THESE, HE SHALL BE A VESSEL UNTO HONOUR, SANCTIFIED, AND MEET FOR THE MASTER'S USE, AND PREPARED UNTO EVERY GOOD WORK.”

“STUDY TO SHEW THYSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD, A WORKMAN THAT NEEDETH NOT TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH.”
II Timothy 2:20, 21 and 15.

These last words from this wonderful man of God vitally concern every present-day Christian and should interest and fascinate every member of the Body of Christ, for the Great House is the Body of Christ, and every member of that Body should desire to be a vessel of honor meet for the Master's use and a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.

In this first Epistle to Timothy, Paul wrote:

“BUT IF I TARRY LONG, THAT THOU MAYEST KNOW HOW THOU OUGHTEST TO BEHAVE THYSELF IN THE HOUSE OF GOD, WHICH IS THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH. AND WITHOUT CONTROVERSY GREAT IS THE MYSTERY.”

Every Christian should want to know how to behave in the House of God.

The Bible has much to say concerning the house of God. In I Timothy 3:15 the House of God is called “the Church of the living God.” In the second chapter of Ephesians we are informed that the Church of the living God is composed of sinners saved by grace: “By grace are ye saved through faith.” “Ye are of the Household of God.” Ephesians 2:19. “Ye are God's Building.” I Corinthians 3:9. God's Building. God is the Builder. God at the present time is building a House

“In Whom all the Building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord: In Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Ephesians 2:21 and 22. “Ye are builded together.” “Builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

Now let us carefully note II Timothy 2:20 and 21: “But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use and prepared unto every good work.”

God's spiritual House is a human structure. The members of God's House are called “Christians” “saints” and “believers”. They are called “vessels”. It is their privilege to be “vessels of honour” sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work. In the same second chapter of II Timothy they are instructed to be workmen who need not to be ashamed. **“Vessels” and “workmen” in a great House, the House of God the Church of the**

living God. The vessels of honour and workmen that need not to be ashamed are labourers together with God.” I Corinthians 3:9.

Let us note several verses in this third chapter of I Corinthians:

“For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s Building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another builded thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” “If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon he shall receive a reward.” “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” I Corinthians 3:9 to 11, 14 and 16.

Labourers together with God are instructed to take heed how they build. The Greek word means “build together” “sunoikodomeo.” Note the word “sun” together, “oiko” - house, “domeo” build. The Greek “oikodome” is “a structure,” “a building.” The verb “oikeodomeo”, to build, to edify.

Christians are in business with God. God is building a House. In the building of this particular House of God, Paul called himself a wise masterbuilder who laid a foundation. Unless we take heed to this statement, we certainly cannot take heed how we build on the foundation. Remember, one foundation and one “House “.

We learned in I Timothy 3:15, that the House of God is called “the Church of the living God.” In Ephesians 1:19 to 23, we read that the Lord Jesus Christ is far above in heaven and is the Head of the Church: “Which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” Ephesians 1:23.

So here we have two more names for the House of God; namely, “the Body of Christ” kind “the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.”

Now let us observe that this House is called by several other names in the second chapter of Ephesians:

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace Who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain One New Man, so making peace; And that He might reconcile both unto God in one Body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner Stone: In Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord: In Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Ephesians 2:13 to 22.

“One New Man,” “One Body,” “the Household of God.” “the Building,” “an Holy Temple in the Lord,” “a habitation of God through the Spirit.” Then we learn in Ephesians 4:4 to 6, as there is one and only one God, one and only one Christ, one and only one Spirit, there is one and only one Body. God then is building one and only one House, the Church of the living God, which is the pillar and ground of the Truth. I Timothy 3:15. Note these words carefully: “But if I tarry long that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the House of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy, great is the mystery.” I Timothy 3:15 and 16.

God wants every member of His spiritual Household to know how to behave in that House. He wants them to know that His Church is the pillar and ground of the Truth. "How to behave." This behavior is to be spiritual and scriptural. Note how this Truth is stated in Ephesians 4:1 to 3: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

It is God's will that members of His Household should walk worthy of the calling wherewith they are called. We should all be agreed that the very first thing necessary for such a walk is to know what is the calling wherewith they are called. If they do not know this, they will be workmen that need to be ashamed. Note II Timothy 2:15: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth."

We have learned God's will concerning members of His Household:

1. They should be vessels of honor.
2. They should be meet for the Master's use.
3. They should be workmen who need not to be ashamed.
4. They should take heed how they build together on the wise masterbuilder's foundation.
5. They are builders together with God.
6. They should know how to behave in the House of God.
7. They should walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called.
8. They should endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit.

Then in Ephesians 4:14, we learn that these vessels, these workmen, these labourers together with God, these who help God to build His House, should cease to be children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.

Note how this verse reads with its context:

"And He gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: From Whom the whole Body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body unto the edifying of itself in love." Ephesians 4:11 to 16.

Here we learn that spiritual men are the Lord's gift to the Church for the edifying or building. The sinner who hears the evangelist preach the grace of God and believes the gospel is added to the Edifice. And every member of God's Household, every member of the Body of Christ, is to be edified and to help edify every other fellow-member; and each member is to grow up "into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ." This is to continue "Till we, all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Ephesians 4:13.

Here we read the future, the ultimate "a perfect man," "the stature of the fulness of Christ." God, the Builder, will complete the Building, the House of God, the One New Man, the

Temple, the Body of Christ, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all, the Church of the living God, the Perfect Man.

All of this may seem so strange to many Christians who have been more concerned about being loyal denominationalists than about studying Ephesians, Colossians and II Timothy, to learn God's Truth concerning the One Bible Church. The average Church-member cherishes history and traditions of his or her denomination more than the knowledge of God's one Church, the one Body of Christ, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. They use some sectarian creed to interpret, or appropriate, or apply what Scriptures they do study. Most of them pay no more attention to the instruction of II Timothy 2:15 than if such instructions were not in the Bible. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth." The words "**rightly dividing**" are from the Greek "**ortho tomeo**" which means "**to cut aright**."

WHEN DID THE HOUSE OF GOD BEGIN?

In cutting aright the Word of Truth, one of the very first things the workman should learn is, when the House of God began. When the workman has learned this first thing, then he should find the Divine principle for the interpretation, appropriation, and application of all the Scriptures that were written before the House of God, the Body of Christ, had its historical beginning: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

All the Scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation, are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

Not all of the Scriptures are written concerning the Body of Christ, or to members of the Body of Christ, but they are all for the members of the Church to study and rightly divide. The workman who misinterprets, misappropriates or misapplies any part of the Holy Scriptures will be a workman that needeth to be ashamed.

We cannot build together intelligently with God if we confuse the House of God with the House of Israel. This particular House of God began when the House of Israel fell.

MESSAGE NUMBER 59

A PARTAKER OF THE AFFLICTIONS OF THE GOSPEL

What did Paul mean when he said to Timothy:

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel." II Timothy 1:8.

Before we answer this question let us quote Paul's words in II Corinthians 1:5 and in Colossians 1:24 and 25:

"The sufferings of Christ abound in us." "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body's sake, which is the Church; Whereof I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill (complete) the Word of God, the Mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints."

Then II Timothy 2:9 and 12 and II Timothy 3:12:

“MY GOSPEL. WHEREIN I SUFFER TROUBLE AS AN EVIL DOER, EVEN UNTO BONDS; BUT THE WORD OF GOD IS NOT BOUND.” “IF WE SUFFER WE SHALL ALSO REIGN.” “YEA, AND ALL WHO WILL LIVE GODLY IN CHRIST JESUS SHALL SUFFER PERSECUTION.”

In II Timothy 1:8, Paul wrote of the afflictions of the gospel in connection with that which he called in II Timothy 1:12, “my deposit.” In the Greek we learn that Paul wrote of “my deposit” in this verse, “For the, which cause I also suffer these things.” Because of that ministry which Paul, in II Timothy, calls “my gospel” and “my deposit,” Paul was in jail suffering as an evil doer.

We learn in Ephesians 6:18 to 20 and Colossians 4:3 and 4, that Paul was in jail for “the mystery;” for “the Mystery of the Gospel.”

There is a difference between the gospel, as recorded in I Corinthians 15:3 and 4, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and “the mystery of the gospel.”

What then is “the Mystery of the Gospel?” Whatever “the Mystery” is, or is not, we know that it is Divine Truth that was unknown to any servant of the Lord for more than four thousand years, until it was revealed by Christ, after His resurrection, to the Apostle Paul. Ephesians 3:8 and 9—Colossians 1:26. It was hid in God from the beginning of the world. It was never mentioned by any of the Old Testament prophets. It was not mentioned while Christ was on earth. It was not mentioned in the ministry of Peter and the Eleven, in Acts. But we know that the gospel by which we are saved,—the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Christ, was all according to the Scriptures. I Corinthians 15:3 to 5. This was foretold by Israel’s prophets.

Every person who has ever been saved, since the days of Abel, has been saved on the grounds of the death and resurrection of Christ. Note Acts 13:29 and 30: “And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a sepulchre. But God raised Him from the dead.”

Thus we see that “the Mystery of the Gospel” is something different from the fact that Christ died for our sins and was buried and raised the third day.

As Christians, we will be spared much controversy, if we get fixed in our minds and hearts that, in addition to God’s redemptive message for sinners, the word “gospel” covers the entire range of God’s truth in which there is any spiritual benefit or blessing for saints. Never before the revelation to and by Paul did the Lord make known such a “grace” gospel as we find in II Timothy 1:9:

“Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

The Holy Spirit calls this “God’s eternal purpose in Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 3:11. Who preached it to Gentiles? Paul. Read II Timothy 1:11.

Of course Peter and all the uncompromising messengers of the Lord Jesus Christ suffered at the hands of evil-doers and most of these persecutions came from religious people who claimed that they were God’s servants. Note I Thessalonians 2:14 to 16: “. . . For ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: Who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God and are contrary to all men: Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.”

They suffered because they preached the gospel; but they were not in jail for “the mystery of the gospel.” “How that by revelation He made known unto ME “the Mystery.”

Then note Ephesians 3:8:

“Unto ME, who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”

The word “unsearchable” here means “not-to-be-traced”, that is, “unprophesied.” “The mystery” was “Gentilish” rather than “Israelitish.”

Let us think of “the Mystery of the Gospel” as “the eternal purpose of God” concerning members of Christ’s Body “being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.” Ephesians 1:11.

The “not-to-be-traced (unprophesied)” riches of Christ for heathen was different from any message or ministry foretold by Israel’s prophets or preached by the Twelve. This Divine Truth, “the dispensation of the Mystery” (Ephesians 3:9), was made known after God brought religion to an end with the setting aside of His religious Nation, Israel. After that time Israelites had to come for “grace” salvation, not as sons of Abraham, but with the heathen, as sons of Adam.

Paul was neither deluded, presumptuous, nor egotistical when he mentioned himself in the first person pronoun, more than ten hundred times. He spoke the truth when he said: “I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” I Corinthians 15:10.

Note Paul’s testimony in Galatians 1:10: “For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men I should not be the servant of Christ.”

Galatians 2:5: “To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.”

Galatians 6:12: “As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.”

Galatians 5:11: “And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.”

Paul’s religious enemies were determined that he and his “grace” converts should add circumcision or something religious to the “grace” gospel.

So far as the apostles were concerned, Paul stood alone, that there should be no mixture of anything religious with that gospel which he preached to heathen. Read Galatians 2:10 to 15. Such a stand caused him much suffering, but he did not compromise to please men.

He would permit nothing to take away the offence of the cross. We are to follow Paul as he followed Christ. I Corinthians 11:1 and Philippians 3:17. For the spiritual aggressive servant of Christ, it is either compromise or suffering. The less the compromise the more the suffering.

What folly then to try to make the “gospel of grace” popular or to pervert that gospel with religion to please religious people!

Little do we appreciate all that is meant by Paul’s final words: “I have fought a good fight . . . I have kept the faith.” II Timothy 4:7.

A short time ago a faithful pastor, who had suffered much from the religious friendly enemies. because of his uncompromising stand for the “Christ-Pauline” message, said, “What we need today among our Bible teachers is some tentmakers; then perhaps so many of our Fundamentalist brethren would not keep silent concerning ‘the mystery of the gospel’, for the sake of personal advantage.” This message is not popular in religious circles or with sectarian

Christians. and sad to say its bitterest foes are many of the outstanding preachers in the “Fundamentalist” organizations.

As we study II Timothy, concerning the peculiar message and ministry of Paul, which he calls in II Timothy 1:12, “my deposit (paratheke) “ and compare with the statements in Ephesians 6:18 to 20 and Colossians 4:3 and 4, that Paul was in jail for “the Mystery,” as the prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ for Gentiles (Ephesians 3:1), we can better understand the particular sufferings to which he referred when he said: “ Wherein I suffer trouble as an evil doer, even unto bounds; but the Word of God is not, bound.” II Timothy 2:9.

Note again II Timothy 2:12: “If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.” Then Paul added. “Yea, and all that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” II Timothy 3:12.

There are multitudes of God’s people who are testifying daily to sinners concerning salvation by the death and resurrection of Christ, who are not partakers of the afflictions of the gospel. There are a number of outstanding “Fundamentalist” Bible-teachers and evangelists in this country, who stand for the verbal inspiration of the Bible, for the Deity, death and resurrection of Christ, preaching salvation by blood, who are not partakers of the afflictions of the gospel. Some of them travel first class. They stay at the finest hotels, receive from \$75.00 to \$375.00 per week for their services. They never know what it is to be a “partaker of the afflictions of the gospel.” They are very careful not to jeopardize their popularity, or fearlessly speak forth some Bible truth that might offend their religious hearers, and thereby cut down their income, or hinder a return engagement.

They pay little, or no heed to Galatians 1:10, concerning pleasing men rather than God. They seem perfectly willing to add it little something to take away the offence of the cross if that pleases their donors.

Satan becomes very much exercised when God’s servants teach the truth concerning “the dispensation of the grace of God,” for he knows that the Pauline Gospel will deliver religious people from all their religious entanglements. This Satan does not want. So he ever brings pressure to bear to keep God’s servants ignorant or silent concerning this special phase of Divine Truth. Many servants who are not ignorant are silent so as to escape the afflictions of the gospel.

The jail door was opened for Paul because he was making known “the Mystery of the Gospel”. Ephesians 6:18 and 19. Then multitudes of those who had been saved by his preaching, turned away from him. II Timothy 1:15—II Timothy 4:16. While suffering its an evil doer in his prison cell he asked others to pray for open doors where the Mystery might be preached. Colossians 4:3 and 4. Let us join in that prayer.

“ALL CHRISTIANS ARE TO SUFFER”

ROMANS 8:17 AND 18

“And if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that. we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

II CORINTHIANS 1:7

“And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.”

PHILIPPIANS 3:10

“That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.”

I PETER 3:14, 17 AND 18

“But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled.”

“For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”

Many Christian foreign missionaries have suffered much, some of them unto death. Many Christian preachers in the homeland have labored with inadequate financial support and have suffered hardships, self-denial, sacrifice, and persecution. Yet the majority of these missionaries and preachers have not been partakers of that phase of the gospel to which Paul referred in II Timothy 1:8. Always read II Timothy 1:8 with II Timothy 2:8 and with Colossians 4:3 and 4, and especially with Ephesians 6:11 to 21. Let us note several of the verses in the sixth chapter of Ephesians:

“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS IN THE HEAVENLIES.” Ephesians 6:11 and 12.

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints: And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL, For which I AM AN AMBASSADOR IN BONDS: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” Ephesians 6:18 to 20.

Note here concerning the devil and the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies. “In the heavenlies.” We find this expression in Ephesians 1:3— Ephesians 1:20— Ephesians 2:6— Ephesians 3:10. And in Ephesians 4:10 this heavenly place is described, “far above all heavens.”

In Matthew, Mark and Luke we read a number of times, “on earth”—“on the earth”. But in Ephesians it is “in the heavenlies.” There is a great difference.

The devil works as “the prince of this world,” as “the god of this age”, as “the prince of the power of the air.” In Ephesians, wherein the mystery is revealed, Satan is identified with principalities and powers in the heavenlies.

In I Thessalonians 2:18 Paul declared that Satan hindered him. Thank God that we can believe and act on the truth of Colossians 2:15: “And Christ having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”

And God will accomplish through members of His Body, Ephesians 3:10.

“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.”

Note the power available for Church-members:

“What is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power. Which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies. Far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to

be the Head over all things to the Church, Which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” Ephesians 1:19 to 23.

But let us never discount the power of Satan. We should be able to say truthfully, with Paul, “we are not ignorant of his devices.” II Corinthians 2:11. Satan is a very clever devil. He is transformed into an angel of light. II Corinthians 11:13 to 15.

With a vicious hatred the Adversary hates the truth concerning the Head and Body in the heavenlies as he hates no other truth in the Bible. He is the relentless enemy of “the Mystery of the Gospel.” In no other way can we account for the profound ignorance and silence concerning this most blessed and glorious message in God’s Word.

WHAT GRACE PREACHERS HAVE WRITTEN

Hear the testimony of a man of God, who for years was an outstanding “grace” preacher. In his book “Romans” he wrote:

“You can judge any man’s teaching or preaching by this rule. Is it Pauline? Does his doctrine start and end according to those statements of Christian doctrine uttered by the Apostle Paul? No matter how wonderful a man may seem to be in his gifts and apparent consecration, if his gospel is not Pauline, it is not the gospel, and we might as well get our minds settled at once on that point.” (Page 339.) “For instance, if you were to take Paul’s Epistles out of the Bible, you cannot find anything about the Church, the Body of Christ, for no other apostle mentions the Body of Christ.” (Page 340.) “Would that we had the grace to defend just as vigorously this great message today, for it has many enemies and even real friends who do not yet see it clearly; and there are others, who like Peter (Galatians 2), through fear of others, are ready to compromise and tone down the gospel of God.” (Page 344.)

For some reason this dear brother has omitted these statements from his revised “Romans”.

Another outstanding “grace” preacher who is pastor of one of the largest churches in America and a very popular servant of the Lord among Fundamentalists has written many books about the Church which is the Body of Christ.

This brother, in his books, touched upon only one aspect of God’s spiritual program during this parenthetical period. In his writings he contradicted himself by stating that “the dispensation of the mystery” began with a new revelation which was given to Paul, (not to Peter); and in the same writings he declared that this dispensation began on the day of Pentecost, with Peter. He did seem, however, to have a splendid start, going almost as far as did John Darby, that great man of God. But something happened. The brother wrote a later book and backed up on the truth, and now he is in utter confusion. If he had gone on in his study of this blessed truth, not seeking a popular ministry, he might have been wonderfully used by the Lord in the recovery of lost truth, for he is an outstanding “grace” preacher, with many followers.

He quoted in his book on baptism a statement, by another “Brethren,” that the truth concerning the one mystical Body of Ephesians was buried under religious rubbish for centuries.

Surely this is true concerning “the dispensation of the Mystery” and humanly speaking, it is an impossible task to recover or uncover it, but blessed be the Name of the Lord, we are making some progress.

Now note some of the written statements of this “grace” preacher concerning Pauline truth—

1—"To the epistles of Paul alone do we turn for the revelation of this mystery. He was the special vessel chosen to make known the heavenly calling. The twelve were, as we have seen, connected primarily with the testimony to Israel. Paul, as one born out of due time, was selected to be the messenger to the nations, announcing the distinctive truths of the present dispensation."

2—"Throughout the writings of the apostle Paul he again and again refers to a wondrous secret, which he designates in a special way as "the mystery," or "the great mystery."

"For centuries it was almost entirely lost sight of. In fact, until brought to the fore through the writings and the preaching and teaching of a distinguished ex-clergyman, Mr. J. N. Darby, in the early part of the last century, it is scarcely to be found in a single book or sermon throughout a period of sixteen hundred years!"

"Of ordinances exalted to the place of mysteries, as in heathen rites, he will find much; but as to the mystery, which to the apostle was so unspeakably precious, rarely a reference!"

3—"That a doctrine so clearly revealed in the Scriptures could have become so utterly lost is only to be accounted for by the Judaizing of the Church, and the consequent minding of earthly things that beclouded the heavenly ones."

4—"The mystery formed no part of the revelation of the previous dispensations. Had it been otherwise, Paul could not rightly have written that it was "kept secret since the world began." It was part of the good news he was commissioned to publish abroad, but he learned it not from the former Scriptures, but by direct revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ in glory."

5—"Now if the mystery be for those who have faith to obey, it is certainly of vast importance that every child of God be instructed as to its true character."

6—"The mystery is made known in the prophetic writing of the apostle himself. He was the chosen vessel to whom alone it was given to set it forth "for the obedience of faith." "Mysteries of God" Page 52.

(Concerning Ephesians 3:1 to 3)

7—"This is the fullest declaration, or unfolding, of this precious and wondrous mystery that we have in all the Bible. It is so plain that one would suppose that every spiritual mind must see at once to what it refers. Yet the commentators and expositors generally are content to make it mean that in the present age God is extending to the Gentiles the same grace He offers the Jew, so that the former, by closing with his offer of grace, becomes a sharer in the kingdom promised to Israel."

8—"All God's promises to Israel will be fulfilled. They will be blessed on earth. The Church will be blessed in heaven."

"This is the mystery; glorious, inconceivably grand, and transcendently wonderful!"

9—"What is especially insisted on here is that the mystery is the great truth that completes the Word of God." (Colossians 1:24 to 27.)

"It is the capstone of Scripture teaching, as the Cross is the foundation-stone of the gospel. Christ is now working among the Gentiles, while rejected by Israel. This, the Old Testament did not contemplate."

10—"The mystery" was not something of difficult, mysterious character, but a sacred secret never known to mankind until in due time opened up by the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul."

“It was not hid in the Scriptures to be brought to light eventually; but we are distinctly told it was hid in God until such time as He chose to manifest it.

“This was not until Israel had been given every opportunity to receive Christ both in incarnation AND RESURRECTION. When they definitely refused Him God made known what had been in His heart from eternity—that from all nations, Jews and Gentiles, He would redeem and take out an elect company who would, by the Spirit’s baptism, be formed into one Body.”

11—“But this doctrine of the one body is never referred to by any other apostle than Paul. He calls it “the dispensation of the mystery” which he had especially been entrusted with.”

12—“It was the secret purpose of His heart only to be revealed after the rejection of His Son.”

13—“Let the reader not fall into a mistake very commonly made today. The kingdom is not the Church. The latter is the Body of Christ, composed of all who, in this dispensation, are called out from Jew and Gentile, and baptized in the power of the Holy Spirit. During the period in which God is doing this special work of His grace, the kingdom, properly speaking, is in abeyance.”

14—“The rejection of Messiah has caused God—not to cancel His promises made to the fathers of the Hebrews, but—to bring to light hidden purposes, hitherto unrevealed, of grace for the Gentiles during a period of undefined duration.”

15—“That the nations would be brought to own His sway THROUGH Israel, is clearly taught; but that He would be doing a special work among them, while the Jew is set aside, was a secret hid in God. To understand it is to enter into the truth for the present dispensation.”

16—“While Messiah is on the Father’s throne and the people of Israel are rejected because of their refusal of their King, God is displaying the hidden purpose of His heart in bringing in of “a new thing in the earth,” even the mystical body of His Son to share with Him all the glories He is yet to enter upon, when the regular line of prophecy is taken up.”

17—“The mystery, on the other hand, is spiritual, and belongs to heaven. A break in God’s ways having come in, He now makes known His hidden purpose to take OUT of Jew and Gentile a people for heaven, who are to be one with Christ for eternity.”

18—“The Old Testament Scriptures clearly predicted the calling of the Gentiles but always in subjection to Israel. During the present dispensation Israel, as we read in Romans 11, is set aside because of unbelief, and Christ is working among the nations, attracting weary hearts to Himself altogether apart from any thought of Jewish priority. Believing Jews and Gentiles are united by the Holy Spirit’s baptism into the one Body, and thus all fleshly distinctions are done away. The middle wall of partition is broken down. This is the mystery.”

19—“THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST WAS NEVER MADE KNOWN IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES, NOR YET IN THE DAYS WHEN OUR LORD WAS ON THE EARTH. WE ARE TOLD DISTINCTLY IT HAD BEEN “HID FROM AGES AND GENERATIONS, BUT NOW IS MADE MANIFESTED TO THE SAINTS.” THE DIVINE METHOD OF MAKING IT KNOWN WAS BY A SPECIAL REVELATION TO THE APOSTLE PAUL, AS HE TELLS US IN EPHESIANS 3. BUT THIS REVELATION WAS NOT FOR HIM ONLY IT WAS A MINISTRY COMMITTED TO HIM TO PASS ON TO THE SAINTS.”

20—“The whole counsel of God was not made known until Paul received this revelation of the mystery.”

21—“It was a special revelation given not to the twelve, but to him as the apostle of the new dispensation.”

22—“How earnest was the apostle in seeking to lead Christians into the knowledge of this precious truth.”

23—“Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles and as such he magnified his office. He was not the apostle to the Hebrews.”

24—“If I set at naught any fellow-believer I am to that extent failing to keep this unity.”

25—“Doubtless the devil thought he had gained a great advantage when he shut Paul up in prison, but from that prison cell came at least four of the great Church Epistles, and some of the pastoral letters, which have been the means of untold blessing to millions throughout the centuries.”

Our brother wrote a later book, “Wrongly Dividing The Word of Truth”. On page 66 of that book he said:

“I SPEAK AS UNTO WISE MEN, JUDGE YE WHAT I SAY.”

That is exactly what we now desire to do, judge what he has said in “Wrongly Dividing” by making comparison with the statements we have already quoted from his earlier writings. Let me emphasize the fact that he has recently stated that he believes all that he has written in his earlier writings and stands by all of his statements in “Wrongly Dividing.”

We now quote his contradictory statements from this later book for wise men to judge:

Page 40 and 41

1—“The mystery then is not simply centered in the term “Body” but whatever expression may be used, the mystery is that during the present age all distinction between believing Jews and believing Gentiles is done away in Christ.”

Concerning Galatians 3:26 to 29, where there is no mention of the Body of Christ, but reference to the salvation and unification of Jews and Gentiles in Christ “on the common ground of grace,” the writer writes

2—“Is there anything in the revelation of the mystery as given in Ephesians or Colossians that goes beyond this? It is a clear definite statement of the absolute unity in Christ of those who before their conversion occupied different positions here on earth, some being Jews, some Gentiles, some free men, some slaves, some men, some women, but every distinction now obliterated in the new creation.”

Page 39

3—“The distinction between Jew and Gentile was abolished on the cross.”

Pages 41 and 42

4—“The greatest of all New Testament prophets is Luke himself, and in his Book of Acts the mystery is plainly made known.”

Page 33 (Acts 9:5 to 15)

5—“Who art Thou Lord?” and the glorified Saviour answered, “I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest.” “This was the revelation of the mystery.”

Page 41

6—“Was this mystery made known by other servants besides the apostle Paul? It was. The apostle John makes it known in his account of our Lord’s ministry as given in the tenth chapter of his Gospel.”

Page 41

7—“It shows us that John, as an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, had received the revelation of the mystery even before the apostle Paul did.”

Page 41

8—“Then what of the apostle Peter? We dare say this same mystery was made known to him on the housetop of Simon’s residence in Joppa.”

Now reconcile our brother’s other statements with this one.

This he writes in another message

“A dispensation then is a period of time in which God is dealing with men in some way in which He has not dealt with them before. Moreover there may be degrees of revelation.” “Only when a new revelation from God is given, does a dispensation change.”

In spite of this statement of fact, this man of God teaches that the new dispensation began with Peter on the day of Pentecost without a revelation. Contradiction as well as blunder.

When does he state that a dispensation changes? When a new revelation from God is given. When did Paul have his revelation according to our brother’s writings?

On the way to Damascus. Acts 9.

When did Peter get the revelation?

On the housetop in Acts 10.

When did the dispensation of the Mystery begin according to his writings? We quote:

“According to God, the new dispensation, that in which we now live, the dispensation of the grace of God, otherwise called the dispensation of the mystery, began the moment the spirit descended at Pentecost.”

In closing we quote again what our brother says about this truth, which he acknowledges was “so unspeakably precious.”

“AS OF ORDINANCES EXALTED TO THE PLACE OF MYSTERIES, AS IN HEATHEN RITES, HE WILL FIND MUCH, BUT AS TO THE MYSTERY, WHICH TO THE APOSTLE WAS SO UNSPEAKABLY PRECIOUS, RARELY A REFERENCE.”
“MYSTERIES OF GOD.”

“THAT A DOCTRINE SO CLEARLY REVEALED IN THE SCRIPTURES COULD HAVE BECOME SO UTTERLY LOST IS ONLY TO BE ACCOUNTED FOR BY THE JUDAIZING OF THE CHURCH, AND THE CONSEQUENT MINDING OF EARTHLY THINGS THAT BECLOUDED THE HEAVENLY ONES.”

We quote our brother’s commendation of Paul; “Lectures on Colossians,” page 59:

“How earnest was the apostle in seeking to lead Christians into the knowledge of this precious truth.”

Paul should have been earnest in seeking to lead Christians into the precious truth concerning “the Mystery.” I am trying to be earnest in the matter. I wonder if our brother is earnest about leading the many members of his present church into this precious truth while he is bitterly opposing God’s servants who are doing what he is neglecting to do.

In closing we ask you to remember Satan's activity in the heavenlies and to obey Ephesians 3:9— Ephesians 6:18 to 20—Colossians 4:3 and 4, praying for open doors and open months for "the Mystery" and make all to see it.

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; The eyes of your understanding being enlightened: that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power." Ephesians 1:17 to 19.

Well it cost Paul something to proclaim this Divine Truth. He was in jail for "the Mystery of the Gospel" and if we aggressively proclaim it with conviction and zeal we will be partakers of the afflictions of the gospel. The devil will never cease to oppose this glorious Divine truth.

But here is a challenge! Find one single sectarian Christian who preaches the Mystery. Find one single zealous baptizer who preaches the Mystery. You will look in vain. There is neither sectarianism nor water baptism in the program of the Church of the Mystery in Ephesians and Colossians.

"Be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel."

MESSAGE NUMBER 60

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST—THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

What about the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ? This question should be considered with the signs of the times ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES and ACCORDING TO THE ETERNAL PURPOSE of GOD IN CHRIST JESUS. In the New Testament Scriptures, especially in the Epistles of Paul, we find much in God's spiritual program that was not prophesied in the Old Testament Scriptures.

First, we quote from Matthew 24:3 the words of the apostles spoken to the Lord Jesus:

"AND AS HE SAT UPON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES, THE DISCIPLES CAME UNTO HIM PRIVATELY, SAYING, TELL US, WHEN SHALL THESE THINGS BE AND WHAT SHALL BE THE SIGN OF THY COMING, AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD?" (AGE)?

Then in the verses that follow the Lord Jesus told His disciples of the signs that would indicate that His coming and Israel's kingdom were at hand.

By carefully studying the entire twenty-fourth and the twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew, the student will learn that Israel, in the midst of the signs mentioned, is in the midst of a great tribulation, and it is at that time of trouble that the Son of man will come and then sit on the throne of His glory as the King. The twelve apostles will sit on the twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Matthew 25:31 and 32. Matthew 19:28.

In Jeremiah 30:4 to 11, and in other Scriptures, the great tribulation is foretold. It is the time of Jacob's trouble, but Jacob shall be saved out of it. Note the prophetic message of Isaiah 11:11 and Ezekiel 37:24 to 28.

Daniel also was Jehovah's prophet to tell about Israel and Israel's land in the end time. He foretold many things concerning the doings of God's one nation and the other nations in the end time.

But we emphasize the fact that neither Isaiah nor Ezekiel nor Daniel nor any other man, woman or child said one word or knew one thing concerning God's spiritual program, which in Ephesians and Colossians is called "the mystery," "the mystery of God's will," "the mystery of Christ," "the mystery of the gospel," "the dispensation of the mystery," "the mystery among the Gentiles." Ephesians 3:3, Ephesians 1:9, Ephesians 3:4, Ephesians 6:19, Colossians 1:25 to 27.

Now note these Scriptures as to the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ to take the members of His Body to glory.

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." I Corinthians 15:51 and 52.

"For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." Philippians 3:20 and 21.

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" Titus 2:13.

"When Christ Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Colossians 3:4.

This translation, transformation and glorification of the members of the Body of Christ was a mystery during the years when Israel's prophets were foretelling the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to die as the Lamb on the cross and to reign as the King on David's throne.

Search diligently the Epistles from which we have quoted and you will notice that there is no mention of one of the signs of Matthew 24 and Luke 21, to warn the redeemed of the Lord that the day of redemption is at hand.

Some preachers confuse members of the Body of Christ by giving to these members the warning of Luke 21:25 to 31: "look up"—"lift up your heads"—"for your redemption draweth nigh." Luke 21:28.

When those Israelites "look up," where will they be and what will they see? They will be right in the midst of Jacob's trouble and they will see awful signs in the heavens and they will see on earth the work of the four horsemen of The Revelation and some great earthquakes and other terrible scenes.

"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Luke 21:27.

". . . NEVERTHELESS WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMETH, SHALL HE FIND FAITH ON THE EARTH?" Luke 18:8.

When the Son of man thus comes He will neither find faith on the earth, nor one single member of the Body of Ephesians 1:19 to 23 and Ephesians 4:4.

Christ is never mentioned as "the Son of man" in His ministry to, and His union with, the members of the Body of Christ.

The Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6, according to Ephesians 3:5, was not made known to the sons of men in other ages. Neither was the heavenly position and possessions, hope and calling of this Body made known to Israel's prophets. Therefore, they never prophesied one single word

about the blessed hope and coming of the Lord for His Body, as revealed in Titus 2:13, Philippians 3:20 and 21 and Colossians 3:4.

From this we should learn that the events in connection with the end time of Israel and the other nations are not to take place during this present reign of grace, when God wants all men to know the difference between His earthly kingdom program and His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus, and to see the dispensation of the mystery which was hid in God until revealed by Christ to and through Paul. Ephesians 3:9.

It is difficult to understand why this revealed mystery has remained a mystery for about 1875 years, so far as most members of Christ's Body are concerned.

The spiritual, intelligent, careful student of the Scriptures will learn that what all the kings of Europe, Asia, and Africa have been doing in this present dispensation has not been in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies and have not been Scriptural signs from God to convince members of the Body of Christ that the blessed hope of Titus 2:13 was at hand.

God's spiritual program today recorded in Paul's last Epistles is not in fulfillment of prophecies of the sons of men of other ages. Read carefully Colossians 1:24 to 27 and Ephesians 3:1 to 11.

The mystery among the Gentiles, the untraceable riches of Christ among the Gentiles, is not ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES (from Genesis to Malachi).

POLITICAL SIGNS

The preacher who teaches that the movements of Russia, Italy, Germany and Japan prove that we are in Israel's prophesied end time and are signs for the members of the Body of Christ, that the blessed hope is at hand, are most inconsistent, for they generally also teach with this blunder, that Paul and all premillennial Christians from Paul's day, have consistently held for the imminent coming of the Lord, the postponement of the kingdom, and that the Church age is a parenthetical period. Such teaching discredits and repudiates the claims of Paul that he received a special Divine deposit from the risen Christ which was unprophesied.

The preacher who preaches "signs" which are in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, as proof that the Lord's coming for His saints is at hand, if consistent, must teach that the living members of the Body of Christ will be in the great tribulation when they experience the glorious appearing of the Lord, mentioned in Titus 2:13. For the coming of the Son of man, prophesied by Israel's prophets, confirmed by Christ on earth, and Peter in Acts 3, is His coming as Israel's Deliverer, when they are in the midst of Jacob's trouble.

In the light of "Christ-Pauline" Truth no messenger of the Lord has Scriptural authority to teach "signs" (in fulfillment of Old Testament Scriptures) and "the imminent coming of the Lord." The two are irreconcilable. This inconsistent teaching is because the preachers are ignorant and disobedient concerning Ephesians 3:9, and because they do not know the difference between "the signs of the times" and "the times of the signs."

Regardless of all the doings of all the wicked rulers, from Nero to Bonaparte and Kaiser Wilhelm, every true, spiritual, intelligent member of the Body of Christ has had scriptural right to believe that the realization of the blessed hope was not only a possibility but a probability.

Every member of the Body of Christ living today should be looking for the blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the Saviour, whether Hitler lives or dies; whether Hitler, Mussolini, or Stalin conquers or is defeated.

What folly to seek to prove that because these men are fulfilling the prophecy of Ezekiel 38 and Daniel 2 and 11, the blessed hope is at hand, when the blessed hope has nothing to do with ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES, but is a part of the dispensation of the mystery, ACCORDING TO THE ETERNAL PURPOSE OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS, concerning the members of the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6, “which was not made known to the sons of men in other ages.” Ephesians 3:5.

“According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will.” Ephesians 1:4 and 5.

“In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.” Ephesians 1:11.

Let us learn from these Scriptures and others that “predestination” is always mentioned in connection with God’s eternal purpose in Christ Jesus.

If the Roman Empire is restored, when the king of the North does his terrible work against Israel, when the battle of Armageddon takes place, when the religious antichrist does his damnable and blasphemous work, when Israel in their own land and in other lands in unbelief is suffering in the great tribulation under the reign of the beast and the antichrist, when their Messiah comes as their Deliverer and fights for them, when all Israel is saved under the guarantee of the New Covenant, when Israel shall be again planted in their own land, never to be uprooted, when King David is on the throne, when the nations learn war no more, when the knowledge of the Lord covers the earth as the waters cover the sea, when all the wild animals are domesticated, when the wilderness shall blossom like a rose, when the millennium of peace is a reality, when there shall be a new heaven and a new earth—all will be in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. This will be the “restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.” Acts 3:21. The King shall say “unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Matthew 25: 34.

We see that all this is “FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD.”

But none of all this fulfillment of prophecy has anything to do with God’s unprophesied program. Note the contrast in the eternity of grace in II Timothy 1:9 and Ephesians 2:7.

“Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” II Timothy 1:9.

“That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 2:7.

Remember, whenever this ETERNAL PURPOSE OF GOD is mentioned, it is always mentioned in connection with “predestination” and not as something prophesied since the world began.

Let us obey God and test things that differ: “So that ye may test the things that differ; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.” Philippians 1:10.

Some of the messages which Paul proclaimed were in fulfillment of the prophecies of Israel’s Old Testament prophets. Concerning other messages proclaimed by Paul, every Old Testament prophet was not only silent, but ignorant. Therefore the words of Paul: “the mystery which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men.” Ephesians 3:5.

Thus we see, in “rightly dividing the Word of Truth,” or “testing things that differ,” we must distinguish between the ministry and messages of Peter and the Eleven, in the first chapters of Acts, and the “revelation” ministry which Christ committed to Paul, the “UNSEARCHABLE” riches of Christ among the Gentiles.

Also we must distinguish between the “confirmation” ministry and the “revelation” ministry, which Christ committed to Paul. In other words, for the intelligent study, interpretation, appropriation and application of the Scriptures, it is imperative that the student know the difference between Divine Truth in the Book of Acts and in the Epistles of the apostles that was “ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES,” and the Truth that was “ACCORDING TO GOD’S ETERNAL PURPOSE IN CHRIST JESUS.”

Other phrases are used in the Bible to express the same meaning as, “ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES.” Some of those other phrases are, “that the Scriptures might be fulfilled”; “to this agree the words of the prophets”; or “none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come.”

“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.” Note how this is stated in Acts 13:29 and 30: “And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree. And laid Him in a sepulchre, But God raised Him from the dead.”

“When was the Lord Jesus Christ taken down from the tree and buried? When they had fulfilled (finished) all that was written of Him.

The Lord Jesus said, “think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Matthew 5:18.

Compare and contrast these statements with Colossians 1:25 and 26. “Whereof I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, TO FULFILL THE WORD OF GOD. Even the mystery which hath been hid from, ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints.”

There is a great difference between fulfilling that which Moses, the law-giver, and all of God’s prophets, before the birth of Christ, foretold, and that which Christ from heaven, in resurrection, gave to Paul to complete.

The mystery, which Paul received from Christ, was to complete the Word of God with Divine Truth which was not made known to Moses and Israel’s prophets. Compare and contrast the meaning of, “ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES” (I Corinthians 15:3), with the expression in Ephesians 3:11, “ACCORDING TO GOD’S ETERNAL PURPOSE IN CHRIST JESUS.”

But now concerning the statement, “And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him (Christ) they took Him down from the tree and put Him in a sepulchre, but God raised Him from the dead.” All that is written concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, as Israel’s King and Messiah, reigning on David’s throne, in His earthly kingdom glory, has not been fulfilled. The Son of God is to have a wonderful ministry on this earth, as “Wonderful,” and “Prince of Peace,” (Isaiah 9:6 and 7) and that will be ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES (from Genesis to Malachi).

However the present ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is in the heavenlies, far above all earthly places, as Head of a company of saints, who are seated with Him and blessed with Him in the heavenlies, is not ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES (from Genesis to Malachi) Ephesians 1:19 to 22. But this is ACCORDING TO GOD’S ETERNAL PURPOSE IN CHRIST JESUS. Ephesians 3:11.

The once-for-all sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, unlike many other events was both ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES and ACCORDING TO GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE, for we read, in I Peter 1:19 to 21, of Christ, as "a Lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world."

Let us now note the words of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth recorded in Luke 24:25 to 27: "Then He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

Christ declared that Moses and all of Israel's prophets wrote of Him. He declared that any one who does not believe all that these holy men of old wrote about His sufferings and glory (I Peter 1:11), is a fool. Are you a fool? If not, then you surely believe that Jesus Christ will return to earth and fulfill Isaiah 9:6 and 7 and Matthew 25:31 to 41. Note Matthew 25:31: "When the Son of man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory."

When Jesus Christ was on earth, in the land of the Jews, His circumcision ministry was a ministry of confirmation. He was confirming to Israel promises which God made to Israel by Israel's prophets. Romans 15:8.

Peter and the Eleven also carried on a ministry of confirmation, not only before the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, but beginning with the day of Pentecost and for some years thereafter. Hebrews 2:3 and 4.

After we have summed up all that the prophets, from Moses to Malachi, foretold, concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and Gentile salvation (aside from the foreordained death of Christ) we will not find one hint or suggestion of the Divine Truth defined the "unsearchable riches of Christ among the Gentiles."

Surely we see the difference between "ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES" and "ACCORDING TO GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE IN CHRIST."

Moreover, there is a difference between the gospel, the death and resurrection of Christ, ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES, and the MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL, which was ACCORDING TO THE ETERNAL PURPOSE OF GOD, for which Paul was an ambassador in bonds. Ephesians 6:20.

Note again Paul's statement in Colossians 1:25 and 26: "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God; Even the mystery, which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints."

Certainly Peter and the Eleven had a dispensation committed to them, and they were presenting the Lord's Divine program in Acts 1 to 11. That dispensation was not "the dispensation of the mystery" of Ephesians 3:9, nor "the dispensation of the grace of God" of Ephesians 3:2, nor "the mystery concerning the Joint-Body" of Ephesians 3:5 and 6, nor "the unsearchable riches of Christ among the Gentiles" of Ephesians 3:8, nor "God's purpose and grace given us in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world," mentioned in II Timothy 1:9.

Note what the Lord is yet to do for Israel under the guarantee of the Old Covenant: "And they shall not teach every man His neighbor, 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." Hebrews 8:11 and 12.

This covenant blessing for Israel is prophesied in Jeremiah 31:31 to 37.

But in all the Scriptures, from Genesis to Malachi, there is not a hint concerning the heavenly position and blessings of the saved Gentiles under the dispensation of the grace of God mentioned in the Epistle to the Ephesians.

And let us keep in mind that the spiritual program for God's people during this present age is not a program of religion; is not a program that Israel's prophets foretold.

What believers have today is a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, and not the Christian religion, or any other religion. We have eternal life and Christ is our life. In the matter of the return of the Lord for the members of His Body these members are not to look for "signs" but for the Son.

We are waiting for a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, OUR LIFE. Then shall we also appear with Him in glory. Colossians 3:3: and 4.

MESSAGE NUMBER 61

THE SCRIPTURAL ANSWER TO THOSE WHO TEACH THAT THE BODY OF CHRIST BEGAN AFTER THE CLOSE OF "THE" ACTS PERIOD

Acts 28:25 to 28 has been called Israel's "Ichabod." Note these verses:

"AND WHEN THEY AGREED NOT AMONG THEMSELVES, THEY DEPARTED, AFTER THAT PAUL HAD SPOKEN ONE WORD, WELL SPAKE THE HOLY SPIRIT BY ESAIAS THE PROPHET UNTO OUR FATHERS, SAYING, GO UNTO THIS PEOPLE AND SAY, HEARING YE SHALL HEAR AND SHALL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND SEEING YE SHALL SEE AND NOT PERCEIVE: FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE IS WAXED GROSS, AND THEIR EARS ARE DULL OF HEARING, AND THEIR EYES HAVE THEY CLOSED; LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART, AND SHOULD BE CONVERTED, AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM. BE IT KNOWN THEREFORE UNTO YOU, THAT THE SALVATION OF GOD IS SENT UNTO THE GENTILES, AND THAT THEY WILL HEAR IT."

These words were first given to Isaiah to proclaim to Israel at the time of spiritual declension. They are found in Isaiah 6:9 and 10. Then when Jesus Christ was on earth as Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of man, in the midst of Israel. After Christ had spoken of Israel's unpardonable sin, in Matthew 12:31, He quoted these Isaiah verses in Matthew 13:14 and 15. Again they are recorded in John 12:37, 39 and 40:

"BUT THOUGH HE HAD DONE SO MANY MIRACLES BEFORE THEM, YET THEY BELIEVED NOT ON HIM." "THEREFORE THEY COULD NOT BELIEVE, BECAUSE THAT ESAIAS SAID AGAIN, HE HATH BLINDED THEIR EYES, AND HARDENED THEIR HEART; THAT THEY SHOULD NOT SEE WITH THEIR EYES, NOR UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART, AND BE CONVERTED, AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM."

The fact that this same Divine judgment was spoken three different times to Israel, and each time when they rejected a very definite testimony from the Lord, seems significant. Each

pronouncement seems to have marked a crisis in the history of Israel. So also did Romans 11:15 and Acts 18:5 and 6.

There are many Bible teachers who, though they fix the historical beginning of the Body of Christ in the second chapter of Acts, teach definitely and dogmatically that there was just as definite an offer of the kingdom to Israel in Acts 3:19 to 21, as there was in any of the Four Gospels before Christ's death and resurrection. Some say that this offer was withdrawn with Stephen's message in the seventh chapter of Acts. Others extend the offer to the tenth chapter of Acts. But the so-called "Ultra-dispensation-lists" say that the words of Acts 28:25 to 28 prove that the offer of the kingdom continued until this Divine judgment was pronounced by Paul in Rome, and that any Church before the close of the "Acts" period was different from the Church, which is called the Body of Christ, in Ephesians.

The Christian who teaches that the nation Israel was set aside with the words of Christ in Matthew 23:31 to 39, that that pronouncement marked the postponement of the kingdom, is guilty of a very serious blunder. Israel was addressed in Matthew 23, as "fools," as "hypocrites," as "blind guides," as "serpents," as "a generation of vipers." But Israel was very affectionately and tenderly addressed, in Acts 3:25 and Acts 3:17: "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." Something transpired between the message of Matthew 2:3 and the message of Acts 3. It was Christ's prayer on the cross: "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34. And the Father postponed the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jews for about 35 years.

Then note again the significant words of the Holy Spirit in Acts 5:30 to 32: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree, Him hath God exalted with His right, hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, **for to give repentance to Israel**, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Spirit, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him." Here Christ was again presented to Israel as Prince and Saviour. Israel had not then committed the unpardonable sin and salvation had not yet been sent to Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy.

Thus we learn of these definite offers to Israel. First: during the days of their prophets in the Old Testament. Second: during the days of the Son of man. Third: during the "Acts" testimony of the Twelve to Israel. Read the parable of the Vineyard in Matthew 21:33 to 46.

It is also significant that the Book of Acts closes before the acts of the Apostle Paul were finished. It was several years after the close of the "Acts" period when Paul said, "I have finished my course." The last sixteen chapters of Acts is the record of the spiritual activities of this one apostle, and only those who had dealings with him are mentioned in those chapters. Why then did the "Acts" end before Paul's acts ended? Why did Paul write about one-half of his Epistles before the close of Acts, and about one-half after they closed? Why is it that in the Epistles of Paul, written after the close of the "Acts" period, there is no mention of any of the sign-gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11? Why no mention of signs, miracles, tongues and physical healing? Why, in Acts 19, did Paul perform miracles of healing and then some years later leave Trophimus at Miletum sick and write faithful Timothy to take wine for his sickness? II Timothy 4:20, I Timothy 5:23.

Many men of God, have learned from diligently studying the Scriptures that a change in God's spiritual program took place after the close of "Acts"; that God then sent salvation to the

Gentiles as had never been done before. A few men have gone so far as to imagine that anew and entirely different Church of God began after the close of the "Acts" period.

We here present some of the Scriptures which they use:

1. Acts 28:20

"For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you and to speak with you: because that for THE HOPE OF ISRAEL I am bound with this chain."

2. Romans 15:27

"It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made PARTAKERS OF THEIR SPIRITUAL THINGS, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things."

3. II Corinthians 3:6

"Who also hath made us able MINISTERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT; not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life."

4. Acts 26:21 and 22

"For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying NONE OTHER THINGS THAN THOSE WHICH THE PROPHETS AND MOSES DID SAY SHOULD COME."

5. I Corinthians 12:28

"AND GOD HATH SET SOME IN THE CHURCH, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."

6. Galatians 4:26

"But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."

7. I Corinthians 12:17

"If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? "If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?"

8. Romans 11:17

"And if some of the branches were broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree."

9. Acts 14:22

"Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

10. Acts 17:7

"Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another King, one Jesus."

11. Galatians 3:7

“Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are THE CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM.”

Presently we shall consider Paul’s statement **“for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.”** But now let us consider the statement always used by these “extreme” brethren in defense of their theory concerning two Bodies.

“SAYING NONE OTHER THINGS THAN THOSE WHICH THE PROPHETS AND MOSES DID SAY SHOULD COME.” Acts 26: 22.

Now let us do what they seldom do, let us study verse 22 in the light of verse 23: **“That Christ should suffer, that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people (Israel) and to the Gentiles.”**

These brethren frequently quote the **“none other things”** of Acts 26:22; but they generally fail to quote the qualifications in verse 23. Paul was referring to very specific Divine Truth. He was in trouble for preaching the resurrection of Jesus Christ and for telling the Jews that the resurrected Jesus had sent him to the Gentiles. Acts 22:17 to 21. Acts 23:6.

Again note Acts 26:22 and 23. Paul there stated that Israel’s prophets said that Christ should suffer, that He should be the first to rise from the dead, and should show light unto Israel and to the Gentiles. Paul was not in any way making any dogmatic statement that all of the spiritual program, which he received from Christ and presented in Thessalonians, Corinthians, Acts, Galatians and Romans, was prophesied by Israel’s Old Testament prophets. Such an idea is absurd and erroneous. Paul did not even hint at such an affirmation; for such a statement would have been contrary to fact.

UNPROPHESIED TRUTH

In Paul’s statement in Romans Six and Eleven and in II Corinthians 5, we have the negation and repudiation of any such foolish claim. Note Paul’s statement in Romans 11:15:

“FOR IF THE CASTING AWAY OF THEM (ISRAEL) BE THE RECONCILING OF THE WORLD, WHAT SHALL THE RECEIVING OF THEM BE, BUT LIFE FROM THE DEAD?”

The casting away of Israel meant the reconciling of the Gentiles as proclaimed in II Corinthians 5:16 to 21 and in Romans 5:9 to 11. No prophet of Israel ever mentioned or knew anything concerning the dispensational change stated in the eleventh chapter of Romans. That radical change brought in the unprophesied ministry of reconciliation.

We may observe that reconciliation, in Romans 5:10 and 11, is mentioned in connection with the two men, Adam and Christ. Reconciliation is related to the old creation and the new creation.

Surely no prophet of Israel foretold the truth recorded in the sixth chapter of Romans; that by one Divine baptism the believer, whether Jew or Gentile, would be joined to Christ, identified with Him in death, burial and resurrection, under grace, and not under law. The reign of grace mentioned in Romans 5:20 and 21, is identical with the dispensation of grace in Ephesians 3:1 to 3, which was God’s mystery until revealed to Paul. The Divine baptism of Romans 6:3 is identical with the Divine baptism of Colossians 2:12 and Ephesians 4:5. The **“MY GOSPEL”** of Paul, in Romans 2:16, and Romans 16:25, is identical with the **“MY GOSPEL”** of Paul in II Timothy 2:8.

No prophet of Israel ever had the slightest intimation and therefore, said absolutely nothing concerning much of the “Acts period” ministry of the apostle born out of due season.

The brethren who teach that the “Post-Acts Church” was a different Church from the “Acts” Church declare that the Body of Ephesians and Colossians is not the Body described as follows in I Corinthians 12:12 and 13.

“FOR AS THE BODY IS ONE, AND HATH MANY MEMBERS, AND ALL THE MEMBERS OF THAT ONE BODY, BEING MANY, ARE ONE BODY: SO ALSO IS CHRIST. FOR BY ONE SPIRIT ARE WE ALL BAPTIZED INTO ONE BODY, WHETHER WE BE JEWS OR GENTILES, WHETHER WE BE BOND OR FREE; AND HAVE BEEN ALL MADE TO DRINK INTO ONE SPIRIT. FOR THE BODY IS NOT ONE MEMBER, BUT MANY.”

However, we know that the Church is still one Body and that every sinner saved by grace becomes a member of this one Body by the Divine baptism which unites all believers together, one in Christ and members one of another. But these brethren ask “how about I Corinthians 12:28? Where are the sign-gifts?” These signs and miracles and gifts are missing. Is this because present-day members of the Body of Christ are not as spiritual and not as faithful as were those Corinthian saints, or have they been dropped from God’s spiritual program somewhere along the line, by God’s will? Did God begin a new Church when the signs and miracles ceased?

We learn as we read all of the two Corinthian Epistles, that the Corinthians were the least spiritual and the most carnal of any saints to whom Paul ministered. They were carnal; they defrauded one another. They misbehaved when they partook of the Lord’s Supper. They were divided. But remember, they exercised all of the sign-gifts. I Corinthians 12:8 to 11.

Thus we see that performing miracles, tongues, healing, casting out demons, and raising the dead, etc., was not the proof of extraordinary faith, or spiritual conduct. But note I Corinthians 13:8: “Love never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail: whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.” The verbs in this verse have the same thought “shall be done away.”

None of the Corinthian saints were more spiritual or more faithful than Trophimus, Epaphroditus or Timothy. Let us read II Timothy 4:20: “Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.” Philippians 2:27: “For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.” And I Timothy 5:23: “Drink no longer water but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake, and thine often infirmities.”

Note here, three faithful saints were sick. One was raised up in answer to prayer; one was told to take a physical remedy; and one was left sick. But not a trace of any “sign” healing or miraculous healing by Paul or any other Christian with the gift of healing. A great change! When did it take place? Again we affirm that the judgment of Acts 28:25 to 28 marked a crisis in God’s dealings with Israel and a change in God’s spiritual program. But there is no scriptural proof that an entirely new and different Body began after the close of Acts.

NONE OTHER THINGS—Acts 26:22

The so-called “Extremists,” “Bullingerites,” .. Welchites,” or “Hyper-dispensationalists” use the statement of Paul in Acts 26:22 to prove that during the “Acts” period, in Paul’s Epistles to the Thessalonians, Galatians, Corinthians and Romans, all written before Paul’s statement in Acts 26:22, Paul taught only such Divine truth as was in fulfillment of prophecy mentioned in

the thirty-nine Books, from Genesis to Malachi. They claim that every message of Paul's, as well as of the Twelve, in the Book of Acts, was a "confirmation" message; that nothing of the Church of the Mystery was revealed to or by Paul in his pre-prison Epistles. If Paul knew anything about the Mystery of Ephesians and Colossians, "**the unsearchable riches**" of Ephesians 3:8, before he reached Rome, they declare that he never said anything about it during the "Acts" period. They try to prove by Acts 26:22 that the Church of God of the "Acts" period, was an Israelitish prophesied Church and not "the Church of the Mystery," the Body of Christ, described in Ephesians.

Israel's prophets were silent and ignorant concerning Paul's message and ministry of grace recorded in Romans, Galatians and Corinthians. They were as wholly ignorant and silent concerning "the reconciliation," "the new creation," "the identification" and "the one Divine baptism" of Paul's "Acts" ministry, as they were concerning the one Body of Romans 12:4 and 5 and I Corinthians 12:13.

In Romans 8:28 to 30 the Holy Spirit directed Paul to write concerning the eternal purpose of God, which is the very heart of the mystery, the same eternal purpose declared in Ephesians 3:11, 1:4 and 5 and 11, and in II Timothy 1:9.

Read I Corinthians 2:6 to 8 where Paul wrote of that which was ordained to our glory before the world was, that which was hidden, that which was the mystery.

The carnal babes of Corinth could never have received the profound truth later addressed to the faithful in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 1:1 and 2. Moreover, there is no Bible proof that Paul wrote during the "Acts" period of some of the phases of the mystery which are recorded in Ephesians and Colossians.

But this by no means proves that the "Acts" Church had an Israelitish hope and that a new Church, with a different hope and calling, began with the close of the "Acts" period.

THE HOPE OF ISRAEL

Just what did Paul mean when he said, "**BECAUSE THAT FOR THE HOPE OF ISRAEL I AM BOUND WITH THIS CHAIN?**" In Ephesians 3:1 and 2, Paul calls himself the prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ for Gentiles. In Ephesians 6:19 and 20 and in Colossians 4:3 and 4, he declares that he is bound for the mystery. Most assuredly Israel's "Kingdom" hope was different from "the Mystery." After reading Paul's Epistles the diligent student will believe, as many Bible teachers teach, that Paul experienced more than one imprisonment in Rome.

In I Timothy 1:1, the Apostle Paul called the Lord Jesus, "**our hope**." As members of His Body we are to look for His glorious appearing, which is our **blessed hope**. Titus 2:13. His death on the cross is called, in Hebrews 7:19, "**the better hope**." By His resurrection from the dead believers have been begotten into "**a living hope**." I Peter 1:3 to 5. With the realization of the blessed hope, Christ, our life will appear and we will appear with Him in glory. Colossians 3:3 and 4.

Note Christ's words spoken while He was in the midst of Israel: "Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection and the Life, he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?" John 11:25 and 26. Then note I Corinthians 15:13 and 17: "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen." "And if Christ be not raised your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." The believer's hope is the resurrection hope. No resurrection; no hope.

Paul, in Acts 28:20, when referring to **“the hope of Israel”** was speaking of resurrection. When did he become a prisoner? The answer is in Acts 21 to 26. Hear His own words: **“Of the hope and resurrection of the dead, I am called in question.”** Acts 23:6. “Believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.” **“And have hope toward God,** which they themselves also allow **that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.”** Acts 24:14 and 15. Note the charge against Paul: “But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of **one Jesus, which was dead, Whom Paul affirmed to be alive.**” Acts 25:19. Now note Paul’s words to Agrippa: “And now I stand and am judged for **the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers.** Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, **hope to come.** For which **hope’s sake,** king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, **that God should raise the dead?”** Acts 26:6 to 8.

You now can easily answer the question, What is meant in Acts 28:20 by “the hope of Israel.” Here we have Paul’s own explanation of his statement of Acts 28:20. Let us consider another hope of Israel in the statement of Romans 11:26

“AND SO ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED: AS IT IS WRITTEN, THERE SHALL COME OUT OF SION THE DELIVERER, AND SHALL TURN AWAY UN-GODLINESS FROM JACOB.”

What is the meaning of the statement, “all Israel shall be saved?” We read in Jeremiah 31:31 to 37 and in Hebrews 8:7 to 13 that God will make the New Covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah: **“And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me from the least to the greatest.”** Hebrews 8:11.

Certainly we know, in the light of the second chapter of Romans and many other Scriptures, that every individual Israelite is not going to be saved. But we do know from Jeremiah 30:11 and other Scriptures, that Israel is going to be saved out of the great tribulation. We do know from the vision of the resurrected dry bones of Ezekiel. 37 and from Amos 9:11 to 15, and scores of other prophecies, that the House of Israel is going to be reestablished in the land of Canaan. We do know that the twelve apostles are yet to sit on twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Matthew 19:28. We do know that God’s ancient people shall fulfill Zechariah 12:10: “They shall look upon Him Whom they have pierced.” And we do know that a nation shall be suddenly born: “Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.” Isaiah 66:8.

Note Ezekiel 37:21 and 22: “And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land. And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one King shall be King to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.”

I WILL BUILD AGAIN THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID

Then there is scriptural authority for believing and teaching that building again the tabernacle of David and again planting Israel in Canaan, never to be uprooted, is **“the hope of Israel.”** Of course, all Christians, in dealing with the subject of Israel’s future, “see through a glass darkly” as to the kingdom place of Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah and Shem. They were not

Israelites and they were not members of the Body. No one seems to know whether or not Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Joseph, Moses, and Daniel, and others, are going to reside on earth in Canaan in their resurrection bodies. If these Israelites are to live as human beings on the earth, then surely their bodies must be quite different from the bodies of the redeemed Israelites who will be alive during the great tribulation and who will not die. These living Jews will go to the holy land in bodies of flesh and blood, and live in earthly houses in their land, eat and drink, and worship the King of Jerusalem. Of course we know, from Ezekiel 36:26: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." So the "Kingdom" Israelites will experience the new birth.

But Paul, in Acts 28:20, was not in any way referring to Israel's restoration and occupation of Canaan when he mentioned the hope of Israel."

Before Paul uttered these words in Rome, he had written to the Romans, Jews and Gentiles, concerning the one Divine baptism that had joined them to Christ and had made them members of the one Body. Note the strangers of Rome present at Pentecost. Acts 2:10. Paul had written that henceforth they should not know Christ after the flesh; that they were now new creatures. II Corinthians 5:16 and 17. He had written I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18 concerning the rapture of the sleeping and living saints. He had written that believing Jews and Gentiles had been baptized into one Body by one Spirit. I Corinthians 12:13. Hence it is the height of folly to teach that the hope of believers in Thessalonians, Corinthians and Romans was Israel's "Canaan". hope. "The hope of Israel," which Peter presented to Israel's rulers in Acts 3,19 to 21 proved by the statement of Acts 3:24, was not the hope presented in I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18.

Some of the so-called "Ultra-dispensationalists," who are frequently called "Bullingerites," but who really follow the more extreme "dispensationalism" of Mr. Chas. Welch, of London, England, state that there was another hope of Israel during the "Acts" period. They teach that there was an "Israelitish Church" until after the pronouncement of Acts 28:25 to 28, and it might be called "a body," but that it was neither the Church, nor the Body, mentioned in Paul's Prison Epistles. They claim that the members of the "Acts," "Israelitish Church" was not an earthly hope, but a heavenly hope. However it was not the super-celestial hope of "the Church of the Mystery."

Because Paul said, "**we are able ministers of the New Covenant**" and that New Covenant was made with Israel, Paul wrote to the Corinthians concerning their place in "The New Covenant Israelitish Church." They quote Romans 11:24: "For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree; how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?" They attempt to prove by the eleventh of Romans, the saved Gentiles became a part of an Israelitish Church, which was separate, different, and distinct from the Church of Ephesians. They think they can prove this with the statement in Romans 15:27, where it is stated that the saved Gentiles were made partakers of Israel's spiritual things.

They have neglected to compare this statement with the "joint-sharers" of Ephesians 3:6, which repudiates their fallacy.

TWO FATHERS—ONE FATHER

But they ask how are we to reconcile the statement of Romans 4:16 with the statement of Ephesians 4:6? In Ephesians 4:6 we are told that we have "**one Father**," whereas in Romans

4:16 we are told that **Abraham is our father**, and in I Corinthians 8:6, we are told **God is our Father**. Therefore during the “Acts” period members of the Israelitish Church had two fathers. We might refer them to the two statements of the Lord on earth. Note John 8:39 and 41, where the Jews said first “**Abraham is our father.**” Then they said, “**We have one Father, God.**” Then note what Christ said, ‘And call no man your father upon the earth: for One is your Father which is in heaven.’ Matthew 23:9. And yet Christ acknowledged that Abraham was the Jews’ father.

Then note Galatians 4:26: “**But Jerusalem** which is above is free, which is **the mother of us all.**” And Hebrews 12:22: “But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, **the heavenly Jerusalem**, and to an innumerable company of angels.” These brethren link up these statements with the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21:2 to show the sphere of blessing and distinction of the “Acts” “**Israelitish Church.**” They prove that it is “Israelitish’ by the “twelves” in Revelation 21:12 to 14, “twelve gates,” “twelve angels,” “twelve tribes of Israel,” “twelve apostles.”

Of course you and I should ask ourselves this question, “what does this city have to do with Paul’s message and description of the Church of the Mystery in Ephesians and Colossians?” As we should ask ourselves how any one can place “the Church of the Mystery” in the first three chapters of the Revelation?

These brethren teach three spheres of blessings, three hopes: 1, “**terrestrial**,” 2. “**celestial**,” and 3. “**super-celestial**.” Some of them say when Paul spoke of “the hope of Israel,” he was not referring to the first, “**the terrestrial**,” but to the second, “the celestial.” But they affirm that when Paul uttered the words of Acts 28:20, the Lord had not yet revealed to him “**the super-celestial**” sphere of blessing, mentioned in Ephesians 1:3 to 23, where Christ is in the “**far above heavenlies.**” It is specifically to this “**super-celestial**” sphere of blessing that Paul refers in Ephesians 4:1: “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.” They affirm that this hope and calling has nothing to do with the hope and calling of the “Acts” Israelitish Church. This makes the Body of Christ and the Bride of Christ different redeemed groups. These brethren declare that the rapture of the saints, in I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18 refers to the Lord’s “parousia” and is quite different from the blessed hope of Titus 2:13 and Colossians 3:3 and 4.

Those who teach that “the hope of Israel” was their “Canaan” hope, quote Acts 17:7, where Paul taught that there was another King, Jesus. He was proclaiming the Canaan Kingdom hope here. They confirm this by the statement in Acts 14:22 that the people had to enter the kingdom of God through much tribulation, as Israel will go from their great tribulation to Canaan.

THE BODY OF I CORINTHIANS 12:13 NOT THE BODY OF EPHESIANS

The disciples of Dr. Bullinger and Mr. Welch claim that the Body of Ephesians could not be the Body of I Corinthians 12:13, for several reasons. One we have noted, I Corinthians 12:28, that God does not set these gifts in the Body today. Again they claim that human beings made up the head of the Body in I Corinthians 12:14 to 23, whereas only the Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the Body in Ephesians.

But we have observed that the one Divine baptism of Romans 6:3 and 4, that joins believers to Christ, is the one Divine baptism of Ephesians 4:5 and Colossians 2:12. And we learn by comparing the result of the one Divine baptism in Romans 12:4 and 5, as to the one

Body, joined to Christ, and joined to one another, is the same as the “Ephesians” baptism and one Body. The same unity of the same Body is set forth in both Epistles.

These brethren have failed to note the dispensational change taught in Romans 11:15.

MESSAGE NUMBER 62

THE TWELVE AND SAUL WHO BECAME PAUL

The number “twelve” is used quite frequently in the Bible. It is a significant number. There must have been some Divine reason why there were twelve tribes of Israel. The number of these tribes must have had something to do with the fact that the Lord selected twelve apostles. If we believe Matthew 19:28, we believe that twelve apostles, in the coming kingdom age, will sit on twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Note Paul’s testimony in Romans 11:13.

“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.”

We may be sure that. Paul will not occupy one of those twelve thrones.

In Galatians 2:7 to 9 we have some very interesting information. Note it carefully

“But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter: (For He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles. And when James, Peter and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.”

In Galatians 2:9 we learn that James, Peter and John seemed to be the pillars. This James is called, in Galatians 1:19, the Lord’s brother. He is the James who persuaded Paul, about 60 A.D., to become a Jew, as one under the law, to the Jews at Jerusalem. Acts 21:18 to 28. James, the brother of John, was killed about 44 A. D. “And he killed James, the brother of John with the sword.” Aside from this record of the death of James, not one of the Twelve is mentioned by name in Acts after the first chapter, which was before the day of Pentecost, except James, Peter and John who represented the twelve. They were sent to Israel. Galatians 2:9.

In the first chapter of Acts we learn that Matthias was chosen to take the place of Judas. Why did any man have to take the place of Judas? In the Book of Acts we are told of the death of two of the twelve, Judas and James. In the case of Judas, before Peter preached to a Gentile, a successor must be selected. In the case of James, after Peter preached to the household of Cornelius, no successor need be selected. Then this is an evident and significant fact; there were twelve apostles from the day of Pentecost until after the statement of Acts 11:19. God’s program required twelve apostles. Note Acts 11:19: “Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that, arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the Word to none but unto the Jews only.” Then followed the death of James. Acts 12:2. Then a radical change; the launching of a new program with the commission of Acts 13:2:

“As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them.”

After the death of James and this new order to Barnabas and Saul there is no further reference in Acts to any of the acts of any of the twelve apostles except as they had dealings with Paul. In the last sixteen chapters of the Book of Acts Paul is mentioned more than 120 times.

Right after Saul received and obeyed the commission of Acts 13:2, his name was changed to Paul. Acts 13:9. With this change of name a very important and significant event took place, the story of a blindness that brought blessing. We have written of this in another message. But let us observe that Saul was converted about 35 A.D., or sooner. He went right to work for Christ in the synagogue in Damascus. Acts 9:20. Then note his testimony in Galatians 1:17 and 18 and 22:

“Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.” “And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ.” Saul received his commission of Acts 13:2 about ten years after he was converted. We know little of his work during those ten years. Also we know little of Paul’s work during the several years between the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters of Acts. But when the Holy Spirit said, “separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them”, He was calling them to a new work. Up to this time we find the record in Acts of one company of Gentiles who had heard and received the Word of God, the household of Cornelius. But in Acts 11:19 we read that the disciples preached the Word to none but to Jews only. It was not lawful for the Lord’s Jewish messengers to go to Gentiles. Acts 10:28. When Peter, about seven years after Pentecost preached to Cornelius, a Gentile who loved the Jews, a God-fearing man whose prayers had ascended to heaven as a memorial, the other eleven apostles criticized Peter. Acts 11:1 to 5.

In referring to his message to the household of Cornelius, Peter declared some years later, “Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles **by my mouth** should hear the Word of the gospel, and believe.” Acts 15:7. We emphasize **“by MY mouth”**, because so far as we have any record in the Book of Acts, Peter’s mouth is the only mouth of the Twelve that God used to preach to Gentiles. Our appeal is to the Book of Acts and not to man’s church history. Remember the Lord’s words to them in Matthew 10:23, “ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.” Then read Acts 8:1: “And Saul was consenting unto His death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, **except the apostles.**” Here we note that the Twelve remained in Jerusalem. So far as there is any record in the Book of Acts the Twelve did not preach outside of the cities of Israel. Remember again: “ And when James, Peter and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.” Galatians 2:9.

PAUL IN ASIA AND EUROPE

Now note Colossians 1:5 and 6 and Colossians 1:23, “the gospel which is come in all the world,” “the gospel which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I, Paul, am made a minister.” We may be puzzled at such a record concerning the twelve apostles in the light of the so-called “great commission” of Matthew 28:19 and 20, and Mark 16:14 to 18. Were not the Twelve to disciple all nations? The answer is Galatians 2:9, “they went to Jews.”

Were they not to preach the gospel to every creature? Paul assumed the responsibility for the regions beyond the cities of Israel and for Gentile evangelization. The Twelve remained in Jerusalem.

Note Christ's words to Paul: "And it came to pass when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance." "And He said unto me, **Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.**" Acts 22:17 and 21.

When the resurrected Christ gave the great commission there were only eleven apostles. Judas was dead. Note Matthew 28:16 and Mark 16:7. But first note Acts 2:14: "**But Peter standing up WITH THE ELEVEN.**" Peter and the Eleven stood up. Twelve apostles stood up. Note their audience: "devout Jews from every nation under heaven." Acts 2:5. If these Jews, representing every nation under heaven and their rulers, had repented and received the message of the Twelve, Jesus Christ would have returned to be Israel's Messiah and King and those penitent and converted Jews would have preached the gospel of the kingdom to all nations. Acts 3:19 to 21, Zechariah 8. Some day a company of Jewish disciples will do this very thing.

But again, why was it necessary to have "Twelve" standing on the day of Pentecost? Note Acts 2:36: "Therefore let **all the house of Israel** know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." "**All the house of Israel.**" "**Twelve tribes.**" "**Twelve apostles.**" Note again Matthew 19:28: "**twelve thrones**", "**twelve tribes**", "**twelve apostles.**" Then note the twelve times twelve in Revelation 7:5 to 8. Then note Revelation 21:12 to 14: "And had a wall great and high, and had **twelve gates**, and at the gates **twelve angels**, and names written thereon, which are the names of the **twelve tribes** of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had **twelve foundations**, and in them the names of the **twelve apostles** of the Lamb."

BACK TO PENTECOST

We hear much in these days of the Pentecostal Church with the slogan "back to Pentecost." But in the Pentecostal assemblies we do not find twelve men standing up preaching to the twelve tribes of Israel, but quite frequently one woman speaking to Gentiles and calling for the repetition of the supernatural phenomena that took place fifty days after Christ arose from the dead. This Divine visitation, or supernatural demonstration was only a little sample of what is to take place in Israel's "last days". The blessings promised to Israel in the prophecy of Joel shall surely take place in Israel's last days. Acts 2:16 and 17 and Joel 2:3.

But let us not get "**the last days**" of Israel confused with "**the first days**" of the Body of Christ. Let us not follow the serious blunder of others who begin "the dispensation of the grace of God" for Gentiles on a Jewish feast-day, and preach that the Pentecostal feast of Leviticus 23 spoke of the birthday of the Body of Christ. Many of these same messengers in their very next message emphasize the fact of the Body of Christ and the truth concerning that Body, was God's secret in Old Testament times, the mystery concerning which Israel and Israel's prophets and apostles were silent and ignorant. Any and all truth concerning the hope and calling and spiritual program of the Church of the mystery, called in Ephesians 3:6, "the Joint-Body", was God's unrevealed secret until some years after the Lord Jesus Christ went back to heaven. Then, as Paul said, "having made known the mystery of His will." Ephesians 1:9. Most Christians apparently have no desire to get beyond the "childhood" truth of Corinthians.

It is sad, but true, that the great majority of Christians, even the outstanding Bible teachers, are still silent and ignorant concerning this mystery. The Lord Jesus Christ disclosed His Father's secret in the days of Paul. That glorious and blessed truth at first was even hard for Peter to understand. II Peter 3:15 and 16. But every Christian should pray for the spirit of wisdom and revelation to understand the revealed mystery of God's will. Ephesians 1:17 to 19. And should then join with all other Christians in making all to see what is "the dispensation of the secret" which was hid in God until revealed to us through the apostle Paul. Ephesians 3:9.

MESSAGE NUMBER 63

ARE THE DEAD CONSCIOUS?—BETWEEN DEATH AND RESURRECTION

The Soul of Man

All Bible Christians believe that the Bible is the living Word of the living God; that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." II Timothy 3:16.

All Christians are agreed as to the virgin birth and the eternal Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are agreed that the unsaved man is "in Adam"; in sin; dead in trespasses and sins; impotent, helpless, and irrevocably lost apart from the grace of God and faith in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ. This redemptive work of Christ means His once-for-all sacrifice on the cross of Calvary. His death, burial and resurrection, His appearing in the presence of God for believers, and His coming again to redeem the bodies of those who are saved by grace through faith.

It is to be deplored that even spiritual Christians are disagreed as to some other Bible doctrines such as the eternal security of those who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, the millennium. Holy Spirit and water baptism, concerning the sign-gift's of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11, spiritual healing for the body, and other truths.

Christians greatly err when they magnify some personal religious experiences and interpret the Bible to agree with those experiences, or when they substitute human reasoning influenced by personal desire or preference for God's principle of diligent and spiritual Bible study, comparing spiritual with spiritual, and "rightly dividing the Word of truth." II Timothy 2:15. Moreover, any Christian is very foolish to follow the Scriptural interpretation of some human leader without submitting his teachings to the critical but intelligent test employed by the Bereans to whom Paul preached. "they searched the Scriptures daily to see whether those things were so." Acts 17:11. And let us ever remember I John 2:26 and 27: "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you. and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things. and is truth, and is no lie. and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him."

Of course all Bible Christians believe the truth stated in Acts 24:15, "there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." They know that this resurrection has reference to the bodies of the just and unjust. Any intelligent student of I Corinthians 15 knows that the subject of that great chapter is the resurrection of the body: and when the Holy Spirit.

declares that those who are Christ's will be made alive at His coming, the reference is to the bodily resurrection of believers. I Corinthians 15:22 and 27. This is clearly taught in the forty-fourth verse: "It is sown a natural body: it is raised a spiritual body."

In John 5:24 we learn that believing sinners pass out of death into life before they reach the grave. This same truth is expressed in Ephesians 2:1 and 5. "You hath He made alive; who were dead in trespasses and sins." Christ said, "He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life." John 6:47. **"The end of your faith, the salvation of your souls."** I Peter 1:9.

Note Hebrews 10:39—**"We are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to THE SAVING OF THE SOUL."**

Note again James 5:20:—**"Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall SAVE A SOUL FROM DEATH,** and shall hide a multitude of sins." Here we learn of saving faith, the saving of the soul. We learn of a soul saved from death.

Now let us note I Thessalonians 5:23:

"I PRAY GOD YOUR WHOLE SPIRIT AND SOUL AND BODY BE PRESERVED BLAMELESS UNTO THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."

By this verse and many other Scriptures we know that the soul of man differs from the spirit.

"THE DIVIDING ASUNDER OF SOUL AND SPIRIT." Hebrews 4:12.

It is interesting to note several statements concerning the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus on the cross. **"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief; when thou shalt MAKE HIS SOUL AN OFFERING FOR SIN."** **"He shall SEE OF THE TRAVAIL OF HIS SOUL, and shall be satisfied."** **"Because He hath POURED OUT HIS SOUL unto death."** Isaiah 53:10 to 12.

Then note Acts 2:27 and 31:

"BECAUSE THOU WILT NOT LEAVE MY SOUL IN HELL, NEITHER WILT THOU SUFFER THINE HOLY ONE TO SEE CORRUPTION." **"HE SEEING THIS BEFORE SPAKE OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, THAT HIS SOUL WAS NOT LEFT IN HELL, NEITHER HIS FLESH DID SEE CORRUPTION."**

Christ bare our sins in His own body on the tree. I Peter 2:24. "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Hebrews 10:10. Christ poured out His soul unto death. His soul was made an offering for sin. Knowing that He was going to the cross Christ said, **"MY SOUL IS EXCEEDING SORROWFUL UNTO DEATH."** Mark 14:34.

Then note the words of Christ in the hour of death, **"FATHER, INTO THY HANDS I COMMEND MY SPIRIT."**

We have learned that there is a difference between the soul and spirit; that man is body, soul and spirit. At death where did Christ's body go? It went to the sepulchre. That sepulchre was not the sheol or hades to which Christ's soul went. No intelligent person would even suggest that the Bible teaches that. Christ's body and soul were one and went to the same place at death. Christ's spirit was committed into the hands of His Father.

Note the words of martyred Stephen as he died, **"And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."** Acts 7:59 and 60.

The Lord received the spirit of Stephen. He fell asleep. Here we have the truth of Ecclesiastes 12:7.

“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God Who gave it.”

However, there is not the slightest suggestion that Stephen’s soul fell asleep.

ASLEEP IN JESUS

Note I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18:

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

Here we read of them which sleep in Jesus. God will bring them with Him when the Lord Jesus descends. They are called “the dead in Christ.” They shall rise first. Are believers dead in Christ? They are alive in Christ. They have been made alive. Ephesians 2:1 and 5. They have received eternal life, the salvation of their souls. They have passed out of death into life. They have already been raised to walk in newness of life. Romans 6:4 and 5. They are risen with Christ. Christ is their life. Colossians 3:1 and 3. Christ is in them. The Holy Spirit is in them. They are under the control of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:2. They have been recreated. They are not dead. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are not dead, except in the sense that David is dead according to Acts 13:36—“he fell asleep and saw corruption.” David’s body saw corruption, but not David’s soul. Therefore it was David’s body that fell asleep, not his soul. “David is not ascended into the heavens.” Those who are Christ’s at His coming will be made alive. This refers to the body. I Corinthians 15:21 to 24.

PUTTING OFF THE TABERNACLE

Note the words of Peter in II Peter 1:14:

“Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.”

Something within Peter was going to put off his body, in fulfillment of John 21 18 and 19. Peter had received the salvation of his soul, God’s free gift. eternal life. His body saw corruption. Like Stephen, Peter fell asleep. But it, was his tabernacle that he put off; that fell asleep. It is only concerning the corruptible body in the grave, and not the soul and spirit of man, that Ecclesiastes 9:5 and 10 are true, “the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.” “For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave (sheol), whither thou goest.” This tenth verse is the principle verse used by some Christians, and more religious people, to support: their teaching that the soul of man is unconscious, or asleep, between the moment of death and resurrection. Some Christians, who are uncompromisingly opposed to those who teach soul-sleeping, admit that generally the “sheol” of the Old Testament Scriptures referred to the temporary abode of the soul; but they say that in

Ecclesiastes the Holy Spirit recorded the words of the natural man even when his human theories were contrary to Divine truth.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

Note the story of the rich man and Lazarus, in Luke 16:19 to 31—**“There was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores.” “And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom; the rich man also died, and was buried.” “And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”** Luke 16:20, 22 and 23.

The soul-sleepers reject the generally accepted interpretation of Luke 16:19 to 31, which shows the consciousness of both the saved and unsaved, by declaring the story to be a parable with an entirely different meaning, but they are by no means agreed in their fantastic interpretation.

When asked concerning Christ’s statement to the dying thief, **“Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise.”** (Luke 23:43), the soul-sleepers say the comma is in the wrong place. It should read. “I say unto you today, thou shalt (some day) be with Me in paradise.” But when they are referred to II Corinthians 5:8 and Philippians 1:23, they do some very queer juggling and twisting of the Word of God. Note these two verses:

“WE ARE CONFIDENT, I SAY, AND WILLING RATHER TO BE ABSENT FROM THE BODY, AND TO BE PRESENT WITH THE LORD.” “FOR I AM IN A STRAIT BETWIXT TWO, HAVING A DESIRE TO DEPART, AND TO BE WITH CHRIST; WHICH IS FAR BETTER.”

The words “present with the Lord” literally mean “at home with the Lord.” This is very plain language. “Absent from the body”, “at home with the Lord.” In other words, when the saint puts off his tabernacle, he departs to be with the Lord, which is far better. This does not mean that his soul goes into a coffin beneath the sod, where worms destroy his body. He departs to be with the Lord. He sets out to sea to be with Christ. “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

THE SOUL NOT UNCONSCIOUS

In Acts 15:24 we learn that false teaching subverted souls. The bodies of these deceived people were not subverted. Something within was subverted. When a sinner believes the gospel, he receives the end of his faith, the salvation of his soul, Hear God’s Word in Isaiah 55:3, **“hear, and your soul shall live.”** The soul of the believer lives. But note the condition of his body in Romans 8:23 and II Corinthians 4:16.

But this question is asked, “Is not man alive when he is asleep?” “Is not the person asleep in bed alive but unconscious?” “Cannot, the soul be both alive and unconsciously asleep between physical death and resurrection?”

We certainly cannot answer this question Scripturally until we learn from the Scriptures that, the soul of man is more than the breath which keeps him alive physically. When the believer receives the end of his faith, the salvation of his soul, his body may be at the point of physical death, and something more than breath is saved.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOUL AND SPIRIT

It is a most difficult task, if not an impossible one, for the human experts in philosophy and psychology to draw a very fine line of distinction between the soul and the spirit. Moreover theologians have tried and failed, for there are many statements in the Bible where the two words seem to be used synonymously and interchangeably. The Word of God, however, is sharp enough to divide asunder the soul and spirit, thus affirming that there is a difference. Hebrews 4:12. All who have given much time to this study know that it is a most intricate study.

The Hebrew word translated “soul” is “**nephesh**”. The verb is “**naphash**” and means “to breathe”. Therefore, it is generally taught that any breathing creature has a soul, or is a soul. The Greek word is “**psuehe**”. The verb is “**psucho**” and means “to breathe”, The Hebrew and the Greek have the same identical meaning.

It is interesting to note that the Greek, “**psuchikos**”, is translated “**natural**”. It is twice translated, “**sensual**”. Jude 19 and James 3:15.

The word “**psuehe**” is translated “**soul**”, in the New Testament Scriptures, more than 50 times. In Ephesians 6:6, “**psuehe**” is translated “**heart**” In the Old Testament the word “**nephesh**” is translated “**soul**” more than 400 times. It is translated “**life**” more than 80 times,

Note very carefully this statement: the word “**psuehe**”, in the New Testament Scriptures, is translated “**life**” more than 30 times.

In Revelation 8:9 we read, “the creatures which were in the sea, and had life (psuehe), died.” In I John 3:16, “He (Christ) laid down His **life** (psuehe) for us.” In Matthew 20:28, Christ said, “He came to give His “life” (psuehe) a ransom for many.” When Christ died He “gave up the “**ghost**” (pneuma),” John 19:30. Note Christ’s words, in Mark 3:4,” Is it lawful on the sabbath day to save “**life**” (psuehe), or to kill?”

In Acts 20:24 Paul said, “I count not my “**life**” (psuehe) dear unto myself.” In Philippians 2:30 it is stated that Epaphroditus did not regard his “**life**” (psuehe). Of course this had no reference to his concern about the salvation of his soul, but to physical death. But some say “soul death” and “physical death” are identical; for soul is breath, and the cessation of breathing means physical death.

The Hebrew word translated “spirit” is “**ruwach**”. The Greek word is “**pneuma**” Again these two words are identical in meaning and come from verbs meaning “to breathe”.

We referred to I Corinthians 15:44, “the natural body” and the “spiritual body”. The Greek “natural” is “**psuchikos**”. The Greek “spiritual” is “**pneumatikos**”. Here we have the dividing asunder of “soul” and “spirit”. Hebrews 4:12. Note also I Corinthians 2:14 and 15, concerning “the natural man” and “the spiritual man.”

The earthly house, the corruptible body of humiliation, is called “**a natural body**”. The incorruptible house from heaven, the glorified body is called “**the spiritual body**”,

ADAM BECAME A LIVING SOUL

Let us carefully read Genesis 2:7:

“AND THE LORD GOD FORMED MAN OF THE DUST OF THE GROUND, AND BREATHED (NAPHASH) INTO HIS NOSTRILS THE BREATH (NESHAMAH) OF LIFE (KHAHEE); AND MAN BECAME A LIVING (KHAHEE) SOUL NEPHESEH.”

It was God’s breath into man that made man a soul. In speaking of every creature, animals, birds, and men, Genesis 7:22 reads: “All in whose nostrils was the breath (neshamah) of life, died.” In Job 41:21 we read, “His breath (nephesh) kindleth coals.” So we learn in the Bible that man became a living soul: and that man has a soul.

ELIJAH AND THE DEAD CHILD

Now let us read the very interesting story of Elijah's ministry in the home of the widow of Zarephath, recorded in I Kings 17:17.

"And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath (neshamah) in him." I Kings 17:17. "And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul (nepesh) COME INTO HIM AGAIN. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and THE SOUL (NEPESH) OF THE CHILD CAME INTO HIM AGAIN, and he revived." I Kings 17:21 and 22.

"Let this child's soul come into him again." For a short time the child was minus his soul. But his soul came back. It is folly to say that this simply meant that the breath returned to the child, that is, to try to make "breath" synonymous with "soul" with no deeper meaning.

It is not man's breath that is healed or saved from death when man believes with his heart, according to Romans 10:9 and 10.

In the Hebrew and the Greek a different word is used for "heart". Heart and soul are not synonymous in the Bible. The Hebrew for "soul" is incorrectly translated "mind" eleven times. The Hebrew for "spirit" is translated "mind" eight times. But the soul, the spirit, the mind, and the heart of men are all different; and in man's physical and spiritual life they are all indefinable and indescribable.

MAN IS A LIVING SOUL - MAN HAS A SOUL

In the first Book of the Bible we read that Adam became a living soul. In the last Book of the Bible we read, "and every living soul died in the sea." Revelation 16:3. The creatures of God, human and otherwise, are called "**souls**". In the seventh chapter of Leviticus we read several times, "**the soul that eateth**", and "**the soul that toucheth**." The soul, as generally understood, could not eat or touch that which we call physical or material. The human being is called "a soul". Note Acts 2:41: "**And the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.**"

From these statements some Christians say that man is a soul, but that he has a spirit.

The rich man, of Luke 12:19 said, "**I will say to my soul.**" He was talking to himself.

But what about such statements as Deuteronomy 11:18, Genesis 34:3, Psalm 23:3, Isaiah 55:3, I Peter 1:9, Job 14:22, Habakkuk 2:10, Psalm 41:4?

"Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul." "And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob." "He restoreth my soul." "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live." "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." "But his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn." "And hast sinned against thy soul." "Lord, be merciful unto me; heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee."

"His soul within him shall mourn." Here we learn that man has, a soul as he has a body and a spirit, and that man's soul can be healed though he may be diseased or afflicted in his body. Note the words of Christ, in Matthew 10:28: "**And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.**"

Man's body can be killed by men, but not his soul. In the Bible we learn that the soul loves and hates and rejoices and mourns.

THE NATURAL MAN—THE SPIRITUAL MAN

Let us carefully read I Corinthians 2:14 and 15 and I Corinthians 15:44.

“But THE NATURAL MAN receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But HE THAT IS SPIRITUAL judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.”

“It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.”

Here we read of the “**natural man**” and the “**spiritual man**”; of the “**natural body**” and the “**spiritual body**”.

In these statements we have a definite example of that difference of soul and spirit, mentioned in Hebrews 4:12.

The Greek word “natural” is “**psuchikos**”, from “**psuche**” soul. The Greek word “spiritual” is “**pneumatikos**” from “**pneuma**” spirit.

What a contrast; what a difference between the “**psuchikos**” man and the “**pneumatikos**” man! And surely there is a difference between the corruptible body, the “natural body”, and the spiritual body”.

Note again James 3:15—“This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, **sensual**, devilish.” “**Sensual**” (**psuchikos**). “Earthly”, “**sensual**” and “devilish” The word “**sensual**” is the same Greek word translated “natural”. Some have translated this word “**soulish**”.

We have seen that the definition, function, and destiny of the soul is no superficial study.

We read in Ezekiel 18:4, “**THE SOUL THAT SINNETH IT SHALL DIE.**” We read in Hebrews 10:39 of those who believe “**unto the saving of the soul**”. The soul of the sinful person is saved when that person believes; but his body will not be saved until the day of redemption.

There are those who claim to be Bible Christians and teach that the soul and body go to the same place and are unconsciously dead between physical death and the resurrection of the body.

MESSAGE NUMBER 64

BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

WHO COMMITTED THE UNPARDONABLE SIN?

Many sermons have been preached on “the unpardonable sin,” using as the text Matthew 12:31 and 32.

Before quoting these verses, let us note three other messages to Jews or Hebrews.

1. Note Stephen's words to the Jews in Jerusalem, some months after the death of Jesus Christ.

“YE STIFFNECKED AND UNCIRCUMCISED IN HEART AND EARS, YE DO ALWAYS RESIST THE HOLY SPIRIT: AS YOUR FATHERS DID, SO DO YE. WHICH OF THE PROPHETS HAVE NOT YOUR FATHERS PERSECUTED? AND THEY HAVE SLAIN THEM WHICH SHEWED BEFORE OF THE COMING OF THE JUST ONE; OF WHOM YE HAVE BEEN NOW THE BETRAYERS AND MURDERERS.” “THEN THEY CRIED OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE, AND STOPPED THEIR EARS, AND RAN UPON HIM WITH ONE ACCORD.” Acts 7:51, 52 and 57.

2. Note Paul’s words to the Jews, in Acts 18:5 and 6:

“PAUL WAS PRESSED IN THE SPIRIT, AND TESTIFIED TO THE JEWS THAT JESUS WAS CHRIST. AND WHEN THEY OPPOSED THEMSELVES, AND BLASPHEMED, HE SHOOK HIS RAIMENT, AND SAID UNTO THEM, YOUR BLOOD BE UPON YOUR OWN HEADS; I AM CLEAN: FROM HENCEFORTH I WILL GO UNTO THE GENTILES.”

3. Note Hebrews 10:26-29 to 31:

“FOR IF WE SIN WILFULLY AFTER THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH, THERE REMAINETH NO MORE SACRIFICE FOR SINS.” “OF HOW MUCH SORER PUNISHMENT, SUPPOSE YE, SHALL HE BE THOUGHT WORTHY, WHO HATH TRODDEN UNDER FOOT THE SON OF GOD, AND HATH COUNTED THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT, WHEREWITH HE WAS SANCTIFIED, AN UNHOLY THING, AND HATH DONE DESPITE UNTO THE SPIRIT OF GRACE? FOR WE KNOW HIM THAT HATH SAID, VENGEANCE BELONGETH UNTO ME, I WILL RECOMPENSE, SAITH THE LORD. AND AGAIN, THE LORD SHALL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE. IT IS A FEARFUL THING TO FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THE LIVING GOD.”

If any man so despises the grace of God that he refuses to trust Jesus Christ and accept His once-for-all sacrifice for sins, the vengeance of God will be his portion. But note the salvation condition, “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” Acts 16:31.

“THERE REMAINETH NO MORE SACRIFICE FOR SINS.” Do not misinterpret Hebrews 10:26 and teach, as some Christians have believed and taught, that the Holy Spirit said, “if a Christian sins wilfully after he has been saved, **“there remaineth no more FORGIVENESS of sins.”** No such statement is made in the Bible. On the contrary, God’s message to Christians is: “If we confess our sins. He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.” I John 1:9 and 10. “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” I John 2:1.

The Epistle to the Hebrews was written to Hebrew Christians and to unsaved religious Hebrews. Some of them wanted to supplement the redemptive work of Christ with a religious program, adding something of Judaism to the finished work of Christ. The priests and religious Jewish leaders were still carrying on in the temple, at Jerusalem, teaching the religious Jews to continue their faith in the blood of animals. offered on their altar, according to the law of Moses. It was to these Jews that the writer wrote, **“there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.”**

As we study the message of Stephen to the Jews, in Acts 7:46 to 56, and Paul’s message to the Jews, in Acts 18:5 and 6, we see that the Jews were very definitely committing the unpardonable sin mentioned in Matthew 12:31 and 32. To this we shall presently refer. But first let us note, in Romans 11:8, Romans 11:11, Romans 11:30 and Romans 11:15, that when and

because Israel committed the unpardonable sin. God sent Paul to the Gentiles with the ministry of reconciliation and the gospel of grace.

THE GENTILES AND THE GRACE OF GOD

Just a few words about the Gentiles and the gospel of the grace of God. “And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:6 to 10. Here we learn that Gentiles who had been aliens from Israel were saved. How? By grace. What does this mean? Read verse 4. “But God, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith he loved us.” God’s work—God’s workmanship. What was man’s part? Not of yourselves. Not of works. What was man’s condition? Dead in trespasses and sins. In the world without God and without hope. Ephesians 2:12. Alienated from the life of God. Ephesians 4:18. What could such a dead man do for himself? Nothing. What did such a dead man have to do to be saved? Some say, “repent.” Yes, “repent” means “change your mind.” But God had to work on them. God, Who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith He loved us when we were dead hath made us alive.

Think of all the sins charged to those ungodly wicked Gentiles. They learned the truth of Romans 5:20, “**where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.**” How many of their sins were forgiven? Read the answer in Colossians 2:13 and Acts 13:39:

“AND YOU, BEING DEAD IN YOUR SINS, AND THE UNCIRCUMCISION OF YOUR FLESH, HATH HE QUICKENED TOGETHER WITH HIM, HAVING FORGIVEN YOU ALL TRESPASSES.”

“And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

Yes, every sin, thought, word, and deed, including the sin of unbelief was forgiven when those ungodly Gentiles believed the gospel of grace and received Christ. Note what happened—**“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”** Ephesians 2:13. Their sins were forever put away; all of their sins. Moreover, they stood in the presence of God as though they had never committed one sin.

All of their sins were pardoned. Which one of their sins was unpardonable? Some one says, the sin of unbelief. They were all guilty of that sin, but when all of their sins were pardoned that sin was included. When they believed there was no sin of unbelief, All of their sins were unpardoned until they were saved by grace. Then all of their sins were pardoned. If they had resisted the Holy Spirit, blasphemed against Him, and not believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, all of their sins would have remained unpardoned; but none of them would have been unpardonable.

CAN A CHRISTIAN COMMIT THE UNPARDONABLE SIN?

Let us note what happened to the saints who sinned in Corinth. “For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. **“For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord,**

THAT WE SHOULD NOT BE CONDEMNED WITH THE WORLD.” I Corinthians 11:29 to 32.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” These sinning saints could not be condemned with the world. Note again the sin of the Corinthian saints, in I Corinthians 6:6 to 8: **“But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.”** In spite of their sins, the Holy Spirit wrote to them—**“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”** I Corinthians 6:19.

But how about Hebrews 6:4 to 6?—**“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, And have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.”**

How about Hebrews 6:17 and 18. God cannot lie. He promised us eternal life before the world began. Titus 1:2. And note II Timothy 1:9—**“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”** God wants Christians to know that they have eternal life. **“These things have I written unto you than believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”** I John 5:13.

If a man receives Jesus Christ and accepts His sacrifice on the cross, he receives the Holy Spirit. If he could fall away, he could not be renewed.

Now read carefully, Galatians 6:1, Luke 17:3 and 4 and I John 2:1. Can a so-called backslider, a Christian who has sinned, be renewed? Most assuredly. Then why do Christians try to use the hypothetical case in Hebrews 6:4 to 6 to do their utmost to make the Bible contradict itself? Every Christian believes that a penitent backslider who confesses his sins will be renewed. Therefore Hebrews 6:1 to 6 does not refer to such an one.

Now read again Matthew 12:31 and 32. And read with these verses Luke 23:34—Acts 3:15 to 15 and Acts 3:25 and 26.

ISRAEL’S UNPARDONABLE SIN

“Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.”

“Then said Jesus, Father forgive them; for they know not what to do. And they parted His raiment and cast lots.”

“And His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know; yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also

your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled.”

“Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”

Here then is the story of the pardonable sin of Israel, the sin against the Son of man. Gentiles did not sin against the Son of man. Note Acts 3:13 and Matthew 15:24.

“The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus; Whom ye delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go.”

“But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

Pilate sinned; but Christ said to him: **“Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin.”**

The Jews committed an awful sin when they had Jesus Christ put to death. Israel sinned against the Son of man. Note I Thessalonians 2:14 to 16—**“The Jews who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway; for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.”**

The Lord Jesus pronounced an awful judgment upon Israel before He went to His death.

“Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” Matthew 23:31 to 33. “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” Matthew 23:38.

“And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.” Luke 21:20.

“But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth; and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.” Matthew 22:7.

This seemed to be the end of the nation Israel. But something happened, for note the difference in the message of Acts 3:17—**“And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.”** Then the first three words of Acts 3:19, **“REPENT YE THEREFORE.”** Your rulers did it through ignorance. And note Acts 3:18, the death of Christ had to be. In other words, the Son of man had to be sinned against.

“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” Acts 2:22 and 23.

“The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, Whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together. For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.” Acts 4:26 to 28.

So Israel, in fulfillment of Scripture, rejected Christ and slew Him with wicked hands. Note Matthew 26:24

“The Son of man goeth as it is written of Him; but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.”

Christ’s prayer availed. “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” As a result, note Peter’s message to the rulers who ignorantly sinned against the Son of man.

“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and SO IS ALSO THE HOLY SPIRIT, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him.” Acts 5:29 to 32.

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” Acts 2:36. Now compare Matthew 23:33 and 38, with Acts 3:25 and 26.

“Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”

“Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”

Before the Jews killed Christ, they were “serpents.” After their awful deed they were tenderly addressed as children. That sin was pardonable.

The Holy Spirit was God’s witness to Israel that He had made Jesus both Lord and Christ; that He had exalted Jesus to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.

But now, if Israel sinned against the Holy Spirit, what? The unpardonable sin. They did resist and blaspheme against the Holy Spirit and sinned. As the result of the unpardonable sin Israel was set aside. There was a very great difference between “the generation of vipers and serpents” of Matthew 23:33 and “the children of the covenant and the prophets” in Acts 3:25.

Now let us compare John 12:37 to 40 with Acts 28:25 to 28.

“But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him; That the saying of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report: and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Isaiah said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.”

“AND WHEN THEY AGREED NOT AMONG THEMSELVES, THEY DEPARTED, AFTER THAT PAUL HAD SPOKEN ONE WORD, WELL SPAKE THE HOLY SPIRIT BY ESAIAS THE PROPHET UNTO OUR FATHERS, SAYING, GO UNTO THIS PEOPLE, AND SAY, HEARING YE SHALL HEAR, AND SHALL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND SEEING YE SHALL SEE, AND NOT PERCEIVE: FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE IS WAXED GROSS, AND THEIR EARS ARE DULL OF HEARING, AND THEIR EYES HAVE THEY CLOSED; LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART, AND SHOULD BE CONVERTED, AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM. BE IT KNOWN THEREFORE UNTO YOU, THAT THE SALVATION OF GOD IS SENT UNTO THE GENTILES, AND THAT THEY WILL HEAR IT.”

The judgment of God was postponed until Israel had another chance, the opportunity to commit the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit. Jerusalem was not destroyed until the year 69 or 70 A.D. The Lord's prayer on the cross caused God to postpone the fulfillment of Matthew 22:7. **Note this verse, "But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth; and he sent forth his, armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city."** Israel's house was not left desolate at the time Christ spoke that judgment. Note Acts 11:19 "Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the Word to none but unto the Jews only."

For some years after the death of Christ the disciples and apostles preached to none but Jews only. Christ came unto His own and His own received Him not. John 1:11. Some of His own received Him while He was on earth. More of His own received Him during the first seven years after the Pentecost of Acts 2.

But since the judgment of Romans 11:6 to 11 and Acts 28:25 to 28, Israel has been an outcast nation. But some day there will be the fulfillment of Hebrews 8:10 to 12

"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, 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."

Thus we see that no unsaved Gentile in this day of grace ever commits the unpardonable sin. Israel committed the pardonable and the unpardonable sin, one before Christ went to Calvary and the other after the Holy Spirit came as a witness to Israel. Acts 5:32.

MESSAGE NUMBER 65

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

If you have tried to give an intelligent Scriptural answer to the question, "**what is the Kingdom of God?**", you have found yourself dealing with a very difficult task. After diligently searching the Scriptures for the Scriptural answer, perhaps you are agreed with me that we might liken "the Kingdom of God" to the United States government. An employee of the United States government might be in the Post-office, the Cabinet, the House, the Senate, the Navy, the Army, the Secret Service, the Diplomatic Service, the Legal Department, or some other department. All of these employees of uncle Sam are under the one Federal government, but in different departments.

In the Scriptures there are different phases and departments of "the Kingdom of God." In "the Kingdom of God," God is King of the Kingdom. Note several statements quoted from the Law and the Prophets

"And when ye say that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us: when the Lord your God was your King." I Samuel 12:12. "For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding." Psalms 47:7. "For the Lord is our defense: and the Holy One of Israel is our King." Psalms 89:18. "For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is

our King: He will save us.” Isaiah 33:22. “I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel your King” Isaiah 43:15. “The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, He hath cast out thine enemy: the King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not see evil any more.” Zephaniah 3:15. “But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts; and my name is dreadful among the heathen.” Malachi 1:14. “And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord and His name one.” “And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.” Zechariah 14:9 and 16 and 17. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.” Jeremiah 23:5. “This is the generation of them that seek Him, that seek thy face, O Jacob, Selah. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.” Psalms 24:6 and 7.

When Jesus Christ stood before Nathanael, that Israelite in whom there was no guile said. **“Master, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel.**” Surely Jesus Christ was Israel’s Messiah and He is the King promised in Jeremiah 23:5 and in Zechariah 14:9, the King of glory promised in the Twenty-fourth Psalm. Therefore, we know that Jehovah was Israel’s King long before Jesus Christ was born in the city of David to occupy the throne of David and to reign over the house of Israel for ever. Luke 1:33. Jesus Christ is coming back to be a reigning King on earth.

In Zechariah 9:9 we learn that Israel’s King was to come riding on the colt of an ass. In Luke 19:30 to 35 we read that Jesus of Nazareth did that very thing. Pilate asked Israel’s rulers, “Shall I crucify your King? They answered. “We have no king but Caesar.”

Because Israel rejected Christ and His offered kingdom, He said to Israel: “Therefore say I unto you, ‘The Kingdom of God’ shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” Matthew 21:43.

In Matthew 8:12 we learn that the Jews, whether they received or rejected Christ as Messiah, were called **“the children of the kingdom.”**

It is interesting to note that the expression “the Kingdom of God”, is found 35 times in the Gospel of Luke, whereas, “the Kingdom of Heaven” is found more than 30 times in Matthew. The Kingdom of Heaven and **“the Kingdom of God”** frequently are used synonymously and interchangeably, but, not always.

THE KINGDOM AT HAND

Compare Mark 1:15, Matthew 4:17, Matthew 10:7 and 8, Luke 10:9 and 11, and Luke 11:20.

“AND SAYING, THE TIME IS FULFILLED, AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND: REPENT YE, AND BELIEVE THE GOSPEL.” Mark 1:15. Matthew 4:17: “FROM THAT TIME JESUS BEGAN TO PREACH, AND TO SAY, REPENT, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND.” Matthew 10:7 and 8: “AND AS YE GO, PREACH, SAYING, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND.” HEAL THE SICK,

CLEANSE THE LEPERS, RAISE THE DEAD, CAST OUT DEVILS; FREELY YE HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE.” Luke 10:9 and 11: “AND HEAL THE SICK THAT ARE THEREIN, AND SAY UNTO THEM, THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS COME NIGH UNTO YOU.” “EVEN THE VERY DUST OF YOUR CITY, WHICH CLEAVETH ON US, WE DO WIPE OFF AGAINST YOU: NOTWITHSTANDING BE YE SURE OF THIS, THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS COME NIGH UNTO YOU.” Luke 11:20: “BUT IF I WITH THE FINGER OF GOD CAST OUT DEVILS, NO DOUBT THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS COME UPON YOU.”

In these Scriptures we learn that. “the Kingdom of God”, then at hand, was the same as “the Kingdom of Heaven” that was at hand. The prophesied Kingdom was at hand because the prophesied King was in the midst of Israel. **“The time was fulfilled.”** The King and the Kingdom prophesied in the Davidic Covenant of II Samuel 7 were at hand. The Church, which is the Body of Christ, in which there is neither Israelite nor Gentile, was not at hand. Speaking scripturally correct, the Lord Jesus is called the Head of His Body rather than the King of that particular Church; although the members of that Body have been translated into the Kingdom of Christ. (Colossians 1:13) and are laborers in the Kingdom of God (Colossians 4:11). They are being preserved unto the heavenly Kingdom. II Timothy 1:9.

But now let us compare several statements in the Gospel of Luke concerning **“the Kingdom of God.”**

Luke 16:16: “The law and the prophets were until John: since that time “the Kingdom of God” is preached, and every man presseth into it.” Luke 10:9: “And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, “The Kingdom of God” is come nigh unto you.” Luke 11:20: “But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt “the Kingdom of God” is come upon you.” Luke 17:20 and 21: “And when He was demanded of the Pharisees, when “the Kingdom of God” should come, He answered them and said, “The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo, here! or lo, there! for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you.” Luke 19:11: “And as they heard these things, He added and spake a parable, because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the Kingdom of God should immediately appear.” Luke 21:31: “So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that “the Kingdom of God” is nigh at hand.” Luke 22:18: “For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until “the Kingdom of God” shall come.”

Surely before John the Baptist and Jesus were born, God was the King of Israel and there existed “the Kingdom of God.” But in Luke 16:16 we learn that beginning with the ministry of John the Baptist, “the Kingdom of God” was at hand in a sense that it was never at hand in the period covered by “the Law and the Prophets.”

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND PAUL’S GOSPEL

When the King, Jesus of Nazareth, was approved by God in the midst of Israel, by performing miraculous healing and other supernatural signs, “the Kingdom of God” had come nigh to Israel. The Lord Jesus said, **“the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. “ “The Kingdom of God has come nigh unto you.”** But remember the words of Christ in Matthew 15:24: “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” This is all so different from the Lord’s proclamation by the pen of Paul in Titus 2:11: **“FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT**

BRINGETH SALVATION HATH APPEARED TO ALL MEN.” And Colossians 1:5 and 2:1 to 2:

“For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the Word of the truth of the gospel.” “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister: Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body’s sake, which is the Church: Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you to fulfil the Word of God: Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of the mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

The King, in physical form on earth, presenting the prophesied Kingdom of God to His “Kingdom” nation, Israel, and healing all manner of diseases, was quite different from “the grace of God” at hand for aliens of the commonwealth of Israel, heathen all over the world. The truth Paul proclaimed concerning them and to them was quite different from the Messianic Kingdom for Israel, promised by all the holy prophets since the world began. Acts 3:19 to 21.

This was the Kingdom of God for which Joseph of Arimathea was waiting. Luke 23:51. This was the Kingdom that was in the mind of the twelve apostles, in Acts 1:6: **“When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?”**

Now note carefully Luke 19:11: **“And as they heard these things He added and spake a parable, because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the Kingdom of God should immediately appear.”**

Jews, familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures, knew that their Messiah would set up His Kingdom and their Kingdom at Jerusalem. They were wholly ignorant of God’s predestinated and eternal purpose concerning the Body of Christ. This truth and spiritual program was God’s secret, withheld from Israel’s prophets. Therefore they knew nothing of this parenthetical “grace” period, which began after Saul of Tarsus became the Apostle Paul: “For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.” Romans 11:13.

The Jews had the right to think that the Kingdom was at hand after Christ had proclaimed it, and when Jesus was nigh to Jerusalem. They thought the King of glory would enter in.

THE KINGDOM AGAIN OFFERED

In Acts 3:19 to 21 the Kingdom was again offered to Israel. But again the rulers rejected the resurrected Messiah. They sinned against the Holy Spirit. But God did not bring hasty judgment against them. Jerusalem was not destroyed until more than thirty-five years after the Lord Jesus pronounced the judgment of Luke 21:21 to 24.

But how literally that judgment has been fulfilled.

Where is Israel? Exactly where Christ said they would be in Luke 21:20 to 24. In what spiritual condition is Israel? In exactly the condition the Holy Spirit in Romans 11:25 and 26 declared they would be. Surely the supernatural preservation of Israel should convince any skeptic that the Bible is the infallible Book of the infallible God. What about Jerusalem? Simply read Luke 21:20 to 24 and the headlines in the newspapers in 1940 A.D. We are all waiting.

Israel is waiting for the fulness of the Gentiles to come in, for the fulfillment of “the times of the Gentiles.”

CHRIST NOT A KING ON DAVID’S THRONE

In the meantime, where is Christ?

“THAT THE GOD OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE FATHER OF GLORY, MAY GIVE UNTO YOU THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM, AND REVELATION IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIM: THE EYES OF YOUR UNDERSTANDING BEING ENLIGHTENED: THAT YE MAY KNOW WHAT IS THE HOPE OF HIS CALLING, AND WHAT THE RICHES OF THE GLORY OF HIS INHERITANCE IN THE SAINTS. AND WHAT IS THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER TO USWARD WHO BELIEVE, ACCORDING TO THE WORKING OF HIS MIGHTY POWER. WHICH HE WROUGHT IN CHRIST WHEN HE RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, AND SET HIM AT HIS OWN RIGHT HAND IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES. FAR ABOVE ALL PRINCIPALITY AND POWER, AND MIGHT, AND DOMINION, AND EVERY NAME THAT IS NAMED, NOT ONLY IN THIS WORLD BUT ALSO IN THAT WHICH IS TO COME: AND HATH PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIS FEET, AND GAVE HIM TO BE THE HEAD OVER ALL THINGS TO THE CHURCH, WHICH IS HIS BODY, THE FULNESS OF HIM THAT FILLETH ALL IN ALL.” Ephesians 1:17 to 23.

Note the position and possessions of the believing sinner who is at peace with God

“And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches, of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 2:6. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” Ephesians 1:3. “To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” Ephesians 1:6 and 7. “In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will: That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ.” Ephesians 1:11 and 12. “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2:13.

All of this is so different from Christ’s earthly ministry to the Jews in the land of the Jews. While on earth the Lord Jesus was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. It is significant in Luke’s Gospel that outside His immediate family the announcement of the birth of the Shepherd-King was made to shepherds while they were in charge of the flock “And the angel said unto them, Fear not for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” Luke 2:10 and 11. The heavenly messengers were careful to mention the city of David. In the Gospel of Luke Jesus Christ is Israel’s Shepherd-King, not Head of the Church.

Note the “fear not” of Luke 12:32:

“Fear not, little flock: for it is, your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.” Luke 12:32 and 33. Note also verses 22 and 29:

“And He said unto His disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on .” “And seek not what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.” Note also Luke 9:3: “And He said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.” Luke 9:3. “But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.” Luke 6:35. “He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.” Luke 3:11. Note also Matthew 5:40 to 42: “And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.”

If Christians, especially those with a number of little children, should obey all of these instructions and dispose of all their property, give away their money, retain only one coat, and divide their bread, certainly they would want to hear the voice of the Lord say, “fear not.”

They might hear Him say, “But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” I Timothy 5:8.

Members of the Body of Christ are to obey Romans 12:13: “Distributing to the necessity of saints: given to hospitality.” But they are not to have a Kingdom communism such as God ordered for Israel.

Let us note the “communism” program in Acts 2:44 and 45: “And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.” Acts 4:34 and 35: “Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the price of the things that were sold.” “And laid them down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.”

From these Scriptures we learn that the same Kingdom program; as to the disposition of earthly possessions, which was God’s order while Jesus the King was in the midst of Israel, continued to be God’s order during the several years that the twelve apostles and the Holy Spirit were witnesses to Israel in the land of the Jews concerning the Messiahship and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Surely we know that this was a Messianic “Kingdom” program and not God’s spiritual program for members of the Body of Christ, under the dispensation of the grace of God, while the Kingdom is in abeyance. This should teach us not to begin the postponement of the Kingdom until after the message of Acts 5:29 to 32: “Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him.”

In Romans 14:17 the Holy Spirit has given to members of Christ’s Body an interpretation and meaning of “the Kingdom of God” different from “the Kingdom of God” which was at hand when Jesus, the King, was here. That phase of the Kingdom of God will again be at hand with the fulfillment of Luke 21:27 to 33.

MESSAGE NUMBER 66

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

The Epistle to the Ephesians is one of Paul's Prison Epistles. It was written by Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God "to the saints which are at Ephesus," and to the, faithful in Christ Jesus.

After presenting the glorious Truth in Chapters One and Two, the Apostle writes: "FOR THIS CAUSE, I PAUL, THE PRISONER OF JESUS CHRIST FOR YOU GENTILES."

At the time Paul wrote this wonderful message, he was in the jail at Rome. We can truthfully say that Paul was in jail for telling a secret. The word "mystery" occurs five times in the Epistle. The Greek word is "musterion," which literally means "secret." Some translate the word "sacred secret."

After telling of the believers' warfare with evil heavenly spirits and describing the believer's spiritual armour, the apostle closes with the words,

"PRAYING ALWAYS WITH ALL PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION IN THE SPIRIT, AND WATCHING THEREUNTO WITH ALL PERSEVERANCE AND SUPPLICATION FOR ALL SAINTS, AND FOR ME, THAT UTTERANCE MAY BE GIVEN UNTO ME, THAT I MAY OPEN MY MOUTH BOLDLY, TO MAKE KNOWN THE MYSTERY (SECRET) OF THE GOSPEL, FOR WHICH I AM AN AMBASSADOR IN BONDS; THAT THEREIN I MAY SPEAK BOLDLY, AS I OUGHT TO SPEAK."
Ephesians 6:18 to 20.

Thus we see that the Epistle to the Ephesians deals with that peculiar phase of Divine Truth, designated by the Holy Spirit, "the Mystery," or "God's secret."

But we read in the first chapter, verse nine,

"HAVING MADE KNOWN UNTO US THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL, ACCORDING TO HIS GOOD PLEASURE WHICH HE HATH PURPOSED IN HIMSELF."

Of course, a secret revealed should no longer be considered a secret. But it is sad to know that this most profound Divine Truth of Ephesians is still a secret so far as the majority of members of the Body of Christ are concerned.

There are six chapters and one hundred and fifty-five verses in the Epistle to the Ephesians. Unlike Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians, to the Philippians, to the Thessalonians, and others, in the Epistle to the Ephesians there is little reference to the local assembly at Ephesus, no specific reference to Paul's ministry in that city, only a hint or two.

Ephesians deals with the Church, as the Body of Christ, the entire Body, specifically setting forth God's spiritual program under "the dispensation of grace"; namely, the building up of the Body of Christ. This is according to the eternal purpose of God. The fact of the matter is, that the word "Ephesus" is missing in most of the original manuscripts. God's program is stated in Ephesians 4:10 to 13. Read these verses carefully and prayerfully,

The Epistle to the Ephesians is addressed "to the faithful in Christ Jesus." The writer of Hebrews says, "strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age (perfect)." "Every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe." Hebrews 5:13 and 14. The Lord desires that believers be established in the Truth contained in Ephesians.

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried away with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.” Ephesians 4:11.

The great majority of Christians never get beyond the milk diet. There is much strong meat in Ephesians. However, the saving gospel of grace is clearly presented in very simple language

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2:8 to 10 and 13.

And there are some very plain instructions in Ephesians concerning the believer’s walk and behaviour, messages for what we call practical Christianity.

The Holy Spirit would not have directed Paul to write to the Corinthians the profound Divine Truth contained in Ephesians. He did write to them: “Behold, I shew you a mystery.” I Corinthians 15:51. But about all he could say about the mystery of Ephesians, he said in I Corinthians 2:7:

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.”

The explanation is found in I Corinthians 3:1 to 3:

“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?”

When Paul preached at Corinth and at Ephesus, he found the same kind of ungodly sinners in both cities. He preached to them that Christ died for their sins and was buried and was raised again. The sinners at Corinth are described in I Corinthians 6:9 and 10. What awful sinners they were! But note the great change: “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” I Corinthians 6:11. Note I Corinthians 12:2: “Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.” The sinners at Ephesus are described, in Ephesians 2:1 to 3 and Ephesians 2:11 and 12. What awful sinners they were! But note the great change in Ephesians 2:13 and 19: “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”

Thus we see the human material out of which the God of all grace makes saints and the Divine process by which they are made. The believing sinners at Corinth, saved by grace, became saints. The believing sinners at Ephesus, saved by grace, became saints. Note how Paul opens each Epistle

“Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours; Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” I Corinthians 1:2 and 3.

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 1:1 and 2.

A saint is a sinner saved by grace. Every saved sinner is a saint. Only the Tri-une God can make a saint out of a sinner. The believing sinner becomes a saint the very moment he believes unto the saving of his soul.

But what a difference between the carnal sectarian saints at Corinth, who walked as men, and could not take the meat of God's Word, and the faithful at Ephesus, to whom Paul wrote, "wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints." Ephesians 1:15.

Note the contrast in I Corinthians 6:7 and 8: "Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law with one another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren." They were carnal. There was a sin among them. They defrauded one another. There was division. There was some real sinning. I Corinthians 5:1 to 5. Some of them drank judgment unto themselves at the Lord's Table. Some of them denied the resurrection. Some of them ate meat offered to idols. There was confusion in their assemblies in speaking with tongues. There was little love for all saints and for one another in the local assembly. But, in spite of all their faults and carnality, they exercised all the sign gifts: "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gift of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues." I Corinthians 12:8 to 10.

It is obvious then that the presence of the sign-gifts among Christians did not prove that those Christians were unusually spiritual or extraordinarily faithful; for undoubtedly we have observed that not one of these sign-gifts are mentioned in the Ephesian letter, to the faithful in Christ Jesus.

Now a little visit to God's "saint factory."

TO THE SAINTS—AS BECOMETH THE SAINTS

Let us note Ephesians 1:1: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, **TO THE SAINTS** which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus." And Ephesians 5:3 and 4: "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, **AS BECOMETH SAINTS**; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks." "**TO THE SAINTS.**" "**AS BECOMETH SAINTS.**" It was one thing to become a saint. It was something different to behave as becometh a saint. So in Ephesians we are taught that lesson, which every believer should learn, "becoming a saint" and "as becometh a saint."

In Ephesians 2:4 to 9, we are told how a sinner becomes a saint. By grace through faith, because of God's great love and rich mercy. By the blood of Christ. What results? Note Ephesians 4:32:

"And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Then in Chapters Three, Four, Five and Six, the saint is instructed how to behave "**as becometh a saint.**" Note Ephesians 2:10:

"FOR WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS UNTO GOOD WORKS, WHICH GOD HATH BEFORE ORDAINED THAT WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM."

The sinner, by faith, must become God's workmanship before he can be God's workman and walk in the good works whereunto he is ordained.

"NOT OF WORKS"—"UNTO GOOD WORKS"—The sinner becomes a saint by believing the gospel of his salvation. Ephesians 1:13. Note this wonderful truth in II Timothy 1:9 and 10:

"Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. But now is made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

Then note II Corinthians 9:8:

"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

And Ephesians 1:19:

"And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power."

"All grace" and "all Divine power," available for the sinner saved by grace, to enable him to behave "as becometh a saint," to walk in the good works unto which he is ordained.

Thus we learn that not one religious ceremony, one moral deed, one single human endeavor, is necessary to make a saint out of a sinner, which is one hundred per cent the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit when the sinner believes the truth. Note how this is stated in II Thessalonians 2:13: "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth."

After salvation by grace the believer is called to a life of separation. Note the instructions in Ephesians 4:1:

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."

We are not saved because we behave, or because we walk well pleasing to the Lord, but we should behave and walk well pleasing because we are saved, by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves; because we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works that God hath foreordained that we should walk in them." Let us always remember these gracious words, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

GRACE, MERCY, PEACE

Refer to Paul's Epistles, and see how frequently he uses a salutation similar to Ephesians 1:2: "Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." "Grace to you" and "peace." In other Epistles he adds "mercy" and "peace." Beautiful words! Even in the sound. Even more beautiful because of the meaning. What an awful predicament the sinner is in! What a fool the unbeliever is! God's grace, God's mercy, and God's peace are available for any kind of a sinner because of the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Romans 3:24, we read the good news, that the believing sinner is declared righteous without a cause, by God's grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood. The Lord Jesus Christ by His blood is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. The Lord Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasteth death for every man. God will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the

Truth. God is called “the God of all grace.” I Peter 5:10. God is called “the Father of mercies.” II Corinthians 1:3. God is called “the God of peace Who brought from the dead the Lord Jesus Christ.” Hebrews 13:20. In Romans 5:21 we learn that grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. In Colossians 1:20, we learn that Christ made peace by the blood of His cross. In Ephesians 2:4 and 5, we learn that God, Who is rich in mercy for the great love wherewith He loved us, when we were dead in sins, hath made us alive together with Christ in the heavenlies. Therefore grace be to you from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Ephesians, God is called “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” and “the Father of glory.” Ephesians 1:3 and 17. The Divine message of Ephesians is the message of grace and glory. The spiritual benefits and blessings guaranteed to the members of the Body of Christ, in Ephesians, are “according to the riches of God’s grace” and “according to the riches of His glory.” Ephesians 1:7 and Ephesians 3:16. In Ephesians 1:7 we learn that it is “according to the riches of God’s grace” the believer has redemption through Christ’s blood, the forgiveness of sins. In Ephesians 4:32 we learn that the believing sinner’s sins are forgiven “for Christ’s sake.”

To the praise of the glory of His grace, the Father hath made the believer accepted in the Beloved. Ephesians 1:6. Remember, this is to the praise of the glory of God’s grace, not of works, lest any man should boast.

But compare with this statement the statement of II Corinthians 5:9:

“WHEREFORE WE LABOUR, THAT WHETHER PRESENT OR ABSENT, WE MAY BE ACCEPTED OF HIM.”

Here we learn of the acceptance of the believer, because of the believer’s endeavors. But let us not accuse the Holy Spirit of contradiction. The Holy Spirit does not confuse salvation with service. He does not confuse salvation as a gift with reward for the believer’s good works. As Noah was saved, and secure, because he was in God’s judgment-proof ark, so also is the sinner saved and secure, because he is in Christ.

About eighty times Paul uses the expression “**in Christ**”—“in Christ Jesus”—“in Him”—“in Whom.” In Ephesians the believer “is saved”—“he is sainted or sanctified”—“he is sealed”—“he is seated in the heavenlies”—“he is secure.” It is all of grace, and because he is in Christ Jesus; God’s workmanship created **in Christ** Jesus.

Let us see how the truth of II Thessalonians 2:13, which we quoted, agrees with the truth of Ephesians 1:13 and 14: “In Whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the Word of Truth, the gospel of your salvation: in Whom also on believing (pisteusantes), ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.” The individual is chosen unto salvation by God through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: “Ye heard the Word of Truth, the gospel of your salvation, in Whom on believing (not, after that ye believed) ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.” That Holy Spirit sealing is the believer’s earnest until the redemption of the purchased possession, and he is sealed unto the day of redemption. Ephesians 4:30.

Salvation is of the Lord. A man can receive nothing except it be given him from above. Eternal life is the free gift of God. God’s Word is Truth. God’s Son said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.” The sinner who believes the Truth is chosen unto salvation through sanctification of the Spirit. Note Hebrews 10:10: “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all.” When this takes place the believer is indeed sanctified once for all; he is sealed once for all; he is

anointed once for all; he is baptized once for all; he is joined to the risen Christ in an eternal and inseparable union once for all. This is all accomplished by the One Divine baptism of Ephesians 4:5. Ephesians is God's message of union and unity.

Note the truth of Ephesians 5:31 and 32: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." The Father's will is expressed in Ephesians 4:15: that His children should grow up unto Him in all things, which is the Head, Christ. There is One Head and One Body, as there is One Father and One Spirit.

It is interesting to note that the One Body is called, in Ephesians 3:6 (in the Greek), the "Joint-Body." The members of the Body are joined to the Head: "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we, being many, are one Body in Christ, and every one members one of another." Romans 12:4 and 5.

Let us keep in mind God's purpose in Ephesians, as we study this wonderful Epistle. God's purpose is to build up the One Body of Christ, to make the One New Man of Ephesians 2:15. God is completing His Household, "in Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, in Whom ye also are buildeth together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. Ephesians 2:21 and 22.

MESSAGE NUMBER 67

TRUTH IN EPHESIANS—CHRIST IN THE HEAVENLIES

Compare the truth of Acts 2:22 with the truth of Ephesians 1:19 to 23:

"YE MEN OF ISRAEL, HEAR THESE WORDS: JESUS OF NAZARETH, A MAN APPROVED OF GOD AMONG YOU BY MIRACLES, AND WONDERS, AND SIGNS, WHICH GOD DID BY HIM IN THE MIDST OF YOU, AS YE YOURSELVES ALSO KNOW." Acts 2:22.

"AND WHAT IS THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER TO USWARD WHO BELIEVE ACCORDING TO THE WORKING OF HIS MIGHTY POWER, WHICH HE WROUGHT IN CHRIST WHEN HE RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, AND SET HIM AT HIS OWN RIGHT HAND IN THE HEAVENLIES, FAR ABOVE ALL PRINCIPALITY, AND POWER, AND MIGHT, AND DOMINION, AND EVERY NAME THAT IS NAMED, NOT ONLY IN THIS WORLD, BUT ALSO IN THAT WHICH IS TO COME. AND HATH PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIS FEET, AND GAVE HIM TO BE THE HEAD OVER ALL THINGS TO THE CHURCH, WHICH IS HIS BODY, THE FULNESS OF HIM THAT FILLETH ALL IN ALL."

God approved Jesus of Nazareth, a Man in the land in the midst of Israel, by miracles. When He died, these words were written above the cross: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."

In Matthew, Mark and Luke, we find the expression "**on the earth**" eleven times. In the Epistle to the Ephesians we find the expression "**in the heavenlies**" five times. There is a difference between the King of the Jews, Jesus of Nazareth, His Israelitish Kingdom, on the earth, and the Lord Jesus Christ seated in the highest heavens, Head of the Church which is His Body, in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile.

In Ephesians it is not the mighty power of God in working miracles by His Son Jesus Christ in the land of the Jews, but the mighty power that God wrought in Christ when He raised Christ from the sepulchre, and placed Him far above everything and everybody. And do not forget the truth in this connection, that this same mighty power is toward members of the Body of Christ, for they too have been raised from their death and burial and seated with Christ in the heavenlies far above. Ephesians 2:6.

From the heavens the ascended Christ gave gifts unto men: Read Ephesians 4 8 to 13:

“HE THAT DESCENDED IS THE SAME ALSO THAT ASCENDED UP FAR ABOVE ALL HEAVENS, THAT HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS. AND HE GAVE SOME APOSTLES; AND SOME, PROPHETS; AND SOME, EVANGELISTS; AND SOME, PASTORS AND TEACHERS; FOR THE PERFECTING OF THE SAINTS, FOR THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY, FOR THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST.”

In this connection note I Corinthians 3:9 and 10

“For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon.”

“But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon,” literally, “how he buildeth TOGETHER thereupon.”

The Lord Jesus chose the Apostle Paul to be the masterbuilder. Paul declared himself to be the Lord’s pattern for believers. I Timothy 1:16. He instructs believers to follow him as he followed Christ. I Corinthians 11:1. Philippians 3:17. We must closely examine God’s “building” plans in the Epistles of Paul, if we would take heed how we labor together and build together.

If we take heed according to God’s eternal purpose, we shall not try, in this age, to establish on earth that Kingdom which the King will build when He comes back to the earth as King.

Making the **“One New Man,”** building up the Body of Christ, the fulness of Him Who is the Head far above in the heavenlies, is a Divine program, so different from God’s prophesied Kingdom plans that it is difficult to understand why the saints of the Lord so confuse these two entirely different and distinct institutions. Although in His essential and eternal Deity the Lord Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever, His relationship, and His ministry for those over whom He shall reign as King on this earth, is entirely different from His present relationship to the members of His Body, with whom He is, or is to be, one flesh. His ministry as King of the Jews is different from His ministry as Head of His Body. Note Romans 15:8:

“Now I say that Jesus Christ WAS a Minister of the circumcision for the Truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.”

“Jesus Christ WAS the Minister of the circumcision.” We could not say that He **IS** the Minister of the circumcision. He is doing something entirely different during this present dispensation. He is to again be a Minister of the circumcision and fulfill all prophecies concerning His Kingship and Kingdom, His earthly reign of righteousness, and peace on David’s throne. But let us not confuse David’s throne with the Father’s throne, where Christ is.

CHRIST IS FAR ABOVE

Note again Ephesians 1:21, where Christ was raised by the mighty power of God, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only

in this world, but also in that which is to come. In Ephesians 4:10 we read that Christ ascended up “far above” all heavens, that He might fill all things. This was accomplished by the mighty power of God. We remember the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, in John 10:17 and 18: “Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father.” What mighty power! Yea, Almighty power!

SATAN AND THE HEAVENLIES

There is another power in the heavenlies operating against God and Christ in the heavenlies, and against any of the Lord’s servants who desire to know, or to make known, the Truth concerning Christ and His Body seated together in the heavenlies

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against **SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS IN THE HEAVENLIES.**” Ephesians 6:12.

“TO THE INTENT THAT NOW UNTO THE PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS IN THE HEAVENLIES MIGHT BE KNOWN BY THE CHURCH THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD.” Ephesians 3:10.

We learn in Ephesians 2:2, that the unsaved person is controlled by the prince of the power of the air. This same power that controls the unsaved sinner is the power against which the saint wrestles. Against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against “**spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies.**”

We soon learn by experience that Satan uses every imaginable weapon against the servant of the Lord Jesus who endeavors to obey Ephesians 3:9 and 10, to “**make all see what is the dispensation of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God. To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenlies might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.**”

This is Divine Truth that is according to the eternal purpose of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Satan is determined that members of the Body shall not know this blessed and glorious Truth and he has been indeed successful in his efforts; for even many of the most spiritual “Fundamentalist” leaders strenuously, and even bitterly, oppose the Truth of “**the Mystery,**” which is the most blessed and glorious Truth in the Bible for saints. They cannot say, with Paul, concerning Satan, “we are not ignorant concerning his devices.”

We are warned in Ephesians 6:11 and 12, against the wiles, or tricks, of the devil in his spiritual activities in the heavenlies. Paul himself was the victim of this Satanic opposition, for he tells us in this same sixth chapter of Ephesians, that he was in jail for obeying Ephesians 3:9 and 10.

Paul suffered as an evil-doer for “the Mystery.” Read II Timothy 2:7 and 8, and Ephesians 6:19 and 20. But Paul would not compromise to please men. Galatians 1:10.

Every servant of the Lord who consistently, uncompromisingly, and fearlessly attempts to make known the “Mystery” of Ephesians, is conscious of a mighty power working against him. But there is a spiritual armour provided, according to Ephesians 6:11 to 20. So many human agencies are active in the opposition that it is difficult for the servant of the Lord to believe that he is not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers in the

heavenlies. The member of the Body of Christ who believes that God has made known **“the mystery of His will,”** concerning His predestinated, or eternal purpose (Ephesians 1:9 and 11), and attempts to pass on the knowledge to others, realizes that he has a conflict in the heavenlies. But let us remember that although there are mighty powers above us, there is ONE far above those powers, Who is our Head. To Him we are forever united.

Let us note again the truth concerning the believer’s position in Christ as revealed in Ephesians 2:6:

“GOD HATH RAISED US UP TOGETHER, AND MADE US SIT TOGETHER IN THE HEAVENLIES IN CHRIST JESUS.”

Think this over seriously, spiritually and frequently. This is a profound Truth.

As a Christian, do you realize your position in the heavenlies, the identification and union of each member of the Body of Christ with the Head, in the heavenlies, and with every other member in the Body? Note the word “together” in this statement; “raised up together”; “sit together in the heavenlies in Christ.” Then note, in verse 5, “God hath made, us alive together with Christ.” Then note verses 21, 22 and 4:16: “. . . all the building fitly framed together,” “ye are builded together”—“the whole Body fitly joined together.” This is indeed union and unity and excludes any suggestion or thought of sectarianism or schism in the Joint-Body of the Mystery.

BLESSED WITH ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN THE HEAVENLIES

Note Ephesians 1:3 to 5:

“BLESSED BE THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO HATH BLESSED US WITH ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN THE HEAVENLIES IN CHRIST: ACCORDING AS HE HATH CHOSEN US IN HIM, BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, THAT WE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLAME BEFORE HIM IN LOVE; HAVING PREDESTINATED US UNTO THE ADOPTION OF CHILDREN BY JESUS CHRIST TO HIMSELF, ACCORDING TO THE GOOD PLEASURE OF HIS WILL.”

So we learn that not only is our position **in the heavenlies** together with Christ, and our conflict **in the heavenlies**, not only are we to show the manifold wisdom of God to the powers **in the heavenlies**, but we are blessed with all spiritual blessings **in the heavenlies** in Christ. Let us couple this wonderful statement with the truth of Ephesians 1:18 to 20

“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, Which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies.”

“To us-ward,” who are members of Christ, is the mighty power of the Almighty God. Think of it!

But it is needless to try to estimate this power. It is infinite, incomprehensible, and illimitable. Who can begin to inventory or enumerate the spiritual benefits and blessings that are included in the **“all spiritual blessings”** of Ephesians 1:3? But quietly, seriously, spiritually, prayerfully, try to take it in and dare to believe this guarantee from the infallible God Who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named! **“The Father of glory.”**

ALL BLESSINGS—THE SECOND BLESSING—PHYSICAL HEALING

One of the first lessons that the member of the Body Church learns when the eyes of his understanding are enlightened, and he knows the hope of His calling, and the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is God's exceeding power toward him, and that he is blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, is not to cry "back to Pentecost"—not to be led into the heresy of seeking for a second blessing, or the power of Holy Spirit baptism, because he has all blessings. All God's power is available the moment he is saved.

When the sinner, saved by grace, has received God's Divine baptism, which joins him to the eternal, Almighty, glorified Christ, and makes him an heir to all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are hid in Christ, and endows him with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, and empowers him with all the mighty power of God, described in Ephesians, what folly to tell him to seek another baptism, or to tarry for the second blessing!

As the Truth of Ephesians is the corrective for all of the fanaticism concerning Holy Spirit baptism, all of the erroneous teaching of the second blessing religious people, and that of the Divine healers, it is the Scriptural remedy for every ill and ism with which the Church of Jesus Christ is afflicted: "That we be no more children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine." Ephesians 4:14.

Spiritually speaking, the members of Christ's Body are truly multimillionaires. But the Body of Christ is not Israel, God's earthly people, living in Canaan and guaranteed Divine blessings of earthly prosperity and physical healings. We can say, with Paul, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." But we must also say, "though our outward man perish (or thoroughly decay), yet the inward man is renewed day by day." II Corinthians 4:16 and 17.

Many, many times the Apostle Paul wrote that Christ on the cross suffered for sins, died for our sins, put away sins, bare our sins, but never once did Paul even intimate that Jesus Christ on the cross died for our sicknesses. He told Timothy, his most intimate and dependable fellow-workers, to take a physical remedy for his physical disease. I Timothy 5:23. To this same faithful man of God. Paul wrote, "Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick." II Timothy 4:20. In that same Second Epistle to Timothy, Paul wrote Timothy to "rightly divide the Word of Truth."

No man of God rightly divides the Word of Truth when he teaches that, physical healing for the saint, under the dispensation of the grace of God, is guaranteed in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. As some servant of the Lord has truly said, "if physical salvation is guaranteed to believers in the work of Christ on the cross, then incorruptibility could be experienced by members of the Body of Christ without the return of Christ." Paul's words: "... though our outward man perish" is the negation and refutation of the foolish theories concerning physical health taught by even some sincere spiritual Christians. So also is Romans 8:23: "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Bodies of believers, like bodies of unbelievers, are, and will be, corruptible bodies of humiliation until the day of redemption, when out of heaven shall come the Lord Jesus Christ to change the believers' bodies of humiliation, in the twinkling of an eye, to be fashioned like unto His body of glory. Philippians 3:20 and 21.

We would not, for one moment, convey the idea that the Almighty God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Father of all members of the Body of Christ, does not hear and answer prayer in behalf of those who are sick. We are taught the truth of elective healing in

Philippians 2:25 to 28. Sometimes the faithful saints are restored to health and strength. Sometimes they are left sick. Sometimes they die, The death rate of the human race, for both saint and sinner, is one apiece, and this will continue until the day of redemption. If and when God hears prayer in behalf of His sick children, and answers the prayer by restoring His sick child to health, it is on the grounds of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is the only sense in which it can be stated that healing is in the atonement. Atonement is not God's Word in Pauline Truth. The word translated "**atonement**" in Romans 5:11, is "**reconciliation**."

We have no record in the New Testament Scriptures that any Gentile had Divine authority to impose hands for healing, or for any other Divine blessing. Neither do we have any record of the use of oil on Gentiles. Let us remember the words of James, in Acts 15:19, when applying the "oil anointing" of James 5:14; and let us not forget that this Epistle is addressed to the twelve tribes of Israel, and read Galatians 2:9.

Let us again emphasize the absence of any reference to signs, sign gifts, healings, tongues, etc., in any of Paul's Epistles written after the pronouncement of God's Divine judgment in Acts 28:25 to 28. Signs are peculiarly associated with Israel, "for the Jews require a sign." In Paul's ministry in the "Acts" period, God's order was, "to the Jew first and also to the Gentile." In Paul's Prison Epistles God's order is, "to the Gentile and also to the Jew." In this day of grace condemned Jews, like condemned Gentiles, must come to the Lord for salvation, not as the children of Abraham, but as the children of Adam. Now, "no difference between the Jew and the Gentile."

In another message we shall consider some of the spiritual blessings mentioned in detail in the Epistle to the Ephesians, all included in the ALL spiritual blessings in Ephesians 1:3. In the four verses that follow, we learn:

1. That we are holy and without blame before God in love.
2. That we have been adopted into God's family and are His children by Jesus Christ.
3. That we have been made accepted in Christ the Beloved.
4. That by Christ's shed blood we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. For these blessings we say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

What has this world to offer that will begin to compare with these spiritual blessings, these eternal benefits? If we do enjoy "fame," "fortune," and "fun" in this life, "health," "wealth," and "worldly pleasures," when we consider God's Divine Truth, "it is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment," how can the unsaved have any peace or joy in their souls? Conscious of the wrath to come, because they have failed to receive God's gracious gift of salvation by Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, and therefore because their sins are all piling up for the day of judgment, how can the unsaved be happy?

Remember, God will have all men to be saved. Receive Christ as your Saviour.

MESSAGE NUMBER 68

ACCORDING TO GOD'S GOOD PLEASURE

It is interesting to prayerfully consider Ephesians 1:9, concerning God's revelation of the Mystery

“HAVING MADE KNOWN UNTO US THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL ACCORDING TO HIS GOOD PLEASURE, WHICH HE HATH PURPOSED IN HIMSELF.”

This confirms the truth of Ephesians 1:5:

“HAVING PREDESTINATED US UNTO THE ADOPTION OF CHILDREN BY JESUS CHRIST TO HIMSELF, ACCORDING TO THE GOOD PLEASURE OF HIS WILL.”

Note, “according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself” and “according to the good pleasure of His will.” He hath made known the mystery of His will. This will is God’s predestinated purpose.

In studying the Pauline messages we must be very careful not to confuse God’s prophesied plan and program with His “predestinated purpose,” the mystery of His will concerning the position and possessions of members of the Body of Christ, revealed to and through the Apostle Paul.

Now let us note some very interesting facts **in Ephesians**; namely, that all of the spiritual benefits and blessings, which the believer has in Christ Jesus, are:

1. **ACCORDING TO GOD’S ETERNAL PURPOSE IN CHRIST. Ephesians 3:11.**
2. **ACCORDING AS GOD HATH CHOSEN US IN CHRIST BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD. Ephesians 1:4.**
3. **ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE. Ephesians 1:7.**
4. **ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GLORY. Ephesians 3:16.**
5. **ACCORDING TO THE MEASURE OF THE GIFT OF CHRIST. Ephesians 4:7.**
6. **ACCORDING TO THE EFFECTUAL WORKING IN THE MEASURE OF EVERY PART. Ephesians 4:16.**
7. **ACCORDING TO THE GOOD PLEASURE OF HIS WILL. Ephesians 1:5.**
8. **ACCORDING TO HIS GOOD PLEASURE WHICH HE HATH PURPOSED IN HIMSELF. Ephesians 1:9.**
9. **ACCORDING TO THE PURPOSE OF HIM WHO WORKETH ALL THINGS AFTER THE COUNSEL OF HIS OWN WILL. Ephesians 1:11.**
10. **ACCORDING TO THE WORKING OF HIS MIGHTY POWER. Ephesians 1:19.**
11. **ACCORDING TO THE GIFT OF THE GRACE OF GOD GIVEN UNTO PAUL BY THE EFFECTUAL WORKING OF GOD’S POWER. Ephesians 3:7.**
12. **ACCORDING TO THE POWER THAT WORKETH IN US. Ephesians 3:20.**

After carefully considering these verses, which tell the source and measure of all the believer’s benefits and blessings, we should be filled with wonder, amazement and thanksgiving, but not with any skepticism or doubt as to what God can do and does do for the sinner saved by His infinite, matchless grace, love and mercy, and why God bestows such unspeakable and manifold blessings upon those of the children of Adam who are willing to be the recipients of His grace.

GOD’S ETERNAL PURPOSE—PREDESTINATION

Note Romans 8:28 to 31:

“AND WE KNOW THAT ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THEM THAT LOVE GOD, TO THEM WHO ARE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE. FOR WHOM HE DID FOREKNOW HE DID ALSO PREDESTINATE, TO BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON, THAT HE MIGHT BE THE FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BRETHREN. MOREOVER WHOM HE DID PREDESTINATE, THEM HE ALSO CALLED: AND WHOM HE CALLED THEM HE ALSO JUSTIFIED:

AND WHOM HE JUSTIFIED THEM HE ALSO GLORIFIED. WHAT SHALL WE SAY THEN TO THESE THINGS? IF GOD BE FOR US WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?”

This causes us to cry out with Paul: “O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of 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 counsellor?” Romans 11:33 and 34. In all the Scriptures, where the purpose of God is mentioned, it is mentioned in connection with predestination, as the purpose which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. II Timothy 1:9. It is God’s eternal purpose purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began. God’s spiritual program under the dispensation of the mystery is according to His eternal or predestinated purpose; that which God purposed in Christ Jesus before Abraham, or even Adam, was created.

Now note carefully and prayerfully Ephesians 1:3 to 5:

“BLESSED BE THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO HATH BLESSED US WITH ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN THE HEAVENLIES IN CHRIST; ACCORDING AS HE HATH CHOSEN US IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, THAT WE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLAME BEFORE HIM IN LOVE: HAVING PREDESTINATED US UNTO THE ADOPTION OF CHILDREN BY JESUS CHRIST TO HIMSELF, ACCORDING TO THE GOOD PLEASURE OF HIS WILL:”

1. Blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ.
2. According as God hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world.
3. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself.
4. According to the good pleasure of His will.

Here we have the grace and glory purpose of God, the dealings and doings of the sovereign God of all grace; all in, by, and through the Lord Jesus Christ, and all for Christ’s sake. It is easy to remember the three “p’s”. It is according to **God’s purpose, God’s pleasure, and God’s power.**

Now note three other “p’s” in the matter of salvation. Note Ephesians 2:10: “For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Those who are members of the Body of Christ are God’s workmanship, created by God in Christ unto good works. God is the expert Workman. In the Epistle to the Ephesians we are in God’s “saint” factory. We learn in this Epistle, in the matter of making saints, “the people,” “the process,” and “the product.”

1. **THE PEOPLE**, or human material with which God must work. Note Ephesians 4:18—Ephesians 2:1 to 3—Ephesians 2:12. They are “alienated from the life of God.” They are “dead in trespasses and sins.” They are “walking according to the course of this world.” They walk according to Satan’s control. Their conversation is in the lusts of the flesh. They are by nature the children of wrath. They are in the world without God and having no hope. This is

almost waste material. Now we can see why only the grace and power of God can transform such helpless, sinful, human creatures into saints.

2. **THE PROCESS**—The Divine process—“But God Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us.” Ephesians 2:4. “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2:13. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God: Not of works lest any man should boast.” Ephesians 2:8 and 9. God’s workmanship. The Creator creates anew. God creates, or recreates, by the one Divine baptism of Ephesians 4:5. By this baptism the believing sinners are taken out of Adam and placed in Christ and identified with Him as the Head of the New Creation.

3. **THE PRODUCT**—“To the saints”—“Believing ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit.” Ephesians 1:13. “Ye were sometimes darkness, but now ye are light in the Lord.” Ephesians 5:8. “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God, And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner Stone; In Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Ephesians 2:19 to 22.

“We are members of His Body.” Ephesians 5:30. We are alive. We are raised up with Christ. We are seated with Him in the heavenlies. The Holy Spirit intends that the children of God should read the Epistle to the Colossians with the Epistle to the Ephesians, for they give us very much the same precious truth, but one is the complement and commentary of the other. Both of these Epistles deal with alienation, reconciliation, and the new creation. In each of these Prison Epistles of Paul we have the message of grace and glory. As to the future of grace and glory, note Colossians 3:3 and 4: “For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, Who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.” Ephesians 2:7. “That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” Thus we see something of God’s eternity of grace.

PAUL’S DISTINCTIVE MINISTRY

Now let us read Colossians 1:20 and 21: “And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled.” Note Paul’s words in Colossians 1:23, “Whereof I Paul am made a minister;” in Colossians 1:29, “Whereunto I labour, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily.”

Paul was neither conceited nor deluded. Paul was in earnest. He was truthful and sincere. The risen Christ had given him a distinctive, unique ministry, something entirely different from any program or ministry or message which he had committed to Peter and the Eleven. Paul, in his Bible ministry, uses the first person pronoun more than one thousand times in speaking of himself.

According to Colossians 1:20 to 28, Paul was made a minister by Christ and was working and striving by that Divine power within, to testify the gospel of the grace of God which he received from Christ, to finish his course with joy, according to Acts 20:24; to make known the message of reconciliation; to fill up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ in His flesh, for His Body’s sake, to fulfill (or complete) the Word of God with God’s secret, which

God had never mentioned to any prophet, priest, king or apostle until the glorified Christ made it known to this man Paul.

Perhaps you are saying, or thinking, "What strange language!" The language may seem strange, but it has been in the Bible all these years; and the strange thing is, that people and pastors alike have paid no attention to it. In fact, the majority of Christians do not know it is in the Bible.

But note in Colossians 1:23, Paul declares that the gospel was preached to every creature under heaven. Then note the three verses that follow:

"WHO NOW REJOICE IN MY SUFFERINGS FOR YOU, AND FILL UP THAT WHICH IS BEHIND OF THE AFFLICTIONS OF CHRIST IN MY FLESH FOR HIS BODY'S SAKE, WHICH IS THE CHURCH: WHEREOF I AM MADE A MINISTER ACCORDING TO THE DISPENSATION OF GOD WHICH IS GIVEN TO ME FOR YOU, TO FULFIL THE WORD OF GOD: EVEN THE MYSTERY WHICH HATH BEEN HID FROM AGES AND FROM GENERATIONS, BUT NOW IS MADE MANIFEST TO HIS SAINTS." Colossians 1:24 to 26.

What does this mean?

Was not the suffering of Christ sufficient? In what sense did Paul supplement the sufferings of Christ? Certainly not, for the sinner's redemption. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust that He, might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but, quickened by the Spirit." The Lord Jesus Christ settled the sin question on the cross and then abolished death and entered into heaven, having obtained eternal redemption for us. Hebrews 9:10.

We might ask also how we are to reconcile Paul's statements in I Corinthians 3:11 and I Corinthians 3:10. In verse eleven, Paul declares that other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ. But in I Corinthians 3:10 he says, "as a wise masterbuilder I have laid the foundation . . . let us all take heed how we build together thereupon."

No spiritual saint can faithfully study the Pauline Epistles and fail to observe that the Apostle Paul had a very special and important part to play in announcing for God the casting away of Israel, which brought the ministry of reconciliation for Gentiles, the beginning of the dispensation of the grace of God, the proclamation of the unsearchable riches of Christ for Gentiles, the revelation and the proclamation of the mystery of God's will, His eternal predestinated purpose given in Christ before the world began. All of these truths are related to the building up of the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6, and they were revealed and proclaimed so that all might see the dispensation of the mystery.

Note very carefully this statement of Paul, in Colossians 1:25 and 26: "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God: Even the Mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints." This special dispensation of God was given to this special apostle, who was not one of the Twelve, for a very specific task, and a most important duty; namely, to complete the Word of God with the mystery, with its Divine message and spiritual program concerning which all the preceding ages and generations had been ignorant, as well as silent.

When the Lord Jesus saved, and first called Saul of Tarsus into service, He said, "I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake." Acts 9:15. And what a sufferer he was! In his last Epistle he said, "according to MY GOSPEL, wherein I suffer as an evil doer even unto bonds." II Timothy 2:8 and 9.

The Lord ordained and willed that the capstone of Divine Truth, called “the Mystery”, should be added to prophecy, and the fulfillment of prophecy, to complete the Word of God, with intense suffering on the part of this chosen vessel. So the Lord restrained Paul from writing his Epistles which tell His secret in detail, until he was suffering in the prison at Rome. But years before that, he had suffered intensely for preaching the gospel of the uncircumcision to Gentiles. Note his sufferings in II Corinthians 11:22 to 28. Then after all this, read his testimony in II Corinthians 12:1 to 9, concerning his thorn in the flesh, which came with the revelations from Christ. Paul mentioned the mystery in I Corinthians 2:6 to 7 and Romans 8:28 to 30, but not in detailed explanation.

Years before Paul reached the Roman prison, he told us Gentiles of his uncompromising bold stand against the other apostles and disciples, “that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.” Galatians 2:5. How he struggled, and laboured and fought and suffered to keep religious men from covering up God’s grace message with religion. You try this today if you want to know what a task it is. I wonder if Paul’s sufferings are appreciated by us, or if we really understand or appreciate the gospel of the grace of God, to say nothing of the dispensation of the Mystery.

But until our next lesson, in our study of the Epistle to the Ephesians, just a few words about alienation, reconciliation, and the new creation, as they are mentioned in Ephesians and Colossians. We read in Ephesians 4:18 and in Colossians 1:21, that the children of Adam, who were not the children of Abraham, were alienated from the life of God. But in Ephesians 2:13 to 18 and in Colossians 1:20 and 21, we learn that Jesus Christ made peace by the blood of His cross and by this work God reconciled alienated Gentiles. The reconciled Gentiles were made new creatures in Christ Jesus.

MESSAGE NUMBER 69

RECONCILIATION AND THE MYSTERY

In our last lesson we closed with reference to the doctrine of “alienation,” “reconciliation” and the “new creation.” We learn, by looking into the Scriptures, which deal with these Divine truths, that the doctrine of “identification” is likewise associated with them, that is, the reconciled believer’s identification with Christ.

But now let us compare Ephesians 4:18 and Ephesians 2:12 to 17 with Colossians 1:20 and 21: “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.” “That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

“BUT NOW IN CHRIST JESUS YE WHO SOMETIMES WERE FAR OFF ARE MADE NIGH BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, FOR HE IS OUR PEACE WHO HATH MADE BOTH ONE AND HATH BROKEN DOWN THE MIDDLE WALL OF PARTITION BETWEEN US; HAVING ABOLISHED IN HIS FLESH THE ENMITY, EVEN THE LAW OF COMMANDMENTS, CONTAINED IN ORDINANCES; FOR TO MAKE IN HIMSELF OF TWAIN ONE NEW MAN, SO MAKING PEACE; AND THAT HE MIGHT RECONCILE BOTH UNTO GOD IN ONE BODY BY THE CROSS,

HAVING SLAIN THE ENMITY THEREBY: AND CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU THAT WERE AFAR OFF, AND TO THEM THAT WERE NIGH.”

Now note Colossians 1:20 and 21:

“AND HAVING MADE PEACE THROUGH THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS, BY HIM TO RECONCILE ALL THINGS UNTO HIMSELF; BY HIM, I SAY, WHETHER THEY BE THINGS IN EARTH, OR THINGS IN HEAVEN. AND YOU THAT WERE SOMETIME ALIENATED AND ENEMIES IN YOUR MIND BY WICKED WORKS, YET NOW HATH HE RECONCILED.”

In Ephesians 2:12 we find the Gentiles alienated and without hope. In Ephesians 4:18 we find the Gentiles alienated from the life of God. In Ephesians 2:17 we read that the Lord sent His servants to preach peace to them which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. Those who were afar off were the Gentiles who were dead in trespasses and sins. Between them and the Jews there had been a middle wall of partition. This was erected at Sinai. It was a wall of law, ordinances, and religion. The Jews, or Israelites, were nigh. They were called “the Commonwealth of Israel.” In Ephesians 2:15 and 16, we learn that Jesus Christ, by His death on the cross, broke down the middle wall of partition, the law of commandments in ordinances; that He might reconcile both Jews and Gentiles unto God in one Body by the cross.

This same truth is recorded in Colossians. In Colossians 2:14 we read

“BLOTTING OUT THE HANDWRITING OF ORDINANCES THAT WAS AGAINST US, WHICH WAS CONTRARY TO US, AND TOOK IT OUT OF THE WAY, NAILING IT TO HIS CROSS.”

Note again Colossians 1:20 and 21: “And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled.

If we did not have other Scriptures to teach us otherwise, we might decide that the risen Christ, immediately after His death, sent His apostles to preach the ministry of reconciliation to Gentiles; that the twelve apostles knew that the law had been nailed to the cross and that all religious barriers had been removed and all national preferences and racial distinctions had been obliterated. But in studying the first thirteen chapters of Acts, in the ministry of the Twelve, we learn that this is contrary to fact. In Acts 10:28 we have the words of Peter that it was not lawful for him to preach to Gentiles, some seven or eight years after the death of Christ on the cross, and by carefully studying those first chapters of Acts, we learn that Peter and his fellow-apostles did not preach to Gentiles. Note Peter’s message in Acts 5:29 to: 12. There Peter preached to Israel that God had raised Christ from the dead to be Israel’s Prince and Saviour, to give that people repentance and forgiveness of sins.

If we will compare Acts 5:29 to 32 with Ephesians 1:19 to 23, we will find quite a difference. In Acts 5 we learn that God raised Christ from the dead to be a Prince and a Saviour to give Israel repentance and forgiveness of sins, whereas, in Ephesians 1:19 to 23, God raised Christ from the dead to be Head over all things unto the Church which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

RECONCILIATION WHEN?

The first mention of the ministry of “**reconciliation**” for Gentiles appears in the Bible about twenty-five years after Christ died on the cross. Let us carefully note the verses:

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the reconciliation.” Romans 5:10 and 11.

“And all things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. II Corinthians 5:18 and 19. “For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?” Romans 11:15.

Studying these Scriptures, together with their immediate context, we learn when and why the Lord Jesus Christ committed to Paul the ministry of reconciliation and the dispensation of the grace of God for Gentiles; and Romans 11:15 is certainly a key verse. So we observe that the gospel of reconciliation for Gentiles is first mentioned in connection with the first mention of Adam in the New Testament Scriptures and in connection with the casting away of Israel. Israel was not cast away until after the death of one of the twelve apostles, some years after the Pentecost of Acts Two. In Acts 12:1 and 2, we learn of the death of James, the brother of John. James was one of the Twelve. Until the time James died there were twelve apostles; Peter and the Eleven. Twelve men stood up on the day of Pentecost. The number “12” is a representative number and speaks of Israel, which was made up of twelve tribes. Note the reference in Acts 2:36, “all the house of Israel.”

Paul declared that salvation was sent unto the Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy; that the Gentiles obtained mercy because of Israel’s blindness and unbelief. Romans 11:11 and 30. Reconciliation was sent to Gentiles when and because Israel was set aside. Romans 11:15. Peter was not in this program, for, according to Galatians 2:9, even after Peter had preached to the household of Cornelius, he agreed to go with his message and ministry to Israel. Peter and his associates did not preach salvation to the Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy. They preached to Israel and Cornelius concerning Jesus of Nazareth and what he did on earth. Acts 2:22 and 10:35 to 38.

But in connection with the message of “**reconciliation**” and “**the new creation**,” Paul says. concerning Jesus Christ, “henceforth know we Him no more after the flesh.” II Corinthians 5:16. Peter preached “Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit;” “Repent and God will send Christ back from heaven,” “Restitution.” This was quite different from Paul’s gospel of grace, and it is indeed interesting and instructive to learn that after the mention of “Adam” and “reconciliation” there is no record in the Scriptures of any one receiving water baptism. Surely there is a reason for this.

Israel was God’s religious nation. When God set aside that religious nation, the time of reformation arrived (Hebrews 9:10) and God was through with His religious program. Whatever interpretation or significance may be attached to water baptism, all must admit that it is a religious ceremony or ordinance.

When Jesus of Nazareth was on earth He was dealing with the children of Abraham, preserved and protected by the Abrahamic Covenant. The Covenant of Circumcision was binding. Genesis 17:7 to 17. Acts 7:8. Any Gentile who received God’s Divine blessing had to come under the Covenant of Circumcision and become it proselyte to the Jews’ religion.

ADAM—CHRIST—RECONCILIATION

Note why the diseased woman of Luke 13:16 received her blessing. She was the daughter of Abraham. Note why the publican of Luke 19:8 to 11 received his blessing. He was the son of Abraham. Christ did not mention Adam in connection with salvation while He was Jesus of Nazareth on earth, when, by His own word, He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 15:24), and when He told His twelve Israelitish messengers to go not into the way of the Gentiles. Matthew 10:5. In that same tenth chapter of Matthew, the twenty-third verse, note what Christ said to His twelve apostles: "But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not (may not) have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come." Matthew 10:23. Then note what He told them in Matthew 19:28: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

This may explain the "why" of the question of these men in Acts 1:6: "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" This may explain why, as far as we have any record in the Book of Acts, the twelve apostles did not preach in other cities than the cities of Israel and why there is no record in Acts that they preached to any Gentiles, except to the household of Cornelius. Any Gentile who may have been saved while Jesus Christ was on earth as the Minister of the Circumcision (Romans 15:8) became a Jew by religion.

But now for reconciliation in Romans 5:11: "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the reconciliation," (Not "atonement"—it should be "reconciliation.") "Wherefore"—Wherefore what? "As by one man—sin and death." Who was that one man? Adam. "Reconciliation"—"Wherefore"—"Adam"—"sin"—"condemnation"—"alienation"—"death." "As in Adam all die." I Corinthians 15:22. In Christ; by Christ—"justification," "righteousness," "reconciliation," "life". In Romans 1:18 to 32 we have the record of God's wrath visited upon the Gentiles just before God elected Abram, at the time when universal idolatry and ungodliness prevailed. God gave over, gave up, the Gentiles at the time God cast them away. That was more than 1900 years B.C.

God gave up the Gentiles about 1900 B.C. He gave up the nation Israel about 1900 years ago. When God turned from Abram's seed, Israel, and cast them away, about 1900 years ago, God turned to the Gentiles with the ministry of reconciliation and with the dispensation of the grace of God. Paul was His human instrument: "For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office" Romans 11:13.

Most assuredly the Lord did not instruct Peter and the Eleven to inaugurate this Gentile program on the day of Pentecost; and those who have "the dispensation of the grace of God," "the dispensation of the mystery," begin with Peter and the Eleven, on an Israelitish religious feast day, do greatly err. These men are largely responsible for the faulty dispensationalism that is taught by the sectarian leaders and by most of the "Premillennial" Fundamentalists of the day. Peter and the Eleven in their recorded "Acts" ministry preached concerning the Abrahamic Covenant. To them was committed the gospel of the circumcision. Galatians 2:7. Paul was the Lord's apostle of reconciliation. His testimony in Acts 20:24 and in Ephesians 3:1 to 3, is, that the Lord committed to him the gospel of the grace of God, the dispensation of grace.

After Paul wrote of "Adam" and "reconciliation" in the fifth chapter of Romans, he wrote to the saints in the sixth chapter, that they had died and had been buried and had been raised to walk in newness of life; that their old man had been crucified. So new creation and identification

follow reconciliation. Our great commission is this side “the fall of Israel.” Read it in II Corinthians 5:18 to 21.

Thus we see how alienation is linked with Adam and the old creation, and how it is mentioned in Corinthians with **“reconciliation”**, Christ and **“the new creation.”** We can likewise see how **“identification”** is linked with reconciliation and the new creation. Again, in II Corinthians 5:12 to 21, “the new creation,” “reconciliation” “and identification” are all linked together. The sinner belongs to the old creation: he is identified with Adam and he is alienated from the life of God. Judgment and condemnation are his portion. With the new creation in Christ everything is different.

At the time of the flood when Noah’s family went into the ark, God destroyed all the children of Adam, except Noah’s family. There was a new beginning with the human race after the flood. Several centuries later the awful judgment of Romans 1:16 to 32 fell upon the Gentiles. They were cut off and given up by God. Abram was circumcised; then followed the birth of the nation Israel. The Gentiles were alienated from the commonwealth of Israel about that time. Israel lost her place of governmental political control about 600 B.C. But until about the middle of the first Christian century, Israel continued to be God’s religious nation, with spiritual authority. Then Israel was set aside, about 1900 years ago. It was at that time that the Lord’s special apostle was sent with the message of reconciliation and grace to the alienated children of Adam. He found the wicked Gentiles twice alienated, alienated in Adam from the life of God by wicked works, and alienated from the commonwealth of Israel. First alienated in Adam, and again alienated from the commonwealth of Israel after the call of Abraham.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was on earth, the children of Adam, other than the children of Abraham, were still alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and from the life of God. Christ, on earth, was not sent to them. He told His twelve apostles not to go in their way. But some years later Christ spoke from heaven. He said to Paul, “Get thee quickly out of Jerusalem” “I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.” Acts 22:17 to 22. The Twelve remained in Jerusalem. Acts 8:1. Their message was to the children of the covenant. Acts 3:25. Galatians 2:9.

With the turn from Israel, from the children of the covenant, with the gospel of reconciliation to the Gentiles who were strangers from the covenant, the Lord Jesus in heaven gave Paul a commission and a ministry that superseded the so-called “great commission” of Matthew 28:19 and 20, committed to Peter and the Eleven, and the gospel of the circumcision committed to them. Galatians 2:7. Note Paul’s commission in II Corinthians 5:18: “And all things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given us the ministry of reconciliation.” Ephesians 3:1 to 3 and 8: “For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,)” “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”

These Divine orders were given by revelation; and with these orders remember the testimony of the apostle in Romans 11:13: “I magnify mine office . . . for I am the apostle to the Gentiles.” And also remember his testimony in I Corinthians 1:17, “Christ sent me not to baptize.”

In the Scriptures, where the message of reconciliation is mentioned, the Holy Spirit speaks of the One Divine Baptism; but never of water baptism. Note Romans 5:10 and 11 with Romans 6:3 to 6. Note Colossians 1:20 and 21 with Colossians 2:12. Note Ephesians 2:13 with Ephesians 4:5.

MESSAGE NUMBER 70

THREE ROMAN OFFICIALS OF THE FIRST CENTURY

The Development of Christianity

I shall never forget the light, help and blessing that came to my soul when, after having read several times the interesting Bible accounts of these three Roman officials, I began to understand the doctrinal significance attached to each of the records. Two of the Roman Gentiles were centurions. The third Roman Gentile was “the deputy of the country.”

The first of these Roman officials was the first Gentile man to whom the Lord Jesus ministered while He was here among His people. The second of the Roman officials was the first Gentile man to whom Peter ministered seven or eight years after Christ’s death and resurrection. The third of these Roman officials was the first Gentile man to whom Saul of Tarsus ministered (so far as there is any Bible record) about twelve years after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

CONCERNING THE FIRST ROMAN OFFICIAL

“AND WHEN HE HEARD OF JESUS, HE SENT UNTO HIM THE ELDER’S OF THE JEWS, BESEECHING HIM THAT HE WOULD COME AND HEAL HIS SERVANT. AND WHEN THEY CAME TO JESUS, THEY BESOUGHT HIM INSTANTLY, SAYING, THAT HE WAS WORTHY FOR WHOM HE SHOULD DO THIS: FOR HE LOVETH OUR NATION, AND HE HATH BUILT US A SYNAGOGUE.” “WHEN JESUS HEARD THESE THINGS, HE MARVELED AT HIM, AND TURNED HIM ABOUT, AND SAID UNTO THE PEOPLE THAT FOLLOWED HIM, I SAY UNTO YOU, I HAVE NOT FOUND SO GREAT FAITH, NO, NOT IN ISRAEL.” Luke 7:3 to 5 and 9.

CONCERNING THE SECOND ROMAN OFFICIAL

“THERE WAS A CERTAIN MAN IN CAESAREA CALLED CORNELIUS, A CENTURION OF THE BAND CALLED THE ITALIAN BAND, A DEVOUT MAN, AND ONE THAT FEARETH GOD WITH ALL HIS HOUSE, WHICH GAVE MUCH ALMS TO THE PEOPLE, AND PRAYED TO GOD ALWAY.” “AND THEY SAID, CORNELIUS THE CENTURION, A JUST MAN, AND ONE THAT FEARETH GOD, AND OF GOOD REPORT AMONG ALL THE NATION OF THE JEWS, WAS WARNED FROM GOD BY AN HOLY ANGEL TO SEND FOR THEE INTO HIS HOUSE, AND TO HEAR WORDS OF THEE.” Acts 10:1, 2 and 22.

CONCERNING THE THIRD ROMAN OFFICIAL

“THE DEPUTY OF THE COUNTRY, SERGIUS PAULUS, A PRUDENT MAN, WHO CALLED FOR BARNABAS AND SAUL AND DESIRED TO HEAR THE WORD OF GOD.” Acts 13:7.

Surely the account of a prudent politician who desires to hear the Word of God is not an ordinary story. In fact, when you have carefully scanned the stories of these three gentlemen under consideration, you will agree with me that they were Gentiles who were different from the average run of Gentiles who lived in the days of Christ and His apostles.

To the person who loves the Lord Jesus and wants to understand the Bible, surely the development of Christianity as taught by the experiences of Christ and His apostles with these three Roman officials should be of unusual interest. So we present the full stories.

THE FIRST CENTURION

“Now when He had ended all His sayings in the audience of the people, He entered into Capernaum. And a certain centurion’s servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto Him the elders of the Jews, beseeching Him that He would come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus they besought Him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom He should do this; For he loveth our nation and hath built us a synagogue. Then Jesus went with them. And when He was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying unto Him, Lord, trouble not Thyself; for I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof: Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto Thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.” Luke 7:1 to 10.

“When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Matthew 8:10 to 12.

THE SECOND CENTURION

“There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band. A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on Him he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And He said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter.” “Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius, and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek; what is the cause wherefore ye are come?” “And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up,

saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation: but God hath spewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.” “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the Word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit.” “When they heard these things they held their Peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” Acts 10:1 to 5— Acts 10:21 and 25 to 28— Acts 10:34 and 35— Acts 10:44 and 45— Acts 11:18.

THE THIRD ROMAN OFFICIAL

“And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man: who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the Word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith, Then Saul (who also is called Paul) filled with the Holy Spirit, set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.”

“Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.” Acts 13:6 to 12 and 46 to 48.

THE FIRST CENTURION

By carefully studying the Four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, we shall learn that this Roman centurion was not only the first Gentile man to whom Christ ministered, so far as the Bible Record is concerned, but that he was the only Gentile man who received a blessing in connection with the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus. This was then an unusual case, and the case of an unusual Gentile.

Christ did bless another unusual Gentile, a Greek woman. Like the centurion she was a Gentile of great faith. The story is related in Mark 7:24 to 30 and Matthew 15:22 to 28. To that Gentile woman Christ made two significant statements.

“Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled; for it is not meet to take the children’s bread and to cast it unto the dogs.” Mark 7:27.

“He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Matthew 15:24.

Yes, these statements are full of meaning for the student of the Scriptures. **“Let the children first be filled.”** Gentiles were not children. The Jews were the children.

About fourteen years after Christ uttered these words, Paul said to the Jews, **“it was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” Acts 13:46.**

Later on we shall endeavor to show the full import of these most interesting and significant words, **“Lo, we turn to the Gentiles.”** But remember the words of the Lord Jesus to the Gentile woman, **“let the Jews first be filled.”**

Then note the words of the Lord Jesus to the Gentile man concerning the children: **“BUT THE CHILDREN OF THE KINGDOM SHALL BE CAST OUT INTO OUTER DARKNESS; THERE SHALL BE WEEPING AND GNASHING OF TEETH.” Matthew 8:12.**

This meant that Divine judgment was in store for the children. The Jews were headed for trouble. This trouble for the Jews meant blessing for the Gentiles. Then about twenty-eight years later the Holy Spirit directed this statement to Gentiles:

“FOR AS YE IN TIMES PAST HAVE NOT BELIEVED GOD; YET HAVE NOW OBTAINED MERCY THROUGH THEIR UNBELIEF.” Romans 11:30.

All through the Book of Acts, in the development of Christianity, God’s program was suggested by Christ’s experience and words with the only two Gentiles who received a kingdom blessing from Him while He was here on earth.

“LET THE CHILDREN FIRST BE FILLED.” “THE CHILDREN OF THE KINGDOM SHALL BE, CAST INTO OUTER DARKNESS.” All through the Book of Acts period God’s order was, “to the Jew first.” At the close of the period God’s terrible judgment was pronounced upon the Jews. Read the awful judgment of darkness in Acts 28:25 to 28.

“And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Spirit by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive; For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.” Acts 28:25 to 28.

But now for the other statement: **“But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Matthew 15:24.**

Note also Matthew 10:5 to 7 and 10:23:

“These Twelve Jesus sent forth and commanded them, saying Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 10:5 to 7.

“And when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.” Matthew 10:23.

Then note why the publican received a blessing from the Lord Jesus: **“And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as, he also is a son of Abraham.” Luke 19:9.**

Now we see why the case of the centurion was an unusual case. He was not a son of Abraham. He was not numbered among the lost sheep of Israel. He knew his place. But he loved the Jews and had paid for their religious house of worship. He did not presume to approach Jesus of Nazareth. He acknowledged himself to be an unworthy Gentile. He asked the Jews to go to their Messiah for him. They did and they told their Messiah that the centurion was worthy. He was of great faith. He received the unusual from Israel’s Messiah. Let us remember the words of Romans 15:8:

“NOW I SAY THAT JESUS CHRIST WAS A MINISTER OF THE CIRCUMCISION FOR THE TRUTH OF GOD, TO CONFIRM THE PROMISES MADE UNTO THE FATHERS.”

Compare this with another verse in the same chapter:

“THAT I SHOULD BE THE MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST TO THE GENTILES, MINISTERING THE GOSPEL OF GOD, THAT THE OFFERING UP OF THE GENTILES MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE, BEING SANCTIFIED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.” Romans 15:16.

Now once again think of the words of the Lord Jesus on earth and compare them with Paul’s word, nearly fifteen years later. **“I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” “Lo, we turn to the Gentiles.”**

Why did they turn? Because the Jews put it from them.

CONCERNING CORNELIUS, THE GENTILE

If any man ever deserved to be saved, surely Cornelius did; for he feared God, and prayed to God; he was just and devout and was in good standing with God’s nation Israel. But he was uncircumcised. Unto Peter was committed the gospel of the circumcision. Galatians 2:7. By a wonderful vision God sent Peter to preach to Cornelius.

It is interesting to compare the two statements of Peter in Acts 10:28 and in Acts 10:34 and 35. In Acts 10:28 Peter declared that it was an unlawful thing for a man that was a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation. But God, in a vision, told Peter that He was now ready to depart from the old order; so Peter said, **“Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.” Acts 10:34 and 35.** This was the Word which God sent to Israel in Judaea. Acts 10:36 and 37.

Later on, God sent a different word to the Gentiles, by Paul: **“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Romans 4:4 and 5.**

Quite different words from Acts 10:34 and 35.

Note the reaction on the part of the other apostles and Jewish brethren, when they heard that Peter had preached to Cornelius, the God-fearing, Jew-loving Gentile: **“And the apostles and**

brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the Word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.” Acts 11:1 to 3.

They did not approve of the new Divine movement toward the Gentiles. But after Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, we read these words “When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” Acts 11:18.

We emphasize **“then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.”** When? About seven or eight years after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

PETER AND PAUL

In the light of these Scriptures, and the fact stated in Acts 11:19, we learn that during the first nine chapters of Acts, God’s order was the same as during the years of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, “to the Jew only.” After Saul became Paul, and thereafter throughout the Book of Acts, God’s order was “to the Jew first” and “also to the Gentile.” But this order ceased after Paul, in Rome, became the prisoner of Jesus Christ for Gentiles.

“FOR THIS CAUSE, I PAUL, THE PRISONER OF JESUS CHRIST FOR YOU GENTILES, IF YE HAVE HEARD OF THE DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD WHICH IS GIVEN ME TO YOU-WARD: HOW THAT BY REVELATION HE MADE KNOWN UNTO ME THE MYSTERY.” Ephesians 3:1 to 3.

It is quite interesting to compare Peter’s statement in Acts 15:7 with the statement concerning Peter’s ministry in Galatians 2:9:

“AND WHEN THERE HAD BEEN MUCH DISPUTING, PETER ROSE UP, AND SAID UNTO THEM, MEN AND BRETHREN, YE KNOW HOW THAT A GOOD WHILE AGO GOD MADE CHOICE AMONG US, THAT THE GENTILES BY MY MOUTH SHOULD HEAR THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL AND BELIEVE.” Acts 15:7.

“AND WHEN JAMES, PETER AND JOHN, WHO SEEMED TO BE PILLARS, PERCEIVED THE GRACE THAT WAS GIVEN UNTO ME, THEY GAVE TO ME AND BARNABAS THE RIGHT HANDS OF FELLOWSHIP; THAT WE SHOULD GO UNTO THE HEATHEN, AND THEY UNTO THE CIRCUMCISION.” Galatians 2:9.

After God selected Peter to preach to the household of Cornelius He decided that Peter should confine his testimony to the Jews. The only time that Peter was out of the land of the Jews, according to the “Acts” record, he certainly proved that he was not the man of God to preach to Gentiles

“For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.” Galatians 2:12.

Let us keep in mind the fact that Peter and the Eleven remained in Jerusalem. Acts 8:1 and Acts 15:2. Christ promised them twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Matthew 19:28. The Twelve were to go over the cities of Israel. Matthew 10:23. They preached to devout Jews out of every nation under heaven. Acts 2:5. But it was Paul who assumed the responsibility of preaching to the Gentiles, the gospel of the uncircumcision and the unsearchable riches of Christ. Galatians 2:7—Romans 15:16—Ephesians 3:8—II Timothy 1:11—I Timothy 2:6 and 7—Romans 11:13. It was Paul who declared that under his supervision and God-given authority,

the gospel had been preached all over the world, to every creature under heaven. Colossians 1:5 to 7 and Colossians 1:23.

Twelve apostles stood up on the day of Pentecost and preached to the twelve tribes of Israel. Acts 2:14 and 2:36. One of the Twelve was killed in Jerusalem, James, the brother of John. Acts 12:1 and 2. That murder occurred several years after Cornelius was saved.

Now, consider two interesting facts. First, there is no record in the Book of Acts, after the death of James, concerning the activities of the Twelve, only as Peter and James and the other nine apostles had dealings with the Apostle Paul. And again: There is no record in the Book of Acts that any of the Twelve preached outside of the land of the Jews, or that any of them, (except Peter's message to Cornelius) preached to any other Gentile during the "Acts" period. They agreed to go to the Jews. Galatians 2:9. Twelve apostles to twelve tribes. One apostle of the Gentiles. Romans 11:13. The Twelve are to have a ministry to the twelve tribes in the future. Matthew 19:28—Revelation 21:12 to 14.

Now note the statement of James and Peter concerning the salvation of the household of Cornelius:

"AND AFTER THEY HAD HELD THEIR PEACE. JAMES ANSWERED, SAYING, MEN AND BRETHREN, HEARKEN UNTO ME: SIMEON HATH DECLARED HOW GOD AT THE FIRST DID VISIT THE GENTILES, TO TAKE OUT OF THEM A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME. AND TO THIS AGREE THE WORDS OF THE PROPHETS; AS IT IS WRITTEN, AFTER THIS I WILL RETURN, AND WILL BUILD AGAIN THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID, WHICH IS FALLEN DOWN: AND I WILL BUILD AGAIN THE RUINS THEREOF. AND I WILL SET IT UP: THAT THE RESIDUE OF MEN MIGHT SEEK AFTER THE LORD, AND ALL THE GENTILES UPON WHOM MY NAME IS CALLED, SAITH THE LORD. WHO DOETH ALL THESE THINGS. KNOWN UNTO GOD ARE ALL HIS WORKS FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD." Acts 15:13 to 18.

God visited Cornelius in agreement with Amos' Prophecy. Read Amos 9:11 to 15. Amos' prophecy concerning Gentile salvation was quite different from the unsearchable (unprophesied) riches of Christ which Paul preached to the Gentiles (Ephesians 3:8) concerning the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6. "Same Body" should be translated "JointBody." This "Joint-Body" may be called in Ephesians, "the Church of the Mystery," "the dispensation of the mystery which was hid in God." Ephesians 3:9

It was one thing for God to visit the Gentiles to take out from them a people for His name. It is quite a different thing for God to make of Jew and Gentile the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6, "the One New Man" of Ephesians 2:15. We must be careful not to confuse the prophesied Gentile program of Acts 15:13 to 18 with the unprophesied Gentile program of Ephesians 2:15 to 3:11.

The kingdom program of the Lord, under the Twelve, recorded in Acts, chapters two to eleven, was something of a pattern of what is going to take place on this earth after God has finished His eternal purpose concerning "the dispensation of the mystery."

"And to make all men see what is the fellowship (dispensation) of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God. Who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Ephesians 3:9 to 11.

Note God's purpose in this age:

“And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:11 to 13.

Note in Acts 2:16 to 18—Acts 2:27 to 35—Acts 3:19 to 25—and Acts 15:13 to 18, that Peter presented God’s prophesied kingdom program, with Christ on David’s throne. Joel’s Prophecy fulfilled, the times of the restitution of all things prophesied by prophets.

“Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many is have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.” Acts 3:24.

Peter preached concerning Israel’s kingdom days and Israel’s prophets spoke concerning these days.

Israel’s prophets did not speak concerning these days, concerning the Body of Christ. the Church of the Mystery. We must know the difference between God’s prophesied kingdom and the unprophesied Body of Christ.

This surely was an important distinction in the mind of the Holy Spirit when He dictated the words of II Timothy 2:15:

“STUDY TO SHEW THYSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD, A WORKMAN THAT NEEDETH NOT TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH.”

Perhaps we sometimes want to give a hearty “Amen” to Peter’s words concerning the profound truth which the Lord revealed to Paul:

“And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable, wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.” II Peter 3:15 and 16.

Let us not follow the blind leaders who insist that there is no difference between the “gospel of the circumcision,” which was committed to Peter and “the gospel of the uncircumcision,” which was committed unto Paul. Galatians 2:7. But let us understand that the word “gospel” covers many phases of Divine Truth, and that both Peter and Paul, and all the other saved Jews and Gentiles, have been saved by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Two serious blunders have been made by the majority of Bible teachers, by even those who are recognized leaders among Fundamentalists. They erroneously have the Old Testament (Covenant) begin with the first part of Genesis instead of with the twentieth chapter of Exodus, 2500 years later. “The law was added.” Galatians 3:19. “The law entered.” Romans 5:20. The Old Testament was added 2500 years after Adam sinned.

Another serious blunder that is responsible for confusion, controversies, and fanaticism among God’s redeemed people, is the erroneous teaching that the “dispensation of the mystery” began with Peter and Pentecost instead of with Saul after his name was changed to Paul. Acts 15:13 and Ephesians 2:15 are two different programs.

One champion of this faulty dispensationalism, who is a recognized leader among Fundamentalists, writes that the new dispensation of the mystery began with Peter. Then he writes in another message: “A dispensation then is a period of time in which God is dealing with men in some way in which He has not dealt with them before. Moreover there may be degrees of revelation.” “Only when a new revelation from God is given, does a dispensation change.” “The whole counsel of God was not made known until Paul received this revelation of the mystery.”

“It was a special revelation given not to the Twelve, but to him as the apostle of the new dispensation.”

In spite of these statements, this man of God teaches that the new dispensation began with Peter on the day of Pentecost before he received the housetop vision. Contradiction as well as blunder.

THE THIRD ROMAN OFFICIAL

In the thirteenth chapter of Acts is recorded one of the most interesting and significant stories in the Bible, including what some one has called, “a dispensational miracle.” Here we have the story of two Jews and a Gentile, “Barjesus,” “Saul” and “Paulus.” Bar-jesus was an unbelieving Jew, filled with all subtilty (guile). He tried to turn the Gentile away from the faith. Saul was a believing Jew, filled with the Holy Spirit. He tried to turn the Gentile unto the faith. But Saul himself had been a blaspheming, unbelieving Jew. Note his own testimony: “Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.” I Timothy 1:13. Bar-jesus then was not one whit worse than Saul. Both Bar-jesus and Saul were blind spiritually, and both of them were visited with physical blindness and had to be led about by another.

Note concerning Saul: “they led him by the hand ... and he was three days without sight.” Acts 9:8 and 9.

Note concerning Bar-jesus: **“And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand”** Acts 13:11.

Note what happened to Paulus, the Gentile, because of the unbelief and blindness of Bar-jesus

“THEN THE DEPUTY, WHEN HE SAW WHAT WAS DONE, BELIEVED, BEING ASTONISHED AT THE DOCTRINE OF THE LORD.” Acts 13:12.

Here we have the very same Divine Truth that we have in Romans 11:7 to 11 and Romans 11:25 to 30. Concerning Israel, God gave them eyes that they should not see: “Let their eyes be darkened.” “The rest were blinded.” “A blindness to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” “For ye (Gentiles) in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief.”

When God sent blindness upon Israel, He cast away Israel, and that meant reconciliation for the Gentiles. That caused Paul to exclaim: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!” Romans 11:33.

Note again Acts 13:12: “Then the deputy, when he saw what was done. believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.” Then note Acts 14:27:

“AND WHEN THEY WERE COME AND HAD GATHERED THE CHURCH TOGETHER, THEY REHEARSED ALL, THAT GOD HAD DONE WITH THEM, AND HOW HE HAD OPENED THE DOOR OF FAITH UNTO THE GENTILES.”

Perhaps we can now see why the Divine judgment (blindness) upon Barjesus, has been called “a dispensational miracle,” for it marked one of the most radical dispensational changes in all of God’s dealings with the human race.

When Paulus beheld the miracle. he was astonished at the doctrine of the Lord. and believed unto salvation. Saul became “Paulus” the apostle to the Gentiles. Romans 11:13. He

took the name of the Gentile convert, This was most significant. It is in the thirteenth chapter of Acts, following; the salvation of Paulus, that we find the apostle's significant statement, "lo, we turn to the Gentiles." Note why he said this in Acts 13:45 and 46. It was because the unbelieving Jews blasphemed. Then followed the important news of Acts 14:27, that God had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

The doctrine of the Lord, in connection with Israel, and their blindness. which has continued unto this day, should cause every Gentile to believe God and His Word, and to take advantage of God's gracious offer of reconciliation through Jesus Christ our Lord.

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Romans 5:10.

"And all things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." II Corinthians 5:18.

Note the contrast between two Jews, Nathanael and Bar-jesus. Concerning Nathanael, Jesus Christ said, "behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." John 1:47. Christ saw Nathanael under the fig tree. Nathanael replied: "Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel." John 1:48 and 49. Nathanael means "the rift of God." Concerning the future salvation of Israel, the Scriptures declare: "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Romans 11:27 to 29. The fig tree in the Bible speaks of the nation Israel. In the coming Kingdom age, under the guaranty of the New Covenant. God is going to take all guile out of Israel. and "they will look on Him Whom they pierced." They too shall say, "Thou art the King of Israel."

The Son of God is yet to be the King of Israel, and He will plant His people in their own land and no one shall ever pluck them up again. Amos 9:11 to 15. Note Ezekiel 36:25 and 37:25:

"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you." "And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob My servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever; and My servant David shall be their prince for ever."

Bar-jesus had an excellent name, but he was a "child of the devil," "the enemy of all righteousness." He was full of guile. Acts 13:10. He was exactly what Nathanael was not. But he was what Israel, in her blindness and rebellion, now is. Nathanael was what Israel is to be in the coming golden age on earth. "Bar-jesus" means "tile child of Jehovah Saviour." What a splendid name! That was the place and responsibility of Israel. Israel was the child of Jehovah Saviour, chosen to turn Gentiles unto faith. Isaiah 43:1, 7 and 10. But like Bar-jesus, they turned them away from the faith.

In almost every city where Paul went preaching the Word of God. the unbelieving Jews, did all in their power to keep the Gentiles from believing. Note the general charge against them in I Thessalonians 2:14 and 15: "Ye also have suffered like things of your countrymen, even as they have of the Jews; who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God. and are contrary to all men."

Remember that Bar-Jesus, the child of Jehovah, was to be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. This is Israel's predicament. Blind, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. Romans 11:25. And then Malachi 4:2 will be fulfilled. "But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall." Then note the blessed condition of Israel as told in Jeremiah 31:34 and Hebrews 8:11: "And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest."

Surely this should cause us to diligently study the eleventh chapter of Romans as never before and know that it is one of God's dispensational chapters, one of His great dispensational chapters, the truth of which was foretold in the dispensational miracle of Acts 13, the story, of a blind Jew, whose blindness caused the Gentile to turn to the Lord for salvation.

But we know that the Gentiles were also blind; they were in spiritual darkness. The blindness of the Gentiles is told in Romans also: "Because that. when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Romans 1:21. The corruption of the Gentiles is told in Romans 1:18 to 32. Note Romans 1:29: "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers." God gave them up. When God gave up the Gentiles, centuries before Jesus Christ came from heaven, then He created a new thing for His glory, the nation Israel: "Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable." Hebrews 11:12. God cut off all nations but Israel. Gentiles had to come under the covenant of circumcision. and become affiliated with Israel, to receive God's blessing. God dealt with all nations through one elect nation.

With the Gentiles given up and Israel set aside, what would happen to the human race? Would God bring an end to the human race, or bring in the reign of grace? The answer is Titus 2:11 to 13—Ephesians 2:7—Romans 5:21—and Romans 5:1 and 2.

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." "That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

Now I sincerely trust the reader sees the dispensational truth taught in the experiences of these three Roman officials, and that the beginning of this present dispensation of grace marked God's changed attitude toward Gentiles who can have God's special favor, righteousness, and eternal glory, without religion, yea, even "without a cause." The word "freely" in Romans 3:24, is "dorian" and means literally "without a cause." But let us also by faith appropriate the necessary grace for every test, trial and task, remembering II Corinthians 9:5:

"And God is also able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."