

BIBLE STUDY FOR BEREANS

JANUARY 1936

INSIDE FRONT COVER

“HAPPY ARE YE IF YE DO THEM”

We sincerely wish for our readers the happiest of all Happy New Years. Spiritual happiness is the true abiding happiness. This happiness comes from knowing the Word of God and doing the Word of God. “Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only.” Hear these words spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ: “IF YE KNOW THESE THINGS, HAPPY ARE YE IF YE DO THEM.” John. 13:17.

Unless we earnestly, diligently, prayerfully, systematically, and spiritually study the Word of God, we shall not know the Word of God. Moreover, if we would so know the Word of God as to get from its study the greatest enjoyment, profit and blessing, by intelligently appropriating, interpreting and applying it, we must obey II Timothy 2:15 and rightly divide the Word.

We are members of the Church, which is the Body of Christ. The words which were spoken by prophets, priests, kings and apostles to God’s redeemed people, who were not members of the Body of Christ, were for their obedience, practice and guidance. “God spake all these words”, so they were just as much inspired as is the truth that is addressed directly to us. But let us not misappropriate, or misapply, God’s instructions to Israel, not written to members of Christ’s Body. All Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.

We are sure that the “Red Letter New Testament” was never printed by the Spirit’s leading. God who spake in divers manners to the fathers, did speak in His Son. Hearing such words from the holy Son of God, His disciples could but wonder at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth; for He spake as never man spake. But every intelligent student of the Word knows that very much of what Jesus of Nazareth spoke on earth was directly to, and exclusively for, Israel. Many of His messages were not addressed to the Body of Christ, nor to individual members of that Body. Christ never intended that the religious program that He presented to Israel should be adopted and practiced by the Church which is His Body. Neither did He intend that all of His commission, given to the Twelve Apostles, should be binding upon the members of His Body.

Some time ago an unsaved man, who had read the Four Gospels quite thoroughly, said to me: “if a Christian today is one who obeys the commands that Jesus Christ gave to His Twelve Apostles, I have never seen a Christian.” Have you? Perhaps you will never appreciate the folly of the “anti-dispensationalists” until you take a pencil and go carefully, verse by verse, through Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and the Book of Acts, and mark in those five Books all of the instructions and commands of the Lord Jesus that are wholly ignored by all Christians today. Not even an attempt is made by the Lord’s true, spiritual messengers of grace today, to obey or practice them. Why? That’s the question. Why? If the answer is one acceptable to God, it must

be, “not intended for this Divine period of special Gentile favor.” There should be a Scriptural explanation for a Scriptural elimination.

All Christians either assent to the fact that many of the Words of Jesus and His Twelve were not intended for members of the Body of Christ, or they are wilfully negligent and disobedient. They prefer to keep silent as to why they have no place in their spiritual program whatever for fifty or more of the commands, practices, messages, signs and works of the disciples in the Four Gospels and Acts. But their silence breaks forth into loud and vigorous protests when a servant of the Lord offers the one and only Divine rule in defense of all Christians who omit from their Church creeds and their spiritual program so much that rightfully belonged to God’s people in a former dispensation.

Just what dispensation is this? And where in the Bible is this present dispensation described? Where is God’s spiritual program for members of the Body of Christ during this dispensation? These are most important questions that we are endeavoring to answer in this magazine.

We want to practice what is, with many of our Fundamentalists, more than a theory. They are sure that they are “grace” preachers, but their programs are really a mixture of grace and

Surely we shall find in Christ’s revelations to the Apostle Paul, the Scriptural “dispensational” key to the intelligent, spiritual understanding, interpretation and application of all of the truth of all of the Bible. If we thus know the things of Christ, happy will we be if we do them. In no other way can we be of power and of love and of a sound mind in rightly dividing the Word of truth, and thus walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called and walk well pleasing to the Lord.

IS THE ONE BODY OF ROMANS

THE ONE BODY OF EPHESIANS?

By request I am printing this message on the Body in the Epistle to the Romans. Let me say, first, that I have sympathy with brethren who are troubled with the problem of the “fatherhood of Abraham” and “the root and fatness of the olive tree” of Romans 4:16 and Romans 11:17, with that ever present question: “Are members of the Body of Christ the seed of Abraham and “Is the Body of Christ ‘Spiritual Israel’?” I have tried to see a new Body beginning after that important climax in Acts 28:25 to 28; but I have seen too much spiritual disaster result from unsound exegesis and fanciful speculation of well meaning brethren, who have not only distinguished between things that differ, but between imaginary differences. Many of them begin by eliminating all that pertains to the New Covenant and they proceed to eliminate some things that they imagine are exclusively associated with the New Covenant, dropping the Lord’s Supper, the rapture of I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18, the judgment seat of II Corinthians 5:10 and Romans 14:10, the believer’s need of a high Priest, Intercessor, or Advocate. These eliminations are only stepping stones toward other eliminations.

In their determination and zeal to prove that these things are not binding on members of the Body of Christ, these brethren seek to prove that John wrote his Gospel, his three Epistles and Revelation before Paul wrote Colossians 1:24 to 28 (about 65 A.D.). Beginning the Body of Christ, of which we are members, this side of Acts 28:25 to 28, it leaves it optional with the

individual member, according to his judgment or inclination, as to what orders he accepts from Romans, Galatians and Corinthians. The selections and rejections may be according to the peculiar fancies of the different individual Christians. By such an unwise, unsound and unscriptural procedure many unconsciously and unintentionally use the pen-knife of so-called dispensationalism joining with Jehudi.

I am satisfied that the Enemy is responsible for these “extremists” to hinder the progress that has been made in recent years to uncover the glorious message of salvation by grace so long covered up in denominational creeds and religious traditions, and recover the blessed truth of the One Body.

Let us pray that God may give us that power, love and sound mind along with II Timothy 2:15. May I beseech believers, who are eager for the clear message of grace and the Lord’s spiritual program for His Body today, not to rush hastily into these fantastic ideas. Be careful, prayerful and spiritual in your Bible study.

With all my heart I do believe in “rightly dividing the Word of truth.” In no other way can we hope to deliver believers from the ritualism, fanaticism and undispensational mixtures so prevalent. We must “test the things that differ”, if we are to intelligently interpret and apply the Scriptures; that is, we should test and see if they really do differ. But that does not give us liberty to force the difference to support our theory of interpretation.

Surely no intelligent student of the Word should deny that there is a difference between Paul’s preaching the faith that he once destroyed and the gospel of the uncircumcision which was unknown to any of the apostles at the time Paul was in the faith-destroying business. Most assuredly there is a difference between the counsel of God referred to in Acts 20:27 and the eternal purpose of God in Christ, mentioned in Ephesians 3:11 and II Timothy 1:9 and 10. And according to internal Scriptural evidence and the opinion generally held by acceptable authorities, the Epistle to the Romans and II Corinthians were written after Paul’s declaration in Acts 20:24 and 20:27. We would ask that you kindly read this chapter; for we shall refer principally to these two Epistles, Romans and II Corinthians, in our investigation and answer to the question under consideration.

If you fail to read the full message, we suggest that you study diligently, prayerfully and spiritually the twenty questions at the close and answer them from the Word of God.

To teach that all that the Holy Spirit wrote by the pen of the Apostle Paul in Romans and II Corinthians was known to Moses and the prophets and is mentioned in their writings, is certainly not the mark of intelligent and careful Bible searching. And likewise, to agree that the mystery refers to that which was “unprophesied” but revealed by the risen Christ, and then teach that that mystery is not found in some of Paul’s Epistles, written during the “Acts” period, is teaching wholly unworthy of any Christian who passes for a competent and spiritual Bible teacher.

On the other hand, to teach that there are not glorious truths presented in Paul’s prison Epistles, not found in his other Epistles, regardless of the time he received the revelation of these truths is just as absurd.

IS THE BODY OF ROMANS THE BODY OF EPHESIANS?

It is conceded by all intelligent students of the Scriptures that Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans about 60 A.D. This Epistle is the only one that Paul wrote before he visited the city and ministered, to the people of the city in person. We read these words in Romans 1:13, “Now I

would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, but was hindered hitherto.” “I long to see you.” Romans 1:11.

Perhaps the very same year that Paul wrote to the Romans, “The Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.” Acts 23:11. About four years before this testimony came to Paul from the Lord Paul said, “After I have been to Jerusalem, I must also see Rome.” Acts 19:21. In Romans 15:24 we read these words of Paul, written to the saints at Rome; “Whenever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you.”

Unlike the opening verses of other of Paul’s Epistles, he does not address the Epistle to the Romans, “to the Church which is at Rome”, but “to all that be at Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints.” Romans 1:7. The word “church” does not appear in the Epistle until the last verse is reached. “Churches” is found in Romans 16:4 and 16. “Church” is found in Romans 16:5 and 23. In Romans 16:5 reference is made to the “church” which is in the house of Aquila and Priscilla. The word church is the Greek word “ekklesia”. The verb is “ek . . . kaleo”, meaning to call out. The Greek verb “Kaleo”, in several forms, is translated “call” one hundred times in the New Testament Scriptures. There is a mystery, mentioned in the Bible in connection with a certain Church in that Bible, but it is rather unfortunate that the word “church” has for centuries been shrouded in mystery and misunderstanding.

From the Greek word, translated several hundred times in the New Testament Scriptures, “Lord”, we get our word “church”. The Greek word is “Kurios”. We simply state these facts that our readers may know how indefinite is the word “church” when it is found in the Scriptures, unless defined. The word is found in Acts 19:32, 39 and 42, translated “assembly”, referring to sinners. Also in Acts 7:38, referring to Israel in the wilderness, 1490 B.C.

Because of the many “churches” in Christendom today we emphasize a fact known to all earnest, intelligent students of the Word of God; and that is, that God has but one true Bible Church in this dispensation of Gentile favor, and God definitely designates that Church, “The Church which is Christ’s Body”. Ephesians 1:19 to 22. Colossians 1:24 to 28, Moreover God’s Word declares that in connection with that One Body, there is one Head, or Lord, one hope of your calling, one faith and one baptism, even as there is one Spirit. Ephesians 4:4 and 5.

THERE IS ONE BODY

Perhaps you are aware of the no small stir that is abroad concerning this One Body. In some sections of the land there is a controversy, even unpleasant in spots, and Fundamentalists are much exercised about definitely fixing the time of the beginning of this Body historically. They all know that this church was purposed by God in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world; that members of that Body were predestined to be conformed to the image of God’s Son, to be children of God and joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ; that members of His Body were chosen to be seated with Him where He now is, in the heavenlies, and there blessed with Him with all spiritual blessings. Ephesians 1:1 to 22. The Divine Record is, that that Body is One New Man. Ephesians 2:15.

The aggressive Fundamentalists of today are mostly Premillenarians. All of these Premillenarians believe and teach that after this dispensation of grace, after the calling out of the Church, which is Christ’s Body, that is, after this Body has been filled up with the last member, the same Christ, who is now the Head of the Body, will return as King to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on this earth. This will be the same Kingdom which Christ proclaimed when He was

here as the Man Jesus of Nazareth in the midst of His people Israel. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.

Most of these aggressive Fundamentalists state dogmatically and positively that that Body had its birthday on the day of Pentecost, about fifty days after the resurrection of the Son of God. There are a number of objections to this date. Some of these aggressive Fundamentalists, very much in the minority, state with the same degree of dogmatism and positiveness, that that Church, the Body of Christ did not have its historical beginning until after the events, recorded in the Book of Acts, had come to an end. They teach that the Body of Ephesians is altogether different from the Body of Romans. Let us now examine the Scriptures to see whether these things are true.

That the Church of Christ, which existed before Paul reached Rome, was called “one Body”, no intelligent person would think of denying; for no language could be more simple than this statement found in 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.” But these brethren, who fix the date of the beginning of the Body of Ephesians and Colossians after Paul’s arrival at Rome, state that the Body of Romans is a different Body, although it was the Church of God in Christ.

No student should deny that in Ephesians and Colossians there is a position; that there are possessions; that there are glories; that there is a ministry belonging to the Body of Christ, not mentioned’ in Paul’s pre-prison Epistles. But let us show, by stating the blessings which are common to the Body of the “Acts” period and the Body of the later period, that the two Bodies are identical; at the same time agreeing with the “later-date” brethren that there is a new administration and order in the “Post-Acts” Church. This is quite different from teaching that there are two separate, different, or distinct Bodies.

Some of these brethren seek to prove by I Timothy 4:13, Philemon 22 and II Timothy 1:15, that between Paul’s two imprisonments in Rome he went back to Asia (perhaps Europe also) and preached a message which superseded the message he had preached in the same cities before the “Acts” period closed. This was a new revelation from Christ and was the dispensation of the mystery”, the “untraceable riches of Christ”, guaranteeing to members of this new Body, a hope and a calling different from the hope and calling of the members of the Body in Romans. These brethren are divided as to whether the entire living membership of the Body of Romans was transferred into the new Body, or only those members who were willing to receive the new teaching; or whether all of the members of the first Body were left in the first Body, and only new converts were baptized into the “Post-Acts” Body. Of course, with this last theory, they have trouble getting Paul and Timothy and Luke and Titus into the new Body, but this does not seem to bother some of them. They are willing to leave them out, if this is necessary to prove their theory.

THE KINGDOM AND THE BODY

The Premillenarians, who teach that the Lord Jesus, while on earth, was offering the Kingdom of Heaven to the Nation Israel, admit that many individual Israelites were saved during those years of His earthly ministry. They say that any such saved Israelite, who died before Pentecost, died outside the Body of Christ, which did not begin until the day of Pentecost. They say they were not members of any Church; but that those who lived until the day of Pentecost became members of the Body of Christ. Perhaps you would like to ask them this question: “What

about the Israelites who had visited the land of the Jews while Christ was in the flesh, had believed on Him, and then had gone back to their homes in Asia or Europe or the Islands of the sea? Without being present on the day of Pentecost, did the Holy Spirit fall on them at home and make them members of that Body, which so many teach began on the day of Pentecost?" We could ask them a hundred questions which they could not answer.

But if they could, Scripturally, refer to the company of Israelites saved while Christ was on earth, as a "Kingdom Church," because they entered the Kingdom and were the Lord's "called-out", perhaps it would not be unscriptural for them to say, that, on the day of Pentecost the "Kingdom" Church became the "Body" Church to which 3000 were added. Acts 2:41 to 47. We are referring to the dispensationalism of the Premillenarians, who teach dogmatically that the Body of Ephesians 1:19 to 22 began on the day of Pentecost.

It is the teaching of the brethren, who fix the historical beginning of the Body of Ephesians after Acts 28:31 that there was a "Kingdom" Church during the "Acts" period superseded by the Body, which began after that period. Because they teach that the Church of the "Acts" period was the "Kingdom" Church and the Body of Ephesians did not begin with Acts 2:41, but after Acts 28:31, those whom we call the "Pentecost Body" brethren, call the "Post-Acts Body" brethren, "ultradispensationalists."

But now to the question: Is there Scriptural authority for calling the Body of Romans 12:4 and 5 a "Kingdom" Church altogether different from the Body of Ephesians 1:19 to 22?

Undoubtedly the expression "the Kingdom Church" may be something new to many Christians. Indeed, any Christian will fail to find the expression in the Bible. We should be willing to admit that the Lord Jesus was not saying, "The Church which is My Body, is at hand," when He preached "Repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" or when He said "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." Matthew 4:17. Mark 1:15. The particular kingdom, concerning which Christ preached, was that Kingdom mentioned by Israel's prophets in Israel's Scriptures. The Body of Colossians 1:24 to 28 and the Dispensation of the Mystery" of Ephesians 3:9, were God's own secrets, withheld from those prophets. So we must admit a difference between the "prophesied kingdom" and the "unprophesied Body."

Christ and His Twelve Apostles proclaimed "the gospel of the kingdom". Matthew 4:23; Matthew 9:35. That gospel of the kingdom is to be Israel's message again after this present dispensation of grace. Matthew 24:14.

THE PROPHETS AND THE KINGDOM

If we refer to Israel's Old Testament Scriptures, we shall learn that the kingdom gospel was foretold and that Gentiles were to receive blessings with God's Nation, Israel. Isaiah 2:2; Isaiah 11:10; Isaiah 42:1 to 6; Isaiah 49:6 and 22; Isaiah 52:15; Isaiah 60:3; Isaiah 62:2; Isaiah 66:12 to 19; Malachi 1:11; Psalm 46:10; Psalm 59:5; Ezekiel 26:3; Ezekiel 37:28; Ezekiel 38:16; Ezekiel 39:7; Ezekiel 39:21; Zechariah 9:10; Zechariah 2:11; Zechariah 8:22 and 23; Zechariah 14:16 to 18; Micah 4:2.

By studying all of these promises we shall learn that the Gentiles were to share, and shall yet share, the kingdom blessings with Israel and be joined with them in their religious ceremonies; "from one new moon to another, from one sabbath to another": "go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." Isaiah 66:23. Zechariah 14:16. In these prophecies we learn that the Gentiles are to seek the Lord. Let us read

God's Kingdom program and God's gospel of the kingdom for Israel and the nations in Amos 9:11 to 15:

“IN THAT DAY WILL I RAISE UP THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID THAT IS FALLEN, AND CLOSE UP THE BREACHES THEREOF; AND I WILL RAISE UP HIS RUINS, AND I WILL BUILD IT AS IN THE DAYS OF OLD:”

“THAT THEY MAY POSSESS THE REMNANT OF EDOM, AND OF ALL THE HEATHEN, WHICH ARE CALLED BY MY NAME, SAITH THE LORD THAT DOETH THIS.”

“BEHOLD, THE DAYS COME, SAITH THE LORD, THAT THE PLOWMAN SHALL OVERTAKE THE REAPER, AND THE TREADER OF GRAPES HIM THAT SOWETH SEED: AND THE MOUNTAINS SHALL DROP SWEET WINE, AND ALL THE HILLS SHALL MELT.”

“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.”

We desire to emphasize these verses because they were quoted by Simon Peter in Acts 15:14 to 18. A careful study of the ministry of Peter and the Eleven should convince any student of the Word of God that, during the days of the Lord on earth, they preached Israel's gospel of the kingdom to Israel. Matthew 10:5 to 12. And that student should also be convinced that Peter and the Eleven proclaimed that same kingdom gospel, with the resurrection of Christ added, on the day of Pentecost and thereafter. Acts 2:38. Acts 3:19 to 21. Acts 5:29 to 32. These Twelve later on agreed to preach the gospel of the circumcision to the circumcision. Galatians 2:7 to 9.

In Matthew 16:16 to 18, we learn, that the Lord Jesus committed to Peter the keys of the kingdom of the heavens. In Matthew 28:19 and 20 He likewise committed to them the so-called Great Commission. The keys of the kingdom of heaven will not fit into the dispensation of the mystery, mentioned in Ephesians 3:9. The Twelve, in the future, have some duties to perform in the kingdom; for they are to sit on twelve thrones and judge the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Matthew 19:28. Later on we shall refer to the Great Commission in the coming kingdom dispensation; for all Premillenarians, whether or not they work under this Commission now, teach that the Commission is to have an important place after the Body has been completed and this present dispensation of grace has ended. Under the terms of the New Covenant, all Israel shall be saved. Romans 11:25 to 28. Jeremiah 31:31 to 35. Surely Israel, called-out from all nations to their God and their King David, will be a “New Covenant Ekklesia”. If then they can be Scripturally called a Church, they can be Scripturally called a “Kingdom” Church. But we might properly ask this question: “What will the Apostle Paul have to do with that Church?” Will he then be preaching and practicing Matthew 28:19 and the Great Commission? Will he be preaching the gospel of the kingdom as the Apostle to the Gentiles? If not, did he preach such a gospel to the Gentiles in the Epistles to the Romans? Did he then work under the Great Commission when the Gentiles obtained mercy through Israel's unbelief? Romans 11:30.

PETER AND THE CHURCH

From Acts 1:21 to Acts 12:3, we learn how God held all of the Twelve Apostles in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1). He did not let one of them die until the household of Cornelius (the religious Gentile who was seeking Israel's God) received from Peter, with his kingdom keys, the Word which God sent to Israel, the gospel of the Kingdom. Acts 10:34 to 28. After Acts 13:2, "separate unto me Barnabas and Saul", nothing more of Peter's preaching is recorded in Acts, except his statement of what took place from Acts 2:22 to Acts 11:18. Here is the order, "Christ, in fulfillment of the Scriptures, raised to take David's throne". Acts 2:27 to 33. "The residue of Israelites". Acts 2:41 and Acts 4:4; Acts 6:7; Acts 11:19. "Then the seeking Gentile." Acts 10:31 and 32. Peter did not preach reconciliation, or the gospel of glory, to any of these converts. That was not committed to him. He had the keys of the kingdom. Mark 16:16 to 18.

Now observe, that Peter declared that all of this was in fulfillment of Amos 9:11 to 15; and as Amos was ignorant and silent concerning the Body of Christ, what the Lord was doing by Peter was not the making of the One New Man. Whether or not the Twelve and others became members of the Body after Acts 11:19 is another matter; but this is certain Peter's declaration concerning the taking out of Gentiles was not the mystery. This was made known to the sons of men in other ages.

PAUL'S MINISTRY

But now for the words of Paul, quoted in Acts 26:22 and 23.

"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."

When we consider what the prophets of Russellism, Mormonism, Adventism and Eddyism have done by taking a verse of Scripture and making their whole religious scheme fit into that verse, we should profit by their blunder and not try to rule the Church which is Christ's Body out of Romans, by the "none other things" of Acts 26:23. Paul wrote to the Corinthians that he was determined to know nothing among them except Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and yet, when we carefully read his two Epistles to them, we learn that he had told them many other things. We must search for the mind of the Spirit in taking one verse and not give to it a disconnected interpretation so literal as to prove a pet theory, while many other verses contradict that theory. Salvation for Jews and Gentiles was foretold by the prophets: the Gentile salvation to follow the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. But now we ask this question: What gospel did Paul preach in his Epistle to the Romans and other pre-prison Epistles? It is true that he was accused of saying that there was another King Jesus. Acts 17:7. But was the gospel of the uncircumcision of Galatians 2:7 to 9; Galatians 3:6 to 8, the gospel of the Kingdom? Was the gospel of the glory of Christ of II Corinthians 4:4, or the gospel of reconciliation of II Corinthians 5:17 to 21, or the gospel of righteousness by grace without a cause of Romans 3:24, the gospel of the Kingdom? Was the gospel of the grace of God, of Acts 20:24, the gospel of the Kingdom? Think of how we have had to contend against Pentecostalism for the great difference in these two gospels; and now let us not preach the negation of what we have stood for so uncompromisingly by stating that Paul was preaching the gospel of the Kingdom to get believers in the Kingdom Church. This is not the Berean method.

THE PROPHETS AND THE BODY OF ROMANS

Now let us cover these two points in our answer. 1. Can we find in Moses and the prophets all the doctrines of Paul proclaimed in Corinthians and Romans, written before Paul spoke the words of Acts 26:22 and 23? 2. If the “Kingdom” Church of the “Acts” period is to be revived and continued in the coming tribulation or kingdom age, will all that Paul wrote in those pre-prison Epistles be God’s order, program and message in that coming Kingdom age?

We are herein under presenting some messages, ministry, positions or blessings which are to be found in the Scriptures belonging to the Body in Romans 12:4 and 5 and also to the Body in Ephesians 1:19 to 22 and Ephesians 4:5. These common blessings seem to prove that they are not different Bodies, but the same Body:

1—Both of these Churches are described as Bodies, made up of members, who are sinners saved by grace, and who are in Christ. “We are one body in Christ.” Romans 12:5 Did the prophets foretell a Body in Christ? Will there be a Body in the next dispensation, such as is described in Romans 12:4 and 5?

2—The members in the Body of Romans and the members in the Body of Ephesians were saved without religion or works of righteousness. Romans 3:24 and Romans 4:1 to 6. Titus 3:5 to 7. Ephesians 2:8. II Timothy 1:9. Will sinners be saved without religion or works of righteousness during the coming Tribulation or Kingdom? Is there a difference between the gospel of the kingdom of Matthew 24:14 and the gospel of the grace of God in Acts 20:24.

3—Members of the Body of Romans and members of the Body of Ephesians were sealed with the Holy Spirit, as the earnest, and were sealed in both churches unto the day of redemption. II Corinthians 1:22. Romans 8:23. Ephesians 1:13, 14 and Ephesians 4:30. Where do we find in Old Testament prophecy anything concerning members of a Kingdom Church who will have the Holy Spirit earnest of a redemption body

4—One outstanding truth concerning the Body of Ephesians is that members of that Body are IN CHRIST. It is just as much true concerning members of the Body of Romans. Romans 8:1; II Corinthians 5:17 and 21.

5—Believing Jews and Gentiles in both Bodies were one in Christ. This might be considered the truth of John 17:9 to 20. But where is the prophecy that these two groups would be baptized into one Body, baptized into Christ, in whom there was neither Jew nor Greek. They had put on Christ Galatians 3:26 and 27. Ephesians 2:13 to 18.

6—The members of the Body of Romans and the Body of Ephesians and Colossians were rejoicing in the hope of glory; and Jesus Christ was within, that hope. II Corinthians 13:5; Galatians 2:20; Romans 5:2; Colossians 1:27. If this is called the mystery in Colossians 1:27, why was it not a mystery in II Corinthians and Romans?

7—In the Body of Romans members were predestinated to be conformed to the image of God’s Son, to be God’s children, to be joint-heirs with Christ, all witnessed by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Romans 8:14 to 28. Compare with Ephesians 1:2 to 18.

8—In Romans 6:13 and in Ephesians 2:1 to 7, members of both Bodies were alive from the dead; and the members of both Bodies were not under the law. They were all saved wholly by grace; and were raised to walk in newness of life Romans 6:1 to 14. What about members in the coming Kingdom age?

9—Believers, as members of the Body of Romans, were cut off from Adam; their old man was crucified. Romans 5:14 to Romans 6:8. Now note that the members of the “Romans”

Body and of the Body of Ephesians were identified with Christ in death, burial and resurrection. Romans 6:2 to 15; Colossians 3:1 to 4.

10—Note the same baptism and burial in Romans 6:4 and Colossians 2:12. Compare the language very carefully to see that they are identical. This baptism burial links the two Bodies together. It is conceded by those who teach that the Church of Romans is different from the Church of Ephesians and Colossians, that the baptism is identical, having reference to a Divine death baptism, having nothing whatever to do with water.

11—If the water baptism of the Great Commission is to be God's program in the coming Tribulation or Kingdom age, and that was neither the commission nor the baptism of Romans 6:4 for the Body of Romans, it must be admitted that the two Churches differ as to baptism, and the Church of Romans was no "kingdom" church. It has already been conceded by the teachers of "Two Bodies" that the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5 is the one baptism of Romans 6:3 and 4. And these same teachers say that water baptism will be practiced in the coming age. What confusion to prove an unscriptural theory!

12—The ministry of reconciliation and the glorious gospel were the messages for both Bodies. II Corinthians 4:3 and 4. II Corinthians 5:17 to 2; Colossians 1:14 to 21; I Timothy 1:11. Will this be the kingdom gospel, referred to in Matthew 24:13? Surely the gospel for the Tribulation period will be the gospel of the kingdom.

13—Will there be an Apostle to the Gentiles, with the gospel of the uncircumcision during the coming kingdom age; and if so, will he receive a commission by revelation different from the Great Commission? Where is the prophecy telling of this?

14—The Body of Romans with the members are spoken of as a new creation in Christ, the work of God. II Corinthians 5:17 and Galatians 6:15. The members of the Body of Ephesians are the same. Ephesians 2:9 to 11. Where in the Old Testament prophecy is the new creation of II Corinthians 5:17 mentioned?

15—In the "Romans" Church and the Church of Ephesians the members are told that their old man had been put off, and that they were to put on the new man. Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10; Romans 13:14.

16—Compare the "my gospel" of Paul, preached in Romans, with the Gentile salvation prophesied in Zechariah and Micah and Ezekiel and Isaiah. Read Romans 2:16 and Romans 16:25, Romans 3:24 with Zechariah 8:23.

17—Will salvation in the coming kingdom age be sent to Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy, with blindness upon Israel, as was the case when Paul wrote Romans?

18—A—Let us compare "the day of the Lord Jesus" in II Corinthians 1:14, "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" in I Corinthians 1:8, "the day of the Lord Jesus" in I Corinthians 5:5, and "the day of Jesus Christ" in Philippians 1:6, "the day of Christ" in Philippians 1:10, Philippians 2:16 and II Timothy 1:12-1:18-4:8, and prove by the Scriptures that the members of the two Bodies were not waiting for the same event.

B—Also compare the believer's judgment in II Corinthians 5:10 with his judgment in Colossians 3:24 and 25:

19—Compare the "absent from the body, at home with the Lord", with the "depart to be with the Lord". II Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23. Also "the house from heaven" of II Corinthians 5:1 to 8, "the incorruptible body of I Corinthians 15:25, with the "body like unto His own glorious body" of Philippians 3:20 and 21, and show wherein they differ.

20—Compare the Lord Jesus Christ as Intercessor in Romans 8:34 with the Lord Jesus Christ, the one Mediator, in I Timothy 2:5 and state whether you agree with the teachers of two

Bodies that the members of the Body of Ephesians have no intercessor or Advocate to represent them in heaven?

A GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE BIBLE IN TEN LESSONS

LESSON NUMBER FIVE

“THE LAW WAS GIVEN BY MOSES” John 1:17.

“Death reigned from Adam to Moses.” Romans 5:13. “From Adam to Moses” is a period of time designated in God’s Word. “From Moses to Christ” is another specific period suggested in Galatians 3:24 and 25; “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.” So death reigned from Adam to Moses. The Law reigned from Moses to Christ and that Law worked death to the sinner. Romans 7:13. The Law was the ministration of death and condemnation. II Corinthians 3:7 and 9. Sin is the transgression of the Law. The strength of sin is the Law. The Law is just. Romans 7:12. The sinner is unjust. By the deeds of the Law no flesh shall be justified in God’s sight; for by the Law is the knowledge of sin. Romans 3:20.

Let us study the “Law Dispensation” in the light of the several Scriptures we shall quote. From these Scriptures we shall see that the Law entered that the offense might abound. Romans 5:20. We shall see the time and purpose of the giving of the Law to Israel, and why it was weak through the flesh, and why God found fault with Israel under the Law, and why God’s Son was made under the Law to redeem them that were under the Law. Romans 8:3 ... Hebrews 8:8 and Galatians 4:4 and 5.

I. “THE LAW WAS ADDED BECAUSE OF TRANSGRESSION TILL THE SEED SHOULD COME.” Galatians 3:19.

II. “FOR THE LAW HAVING A SHADOW OF GOOD THINGS TO COME, AND NOT THE VERY IMAGE OF THE THINGS, CAN NEVER WITH THOSE SACRIFICES, WHICH THEY OFFERED YEAR BY YEAR CONTINUALLY MAKE THE COMERS THEREUNTO PERFECT. FOR THEN WOULD THEY NOT HAVE CEASED TO BE OFFERED? BECAUSE THAT THE WORSHIPPERS ONCE PURGED SHOULD HAVE HAD NO MORE CONSCIENCE OF SINS. BUT IN THOSE SACRIFICES THERE IS A REMEMBRANCE AGAIN MADE OF SINS EVERY YEAR. Hebrews 10:1 to 3.

III. “FOR THE LAW MADE NOTHING PERFECT, BUT THE BRINGING IN OF A BETTER HOPE DID BY THE WHICH WE DRAW NIGH UNTO GOD.” Hebrews 7:19.

IV. “FOR CHRIST IS THE END OF THE LAW FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS TO EVERY ONE THAT BELIEVETH.” Romans 10:4.

I. . . . “THE LAW WAS ADDED.”

The Law was given by Moses. Jehovah added the Law by Moses. Moses was eighty years old when the Law was added. Exodus 7:7. Moses was chosen by Jehovah to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt about 1492 B.C. The Covenant that God made with the children of Israel at Mt. Sinai is called the “Old Covenant.” Jeremiah 31:31 to 34. Hebrews 8:6 to 9. Four hundred and thirty years before God made that Old Covenant with Israel through Moses, God made the Covenant of Promise with Abram. “The promise that he should be heir of the world

was not to Abraham or to his seed through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.” Romans 4:13. The Law that was added 430 years after the Covenant of Promise did not and could not make the promise of none effect. Galatians 3:17. The “Covenant of Promise” is still effective; but the “Law Covenant” has been abolished. “Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” Hebrews 8:13. II Corinthians 3:11 and 13. Therefore the “Law Covenant” or the “Law Dispensation” was temporary; that is, from Sinai to Calvary. We shall see in a later lesson that there was an overlapping period for a few years after the death of Christ when the Jews which believed were still zealous of the Law. But on the Cross, when the Son of God died, the handwriting of ordinances was taken out of the way: it was nailed to His Cross. Colossians 2:14. There Christ broke down the middle wall of partition between Israel and the nations, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, the Law of commandments in ordinances. Ephesians 2:15.

The Law was added to the Gospel contained in the Promise made to Abraham and His seed. Galatians 3:8. So Moses lived eighty years before there was an Old Testament or Covenant; and then He lived forty years under the Old Covenant. Deuteronomy 34:7. So Moses lived in two dispensations; before and after the Law was given. We must be careful, if we would rightly divide the Word of truth, not to confuse the “Law Covenant” which has been abolished, with the “Promise Covenant”, preached before, which is still effective. We must likewise be careful not to fix the end of the “Old Covenant” with the birth of Jesus Christ, or even thirty years later, with the beginning of His public ministry, as so many have done. How erroneous it is to fix the beginning of the “Old Covenant” with the First Chapter of Genesis and the beginning of the “New Covenant” with the First Chapter of Matthew.

No, sin entered by Adam, and sin and death were in the world from Adam to Moses, “when there is no law.” Romans 5:13. But it was about 2500 years after God stated to Adam the Law of Sin and Death, that the Law was given by Moses about 1492 B.C. It was at that time that the Law entered that the offense that entered by Adam might abound. What misunderstandings and misinterpretations of God’s Book there have been by dealing with Adam, Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel) and Jacob’s twelve sons as “Old Testament” characters. Every one of Jacob’s twelve sons had died before the Law was added to the Covenant of Promise. “It was added till”. Till when? Till it was taken out of the way. Till it was abolished. Till Christ became the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth. God sent forth His Son, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law. Galatians 4:4.

“And for this cause He is the mediator of the New Testament (Covenant), that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the First Covenant, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a Testament (Covenant) is, there must also of necessity be the death of the Testator. For a Testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the Testator liveth. Whereupon neither the First Covenant was dedicated without blood . . . But the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.” Hebrews 9:14 to 18.

II . . . “THE LAW HAVING A SHADOW . . . IN THOSE SACRIFICES THERE IS A REMEMBRANCE AGAIN MADE OF SINS EVERY YEAR.”

“LET NO MAN THEREFORE JUDGE YOU IN MEAT, OR IN DRINK, OR IN RESPECT OF A HOLYDAY, OR OF THE NEW MOON, OR OF THE SABBATH . . . WHICH

ARE A SHADOW OF THINGS TO COME; BUT THE BODY OF CHRIST.” Colossians 2:16 and 17.

When we turn to the first five chapters of Leviticus, we read of Israel’s five offerings given them under the Law. The Burnt Offering, the Meat or Meal Offering, the Peace Offering, the Trespass Offering and the Sin Offering, all pointing to the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have the record of the giving of the Ten Commandments at Sinai, in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, and then follows God’s instructions and orders as to the construction and erection of His Sanctuary and Tabernacle, with the outer court, the holy place and most holy place, and the service in connection therewith given into the hands of Aaron and the Levites, all pointing forward to the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ was God’s true sanctuary. He became flesh and tabernacled among us.

“And he (the priest) shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation. And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year.” Leviticus 16:33 and 34.

It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin. Hebrews 10:4. “But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God.” Hebrews 10:12. “Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others; For then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the ages hath He (Christ) appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” Hebrews 9:25 and 26.

In the shadow of the cross the Lord Jesus said, “This is my blood of the New Covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” Matthew 26:28.

Then Israel’s Tabernacle, with its sacrifices and service was a figure. Hebrews 9:9. “In meats and drinks, and divers baptisms, and carnal ordinances, imposed until the time of reformation.” Hebrews 9:10. Thus we learn that as the Law was added till Christ cried on the cross, “Finished”—when the veil in the temple was rent from top to bottom—so with the Law, Israel’s religion was added until the time of reformation. That time has long since passed and so there is no place today in the program of God for the Jews’ religion. All Israelites were Jews by religion, if not Jews’ by birth. And even Gentiles became Jews by religion. Esther 8:17. The Jews were converted, together with Proselytes, from Judaism to Christianity, from Moses to Christ. The Gentile were turned to Christ from paganism without going by the way of Moses and the Law. Now believing Jews and Gentiles are dead to the Law, by the body of Christ. Romans 7:4. “Ye are no longer under a schoolmaster.” Galatians 3:25. Surely no Christian should desire to go back to the Shadow when he has Christ, who has done for him what the Law could not do. The Law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Under the Old Testament God said I will meet with you from above the mercy seat. It was sprinkled with blood. Exodus 25:22. Leviticus 16:15. Now God meets the believer “in Christ”.

“For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole Law.” Galatians 5:3. Circumcision was instituted in Abram’s home about 1900 B.C. Genesis 17:6 to 12, Circumcision was to Abraham the seal of the righteousness which he had yet being uncircumcised. Romans 4:11. In the language of Christ, recorded in John 7:22, “Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers).” Inasmuch as circumcision was practiced 406 years before the Old Covenant was given, it is not Scripturally true to say that circumcision began with the Old Covenant, but with the Covenant of Promise. It

is not Scripturally true to say that circumcision was done away with by the teaching of Christ while He was on earth.

There were certain sabbaths given to Israel in connection with the annual feasts of Jehovah, mentioned in the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus, "Passover" on the fourteenth day of April, and in connection therewith the Feasts of "Unleavened Bread and Firstfruits," then about the First of June, "Pentecost," then in October, "Trumpets" followed by "Atonement" and "Tabernacles." But there was a Seventh Day Sabbath given with the Ten Commandments, being one of them. Concerning the Sabbath, Jehovah said "observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant." "A sign between me and the children of Israel forever." Exodus 31:16 and 17. Which then is the sign of the Old Covenant, circumcision or the Sabbath? Both of them were taken away at Calvary. Christ took Israel's Sabbath to the sepulchre with Him. Under the Law Israel had the Sabbath but no rest. In Christ the believer has rest but no Sabbath. Since the giving of the Law there have been two places Divinely appointed, "Under the Law" and "in Christ." You cannot be "In Christ" and "Under the Law." To be "in Christ" is to be dead to the Law and not under the Law. Romans 7:4 and 5; Romans 6:14.

III . . . THE LAW MADE NOTHING PERFECT, BUT THE BRINGING IN OF A BETTER HOPE."

"The Lord Jesus Christ, which is our Hope." I Timothy 1:1. "For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Hebrews 10:14. The Epistle to the Hebrews is the Book of "Better things. The word "Better" is used thirteen times in the Epistle. In and by Christ are the better things, the better covenant, the better sacrifice, the better resurrection.

The Law is just; but by the Law God could not justify a sinner. The Law is perfect; but it made nothing perfect. The Law was weak through the flesh. Romans 8:3. The strength of sin is the Law; and by the Law the whole world is guilty before God. I Corinthians 15:56. Romans 3:19. "Because the Law worketh wrath." Romans 4:15. The Law was a yoke which neither Israel nor the Gentiles could bear. Acts 15:10. "They could not endure that which was spoken (at Sinai)." Hebrews 12:20. Man would have to be born with a sinless nature and be wholly rid of his sinful nature in order to perfectly keep the perfect Law of God. But man by natural birth is imperfect and wholly unable to perfectly keep God's perfect Law, which he would have to do to be perfect, or prove that he was perfect. Christ did.

"But God who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath made us alive together with Christ . . . BY GRACE YE ARE SAVED." Ephesians 2:4 and 5. Salvation then is not because of what man could or could not do with God's Law, but because of God's mercy, love and grace. He sent His Son from heaven to establish a new Law, "the Law of the Spirit of Life." Romans 8:2. Christ had power to lay down His life; and He did. Christ had power to take up His life again; and He did. John 10:17 and 18. Thereby He abolished death and in the Gospel has brought life, with the guaranty of incorruptibility. II Timothy 1:9. The new Law can do for any and every sinner what the Old Law could do for no sinner. We might say that the Law and the Old Covenant were the same. How are the New Law and the New Covenant related?

When the Law was given at Sinai the people stood afar off, in fear of God. When Christ died on the cross He was made sin. There was darkness on the earth. His Father forsook Him in the hour of death. Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. Christ on that tree was made a curse to deliver law-breakers from the curse of the Law. Galatians 3:10 to 14. And by that work

on the cross, the Lord has brought the blessing of Abraham to the Gentiles, righteousness by faith in Christ without works or religion. "But now in Christ ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Ephesians 2:13.

Although no redeemed sinner can say, "I do always the things that please Him," and must, if honest, confess, "Lord, I have done the things I should not have done and have left undone the things I should have done," yet every redeemed sinner is perfect in Christ, accepted in Christ, complete in Christ, blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ, without condemnation in Christ, the righteousness of God in Christ; that is, every believer has by God's grace, in Christ, a perfect standing. The believer has passed out of death into life; he has eternal life; and he shall never come into condemnation. John 5:24. "He that believeth on Him is not condemned." John 3:17 and 18.

The bringing in of the "Better Hope" has made believers perfect. Christ is in the believer, the hope of glory. Colossians 1:27. By the omnipotent power of the indwelling Holy Spirit it is the privilege and duty of every believer to fulfill the righteousness of the Law by walking in the Spirit and not in the flesh. Romans 8:4.

IV . . . "CHRIST IS THE END OF THE LAW FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS TO EVERY ONE THAT BELIEVETH."

The end of our faith is the salvation of our souls. I Peter 1:11. The end of the Law is love. I Timothy 1:5. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore Love is the fulfilling of the Law." Romans 13:10. "The fruit of the Spirit is love." Galatians 5:22. Christ is the end of the Law.

Love is the end of the Law. When we have reached the end, shall we go back? The Law demanded righteousness and love. Grace supplies righteousness and love by Christ and the Holy Spirit. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given unto us. Romans 5:5. "Against such there is no Law." Galatians 5:23. The fruit of the Spirit is the fulfilling of the Law.

"Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works." Romans 4:6. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Romans 10:10.

Christ on the cross was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. II Corinthians 5:21.

Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth By Adam was the entrance of sin. By Moses is the knowledge of sin. By Jesus Christ is the forgiveness of sin. Act 13:38 and 39. "By Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses." Act 13:39.

PAUL'S OWN STORY

"Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord? For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office."

"And last of all He was seen of me also, as one born out of due time. And I said, Who art Thou Lord? And He said, I am Jesus Whom Thou persecutest. But arise, and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of

these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee: Delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee.”

“My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own Nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And He said unto me, Depart for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles. And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. Therefore I have pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee: Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.”

“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners: of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.”

“But by the grace of God I am what which was bestowed in vain; but I labored they all; yet not which was with me.”

“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.”

“Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. 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. 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 unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law. To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. For Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel; not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, 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. Yea, so have I strived, to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon."

"Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons. Serving the Lord! with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. But now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. 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."

"And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 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. I am clean, from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. 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."

"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: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles. 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 that which He has committed unto Him against that day. That good deposit which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us. And the things that thou hath heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also. Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me."

"Brethren, be ye followers together of me. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no more flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend. 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. 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 (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: 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."

Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; 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.

“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. Whereby, when you read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ). 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, 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. 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 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. This thou knowest that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me. 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.”

“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. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom; to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

“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.”

GLEANINGS FROM THE BOOK OF ACTS

Lesson 5

In this lesson we shall consider and compare:

PETER’S MESSAGE—JERUSALEM—Acts 2.

PHILIP’S MESSAGE—SAMARIA—Acts 8.

PAUL’S MESSAGE—EPHESUS—Acts 19.

I—PETER’S MESSAGE—ACTS 2

“Dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven.” The day of Pentecost—one of Jehovah’s or Israel’s feasts, fifty days after Firstfruits. Leviticus 23:15. These Jews, together with the proselytes (Acts 2:10), were all amazed because they had heard and witnessed God’s supernatural visitation. The Apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit, began to speak with other tongues. The Holy Spirit had come in fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy. Christ had been raised from the dead, in fulfillment of David’s prophecy, to occupy David’s throne. God had made the same Jesus, whom these Jews with wicked hands had crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Acts 2:36. Peter's message was addressed "Ye men of Judea;" "Ye men of Israel." Acts 2:14 and 2:22. The convicted Israelites said unto Peter, "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 GHOST."

Note the results. Three thousand Israelites and proselytes (all considered Jews) were added. Acts 2:41. They sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men, as every man had need. At that time they had favor with all the people. "The Lord added daily such as should be saved." Acts 2:43 to 47. Some Israelites had been saved while Christ was on earth. Luke 10:20. They had been called "the little flock" and instructed to sell their property and give alms. Luke 12:32 and 33. The Apostles had received the Holy Spirit before Pentecost. John 20:22. It is not definitely stated in the Scriptures whether or not the Church of God began on the day of Pentecost. The Greek word for "church" is "ekklesia," literally the "called out". Some Israelites were certainly called out while Christ was on earth. But the Church of God was to be purchased with His own blood and Christ had to go to the Father before He could send: the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit in early Acts was to witness to Israel concerning Christ as Israel's Prince and Saviour. Acts 5:32.

In the first nine chapters of Acts it was not lawful for the apostles to go to the Gentiles with the Word of God. Acts 10:28. So they preached to none but Jews only. Acts 11:19. Peter did not preach the unsearchable, or untraceable, riches of Christ to the Israelites, if indeed anyone did. But God wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision. Galatians 2:7 to 9. Peter preached to Israel none other things than Moses and the prophets said should come. Joel—David—Moses—Samuel—all the prophets—Amos. Acts 2:16; Acts 2:25 to 33; Acts 3:21 to 26; Acts 10:43; Acts 15:14.

Before we consider Philip's Message in Acts 8, let us note several facts in the ministry of Peter and the Eleven in Acts 3 to 7.

a. Acts 3:14 to 21. In these verses we learn that God, was willing to consider Israel's crime of killing the Prince of Life an act of ignorance (in answer to Christ's prayer on the cross) and because God had foreordained that Christ should appear at the end of the ages and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Therefore "repent" was God's message to the nation and God will send Christ back to earth to restore the kingdom to Israel. This is quite a different message from the fact stated in Ephesians, that sinners, redeemed by grace, were raised up to be seated where Christ is in the highest heavenlies. Where in the Acts is it recorded that Peter and the Eleven told the Nation Israel to believe in the grace gospel, and by believing in the shed blood of Christ they would be justified and reconciled?

b. Acts 5:29 to 31. God had raised Christ from the dead to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. And the Holy Spirit was sent down from heaven to witness to this fact. This is quite different from the witness of the Holy Spirit concerning the Divine sonship and special inheritance of members of the Body of Christ. No mention is made of a message of salvation for Gentiles. The Holy Spirit was sent in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy.

c. Acts 5:42. "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ." Study this in connection with the statement of Acts 8:1, that the Twelve remained in Jerusalem. In Matthew 23:38 and 39, the rejected Messiah said Israel's house was left desolate. He was to send His Army to destroy them and burn up their city; armies were to compass their city. Matthew 22:7. Luke 21:20 to 22. Not one stone of the temple was to be left.

Matthew 24:2. Because of the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross God postponed the judgment pronounced upon Israel, in Matthew 23:33 to 39, and their Jerusalem and their temple stood until after the “Acts” period had ended. During those years of grace God gave Israel favor with Rome and the Twelve had access to the Jerusalem temple for their testimony. Acts 21:18 to 28.

d. Acts 7:1 to 53. The message of Stephen to Israel ended with the statement that they were resisting the Holy Spirit, or committing the unpardonable sin, mentioned by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 12:31 and 32. Stephen saw the Son of man standing at the right hand of God. Christ called Himself the “Son of man” when ministering to Israel on earth. Stephen saw in heaven the same Son of man who warned Israel against the sin they were now committing, namely, rejecting the Holy Spirit, or committing the unpardonable sin.

II—PHILIP’S MESSAGE—ACTS 8

“Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria.” Acts 8:5.

Philip was numbered with those who were scattered, when Stephen was martyred, and preached the Word to none but Jews only. Acts 11:19. There was a difference between Samaritans and Gentiles. Matthew 10:5. In the light of Acts 10:28 and Acts 11:18, it is not probable that Philip, in the city of Samaria preached to Gentiles.

God performed great miracles by the hand of Philip. To the people of Samaria Philip preached Christ. Philip was filled with the Holy Spirit, full of faith and of good report. Acts 6:3 to 8.

“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:”

“WHEN THE APOSTLES WHICH WERE AT JERUSALEM HEARD THAT SAMARIA HAD RECEIVED THE WORD OF GOD, THEY SENT UNTO THEM PETER AND JOHN, WHO, WHEN THEY WERE COME DOWN, PRAYED FOR THEM THAT THEY MIGHT RECEIVE THE HOLY GHOST. THEN LAID THEY THEIR HANDS ON THEM, AND THEY RECEIVED THE HOLY GHOST.”

In this ministry and Divine program of Philip, we observe something of the same order that prevailed in the ministry and Divine program of Peter and the Eleven at Jerusalem. In both of these ministries we observe that water baptism preceded the receiving of the Holy Spirit, and undoubtedly was a prerequisite for that reception.

The message that the risen Christ gave to the Eleven is recorded in Mark 16:13 to 18. In that message Christ clearly stated, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” He did not say “he that believeth and is saved shall be baptized.”

We observe in the order of Philip’s ministry that the people heard his gospel message, believed and were baptized. In accordance with Mark 16:15 and 16, they must have been saved. Several days after they received the Holy Spirit.

Undoubtedly these Samaritans, or Jews in Samaria, became members of some church when they believed. But were they, at that time, baptized by one Spirit into the One Body of Ephesians 1:19 to 22? Were they saved before they became members of that Body? Is this God’s order for today?

III. PAUL’S MESSAGE—ACTS 19.

In Ephesus were certain disciples who had believed John's message for Israel. They had been baptized unto John's baptism but had not received the Holy Spirit. They had not heard that the Holy Spirit had been given. Paul preached Christ Jesus unto them.

“WHEN THEY HEARD THIS THEY WERE BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS. AND WHEN PAUL HAD LAID HIS HANDS UPON THEM, THE HOLY SPIRIT CAME ON THEM; AND THEY SPAKE WITH TONGUES AND PROPHESED.” Acts 19:5 and 6.

There are some who believe that the translation of Acts 19:5, should be, “When they heard this having been baptized in the Lord Jesus.” This is rather doubtful. They suggest this translation because the Twelve Apostles received John's water baptism and were not rebaptized on the day of Pentecost. But here we have again something of the same order that is found in both messages which we have considered, Peter's and Philip's.

Here, in Ephesus, there were both Jews and Greeks in the assembly. The record here seems to indicate that these twelve disciples were Jews, disciples of Apollos. Acts 18:25; Acts 19:7 and 8. Water baptism and imposition of hands preceded Holy Spirit baptism. Speaking with tongues and prophesying followed. This was about 54 A.D., or about twenty years after Pentecost. This is the last Bible record of any one receiving water baptism.

To the Church at Ephesus, this same Paul wrote, about nine years later, “There is one Body and one baptism.” Ephesians 4:3 to 5.

ONE BODY—ONE BAPTISM.

Which of these orders are for the One Body?

Perhaps the more we study the Book of Acts, the more we realize how little we really know about it. Doubtless the consideration of these messages have suggested some thoughts to our minds and hearts and we are ready to ask some questions.

God's Program for Today.

Undoubtedly we have observed that no present day gifted spiritual teachers of the Word of God believe that any of these gospel programs are for today. Perhaps they eliminate the “imposition of hands” on the ground's that that was only an apostolic prerogative. But in the light of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11, they cannot eliminate miracles and signs, by stating that they were intended for apostles only. If they eliminate them—and they must or acknowledge themselves powerless and faithless—they should give an intelligent Scriptural reason for so doing. God linked water baptism and signs together. They stand together, or fall together, in the Church of Christ.

These teachers teach dogmatically and positively that, if the believer has not already received the Holy Spirit, he should not be baptized with water. They also teach that the very moment that believer receives the Holy Spirit, he becomes a member of the Bible Church, called in Ephesians and Colossians, the Body of Christ. Most of them believe that Peter's message of Acts 2:38 preached believing Israelites into the Body of Christ, and yet they acknowledge that that message is not the Lord's message for today. By such an acknowledgment they teach that there are two ways, at least of becoming members of the Body of Christ, and in one way water baptism was altogether essential. They must also acknowledge there were different ways of getting into the Body of Christ, if that Body was there.

Who can read the Scriptures in connection with the three messages we have quoted and compare them with the experience of Cornelius, recorded in Acts 10:34 to 47, and say that Cornelius did not receive the Holy Spirit before he was water-baptized? But in the light of Acts 10:20 and I Corinthians 1:22 we might say this reversal of order was not because Cornelius was a Gentile, but because the Jews required a sign. God gave the tongues so Peter could say,

“Can any man forbid water?”

But if we insist that with the Gentile believers, water baptism followed Holy Spirit baptism and with Israelite believer’s water baptism was a prerequisite for Holy Spirit baptism, how can we then be consistent and say, that the Body of (Christ, in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile, began on the day of Pentecost?

Surely we must turn to Romans and Ephesians to get our message of unmixed grace; for if we get our message and program from Acts 19, we must bear in mind that, associated with the last record of water baptism, which preceded the receiving of the Holy Spirit, there was the imposition of hands, Holy Spirit baptism, tongues, prophesying, casting out of demons, the blessing of handkerchiefs and aprons for physical headings.

What God, hath joined together let no man put asunder until God does. “Let us go on to perfection.”

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS

Lesson Number Two

By Vincent Bennett, Muskegon, Mich.

INTRODUCTION.

Salutation and Benediction—Chapter 1:1, 2.

“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 to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”

These opening verses hold riches of spiritual wealth that are well worth mining, and the workman in the Word will be amply repaid for any labor expended in study, as God by his Spirit reveals one rich vein of truth after another.

“PAUL” His name was originally “Saul” and it is interesting to note the transformation of this man’s life, and the circumstances under which his name was changed. Only as we understand Paul’s conversion from his former life will the glory of the message of grace shine out in full splendor.

Philippians 3:5 gives us the information that Saul of Tarsus was “Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews: as touching the law, a Pharisee.”

The Pharisees were the strictest sect of the Jews’ religion, a group of “separatists” with an “holier-than-thou” attitude; who not only strived to observe the law but endeavored to go beyond its ceremonial requirements and sought justification in the carrying out of the traditions of the elders. Saul was behind none in meeting the exacting demands of his religion. Listen to him in Galatians 1:14—“And profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own Nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers,” and could say as touching the righteousness which is of the law he was blameless.—Philippians 3:5. His zeal in

his religion knew no bounds. Persecuting the early Christians he wrought havoc in the assemblies—(I Corinthians 15:9; Galatians 1:13; Philippians 3:6). Acts 7:57 and 58 and Acts 8:1 tell of how the infuriated Jews, who stoned Stephen, found this man Saul consenting to their murderous actions and more than willing to take care of their clothes.

To the end of his days Paul never forgot the grace of God which so gloriously transformed his life from the chiefest of sinners into the Apostle of the risen and ascended Lord. “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ”—“Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” (I Timothy 1:15 and 16)

The passage of Scripture which records his change of name is also very significant. In Acts 13:7 the name of his first Gentile convert is mentioned, “Sergius Paulus” This man desired to hear the word of God, but Elymus, a Jew, sought to turn this Gentile away from the faith, whereupon Saul, vindicating his apostleship to the Gentiles, under the Holy Spirit, performs a miracle of judgment and blindness upon the offender, one of his own kin, Elymas, the Jew. From this time the Hebrew name “Saul passes from the record and the Apostle to the Gentiles is called by the same name as his first Gentile convert—“Paul”. Is it not also singularly significant that this incident is typical of Saul’s ministry?—I Thessalonians 2:14 to 16—“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.” And in Acts 28:27 and 28, after the rejection of the message by the Jews, Paul pronounced the judicial sentence of blindness upon, his own people; and the word of salvation is sent unto the Gentiles.

The name “Paul” means “little”. Is not that suggestive of humility and the outstanding characteristic of this Apostle, who so conscious of his unworthiness, expresses himself as being “less than the least of all saints?” Yet to such an one is grace given to make known truth which has been hid from ages and generations: “the untraceable riches of Christ”—Ephesians 3:8.

“THE APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST BY THE WILL OF GOD”

The origin of Paul’s apostleship is “the will of God” and so is his message. That which is to be dispensed in this Epistle, through the Apostle (one sent) to the Gentiles, is all in accordance with God’s will for the working out of his own eternal purpose in Christ Jesus, which he planned in his infinite wisdom “before the world began”. Notice how this phrase is made the background of the truth of the first chapter: Ephesians 1:1, Paul’s apostleship is by “the will of God”; Ephesians 1:5, we are given the “son place” “according to the good pleasure of his will”. Ephesians 1:11, “who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will”. It is well to realize that the unique truth of this Epistle has its origination, revelation, manifestation, and consummation in the will of God.

“TO THE SAINTS WHICH ARE AT EPHESUS AND TO THE FAITHFUL THAT ARE IN CHRIST JESUS:”

Whether or not this Epistle was sent just to the church at Ephesus or was a circular letter sent first to the Ephesian saints and then passed on to other places, is a subject outside the scope of our study and must be left to others. We are looking for the teaching of the Epistle.

“Saints” and “faithful”—all believers are called “saints” and are made one with the Lord Jesus in death, burial, resurrection and ascension. They are therefore “in Christ Jesus”. But not all who are saved by his grace are “faithful”. Notice how Paul closes this Epistle—Ephesians 6:24, “Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.” God’s best can only be given to the “faithful” and only the faithful will pass on that which God reveals. In this respect Paul gave the commission to Timothy (II Timothy 2:2), “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.”

BENEDICTION—”GRACE BE TO YOU, AND PEACE, FROM GOD OUR FATHER, AND FROM THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.”

Glory to God for such a benediction! Separated from God by sin, doomed and lost, yet by the provision of his mercy, “grace” and “peace” come from God to span the gulf between us made. And nothing but God’s grace can span that gulf. There is no peace apart from the blood of Christ’s cross. Oh, how futile is man’s effort to bridge the distance between himself and God by his own works. Man cannot accomplish it, but God has done it; and in the Son of His love, I can call God “Father”

“Grace”! Who can fathom its depths? “Peace”! Who can fully express its satisfaction? “Grace” is the source of blessing, “peace” is the crown. They never come in reverse order. God never gives peace apart from grace; neither can the sinner experience peace until he has accepted grace.

Such is the salutation of this wonderful Epistle and the best is yet to come: as the wonderful theme of His marvelous and matchless grace is unfolded.

“WERE THE LAST DAYS THE FIRST DAYS?”

A Message by Chas. F. Baker

What would you think of an exegesis which made the last mean the first? Would it not be much akin to saying that black means white, or that yes means no? But, it may be asked, who teaches that last means first? It must be admitted that no one claims to teach this, but it will be left for you to judge in this study of Pentecost whether or not this is taught by those who claim that the Body of Christ began on that Jewish feast day.

The Scripture is Acts 2:17. The scene is the day of Pentecost. The Apostle Peter is the mouth piece of the Holy Spirit, who is giving a specific account of what is transpiring upon that notable day. Now the majority of pre-millenarians, if asked to relate what happened on that Pentecost, would say that the Church which is the Body of Christ came into existence at that time. It was the birthday of the Church, or in other words, Pentecost marked the first days of the Church.

Now ask the Holy Spirit what took place, and hear Him answering “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: “And it shall come to pass in the last days . . .” God says that the events of Pentecost were described by Joel some 800 years before, and that these events marked the last days. You are now face to face with the problem which has confronted many true Bereans. They had been taught, and for that reason had taught others, that Pentecost marked the first days; God said it marked the last days. Who was right? It should not take long to decide,

and since God has not given any one authority to make decisions for other people, you must judge and answer for yourself.

For the sake of those who believe it is a heresy to teach that the Body of Christ did not begin on Pentecost, it might be pointed out that many of the outstanding theologians, real defenders of the faith, have taught and do teach that the Church began long before Pentecost. Dr. Hodge, who represents the doctrine of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, makes the following remarks in "Outline of Theology"; in answer to the question: "How may it be shown that this visible church is identical under both dispensations, and what argument may be thence derived to prove that the infant children of believers should be baptized?"

"There is no evidence whatever furnished by the apostolical records that the ancient church was abolished and a new and different one organized in its place.—Their disciples were always added to the 'church' or 'congregation' previously existing—Acts 2:47" (pg. 619). Dr. A. H. Strong, theologian of the Baptist Church, says in his 'Systematic Theology': 'The church of Christ, in its largest signification, is converted upon that day could have been 'added' (Acts and ages, in heaven and on earth.—The church existed in germ before the day of Pentecost,—otherwise there would have been nothing to which those converted upon that day could have been 'added' (Acts 2:47)." (Pg. 887, 900).

Space forbids quoting many other great Christian thinkers who are of the same opinion, namely, that the Pentecostal Church was the continuation of that church which was upon earth during the earthly ministry of Christ. And where is there to be found any intimation from the lips or from the pens of the Twelve Apostles that a new church was being inaugurated? Were they not still expecting the Messianic Kingdom to be restored to Israel (Acts 1:6; Acts 3:19 to 21)? Did they not have all things in common, as prescribed by the sermon on the mount (Acts 2:44, 45; Acts 4:32 to 37)? Did they not continue to meet in the Jewish Temple (Acts 2:46; Acts 3:1; Acts 4:1; Acts 5:20, 42; Acts 21:26; Acts 24:18)? Did they not continue to observe the Mosaic Law (Acts 21:18 to 26)? And what is even more conclusive and convincing, was not the Holy Spirit witness (Acts 5:32) to the fact that everything connected with the Pentecostal experiences was but the fulfillment of the Old Testament expectations (Acts 2:16; Acts 3:24), and where in the Old Testament is there to be found any expectation of a new church divorced from the nation Israel and its hopes?

Whereas it is plain that the Holy Spirit teaches that Pentecost began the last days in the consummation of God's prophetic program; it is just as evident that the same Spirit through Paul teaches that the Church which is the Body of Christ was a secret truth hidden in God, never before made known to the sons of men (Ephesians 3:1 to 9), and therefore in no way connected with God's prophetic program. How could that which was foretold by all the prophets since the world began (Acts 3:21), be the same as that which was kept secret from the beginning of the world until made known to Paul (Ephesians 3:5 and 9)? And in what sense could the last days of the Body of Christ have taken place before God even revealed that the Body was in existence?

Pentecost ushered in the last days, which have to do wholly with the nation Israel. Israel was expecting a new age, but not a new church. Pentecost was bringing the old age to its consummation and making possible the realization of the Millennial hope of the return of Christ to establish the kingdom. It should be noted that Peter did not say: "It shall come to pass in the last day, but in the last days." All of Joel's prophecy was not to be fulfilled in one day, but was to cover a period of days, of which Pentecost was the beginning. Therefore all of Joel's prophecy was not fulfilled on Pentecost, but there was the beginning. There was the pouring out of God's

Spirit; but it was no secret that God would do this; for it is plainly foretold in Proverbs 1:23; Isaiah 44:3;

Joel 2:28, 29; Zechariah 12:10; and, Malachi 3:10. These last days did not come to completion, however, because the offer of the Kingdom which began on Pentecost was rejected, and God interrupted the Kingdom program with His secret dispensation of the Body of Christ. When God ends this secret dispensation, we have every reason to believe that He will bring to completion Israel's last days.

It is necessary to see the difference between the last days of Israel and the last days of the Church. The Apostle Paul who was made the depository of the truth concerning the Body of Christ never says that either the first or the last days of that Church began on Pentecost, but instead, some 36 years after Pentecost, points us on to some future time for its last days II Timothy 3:1. No where will it be found that in the last days of the Church there will be any of the miraculous sign demonstrations which belonged to Israel's last days.

A clear understanding of this subject is perhaps of more importance for the Christian of today than one would at first suppose. Firstly, it shows us that we are not living in Israel's last days, and therefore we should not look for nor seek to make a place for the sign gifts of Israel's last days, Secondly, it shows us that the message of those last days has been superseded by a new message for the Body of Christ. It is no longer "repent and be baptized for the remission of sins and God will send Jesus Christ back to earth" (Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19 to 21), for Christ will never come back to earth until this present dispensation of the Mystery is completed. We are not and cannot today usher in the kingdom or bring the King back. We today have a message of unmixed grace to proclaim to a world dead in trespasses and sins, that God for Christ's sake will not only save the sinner by grace through faith apart from all religious works, but will also make him a member of that Body of Christ which He will some day call on High (Philippians 3:14). Thirdly, this truth shows us that the signs which belong to Israel's last days which must come to pass before Christ can come back to earth are not to be sought after in the last days of the Church.

It does seem peculiar that many who preach on the signs of the times object to people speaking in tongues, when tongues is clearly called one of the signs (I Corinthians 14:21 and 22). It is to be conceded that members of the Body may in its last days see a foreshadowing and preparation for Israel's political and economic signs, but it is not possible for any one today to say with assurance concerning current events: This is that which was spoken by the prophet.

In conclusion it may be said that it is difficult to see how or why one is not saying that last means first, although perhaps unwittingly, who places the birthday of the Body or Christ on Pentecost, or who follows the Pentecostal program for today, or who preaches the fulfillment of Israel's signs in the present Dispensation of the Mystery.

FOLLOWING THE LORD IN BAPTISM

Quite frequently we hear some Christian urge another Christian to follow the Lord Jesus in baptism. Perhaps it is more important to be identified with the Lord Jesus Christ by Divine baptism than to follow Him in the water baptism He received from John the Baptist. John the Baptist came baptizing with water that Christ might be made manifest to Israel. John 1:31. But two or three years later the Lord Jesus asked His apostles this question: "Are ye able to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Matthew 20:22. The Lord Jesus was then

speaking of His baptism into death which was to be accomplished on the cross, Concerning that baptism into death He said, “how am I straitened till it be accomplished.” Luke 12:50.

When the Lord Jesus was baptized with water, all Judea went out to be baptized of John. At that time the people of Israel were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether He were the Messiah or not. Luke 3:15. Israel had not been instructed to look for Christ as the Head of the Church, which is His Body, but for the King and the Kingdom of the heavens. Christ declared to Israel, “the time is fulfilled.” Mark 1:14 and 15. John’s water baptism had to do with the King and the Kingdom. It was after the King told His disciples that Israel would not have Him as King that He spoke of another baptism; His “death” baptism

If we are to follow the King in His kingdom baptism, we should likewise follow Him to the Jewish synagogue to worship on Saturday, as was His custom. Luke 4:16. We should take our gifts to the priest, after the law of Moses and leave our gifts at the altar. Matthew 8:4 and 5:24. We should likewise follow our Lord in observing the Passover, and the other Jewish feasts. Luke 22:8 and John 7:10. Does it not seem strange, that although we know circumcision was carried over into Acts, we can prove by Colossians 2:11 that circumcision was done away by Christ’s death and yet make no effort to prove by the next verse, Colossians 2:12, that water baptism has been done away? Remember that we do not follow our Lord in circumcision. Luke 2:21. Circumcision and baptism, with much of Israel’s law, was carried over into the Book of Acts, until Paul wrote Romans and declared the blessed truth of the believer’s identification with Christ in a baptism not made with hands:

“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.

What presumption and religious pride on the part of any man who thinks that he can baptize a fellow-man into the death of Jesus Christ, or so bury him by baptism into death that the baptized fellow-man can rise to walk in newness of life! The baptism of Romans 6:3 and 4 identifies the believing sinner with Christ in death, burial and resurrection, bringing the crucifixion of the old man; and it makes the baptized believer a new creature. If the baptism is water, the water is most assuredly meritorious and efficacious and is an important factor in the believer’s salvation and newness of life. If there is water in Romans 6:3 it is salvation by water. Apart from identification with the crucified, buried and resurrected Christ there is no salvation for any sinner. This identification can be accomplished only by baptism. Water or no water? Can water do the work? Then salvation is by God, by man and by water; therefore of grace and works. This is a plain contradiction of God’s Word. Therefore, man’s water baptism must be out of place.

Some well-meaning brethren answer: “no merit in the water, but . . .” There are many “buts”; but without Scriptural support. There is no mention of water baptism as a witness to the world, or as the outward symbol of an inward work. Some say they were baptized to indicate that their old man was put to death at Calvary and has been buried. But they will admit, or others will admit for them, that nothing will stir their old man like opposing their water baptism theories. They will also admit that water baptism in Acts 2:38 and Acts 8:5 to 13, and Acts 19:1 to 7, had an entirely different meaning. But they prefer not to discuss those verses, which prove that their theories are unscriptural. They are simply following the traditions of the elders, their denominational leaders who blundered and led them into the blunder.

Any spiritual student of the Word, who understands the message of grace, will admit that there is not one verse of Scripture instructing one member of the Body of Christ to baptize with water another person who is already a member of that Body. They will likewise admit that water baptism neither helps a believer to get into the Body of Christ, nor keeps him in that Body; but that this is accomplished by the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5. Who has the Scriptural right to demand for entrance into a church-organization water baptism, and call that organization the Bible Church that demands no such religious ordinance for membership in that Bible Church? It is more Scriptural to join the Campbellites or some other church that teaches water baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins.

Yes we should follow the Lord in baptism, if by that we mean that we should bow at the cross of Calvary, as poor hell-deserving, condemned, ungodly sinners and by faith appropriate that death. God will then take care of the baptizing, and by His grace enable us to know the Blessed Saviour in the fellowship of His suffering and in the power of His resurrection. God's one baptism joins the believer to the eternal Christ in an eternal union. "There is one baptism." Ephesians 4:5.

STEPHEN

BY PASTOR HENRY BULTEMA

Stephen was a full man. He was full of faith, full of grace, full of the Spirit and full of power, we read. He was the forerunner of Paul. Before the Apostle of the Gentiles, no one had such a clear vision on Israel as this deacon. After his great message he suffered martyrdom of those whom he had told the truth. He was also filled with courage and called the leaders "stiffnecked and uncircumcised whilst he gave a searching indictment of his own Nation. He gave a bird's eye view of Israel's history from Abraham to Solomon.

He was a man of vision, for he "looked up steadfastly into heaven" while they piled the rocks on top of him. He did not look at his own gory body, but at the glory of God. He did not see earth, but heaven, and there he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Why did Jesus stand? We always read that he sits and here he stands. Why? Twice we are told emphatically that he was standing and this must be important. Stephen saw here prophetically Jesus as the Son of Man, standing and waiting for Israel's conversion, and at the same time ready to receive the faithful remnant represented by Stephen. The word "behold" points also to Israel, for this attention-arresting word is never used of the members of the Body. "Behold, He that keepeth Israel will neither slumber nor sleep." The opened heavens also always points to Israel.

Stephen was also a Christ-like man, for like our Lord, he interceded for his enemies and said also: "Receive my Spirit."

A BUNCH OF KEYS

BY PASTOR HENRY BULTEMA

Keys are the emblem of authority, privilege, power. With keys one can admit to, or exclude from, a house, or city, or treasures. In Isaiah 22:22, we have the story of the proud Seba who had proved unfaithful. How God took the key of the house of David from him and gave it to

Eliakim, signifying that this man was henceforth to be the intimate adviser of the King and admit to the royal chamber whom he wanted and excluded whom he wanted to keep out. In Revelation 3:7, our Lord has the key of David and receives and excludes whom He will to and from the Davidic Kingdom and the “sure mercies of David”.

To Peter, as the most prominent member of the Twelve, Christ gave the Keys of the Kingdom, Matthew 16:19; Matthew 18:28; and in his Pentecostal address Peter opened wide the door for the whole Israel to enter into the Kingdom, while he used the key to keep Simon the sorcerer out and also Ananias and Saphira. Acts 5.

The key of knowledge had been stolen from the people by the lawyers. Luke 11:52. The figure used here is that of knowledge being a temple filled with great treasures into which the leaders should have led the people, but whose gate they shut, and kept the key with jealous care, even their commentaries rather hiding than revealing the knowledge of God’s will.

We cannot even enter into the treasures of the snow, Job 38:22, unless God unlocks His treasure to us. One scientist photographed 10,000 separate snow flakes, and he found that every one was different from the other, although each was mathematically symmetrical; and so the scientist had not found the treasures even of this one department of nature.

What shall we say then of God’s great treasure box “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

Christ has also the keys of Hades and Death. Revelation 1:18. Hence death and the grave could not hold Him. He had the keys and could open the doors from the inside.” “What a wonderful Saviour is Jesus, my Lord.” Let us worship Him with great joy and love!

THE LORD’S SUPPER

(Continued from December issue)

THE LORD’S SUPPER AND THE GOSPEL IN I CORINTHIANS

“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: And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my Body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. 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.” I Corinthians 11:23 to 25.

“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 ye 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.” I Corinthians 15:1 to 4.

All true and faithful servants of the Lord repeatedly present to the lost sinners the gospel of I Corinthians 15:1 to 4. Surely we have here a clear statement of the “good news” for sinners which the risen Christ gave to us through our Apostle Paul. This message is quite different from the gospel of Matthew 10:5 to 8, the gospel of the kingdom which Christ and His Apostles proclaimed unto Israel when water baptism, unto repentance for the remission of sins, was in order. When Christ on earth mentioned the facts of our gospel to even His chosen few, it was

completely hid from them. Luke 18:31 to 34. At that time they had been preaching the gospel for more than two years; but not Paul's gospel.

Where did Paul receive this gospel? Read Galatians 1:7 to 18. He was led out into Arabia and received the "Grace of Christ" message, the gospel of the uncircumcision, from the risen Lord. Galatians 2:7. It was a direct revelation. Paul was not present when the Eleven received the great commission. Neither did he receive his gospel from the Twelve who companied with the Lord Jesus on earth. They added nothing to him in conference, but learned from him the new message and the new commission that he received by revelation from heaven. Galatians 2:7 to 9. The Twelve were told to stay in Jerusalem and preach the circumcision gospel to the circumcision. Acts 8:1; Galatians 2:9. Christ met Paul in the Jerusalem temple and told him to get out of Jerusalem and go far hence to the Gentiles. Acts 22:17 to 22. Paul's Grace Gospel was by revelation.

Neither was Paul present with Christ and the Twelve when Christ broke bread with them just before His death. But in the same manner that Christ revealed to Paul a gospel for the Gentiles He likewise revealed to Paul the Lord's Supper for the Gentiles. In I Corinthians 12:2, Paul wrote, "Ye know that when ye were Gentiles." Israelites had not been Gentiles; therefore He was addressing Gentiles. There are a number of references to Israel and Israel's religion in I Corinthians, but the message was addressed to saved Gentiles as well as to saved Israelites.

Now, unless we can find some good and sufficient Scriptural reason for separating the two revelations, perhaps given at the same time, it would seem as reasonable that we should no longer preach the gospel of I Corinthians 15:1 to 4 in this age, as to eliminate the Lord's Supper for this age. We know that that gospel is still our message today and by it we are saved as were the Corinthian saints of the first century.

BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER IN I CORINTHIANS

Let us read and study these words of the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 1:17: "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."

Now, let us remember that we have found in this Epistle that the risen Lord, by revelation, gave to Paul, for Gentiles, the gospel of grace and the Lord's Supper. Most assuredly He did not give to Paul, by revelation, water baptism for the Gentiles. In his message water baptism did not have the meaning and merit that it had in the message of the Twelve. Compare Mark 16:15 to 18 and Acts 2:38 with I Corinthians 1:17.

The Twelve were sent to preach their gospel and to baptize. Paul was sent to preach his gospel, but Christ sent him not to baptize. If water baptism had any merit in Paul's ministry and gospel he would have said: "I thank God I baptized many of you;" for he could have wished himself accursed for Israel's sake, for whose salvation he had desire and heaviness of heart. He travailed for others that Christ might be formed in them. But he didn't even remember whether he had baptized any others.

Any careful student of the Bible can develop from John 1:31 to Colossians 2:11 that water baptism gradually lost its importance and finally ceased to have a place in God's program.

Water baptism was not given to Paul by Christ when he received, by revelation, for the Gentiles, the gospel and the Lord's Supper.

Baptism received once-for-all by the believing sinner, in a few moments, has no connection with the Lord's Supper received by the believing saint just as often as he desires to

remember the Lord's death till He come. He may partake of it in or out of a church building, with or without the ministry of a clergyman, reverend or pastor, as oft as he pleases.

THE LORD'S SUPPER AND THE NEW COVENANT

In Matthew 26:28 and Mark 14:24 we read the words of the Lord Jesus, "This is My blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." In Luke 22:20, we find the language, "This cup is the New Covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."

It is true that the new covenant is for the House of Israel. Jeremiah 31:31 to 35. Hebrews 8:7 to 13. It is true that by the guarantee of the New Covenant, Israel, as a nation, is to be saved. Hebrews 8:11; Romans 11:26 to 29. Just what Israel is to eat and drink at Messiah's table in the kingdom is not clear. It is true that before the Nation Israel was born, Melchizedek, King of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, as priest of the Most High God. Genesis 14:18. The Melchizedek priesthood did not pertain to the Old or the New Covenant. Melchizedek spoke of the everlasting Christ; and identified with the shed blood of the everlasting Christ there is an everlasting Covenant. Hebrews 13:20 and 21.

To Israelites pertaineth the covenants. Romans 9:4. But to Israel Christ belonged. He is mentioned in connection with Israel and the covenants, as Christ, who is over all, God blessed forever. Romans 9:5. We do not give up Christ because He was of Israel. Our Saviour was crucified as King of the Jews. He said "salvation is of the Jews."

It is by the precious blood of One who died as a condemned Israelite, under Israel's law, that all Gentiles, as well as all Israelites, are saved and become members of the Body of Christ.

It is true that the blood of Christ, mentioned in Ephesians 2:13 and Colossians 1:20, is not called the blood of the New Covenant and it is doubtful if the Body of Christ in Ephesians and Colossians, can be called, with Scriptural authority, "the New Covenant Church." Because of the absence of Covenants in Paul's prison Epistles, and because it is reasoned by some Christian brethren that the "dispensation of the mystery" could not be designated as "a mystery", if it were in fulfillment of the covenants which God made with Israel, the cup which is the New Covenant in Christ's blood should not be given to members of the Body of Christ. These brethren reason, and perhaps correctly, that the New Covenant was suspended with Paul's statement in Acts 28:25 to 28 with the close of the "Acts" period. And at that time the risen Lord through Paul revealed a new message, if He did not usher in a new dispensation, with truth concerning the mystery; that is, blessings, a hope and a calling not promised in Israel's Covenants. He instructed Paul to proclaim a message for Gentiles different in many respects from the message in his pre-prison Epistles.

However, these Christian brethren continue to proclaim the gospel of Hebrews 9:26; "Christ appeared in the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself"; and they continue, and should continue, to claim the once-for-all sanctification through the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ as told in Hebrews 10:10 and 14.

Are we not to draw nigh to God in full assurance of faith, because we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus? Hebrews 10:19 to 21. Is not Christ in heaven itself to appear in the presence of God for us (saved ones)? Hebrews 9:24.

All of this is because of the blood of the New Covenant. The general rule is, that Christian brethren who drop the Lord's Supper, because of its association with the New Covenant, come by the same reasoning to do away with an interceding Representative for members of the Body of Christ.

In connection with all of the blessings mentioned in Hebrews, to which members of the Body of Christ are entitled, the blood is called the blood of the New Covenant, the blood of the Everlasting Covenant and the blood of Jesus.

But if the so-called Ultra-dispensationalists are to eliminate, with the Lord's Supper, all that is associated with the New Covenant it will mean the doing away of the priesthood of Christ for members of the Body of Christ. To do away with that work of Christ, in the seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel, leads to the teaching of some that the members of the Body of Christ need no advocate in heaven.

Let us be Bereans; but move slowly in discarding all that is associated with the covenants, even though we are sure that the most glorious truths and richest blessings that God has ever guaranteed to any people are revealed for members of the Body of Christ, in the prison Epistles of Paul.

While it may be proved that Covenant dispensations and the dispensation of the mystery differ, yet it is not such a simple matter to prove that not any blessing or benefit from the Abrahamic Covenant and the New Covenant can be claimed by members of Christ's Body.

(This message will be continued in February Edition.)

WHAT SHALL I DO?

Every sinner concerned about his salvation has asked the question, "WHAT SHALL I DO?" If the concern has resulted from the preaching of the Word of God and the conviction of the Holy Spirit, he should be sure that the answer is in the Bible. But he may ask as did the Ethiopian eunuch, how can I understand, except some man should guide me?

At once we must recognize the importance of a human guide. Something more is required than that a person be sincere and earnest, filled with religious zeal, and even a soul burdened for poor, lost sinners. Today as never before Christians dealing with sinners should be workmen that needeth not to be ashamed, "rightly dividing the Word of truth."

Do you suppose that there was any lack of real sincerity on the part of those zealous religious people of the first century who went from Jerusalem to Antioch and preached, with great conviction, "except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." Acts 15:1. Many very religious, well-meaning people in Paul's day, had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. Romans 10:1 to 3. Some very earnest Christians, who endeavor to be faithful as soulwinners, seem to be ignorant that they give to sinners a perverted gospel which subverts the soul. Galatians 1:7. Acts 15:24.

No one is more wrong than the religious workman, who is sincerely wrong. It is all well enough to say, concerning some enthusiastic, zealous religious worker, "dear soul", "he or she is so earnest." But dealing with lost sinners is a very delicate operation and a most important occupation. Workmen must know the difference between the gospel of the kingdom for Israel and the gospel of the grace of God preached to individual sinners by the Apostle Paul. It was he who received the message from the risen Christ and has passed it on to us. Galatians 1:11 to 18; Acts 20:24; Ephesians 3:1 to 3.

It is a spiritual crime to mix the message of John the Baptist or that of the Twelve to Israel with the message of grace, to say nothing of substituting the former for the latter. Should we preach to an unsaved man I John 1:9 when we are told that that message is addressed to believers?

In order that we may appreciate the importance of rightly dividing the Word of truth in presenting the gospel to the sinner, answering his question, "what must I do" we submit for your study, comparison and contrast:

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

Luke 3:10 to 14: "And the people asked Him saying, What shall we do then? He answered and said unto them, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none: and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto Him, Master, what shall we do? And He said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you."

Luke 10:25 to 28: "And behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted Him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answered and said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And He said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live."

Luke 18:18 to 22. "And a certain ruler asked Him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother. And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up. And when Jesus heard these things, He said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow Me."

Acts 2:37 and 38: "Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and 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 Ghost."

Acts 9:6 and 7: "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him. Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no man," Acts 22:10 to 26: "And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do." "And why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins."

Acts 10:6: "He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the seaside: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." Acts 10:34 to 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. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (He is Lord of all;) That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached: 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."

Luke 13:24: "Strive, (agonize) to enter in at the straight gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Matthew 24:13: "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."

PAUL AT PHILIPPI.

Acts 18:30 to 32: “And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.”

NOW FOR THE UNMIXED MESSAGE OF GRACE, MERCY AND PEACE.

THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD.

Romans 3:24 and 25: “Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.”

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.”

Titus 3:5 and 6: “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.”

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.”

If we are willing to acknowledge that a mixture of law and grace frustrates the grace of God and perverts the gospel, we should know that a mixture of the kingdom message of John the Baptist and the Twelve Apostles, with the “dispensation of grace” committed to Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles, will likewise frustrate the grace of God.

Let us be careful to sound forth the pure unmixed gospel of the grace of God, to sinners. In the matter of the sinner’s salvation, it is by grace—through faith—not of works—it is the free gift. No striving—no enduring, no religion. Simply trusting. Christ is the believer’s hope. His precious shed blood is the sinner’s need. Redemption is not for sale. Redemption is not an attainment. Christ obtained it. It is yours for the taking.

FROM BACK COVER

WE WISH ALL OUR READERS A VERY HAPPY

NEW YEAR

If you have been redeemed by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus, then it should be unnecessary to say that it is only “IN CHRIST JESUS” that you will enjoy a Happy New Year, in the true sense of happiness. “Happy is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” That happy man is the sinner saved by grace, who by faith has seen Jesus, Jesus for a little while made

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. Knowing that Christ died for sins once, but He is alive forever more. The Man who died on Calvary's cross is now in the presence of God the Father, making intercession for His redeemed people. It is only through believing God and His infallible Word that we can experience true joy and peace. When Abraham believed God, his faith was counted for righteousness. It is still God's truth today, "with the heart, man believeth unto righteousness". And God describes the happiness of the man to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness, without works. Romans 4:3 to 9.

We would suggest that, at this time of inventory taking, we turn to the fourth chapter of Romans and read about the happy man, in the first nine verses. As believers, our sins have forever been put away; therefore we are happy. As believers on the Lord Jesus Christ, God has declared us to be righteous; therefore, we are happy. And according to Romans 5:1, having been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; therefore, we are happy. According to Romans 8:1, because we are in Christ Jesus there is no condemnation; therefore, we are happy. And as we follow on with Paul in the glorious revelations for us which he received from Christ, it gets better and better. Just turn to the Epistle to the Ephesians and try to count your blessings and name them one by one. There we learn of our inheritance, our riches, our high and holy calling, our identification with the risen Son of God, seated with Him in the highest heavenlies. There we are told in Ephesians 1:3 that we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. Surely, such Divine truth should not only mean a happy New Year for redeemed sinners, but happiness every moment. We have a hope laid up in heaven. We are to appear with Christ in glory.

Let us not forget, however, that in the Epistle to the Romans the little word GRACE is used 22 times; and in the Epistle to the Ephesians it is used 12 times. God would have us know at all times that our position and possessions "in Christ" are all of grace and all by grace. We are God's workman, ship created in Christ Jesus. We have been made accepted in the Beloved, Christ Jesus. Only the believer can experience true happiness. The true knowledge of this true happiness is experienced only by the believer who knows the truth of God revealed in God's Book, in His special messages to the members of that Church which is the Body of Christ. We are complete in Christ.

IF NOT IN CHRIST

If you are not in Christ, where are you? "The whole world lieth "in the evil one" I John 5:19. "As 'in Adam' all die", I Corinthians 15:22. "They that are 'in the flesh' cannot please God." Romans 8:8. "Even when we were dead 'in sins,'" Ephesians 2:5.

Thus we see the predicament, the peril and the despair of the person who is not in Christ. Consider it, seriously, sinner. "In the evil one." "In Adam." "In the flesh." "In sins."

When the Lord Jesus was here on earth He said, "If ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die, in your sins." John 8:24. We may have to die, before the Church is called to meet the Lord, but blessed fact, we do not have to die in our sins. Why hesitate at such a choice, to die in Christ, or to die in our sins? Do not procrastinate another moment; hurry to Christ. Out of Adam into Christ means out of condemnation into justification; out of death into life; out of wrath into peace; out of despair into hope.

IF ANY MAN BE IN CHRIST

“Therefore, if any man be in Christ, there is a new creation.” II Corinthians 5:17.

Why not begin the new year by becoming a new creature in Christ Jesus? Perhaps, you will make a new resolution to join the church or do more deeds of kindness or give up some questionable habits. Joining some church organization is not the equivalent of becoming a new creation in Christ Jesus. An increase in good deeds with a decrease in evil deeds will not lift you out of Adam into Christ, out of death into life, out of the flesh into the Spirit. Evil deeds are an abomination in the sight of God and good deeds will be rewarded by Him, if the doer of the deeds has first passed out of death into life, out of darkness into light, by faith in the crucified, resurrected and glorified Christ.

In Galatians 6:15 God declares that neither the religion of the Jew nor the religion of the Gentile availeth anything, but a new creation. There is neither life nor justification nor hope in religion. There is a great difference between “in Christ” and “in religion”. To be “in religion” means to be “in the flesh”, condemned; perhaps twice dead plucked up by the roots.

The omnipotent God is waiting to be your Saviour. He is more than willing and abundantly able to put you in the place of life, the place of eternal security, the place of spiritual blessing; “in Christ Jesus”, where there is no condemnation.

Why not bow in His holy presence, confess yourself, what God knows you to be, a ruined condemned, guilty sinner, a good case for the infinite grace of God, and then accept by faith the precious blood of Jesus Christ? If you will do this, something will happen. God will do the creating—you will become the new creation. You will pass out of death into life. A splendid way to begin the New Year? Yes or no?