

BIBLE STUDY FOR BEREANS

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RIGHT NOW AND BYE AND BYE

It seems rather a foolish question to ask anyone, "Where will you be in a thousand years from today?" And yet, if it is considered seriously, it may not be so foolish as it seems. We are told in the Bible, which is God's Word, that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." The sum total of the wisdom of this world, with all of its philosophies, sciences and religions, has to do with the life that now is. And even then, it is admitted by all the worldly wise men that the present life is an unsolved and unsolvable mystery. In all of their literature they have no satisfactory answer to the question, more than 4000 years old, "if a man die shall he live again?" Job 14:14.

The Bible claims for itself Divine inspiration. It claims to be God's eternal Truth; and therefore, this claim for the Bible is made by every true Christian. We say, true Christian, because there are many religious people today who claim to be Christians but who are not Bible Christians; because they question the Divine authority of God's Book.

Without apology or defense, the Bible claims to express Divine Truth as to the whence and whither of the human race, "the life that now is and the life which is to come." Therefore, if we want information about "right now" and "bye and bye", let us turn to the inspired Word of the God in Whom we live and move and have our being. In this Book we are told that not only our reward in the "bye and bye", but our very destiny, is determined by our decisions and our activities "right now". Here is a wonderful verse of Divine truth

"BELOVED, NOW ARE WE THE SONS OF GOD, AND IT DOTHT NOT YET APPEAR WHAT WE SHALL BE: BUT WE KNOW THAT WHEN HE SHALL APPEAR, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM; FOR WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS." I John 3:2.

Surely this is not only a glorious message but it is a blessed fact: "now", "right now", here on this earth; we are the children of God. But let each one examine himself to know whether or not he is included in the "we". If you would know positively, read and believe Galatians 3:26, which we quote "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus"; and John 1:12, which we quote: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name." Surely no one, how, ever simple, should stumble over these clear statements of truth. Perhaps it is the one who is wise in his own conceit who is apt to stumble.

Regardless of man's attitude towards God's Truth, that Truth remains Truth. God declares there will be a day of judgment and hearers of this Truth will be judged by this Truth. How much better it is to hear the Truth and hear right now, and "the Truth shall make you free." You will pass out of death into life. John 5:24. Now we quote for your information, and we trust for your edification and comfort some of the blessed "nows" of God's Word:

"There is therefore NOW no condemnation to them, which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit". Romans 8:1.

“Much more then, being NOW justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.” Romans 5:9. “For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have NOW obtained mercy through their unbelief.” Romans 11:30. “But NOW in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2:13. “NOW therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” Ephesians 2:19.

“For ye were sometimes darkness, but NOW are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.” Ephesians 5:8.

After we have read these and pondered over them, and receive them into our hearts, we shall know something of the meaning of Ephesians 1:3, which we quote: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” In Christ we are spiritually multimillionaires,

To be justified right now means to be glorified bye and bye. We read in I John 3:2, “Now are we the children of God; and when Christ shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.” While we are waiting for this glorious climax, we are told, in Romans 8:22 that “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now”. And in I Peter 1:6 we find these words which tell us something of the heaviness even in the soul of the believer “right now” “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.” Faith is the victory that overcometh the world. Therefore, every believer should be able to say with a real head knowledge and heart experience what Paul said in Galatians 2:20: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” When the children of God shall come into the realization of glory, when Christ shall appear, they shall know the full meaning of I Corinthians 13:12: “For now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”

As believers, waiting for the appearing of Christ, we should obey Romans 13:11, which we quote: “Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed”, and should walk day by day in accordance with Romans 6:22: “Now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” The coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ will mean great blessing for the redeemed child of God. What a time of awful judgment for the child of wrath; and such are all by nature. Ephesians 2:1 to 3.

This world belongs to the crucified and glorified Christ, by creation and redemption. Until He comes we must all join in the words expressed in Hebrews 2:8: “Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet. For in that He put all in subjection under Him, He left nothing that is not put under Him. But now we see—not yet all things put under Him.” Some glorious day another message will ring out, the message of Revelation 12:10: “Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.” In the meantime, the high and holy place of our living Christ, the sinner’s Redeemer and Friend, is recorded in Hebrews 9:24. “In heaven itself, NOW to appear in the presence of God for us”.

Our closing word we give first to the child, in the language of Ecclesiastes 12:1. “Remember now, thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.” Then; to all in the language of Isaiah 1:18 “Come NOW, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

Hear these words of God:

“COME FOR ALL THINGS ARE NOW READY.” Luke 14:17.

You have nothing to add to the Great Supper. God’s Gospel is His own perfect work and Christ has finished the work: Supper tickets are not for sale. A place at the table means eternal redemption. Come. It is without cost so far as man’s pay is concerned.

DISPENSATIONAL “NOWS”

WHEN DID CHRIST REVEAL THE MYSTERY OF COLOSSIANS 1:26?

The word “NOW” of Colossians 1:26 most assuredly suggests a very definite dispensational change. Now the question is, when did the change, indicated by that NOW, take place? It is taught by some “dispensationalists” that this change did not take place until after Paul reached Rome, about 62 A.D. It is generally agreed among Bible students that Colossians was written about 64 or 65 A.D. We quote Colossians 1:25 and 26:

“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God. Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but NOW made manifest to his saints.”

Again the question, does the “NOW” of Colossians 1:26 prove that the day of the revelation of the mystery was about the time in Paul’s life and ministry when he wrote Colossians from the Roman prison? Careful students of the Word must acknowledge that there was no Divine written record, in which the mystery was clearly defined, until Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians and II Timothy were written, several years after Paul pronounced God’s judgment upon Israel, as recorded in Acts 28:25 to 28. Neither should any such student deny that the mystery was mentioned by Paul in I Corinthians 2:7 and 8 and Romans 16:25 and 26, both written before the date of Acts 28:28. In God’s infallible Records of the teachings of Paul, before he reached Rome, we have a very small part of his ministry. As to just what he taught orally, concerning the mystery, in addition to the record in the Book of Acts and in his epistles written during the “Acts” period, we cannot even guess with any degree of accuracy. Moreover, no spiritual believer will accept guessing and speculating, rather than sound Scriptural exegesis, as proof of Scriptural facts and Divine truth.

Inasmuch as some “guessing” Bible teachers have imagined that they have supported their speculations by some Scriptural exegesis with the use of the word “NOW” to prove that the Apostle Paul received the revelation of the Mystery after the close of the period covered by the Book of Acts, we want to use some other “NOWS” to disprove their theory. We quote several:

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, NOW to appear in the presence of God for us.” Hebrews 9:24.

“But NOW in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2:13.

“NOW therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but, fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” Ephesians 2:19.

“For ye were sometimes darkness, but NOW are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of ‘light.’” Ephesians 5:8.

“For your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until NOW.” Philippians 1:5.

“And NOW abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.” I Corinthians 13:13.

In the first verse quoted, “NOW to appear in the presence of God for us.” The Epistle to the Hebrews was written at least twenty years after Christ sat down in heaven, in accordance with Hebrews 1:3—Hebrews 10:10 to 14—Hebrews 12:1 to 3. Christ had been interceding for saints, in accordance with Hebrews 7:25, for more than twenty years after He sat down. Christ had been appearing in heaven itself in God’s presence since, the day of Pentecost when Paul (or some other apostle) wrote Hebrews 9:24. Therefore the “NOW” of Hebrews 9:24 did not begin with the day Hebrews was written, but years before.

“But NOW in Christ Jesus”. Ephesians 2:13. But when? But “NOW”? Certainly not the date when Paul wrote Ephesians, which was more than thirty years after Christ died on the cross and was seated in the heavenlies. What is proved by the immediate context? “Ye are (were) saved by grace”. Ephesians 2:8. What Gentile was not saved by grace in Paul’s ministry beginning with Acts 13:39? “By Him all that believe are justified by all things.” Where is the grace message more clearly presented than in Galatians 1:11 to 17 and Galatians 2:21, and especially in Romans 3:26 to Romans 5:20? It was grace all the way. It was about 47 A.D. when Paul returned to Antioch with the report and result recorded in Acts 14:27; “And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had OPENED THE DOOR OF FAITH UNTO THE GENTILES.” Most, if not all, of the believers to whom Paul addressed his Epistle to the Ephesians were brought nigh to God by the blood of Christ, not later than 58 A.D. So the “NOW” of Ephesians 2:13 did not refer to the “NOW” date of the Epistle.

This same argument holds good for Ephesians 5:8, quoted above. When were they sometimes darkness? When did they become light in the Lord? Certainly this transformation had taken place before Acts 28. Now note Ephesians 2:19—“NOW” therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” When did they enter the household of God? When they were saved. The Galatians were in. Galatians 3:26 to Galatians 4:4. When was the middle-wall of partition broken down? Some teachers seem to think that the breaking-down of the middlewall of partition did not occur until God set Israel aside with Acts 28:25 to 28. But let us read Romans 3:22, “there is no difference”; Galatians 3:28, “there is neither Jew nor Greek”; II Corinthians 3:13, “that which is abolished (the law)”; and Galatians 2:18 and 19. The middle-wall of partition was known to be out of the way before Paul reached Rome. To be sure the revelation and knowledge of all that Christ accomplished, for the Gentiles, on the cross came gradually and much of the truth of Ephesians and Colossians was wholly unknown to Peter and the Eleven at the time Cornelius was saved. Read Acts 5:31 and you will wonder where the Gentiles get in. But the “NOW” of Ephesians 2:19 was before Paul said to the saints at Ephesus “I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.” (Acts 20:27). However, let us not speculate with other “dispensationalists” who try to prove that there was nothing new in Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and II Timothy because of the statement in Acts 20:27 concerning the whole counsel of God. There are glorious truths and phases of the dispensation of the mystery revealed in Paul’s prison epistles, not before recorded; and we must, at least, see something of God’s purpose in withholding these written records until after Israel was set aside with Acts 28:25 to 28. No one can prove that some of the glorious truths of Ephesians were made known by Paul before he wrote Ephesians.

Nearly all diligent students of God’s Word have learned the fallacy of setting Israel aside at the time of Christ’s words in Matthew 23:33 to 39. Most of them have moved, at least, to the

message of Stephen recorded in Acts 7:41 to 58. But the pronouncement of the doom of Israel is in Acts 28:25 to 28. After that pronouncement God's spiritual program for the Body changed. Signs, miracles, tongues and religious things ceased. Certainly God's order was no longer, "to the Jew first." But there was neither the beginning of a new and different Body nor the first intimation of the mystery after Paul became the prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ with the grace message of Ephesians 3:1 to 9.

It is quite interesting, and significant to note that the Book of Acts closed before Paul's acts ceased: for he lived and acted for several years after the Book of Acts closed. Only stupidity, prejudice, or indifference will keep any student of the Scriptures from observing the Lord's changed attitude toward Israel in the epistles written by Paul after the close of the "Acts of the Apostles". The words, "signs", "miracles", "healings", "tongues", etc. are not once found in those last epistles. And even Peter remarked that in Paul's epistles there "are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest." II Peter 3:16.

We do not want to be unlearned and unstable, and God forbid that we should wrest the things of Paul which are hard to be understood. If you belong to a denomination and your church creed prohibits you from obeying Ephesians 3:9 and Ephesians 4:3 to 7, just acknowledge that your denominational creed comes first and God's Word second. If you have read the Epistle to the Ephesians even several hundred times, and have spent many hours in prayerful study, you are still of the opinion that in it there are many things hard to be understood; so different from Galatians, Corinthians and Romans.

Paul's last written message is II Timothy. In the original text we read of "my deposit" in II Timothy 1:12 and "that good deposit" in II Timothy 1:14. Paul had his own special "good deposit" from the risen Christ. There are many different phases of that mystery. No man knows when Paul received that deposit and whether or not he received the full revelation of the mystery all at one time. Undoubtedly the "before-the-world-began" grace and purpose given members of the Body in Christ Jesus is a part of Paul's deposit. II Timothy 1:9. But read the "NOW" of the verse that follows: "NOW made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour. Most assuredly that "NOW" does not fix the Saviour's appearing, 67 A.D., the year when Paul wrote II Timothy. Christ died years before. Read II Timothy 1:7 and let's be of a sound mind.

Therefore, it is unwise to endeavor to prove by the "NOW" of Colossians 1:26 that the Body of Colossians 1:25 began after Paul's Roman imprisonment, especially since the "NOW" of Philippians 1:5 proves the very opposite. "For your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until NOW." Paul was in Philippi about 52 A.D. Acts 16:11 to 32. He wrote to "all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi". (Philippians 1:1) Paul preached Christ Jesus unto all the saints who had enjoyed fellowship with him from the first day. The "NOW" of Philippians 1:5 is proof positive that the saints in 64 or 65 A.D. had not changed from an "Acts" Church to a "Body" Church which began after Acts closed. Therefore the "NOW" of Philippians 1:5, (64 or 65 A.D.) proves that the "NOW" of Colossians 1:26 and Ephesians 3:5 began years before Colossians and Ephesians were written.

Also the "NOW" of Colossians 1:26 proves that the "AS" of Ephesians 3:5 has no suggestion of the relative degree in which the Gentiles' place in the "same Body" (Sussomos) of Ephesians 3:5 and 6 was made known before and after Christ revealed the Body truth to Paul. We quote Ephesians 3:5 and 6:

"Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, AS it is NOW revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same Body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel."

It is taught by some unlearned and unstable teachers that the mystery of Ephesians 3:6 was made known to the sons of men in other ages, but not AS it is NOW revealed. But Colossians 1:25 and 26 is the Holy Spirit's refutation of this statement. Therefore it is but folly to say that Peter in his housetop vision received a revelation of the mystery or that the "dispensation of the mystery" began on the day of Pentecost. Acts 10:5 to 28, Ephesians 3:9.

Paul, in Ephesians and Colossians, is setting forth some truths made known before Acts 28:28; but Ephesians 3:8 is his own testimony that he was to make known among the Gentiles the unsearchable (not-to-be-traced) riches of Christ. Such riches could not be included in the confirmation message which Christ began to speak and gave to the Twelve to confirm. Romans 15:8 and Hebrews 2:1 to 4. Neither could the truth have been searched in the Scriptures by the Bereans. Acts 17:11.

Most Bible teachers oppose the glorious truth of the mystery of Ephesians 1:17 to 22 and Ephesians 3:14 to Ephesians 4:14, and totally ignore Ephesians 3:9, because they are zealous for their denominational program. But undoubtedly many of them are discouraged and restrained because of the fantastic speculations of a few extremists who seem to think that they are making all men to see the mystery by trying to rob the believer of one blessed truth of God after the other. Such a negative procedure is unscriptural, unspiritual and unprofitable and most detrimental to God's truth and to God's children who are deceived by them.

Let us acknowledge that the believer's position and possessions in Christ, in connection with the mystery, are never clearly set forth in Paul's pre-prison epistles, and that in no written message before Acts 28 can we find the glorious truth as to the One New Man and the relationship of Head and Body-members as it is revealed in Ephesians. But let us not be stubbornly dogmatic in our assertion that the revelation did not come to Paul from Christ until after Acts 28, and show the weakness of our dogmatism in an attempt to prove it by the "NOWS" of Colossians 1:26 and Ephesians 2:5.

In closing, let us be instructed by the "NOW" of I Corinthians 13:13: "Faith, hope, and love abideth". In I Corinthians 13:8 there are things (signs) which were to be done away. These are absent after Acts 28:28, in Paul's prison epistles. These last epistles are filled with "faith", "hope" and love. The "NOW" of I Corinthians 13:13 proves that the "Post Acts" Body was to be a continuation of the "Acts" Body with a different spiritual program.

"THE SAVIOUR OUT OF HEAVEN"

BY CHARLES F. BAKER

"No one hath ascended into heaven, but (except) he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven" (John 3:13). The entire New Testament bears record to the fact that the Son of God found it necessary to come out of heaven in order to become the Saviour of the world. "The second man is the Lord out of heaven" (I Corinthians 15:47). The preposition "ek" meaning "out of", often translated "of, from", proves conclusively that Christ came out of heaven once to die a redeeming death, and although now in heaven, will come out of heaven again. Most Christians profess to believe in His first coming out of heaven, but are ignorant of or deny the fact that He will come again, although the entire New Testament with the exception of three books, Philemon, 2nd and 3rd John, bears witness to the fact and in the same language which describes His first coming. No doubt fanatical date-setters have spoiled this glorious truth for most Christians, but such cannot alter the infallible Word of God. The whole philosophy of

Christianity is hopeless and pessimistic apart from it; for the Bible nowhere holds out hope of immortality and resurrection apart from it, and if it will never occur, then Christians are of all men most to be pitied (I Corinthians 15:23, 19). A failing and powerless Christendom surely presents to the world a defeated God, when it throws away the hope of Christ's coming with power and great glory (Matthew 24:30).

Every true Christian has been made conformable with Christ's death (Philippians 3:10), i. e., has been crucified with Him (Galatians 2:20; Romans 6:6; Colossians 3:3) for the penalty of sin, and has been given the hope of having his body of humiliation made conformable with Christ's body of glory (Philippians 3:21). This redemption of the body (Romans 8:23) is to be realized when Christ next comes out of heaven. We have already received everlasting life, the salvation of our souls, but we await the salvation of our bodies. Those who spiritualize or misplace this resurrection err and overthrow the faith of some (II Timothy 2:18). This will not be a general resurrection; for it is called an "ek (out) resurrection ek (out of) dead ones" (Philippians 3:11), signifying that some of the dead will remain in the grave after this takes place. It would seem to include only the Body of Christ. Paul had the hope of attaining to this out resurrection, not by meritorious effort; for the word "attain" here merely means to come to or arrive at, as is seen from its usage in Acts 26:7 "come"; Acts 25:13 "came unto"; I Corinthians 10:11 "come"; towards which he pressed (Philippians 3:12, 14).

Some teach that the Body of Christ began after God set Israel aside in Acts 28:28, and therefore the hope of resurrection in I Corinthians 15:51, 52; I Thessalonians 4:13 to 17 (given before Acts 28) is not for the Body of Christ. They say our hope is found in Philippians 3:11, 14, 20, 21 and Colossians 3:4, and claim that these passages teach that our Lord is not coming out of heaven as in I Thessalonians 4, but that we will be called up on high, to meet Christ, not in the air, but in heaven. This theory seems to be contradicted, however, by the very scripture they use. Philippians 3:20 reads: "For our citizenship is in Heaven, from whence (ek ou—out of which, i. e., out of heaven) also we look for (or eagerly await—same word used in Romans 8:19, 23, 25; I Corinthians 1:7; Hebrews 9:28) the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." It is exactly what the Thessalonians were doing: they were "waiting, for His Son from (ek—out of) heaven" (I Thessalonians 1:10). Christ is now in heaven; we are to wait for Him out of heaven. He must descend from heaven as in I Thessalonians 4:16 before Philippians 3:20, 21 can be realized. The day in which the Corinthian and Thessalonian event is to be realized is called "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 1:8), and the one in which the Philippian hope is to be realized is called "the day of Jesus Christ" and the "day of Christ" (Philippians 1:6; Philippians 2:16). If these are two separate events, then language seems useless in making the distinction. We must, of course, recognize the distinction between His two comings or parousias; for there will first be a parousia or coming "for His saints" (I Thessalonians 4:15; II Thessalonians 2:1) in which the Church takes part; and then there will be the parousia "with His saints" (I Thessalonians 3:13). The former is called a Mystery (I Corinthians 15:51); the latter is the subject of prophecy and not a mystery, being the Second Coming of Christ back to the earth. Our hope is not to die and go to be with Christ in heaven, but to be caught up with Him when He next comes out of heaven, and to ever be with Him where ever He is.

THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST

BY CHARLES F. BAKER

Having seen the necessity for the Virgin Birth, it will be our purpose now to show the necessity and the proof for the Deity of Jesus Christ. The Modernist speaks of the divinity of Christ, but he also speaks of the divinity of all men; so that Jesus was no different in nature from other men: He merely realized more of the Divine in Himself than others have done, and there is the possibility that others will yet arise who will utilize the divine in themselves more than Jesus did. Such teaching exalts man but debases God. By ascribing Deity to Jesus Christ we mean just the opposite: Jesus Christ is the eternal Creator, who, though He became man, yet was different in essence from every created being in the universe.

The one great necessity for the Deity of Jesus Christ is seen in the scriptural doctrine of salvation. Because the Modernist denies the former, he must denounce the latter. He argues that salvation based upon the substitutionary death of an innocent man is unethical. It would be unjust for God to demand the death of a good man in order that a bad man might be saved. We absolutely agree with this, if that good man be not God Himself manifested in human flesh. It would not be right for God to take any good or innocent created being and cause that one to die for a bad one; neither could there be any virtue or value in such a death. Surely no man could ever redeem his brother (Psalm 49:7), neither could any angel redeem man. Jesus was not merely a third party who stepped forward to pay our fine. He was the very God against whom we have sinned and to whom we are responsible. Let us illustrate. Suppose you owe me a debt of five hundred dollars, but you haven't a cent with which to pay (see Luke 7:41 to 50). Now if a third party gives you, that amount and you pay it to me it can in no sense be said that I forgave you the debt; for I received my money in full. But suppose the debt was so large that no one could pay it for you. This is the intended meaning in the story of Matthew 18:21 to 35, where the debt of 10,000 talents (over 300 million dollars) represents our debt to God because of sin, and that of 100 pence (15 dollars) represents our debt to our fellow man. You owe me this enormous debt, but you have not a cent to pay, neither can any one else pay it for you. Now suppose I freely forgave you that debt. Who paid it? Did not I? for I suffered the loss in forgiving you. Just so in all true forgiveness, the one who forgives suffers the loss of that which is forgiven. This is also true in the case of God. The debt of man's sin was too great for man ever to pay; so God in His mercy and grace paid the debt Himself by becoming a Man in order that He might die the death which sin demanded. Thus Jesus Christ is either God and the scriptural doctrine of salvation is perfectly ethical, or else Jesus was a mere man and the scriptural salvation is extremely unethical.

Scriptural proofs of Christ's Deity are so abounding as to be beyond the scope of this brief message. Suffice it to say that He is called God (Hebrews 1:8; Matthew 22:44); He claimed to be God (I AM or Jehovah—John 8:24, 56, 58, 59; equal with the Father—Matthew 28:19; Mark 14:62; John 10:30, 31, 32; John 14:8, 9; John 17:5; exercised God's prerogative—Mark 2:5 to 7; Luke 7:48 to 50; omnipresent—Matthew 18:20, omniscient—John 11:11 to 14; Mark 11:6 to 8 omnipotent—Matthew 28:18; Luke 7:14; John 5:21 to 23; John 6:19; divine power over nature—Luke 9:16, 17; John 2:9; John 21:6; Luke 8:24; received human worship due only to God—Matthew 14:33; Matthew 28:9; John 9:38; Matthew 20:28, 29; arose from the dead—Romans 1:4); all of the Bible writers ascribe Deity to Him—Micah 5:2; Isaiah 7:14; Psalm 2:2 to 9; Psalm 45:6, 7; Psalm 110:1, 4; John 1:1, 3, 10; John 20:31; Acts 20:28; Acts 2:36; Romans 9:5; I Corinthians 15:47; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:6; Colossians 1:15 to 19; I Timothy 6:15, 16; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 7:3; James 2:1; II Peter 1:17; Revelation 1:8, 17, 18; Revelation 19:16.

Some who claim to believe the Bible teach that because Jesus is called the "only begotten Son" or the "first begotten" that He was born or created of God as the first of His creation and then all else was created by Christ. If Christ be but the greatest of creatures, then all of the above

scriptures are in error. Such passages as John 1:14, 18; John 3:16, 18; Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5 I John 4:9; Revelation 1:5; Matthew 1:25; Romans 8:29; Colossians 1:15, 18 do not teach that the Son of God came into existence at some point in time, but refer to His position in the Godhead, His humanity, and His resurrection, cf. Hebrews 1:5 and Acts 13:33. The fact that “all things were created by Him” (Colossians 1:16, 17; John 1:3), excludes the thought that He Himself was created. We bow our knees at the name of Jesus, and confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father; as every one must some day bow and confess Him either as Saviour or Judge (Philippians 2:10, 11).

WE ARE ONE

“SO WE, MANY, ARE ONE BODY IN CHRIST, AND EVERY ONE MEMBERS ONE OF ANOTHER.” Romans 12:5.

“BE KINDLY AFFECTIONED ONE TO ANOTHER WITH BROTHERLY LOVE” Romans 12:10.

“BE OF THE SAME MIND ONE TOWARD ANOTHER.” Romans 12:16.

“LET US NOT THEREFORE JUDGE ONE ANOTHER ANY MORE.” Romans 14:13.

“WHEREFORE RECEIVE YE ONE ANOTHER, AS CHRIST ALSO RECEIVED US TO THE GLORY OF GOD.” Romans 15:17.

By the pen of the Apostle Paul, the Holy Spirit wrote these words to the Galatians, “ye are all one in Christ Jesus”. Galatians 3:28. Every member of the human race is either “in Adam” or “in Christ”. Those who are “in Adam” are not one with those who are “in Christ”. But all who are “in Christ” are one; one in Him; ONE BODY IN CHRIST. All “in Christ” should endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit, ever bearing in mind that there is but one Christ and one Body. Ephesians 4:3 to 7.

Are the Roman Catholics one with the Protestants? In united spiritual activities and joint-worship, emphatically no. But in God’s purpose and program for this age the saved Romanists and saved Protestants are all “in Christ”, and all who are “in Christ” are one; for God so states. Unsaved Catholics and unsaved Protestants, and all unsaved church- members, are “in Adam”; and are not members of God’s one and only true church, the Body of Christ, notwithstanding the fact they have joined a religious organization. Ephesians 1:19 to 22 and Ephesians 3:6. “If any man be in Christ there is a new creation.” II Corinthians 5:17.

God’s Book declares that members of His one true Church are those who are saved by grace, those who have been brought nigh by the blood of Christ; without religious ceremonies and without religious works. These saved ones have been recreated spiritually by God. Ephesians 2:8 to 10 and Ephesians 2:13. Are church-members saved, if they insist that their religious observances and activities have helped to save them? God says, “not by works of righteousness”. Who is saved and who is not saved? Who knows? God does. “The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His”. II Timothy 2:19. God, by His infinite grace, has saved some church-members, in spite of their religion. But what an insult to God to offer Him religion to supplement His infinite grace and the finished work of redemption accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ. Eternal redemption obtained for us by Him. Hebrews 9:12. What a religious man thinks will supplement God’s grace, in reality, frustrates that grace. Galatians 2:21, Romans 11:6.

But are Protestants one? Are Lutherans and Baptists one? They are not one in their religious practices. Very seldom do they unite for worship as one company of redeemed sinners. But saved Lutherans and saved Baptists are one in Christ; and they all belong to the same Body. They are members one of another. But if they should hold a joint-baptismal service, the Lutherans to sprinkle babies into the Church, and the Baptists to bury adults into the death of Christ, the admonition, "let us not therefore judge one another any more", would be forgotten. The unity of the Spirit would not be kept; for that unity is on the basis of one baptism. Ephesians 4:5.

Are the Plymouth Brethren and the Pentecostals one? The saved ones are one in Christ; but anything but one in doctrine and practice. They each claim that they are earnestly contending for the faith once-for-all delivered unto the saints. They both claim that they are carrying on the Scriptural program of the Body of Christ. They both claim that that Body began on the day of Pentecost, and that the Body of Ephesians is identical with the Body to which 3000 were added on the day of Pentecost and which continued all through the "Acts" period and is the Body to which saints now belong. The Pentecostals claim that the Plymouth Brethren have arbitrarily rejected from God's spiritual program, recorded in "Acts", many very important ceremonies, gifts and ministries such as baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins, laying-on of hands, miracles, signs, sign-gifts, tongues, visions, etc., which positively belonged to the first Pentecostal Church. Which of these two companies of New Testament saints is right and who said so? Perhaps they will feed together like the cow and the bear of Isaiah 11:7; but it will be in the sweet bye and bye. They will never act as one church before the millennium. What a pity that the One Body of the One Lord cannot present to the world the unity of the one Spirit and the one faith!

Is it possible for the saved Nazarenes, saved Presbyterians, saved Dunkards, saved Mennonites, saved Quakers, saved Baptists, saved Healing-Christians, saved Second-Blessing Saints, saved Reformed, saved Lutherans, and saved Methodists to be of the same mind one toward another in a union meeting? Many of these have no more Christian fellowship than do the lost "in Adam" and the saved "in Christ". And thereby God's instructions are being disobeyed or ignored. The prayer of Christ remains unanswered. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." John 17:21.

The only way that this mixed multitude can obey Romans 12:10, "be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love", is to forsake the assembling of themselves together and to have no more dealings in a union-meeting than the Jews and the Samaritans had. Can they not gather in the Name of the Lord and forget their doctrinal differences by not referring to them? "What saith the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." Galatians 4:30. How can God's true messenger of Grace compromise with a loyal denominationalist who must be true to his religious church creed, which is part grace and part Judaism? How can there be agreement between believers who know they have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ, and believers who demand that members of their church seek after, and tarry for, a second blessing? How can there exist unity of the Spirit between believers who, with their cry, "back to Pentecost" and "the program of Jesus on earth," strive to be religious Israelites and believers who advance with Christ's revelation of the dispensation of the grace of God and the dispensation of the mystery, through Paul? Believers who know Pauline truth, who enjoy the riches of God's grace and glory and appreciate their heavenly position and possessions in the risen and glorified Christ and have

neither the desire nor Divine authority to be religious Israelites, cannot heartily participate in a mixed program of legalism, grace and the kingdom of heaven.

Until all believers are willing to acknowledge that there is one and only one non-sectarian Bible Church, The Body of Christ, and study and practice all Scripture in the light of the revelation of the risen Christ to the members of that Body, through Paul, discord and divisions will increase and multiply, and the denominational churches will move steadily toward religious Babylon instead of making any attempt to obey Ephesians 4:3, “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit”, “One Lord, one faith, one Body, one baptism, etc.”

The beautiful doctrine of many believers “all one in Christ”, “One Body”, is real with God; but only a theory with Christians here on earth. Is Christ divided?

How true it is, that the Body truth of Romans, of Ephesians, Colossians, and II Timothy is the golden key to use in the understanding, interpretation and application of all Divine truth and is the curative for every unscriptural OR undispensational “ism”, all the fanaticism, being propagated in the name of Christianity, and is the death-blow to all sectarianism. Let’s do our utmost to obey Ephesians 4:3 to 13 and Ephesians 3:9 and II Timothy 2:2 and II Timothy 2:15.

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS

BY PASTOR VINCENT BENNETT
LESSON NUMBER SEVEN

PAUL’S PRAYER, Ephesians 1:15 to 23.

How wonderful it is to hear this prayer of the apostle, a prayer which was inspired by the very Spirit of God, not only for the saints to whom the epistle was written but for all the saints who are members of His Body, and it is therefore a record of permanent value to every sinner saved by grace. Oh, that we might all have Spirit opened eyes to appreciate our privileges “in Christ”.

This is Paul’s first prayer in this epistle, the second prayer is found at the close of the third chapter, and the greatest revelation in the Word of God is found between these two prayers, and is vitally connected with both.

FAITH AND LOVE. Ephesians 1:15.

“Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all the saints”. It is this thought that leads him to the throne in thanksgiving. “Faith” and “love” stand in relation to each other as cause and effect or root and fruit. Notice the preposition “in” and “unto”, the one signifying location, the other direction, “faith” is “in the Lord Jesus”, and “love” is “unto all the saints.”

THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION. Ephesians 1:16.

“Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.”

Truly Paul was conscientious and consistent when he implored of the believers to “pray without ceasing”: “in everything give thanks” (I Thessalonians 5:17 and 18). Note in the following passages how the apostle himself prayed without ceasing for the believers in Christ, II

Timothy 1:3, “I thank God—that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day.” Romans 1:9, “For God is my witness—that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.” I Thessalonians 1:2 and 3. “We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith”—I Thessalonians 2:13, “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing.” Now we come to this Ephesian passage, and we find that the thanksgiving is for the foundation already laid as given in the previous verse, but the intercession is for the future, the superstructure going up, and for these beloved converts among whom he lived and labored so long, the apostle pours out his heart in one of the mightiest prayers in the Word of God. God grant that we all may be given spiritual insight into the burden of the apostle’s prayer that it might be answered in us.

THE PETITION. Ephesians 1:17.

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.”

The prayer is addressed to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of GLORY. In II Corinthians 1:3, God is called the “Father of mercies”, and in James 1:17 “the Father of lights”. The context of these passages giving definite reason for such designation, so in Ephesians 1:17, God is the Father of GLORY, and the term “glory” is not without significance. Let us then refresh our minds in reference to the occasions when God has expressed His presence by His glory, and by progressive revelation come to the truth contained in Ephesians.

In Exodus 25:8, is the record that God instituted a tent meeting, a sanctuary for His presence, and the tabernacle was the first building designed by God and consecrated for His presence and glory. The structure had three enclosures, the outer court, the holy place, and holy of holies. Inside the most Holy Place was the ark of the covenant with its covering or mercy seat upon which rested the Shekinah light of glory, the outward symbol of God’s presence. That was true of the tabernacle was also true of the temple and His glory filled the house. (I Kings 8:1 to 11). When we turn to Ezekiel 9:3, Ezekiel 10:4, Ezekiel 10:18, and Ezekiel 11:23, we find a record of how the glory of God departed because of Israel’s sin and disobedience. When Jesus came to earth God again tabernacled among men and in the person of His only begotten Son displayed His glory (John 1:14 and II Corinthians 4:6). He is indeed the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory. A little later in this epistle we shall see how since Jesus Christ’s ascension God has been seeking to display His glory in the Church, the Body of Christ. In Ephesians 1:17, the three persons of the Godhead are revealed in Their relation and respective operations. The Father of Glory is the bestower of knowledge, the Lord Jesus Christ is the substance of it, and the Spirit of wisdom and revelation the communicator of it. The Spirit of revelation is twofold. First as the Spirit of “inspiration”, in the giving of the scriptures that are now complete, and as the Spirit of “interpretation” in revealing to the believer the meaning of the Word of God, bringing him to a full knowledge of Him. This kind of “revelation” means an unveiling or the removing of a veil, giving a true knowledge of Jesus Christ. Not merely mental, but experimental, not intellectual but spiritual, and such knowledge of Jesus Christ is to know Him who is “made unto us wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.” (I Corinthians 1:30), and Colossians 2:3 tells us that in Jesus Christ “are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

THE EYES OF YOUR UNDERSTANDING (HEART)

BEING ENLIGHTENED; THAT YE MAY KNOW Ephesians 1:18

Paul says of these believers “ye were once darkness” (Ephesians 5:8), and before their conversion they were darkened in their understanding (Ephesians 4:18) but now with the eyes of the heart enlightened, they should be able to receive further illumination. The enlightenment is the condition of knowledge, and all that has been said up to this point is the preparation for what is to follow.

THE THREE “WHATS”.

A three-fold progression is clearly marked by the recurrence of the word “what”, unfolding the burden of the apostle’s prayer, Ephesians 1:18 and 19, “That ye may know WHAT is the hope of His calling, and WHAT the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and WHAT is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe.” In this passage we have again the Trinity before us, revealing the Father’s calling, the Son’s inheritance, and the Spirit’s power.

WHAT IS THE HOPE OF HIS CALLING.

How few there are that know what is the hope of His calling, that is, the calling of the Church the object of God’s special dealing in this present dispensation and the subject of this epistle.

The “hope” is in harmony with the “calling”. We have already brought to your attention God’s calling of the nation Israel, how that by covenants made with Abraham, Genesis 12:1 to 3, Genesis 15:1 to 21, Genesis 17:1 to 9, Genesis 22:15 to 18, confirmed unto Isaac Genesis 26:1 to 5, and Jacob, Genesis 28:13 to 15. Israel has a calling given since the foundation of the world with a definite hope of inheriting the earth. (Matthew 24:34).

The church also is given a hope which is in harmony with the calling. Even as ye are called in one hope of your calling”, Ephesians 4:4. This is the calling of the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, and has reference to the glorious position and destiny we have in the Lord Jesus. It is a calling into the “heavenlies”, the place of our present position in Christ (Ephesians 1:3, Ephesians 2:6) and our future manifestations, Ephesians 2:7, Ephesians 3:10. In Philippians 3:20, the apostle tells us our citizenship is in heaven and in Ephesians 1:21, we have the hope that we shall be called to be with Him there and be clothed with, the body of His Glory.

WHAT THE RICHES OF THE GLORY OF HIS INHERITANCE IN THE SAINTS.

We must notice carefully that it is NOT “the saints inheritance in Christ”, that truth has already been brought to our attention in Ephesians 1:11 and 14, and it is easy to believe that our inheritance in Him will be rich in Glory (II Corinthians 8:9) but now we have the astounding declaration that unworthy sinners saved by grace become “Christ’s” inheritance. We are His “purchased possession” Ephesians 1:14. In Ephesians 1:7 through the redemption in His blood we have been made partakers of the riches of His grace and because of this we shall be partakers of His glory. When that day arrives this will not only be “glory for me” but “glory for Him”. Yes! we have an inheritance “in Him” and He has an inheritance “in us”. He is our inheritance,

we are His. In Deuteronomy 4:20 and Deuteronomy 9:29, Israel is also called an inheritance, but don't let us confuse this with the truth for the Body, but let us distinguish between things that differ.

WHAT IS THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER TO USWARD WHO BELIEVE. Ephesians 1:19-20.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the New Testament standard of power. It is a sample and pledge of what God can do for man. In the Old Testament the standard miracle was the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt. From Moses to Malachi the appeal was to the Red Sea as the supreme demonstration of God's power to help and save, and when the prophets sought to inspire courage and confidence they pointed aback to the deliverance from bondage. (Micah 7:15, Isaiah 11:16). But for us the Red Sea is superseded by the empty tomb; and the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead stands as the greatest achievement of omnipotence; and the standard of what God can and will do for them that believe. The resurrection is God's crowning testimony to His Son and the essential witness of the Christian church. If Christ be not raised, we have no gospel. Look at the expression in the text. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead reveals the might of God, working at the fulness of its strength, and this power is to usward who believe, the Spirit of life, power, and glory is in us, and on that day when the church is complete, that same Spirit that led Christ through the heavens will bring his completed church into the glory. God raised His Son from the dead, and this is the guarantee of our hope, the standard of this operation is the standard of our expectation.

CHRIST IS EXALTED TO BE HEAD OF THE CHURCH, VERSES 20 to 23.

And set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principalities, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

In Acts 2:30 Christ is raised to take David's throne and this is the hope of Israel that will surely take place when Christ comes as King. But during this day of Israel's blindness, the ascended Lord has not the same relation to us that He had to the Jews, and today the ascended Lord is exalted to be the Head of the Church, and in God's eternal purpose and by His grace we are included in the calling of that Church which will be in the glory before God turns His attention to Israel again.

The fulness of Christ is the Church, the Body in its completion with Christ the Head. The Body can never be complete without the Head. The word "fulness" from the Greek word "pleroma" is used in a definite sense in the prison epistle that is worthy of note, helping in the understanding of the present passage. The word itself is derived from a verb signifying first to "fill", second and more frequently to "fulfill", or "complete". It is found in a physical sense; 1st, of the full contents of the baskets in Mark 6:43 and 8:20, of the earth; I Corinthians 10:26 to 28, and in Matthew 9:16, and Mark 2:21, it is applied to the patch of new cloth on an old garment. 2nd, It is used of fulness "of time" as in Galatians 4:4, of the fulness of the Jews; Romans 11:12, the fulness of the Gentiles; Romans 11:25, and times fulness, Ephesians 1:10. 3rd, It is also used of the fulness of love, Romans 13:10 and of the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of Christ. Romans 15:29.

4th, In the prison epistles it is applied to the Lord Jesus and also to the members of His Body in a striking way; first of all in Colossians 1:19 of the Lord Jesus it is said “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell.” In Colossians 2:9, “for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” Then Paul’s desire for the saints is Ephesians 3:19, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God, and the astounding statement of Colossians 2:10 “ye are complete (filled full) in Him”. But in Ephesians 4:13, the reference is to the Head Jesus Christ and the Church which is His Body brought to completion and made one. Thus we see that Christ and His church make one multifold personality, making the perfect Man the stature of Christ’s fulness. Ephesians 4:13, “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” This is “The fulness of Him that filleth all in all”.

Christ has been exalted above every name that is named (Ephesians 1:21) and to Him every knee shall bow (Philippians 2:9 and 10). God the Father has ordained that in all things Christ shall have the preeminence (Colossians 1:18) and there is a day coming when Christ shall be Lord of all and all things shall be in subjection under His feet. Hebrews 2:8, Hebrews 10:13. This has not taken place yet. But in Christ’s resurrection and triumph over all principalities and powers (Colossians 2:15) and His ascension and exaltation “far above all” into the “heavenlies” at God’s right hand, we have a foretaste and a full guarantee that all things will eventually be brought to a final consummation according to the eternal purpose of our God. “He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.” (Ephesians 4:10).

LIGHT FROM PHILIPPIANS ON

THE THEORY OF TWO BODIES

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

There seems to be unanimous agreement among the students of the Word of God that Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians was written from Rome, between 64 A.D. and 66 A.D.; after the judgment of God was pronounced upon Israel. Acts 28:25 to 28. The expression in the Epistle, “my bonds” (Philippians 1:7, Philippians 1:13, Philippians 1:14, Philippians 1:16) seems to mark this Epistle as a “Prison” Epistle. If Paul suffered (or rejoiced in) two imprisonments in Rome, the Epistle to the Philippians was written during his first imprisonment. We can learn this by comparing with Paul’s final words, II Timothy 4:7 to 18, his statements in Philippians 1:26 and 2:24, “by my coming to you again”; “I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.” The uncertainty of Paul’s liberty is expressed in Philippians 2:23—“I shall see how it will go with me.”

That there had been a decided change in Paul’s attitude toward the religion of the Jews since he visited Philippi some 12 years before (Acts 16:12), a change after Acts 28:25 to 28, there should be no doubt in our minds.

The standing of the Nation Israel, in the place of special Divine favor, had changed with Acts 28:25 to 28. While they maintained that place of Divine favor, with the gospel “to the Jew first” and enjoyed other priority rights, up to the close of the “Acts” period, Paul had carried on a

two-fold spiritual program, one order for “the Jews that believed”, Acts 21:18 to 20, and another order for “the Gentiles that believed”. Acts 21:25. The practice of circumcision among “Jews that believed” continued. Therefore, Paul circumcised Timothy immediately before Timothy went to Philippi with Paul. Acts 16:3. Paul became a Jew to the Jews, as one under the law; but not to the Gentiles. I Corinthians 9:20 to 22. Paul, in so doing, was not disobeying the Word of the Lord, or going contrary to the will of God, because of his prejudice in favor of the Jews, or because of a seeming ungovernable zeal to win Israel; that heart’s desire which is expressed in Romans 9:2 and 3: “great heaviness—continual sorrow in my heart.” “I could wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren (Israel)”. And Romans 10:1 “my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel.” No, it was because of God’s extended mercy to His chosen nation. After Christ had pronounced that terrible judgment upon Israel and Jerusalem and had wept for His people, He prayed on the cross that His Father would forgive them, on the grounds of ignorance. Matthew 22:7, Luke 21:20 to 24, Luke 23:34. The Father was willing. Acts 3:14 to 21. They were warned again, through Paul, some years later. Acts 13:40 We may learn, by reading “The Acts”, that for more than thirty years, after the prayer of the dying Prince of Life, Israel was preserved and protected by God in their land; enjoying the favor of Rome, until God’s appointed time for Israel’s destruction arrived. The Jews continued their services in their temple at Jerusalem with their feasts. Acts 20:16. As late as 60 A.D., about 27 years after the prayer of Christ on the cross, Paul quoted Israel’s law in apologizing to Israel’s high-priest. Acts 23:1 to 5. Paul further declared, “I am a Pharisee.” Acts 23:6, In Philippians 3:5, “I was a Pharisee.” Some of the things that he practiced before Acts 28:25 to 28, while becoming as a Jew, under the law, to Jews, he counted as dung in Philippians 3:5 to 8. Paul was not out of the will of God in waiting until he was the Lord’s prisoner in Rome before he changed his attitude toward Israel and the Jew’s religion. He never changed until God changed. Compare Acts 28:25 to 28 with Isaiah 6:5 to 8. Read Acts 13:46. Acts 18:6. Romans 11:1 to 8, Romans 11:11 and Romans 11:30.

God’s order was no longer, “to the Jew first,” after Acts 28:25 to 28. “The Jews require a sign.” I Corinthians 1:22. They were given many of them. The words “miracle, sign and wonders are found more than 30 times in the Lord’s messages during the “Acts” period. (Acts, II Thessalonians, Galatians, I and II Corinthians, Romans). But these words are not once mentioned in Paul’s Epistles, written after Acts 28:28. (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Titus, Philemon, I and II Timothy). Certain gifts were to cease; faith, hope and love were to abide. I Corinthians 13:8 to 13. The “now” of I Corinthians 13:13 should be studied with the “now” of Philippians 1:5 and Ephesians 2:13 and Ephesians 3:6.

It is in Philippians 1:10 that the believer is instructed to distinguish between things that differ (original text). Paul’s attitude toward Israel’s religious program before Acts 28:28 certainly differed from his attitude after Acts 28:28. If the spiritual program of “believing Jews” and “believing Gentiles”, baptized into one Body, remained the same before and, after Acts 28:28, and if that “Acts” spiritual program is for members of the Body of Christ today, then the sign-gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11 should be practiced by God’s people and included in the spiritual program of every “church” claiming to be a part of the true Bible Church. But where is there to be found among the most spiritual believers of today members of Christ’s Body with the gifts of miracles, tongues, healings, discerning of spirits, et al, except in the counterfeit?

TWO BODIES?

Because of the absence of these sign-gifts and the difference between the spiritual program of the Body of I Corinthians 12:13 and the Body of Ephesians 3:6, there are certain brethren who teach that these two Bodies are altogether different, two distinct Bodies. The Body of I Corinthians (and Romans) was a different Body from the Body of Ephesians, Colossians and Philippians; not only with different spiritual programs, but each of these two Bodies sustained entirely different relations to Israel and were blessed with entirely different hopes and callings. These two Bodies were headed for two entirely different destinations. They were waiting for two entirely different “days of Christ”. The first Body, of I Corinthians, and the “Acts” period, was waiting for the coming (apokalupsis) of Christ (I Corinthians 1:7), the parousia of Christ. That coming was the hope of that Body and the members were to take the Lord’s Supper “till He come”. (erkomai) (I Corinthians 11:26). That coming of Christ (apokalupsis) (parousia) (erkomai) was altogether different from the appearing of Christ mentioned in II Timothy 4:1, or the hope of the “Post-Acts” church expressed in Philippians 3:20 and 21. Because the parousia of Christ was postponed from Acts 28:28 to the coming tribulation period, the “till He come” has had no meaning for members of any Body of Christ since Acts 28:28; and therefore the Lord’s Supper is not for the Body of this dispensation. The blessed hope of members of the “Post-Acts” Body is Titus 2:13. These brethren are agreed that the coming of Christ, which was the hope of the Corinthians, was also the hope of the Philippians, during the “Acts” period. But they claim that the hope of the Philippians was entirely different from their first hope at the time of Paul’s Epistle to those saints. The hope of believers since Paul wrote from Rome, as the prisoner of the Lord Jesus for Gentiles, has been different from the hope expressed in I Corinthians 1:7 and 8.

Inasmuch, therefore, as Paul wrote to the Corinthians before Acts 28:28 and to the Philippians after Acts 28:28, the “day of the Lord Jesus Christ”, mentioned in I Corinthians 1:8, is not the “day of Jesus Christ”, and the “day of Christ”, mentioned in Philippians 1:6, Philippians 1:10, Philippians 2:16. This is a part of the argument for two Bodies.

STRANGE DOCTRINE?

These statements may seem startling to some students of the Word of God absurd nonsense to others. But inasmuch as this teaching is being given out and received by God’s people, as very sound doctrine, and indeed as higher truth, I presume we are agreed that it is high time that we search the Scriptures and see whether these things be true. The study of Philippians alone is enough to prove that this teaching is worse than sheer nonsense.

TWO PHILIPPIAN CHURCHES?

Were there two Bodies in Philippi, one “Acts” Body, and one “Post-Acts” Body? These brethren say dogmatically “yes”. We ask them, to which of the two Bodies did Paul address his Epistle? If he addressed both Bodies in one Epistle, then they must have been blessed with the same spiritual blessings, waiting for the same coming of Christ and for the same day of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If it can be proved that Paul, in his Epistle to the Philippians, was addressing the same company of believers that he left in Philippi, years before he became the prisoner of the Lord Jesus in Rome, the whole theory of the two different Bodies, two different appearances of the Lord Jesus Christ, and two different destinations is disproved. If this is disproved, this should

persuade these brethren to confess that their teaching concerning the absence of the Lord's Supper from the present Body is fallacy.

“THREE DAYS” AND “ALL”

Perhaps Three Days, mentioned in the Epistle to the Philippians, will help us in our study; also the little word “All”. The Three Days are mentioned in chapter 1. verses 5 and 6. “From the First Day until NOW (this Day) ... Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it, until the DAY of Jesus Christ.” “The Day of Christ” Philippians 1:10. “The Day of Christ.” Philippians 2:16. Here we have three Days The First Day that Paul preached the Gospel in Philippi, (about 52 A.D.) Now, the Day he wrote the Epistle; (about 64 A.D. The Day of Jesus Christ, the Day of Christ, yet future; some day later than Easter Sunday, 1936 A.D. The work begun in 52 A.D. was continuing in the same believers in 64 A.D. and will continue until the Day of Jesus Christ, the very same day until which the Corinthian saints, saved after the Philippian saints, were to be confirmed “the Day of the Lord Jesus Christ.” I Corinthians 1:8.

Read carefully Philippians 1:5 and note that the fellowship between the saints at Philippi had gone on uninterrupted from the very First Day. The First Day is recorded in Acts 16:12 to 31. “Until Now”. By those who teach two Bodies, much emphasis is placed upon the Now of Ephesians 2:13 and Ephesians 3:5 and Colossians 1:24 and Colossians 1:26. Then let us emphasize the Now of Philippians 1:5 and be instructed by the unbroken continuity of the fellowship in the gospel. And don't forget the Now of I Corinthians 13:13. Every one must at once agree that the believers, saved when Paul preached in Philippi, were in the “Post-Acts” Body of Christ, as well as in the Body of the “Acts” period. Doubtless some believers died before Acts closed. They must have died outside of the “Post-Acts” Body, according to the brethren whom we have designated, “theorists”. They died outside of the spiritual sphere and super celestial hope of their fellow-believers who lived this side of Acts 28:28. You say, “this is worse than a theory.” I agree with you heartily. Undoubtedly some believers had been added to the Church at Philippi, after Paul left there. Some of those were added before he reached Rome; and some of them added: after he reached Rome. Were they added to two different Churches? Were the first additions to the “Covenant” Church at Philippi and the second additions to the “Mystery” Church at Philippi? It is even taught by some of these believers in Two Bodies, that members of the “Covenant” Church, who rejected truth that would have meant their transfer to the “Mystery” Church were not transferred. But Philippians 1:5 is the negation and refutation of such unsound exegesis.

Let us carefully note Philippians 2:12, that the believers at Philippi obeyed both during Paul's presence with them, and during his absence from them. These are the same “beloved” who had fellowshiped with Paul from the First Day right down to the Day he wrote this “Mystery” Church Epistle. He was writing to “beloved brethren” who had seen something in Paul when Paul was in their midst. Philippians 1:30 and Philippians 4:9. Paul was writing to the same “beloved brethren” that had sent help to him when he was in trouble in Thessalonica, in Acts 17:1 to 9. Read Philippians 4:15 and 16.

Now, the little word, “All”. “To ALL the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi.” Philippians 1:1. .”Ye All are partakers of my grace.” Philippians 1:7. “I long after you ALL” Philippians 1:8. If there were two classes of saints at Philippi composing two different Bodies, at the time Paul wrote this Prison Epistle, Paul didn't know anything about it. He ignorantly

addressed both of them without any distinction, without any knowledge that they were rejoicing in different hopes and waiting for different appearances of Christ and different days of Jesus Christ. We sincerely trust this will convince these teachers of their unsound teaching. Some of them are servants of the Lord who love Him and His Word, but are like those zealous Israelites who had zeal without knowledge. Another “ALL” in Philippians 1:25, the next verse:

“And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you ALL for your furtherance and joy of faith; That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me BY MY COMING TO YOU AGAIN.”

Paul wanted to abide and continue; with how many of the saints at Philippi? With ALL. He desired to take a journey to Philippi and apparently expected to take that journey SHORTLY.

“But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.” 2:24. He did not know how it was going with him. Philippians 2:23. He did not know how it was going with the saints at Philippi. But intended, if possible, to send Timothy shortly to Philippi. Philippians 2:19.

Paul’s name was in the Book of Life with those who had laboured with Paul in Philippi years before.

After reading this Epistle we learn that the theory that Paul went back to Philippi, after his imprisonment at Rome, preached there a different grace gospel or presented a new “Mystery” Body, with a different hope and calling, is exploded.

But some of these brethren tell us that we should be instructed by Philippians 3:11 to 14 that Paul himself had not yet attained unto membership in the “Mystery” Body. But the “OUR CITIZENSHIP” of Philippians 3:20 is the negation of this fantasy.

That the coming of the Lord for His Body and unto Israel, are different, no student of the Scriptures should deny; but that the hope of I Corinthians 1:7 is different from the hope of Philippians 3:20 to 21, no student of the Scriptures should believe.

THE CHURCH AND THE LAST DAYS

The Bible has much to say about “the church”, and there are a number of prophecies in that Book concerning “the last days”. We all know that God has a Church in the world. It is mentioned in Acts 20:28 as “the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” Moreover we have God’s own plain statement, that He has only one true Bible Church in this age. Ephesians 4:3 to 6. Are we in the last days foretold in the Scriptures? If we are, when did the last days begin? And when will they end?

About 1850 years ago that disciple whom Jesus loved (John) wrote these words: “it is the last time; and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.” I John 2:18.

“We know that it is the last time.” Well here we are in the year 1936 A.D. and the antichrist has not yet come. “That man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped: so that He as God sitteth in the temple of God, sheweth himself that he is God. . . . And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.” II Thessalonians 2:6 to 8.

Where is the temple of God? A temple of God is described in Ephesians 2:21 and 22, “in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” This particular temple of

God is called, in the same Epistle to the Ephesians, “the Body (soma) of Christ”, and the “Joint-Body (Sussomos) of Christ”. Ephesians 1:19 to 21 and Ephesians 3:6. The man of sin, is not sitting in this temple. Only redeemed people are members of the Church, which is Christ’s Body, and they are all seated with Christ in the heavenlies. Ephesians 1:20 and 2:6.

Inasmuch as God will not have another temple in this age, the man of sin, the son of perdition, can not take his seat as long as the Body of Christ is in the making. But the man of sin, the antichrist, is coming, and therefore there is yet to be on this earth, “the temple of God”, in which that son of perdition may sit. In this connection it is quite interesting to read Daniel 8:23 and 25: “And in the latter (last) time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up; and his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and holy people He shall also stand up against the Prince of princes: but he shall be broken without hand.”

Now read and compare with these verses from Daniel, Revelation 13:1 to 18 and Revelation 19:16 to 21 and II Thessalonians 2:8 to 12, and you will know something of the reign of that one who is coming after the power of Satan and how he is to be destroyed when the Word of God, arrives on His white horse. During this age, at least, thus far, he has been restrained and withheld. II Thessalonians 2:6.

So we know that the antichrist is going to be revealed in the last days. In writing to Timothy, Paul, in his last written message, said; “this know also, that in the last days perilous days shall come.” II Timothy 3:1. Was the Apostle Paul identifying “the last days” of the present Church age with the “last time of their kingdom”, referred to in Daniel 8:23? If so, then we must decide that Daniel prophesied concerning the Body of Christ described in Ephesians. But Ephesians 3:5 and 6, Ephesians 3:8 and 9 and Colossians 1:24 to 27 specifically states that Daniel and the other prophets were altogether ignorant and silent concerning the Church of this age or dispensation. Therefore no prophet of Israel spoke or wrote of the dispensation of the mystery. Ephesians 3:9.

In the consideration of our subject, “the Church and the last days”, let us search the Scriptures for Divine light on “the Church.” Perhaps, you have heard that when the company of godly men who translated the King James edition of the Bible came to the Greek word “Ekklesia”, they hesitated and meditated much before they translated the word to “Church”. They were unanimously agreed that the word “Church” was a poor translation, but a word used by the Christians, and therefore they made what has perhaps proved an unwise translation. The word “Church” is derived from “Kurios”, the Lord; whereas the word “Ekklesia” is “Ek”, out of, “Kaleo”, literally the called-out or “assembly”, as the word is translated in Acts 19:32, 39 and 41, where the word describes an unlawful gathering of heathen. The translators, however translated the word “Ekklesia”, more than 100 times, in the New Testament Scriptures, “Church.” (A number of times in the plural). We are still the victims of this unfortunate translation, and doubtless much misunderstanding and erroneous Church doctrine has resulted by not translating the Greek word, “assembly”, “congregation”, or “called-out.”

The word “Ekklesia” is sometimes used to designate a specific assembly or company of God’s people, while again it is used in a general sense. For example, we read in Acts 7:38, of “the Church in the wilderness”. That is quite specific. Israel worshipping in the tabernacle, enroute from Egypt to Canaan was “the Ekklesia in the wilderness”.

Now turn to Psalm 22:22 and Hebrews 2:12. We quote the two verses as they appear in the King James Edition:

“I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.” Psalm 22:22.

“I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.” Hebrews 2:12.

Here we see that in Psalms 22:22 the translation is “congregation”. The word translated “congregation” in the Greek septuagint is “Ekklesia”. This same Greek word “ekklesia” is found more than sixty times in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. In Nehemiah 13:1, the Greek is “the ekklesia of God”; that is, “the called out”, “the congregation”, “the assembly”, of God. Ever since the days of Seth, when men began to call upon the name of the Lord, God has had a “called-out people”. Genesis 4:26. God said to Noah, “Come thou, and all thy house into the ark”. Genesis 7:1. Surely, Israel under the Old Covenant was “the called-out” of God. They were the Old Testament Church. Gentiles, in order to be saved, had to become identified with that Church. However, there is no intimation that saved Gentiles were baptized by one Spirit into one Body, under the Old Covenant. But God, promised to Israel that He would make a New Covenant, guaranteeing to them more wonderful blessings with His own Divine Spirit indwelling and controlling them. Jeremiah 31:31 to 35. In connection with that New Covenant, He promised them a kingdom on earth, under the reign of the Prince of Peace, sitting on the throne of David. Isaiah 9:6 and 7. The Divine blessings of Israel, in this New Covenant, are mentioned in detail in the 36th and 37th chapters of Ezekiel. During the kingdom reign, under the New Covenant, many nations will be joined to the Lord. Zechariah 2:11.

Therefore, so far as earthly blessings are concerned, as well as spiritual blessings, the greatest “congregation” or “ekklesia” of God is yet to be, when all Israel shall be saved, when there will be no Israelites unevangelized. Hebrews 8:7 to 11. Romans 11:26. The ancient people of God are to inhabit their land: and dwell in peace and safety under the reign of their own promised Messiah. Amos 9:11 to 15.

That kingdom reign of Christ with Israel is specifically called “the last days”. They are described in Micah 4:1 to 4, and in virtually the same language in Isaiah 2:2 to 4. We quote the verses from Micah 4:1 to 3.

“But in the last, days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and the people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

Many of the prophets wrote concerning these last days; but not one of them wrote concerning either the first days or the last days of the Body of Christ. This we may learn by reading Ephesians 3:1 to 11 and Colossians 1:24 to 28.

Inasmuch as Amos did not write concerning the Body of Christ, it is difficult to believe that the declaration, recorded in Acts 15:13 to 18, refers to the joint-Body (Sussomos) of Ephesians 3:6. This joint-Body is described in the Epistle to the Ephesians in connection with the dispensation of the Mystery. Ephesians 3:9. God is visiting both Gentiles and Jews now, not Gentiles only as in Acts 15:14.

The prophet Joel has much to say about the last days of Israel, with special reference to Israel’s tribulation and kingdom glory. He wrote, directed by the Holy Spirit, concerning Israel’s

kingdom age. He wrote concerning their last days. He had nothing to say concerning either the first days or the last days of the Body of Christ.

Therefore, we present this question for your prayerful and thoughtful meditation and spiritual study. In Peter's reference to Joel's prophecy, recorded in Acts 2:16 and 17, was he making application to the Body of Christ described in Ephesians, or to Israel's kingdom foretold by all of Israel's prophets? We quote these two verses: "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass IN THE LAST DAYS, saith God, I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams."

Perhaps you have wondered, as I have, how the day of Pentecost could have been the birthday of the Body of Christ, when the happenings on that day were in fulfillment of prophecy concerning Israel's last days. We quote this footnote from the Scofield Reference Bible

The "last days" as related to the Church began with the advent of Christ (Hebrews 11.2), but have especial reference to the time of declension and apostasy at the end of this age (II Timothy 3:1; II Timothy 4:4). The "last days" as related to Israel are the days of Israel's exaltation and blessing, and are synonymous with the kingdom-age (Isaiah 2:2, 4; Micah 4:1 to 7). They are "last" not with reference to this dispensation, but with reference to the whole of Israel's history."

Even in the face of this most evident fact, Dr. Scofield declares that the Church, the Body of Christ began on the day of Pentecost.

If you will also read Dr. Scofield's note concerning Acts 15:13 to 18, you will observe that he there states that Amos foretold the Gentile salvation. But that the declaration by James, in Acts 15:13 to 18, was concerning the Body of Christ which began on the day of Pentecost. We have already observed that Amos 9:11 to 15 has reference to Israel's "last days"; their kingdom age and that he had nothing to say about the Church which is the Body of Christ. If you will study the foot-note in Dr. Scofield's Reference Bible concerning Ephesians 3:5 and 6, you will observe that he states that that Body was the mystery not made known to, or by, Amos and Joel. Therefore, we see the contradiction in his two footnotes.

It is one thing to say, "I believe we are in the last days"; it is another thing to prove it by some specific Scripture. One thing we must always bear in mind is the fact that we are living in the dispensation of the mystery, and a period of time never once mentioned by Israel's prophets who wrote concerning the last days. Surely, the last days of Israel will come; but the last days of Israel must not be confused with any days, either the first or the last, concerning the Body of Christ which was given to the Apostle Paul by special revelation.

Some of God's servants endeavor to prove that the Church of God of Acts 2 to 11 was the Body of Christ because of Acts 5:14, "believers were the more added to the Lord" Our first answer is, that the Body of Christ was not prophesied by Israel's prophets; and again Zechariah 2:11 foretells a joining to the Lord. The Hebrew word "join" in Zechariah 2:11 means to "unite" as in marriage, Genesis 47. Great and wonderful things are going to happen on this earth in the last days. But what last days? The beginning of the kingdom on earth, that is the first days of Israel's restoration, will be the last days foretold by Israel's prophets. But the last days of the Body on earth, the close of this dispensation, will take place before the first days of the last days of the Old Testament prophets. The Roman Empire will be rebuilt in the last days. Israel will return to Jerusalem in the last days. If this is taking place in the last days of the Church (Body), as well as in the last days which speak of Israel's restoration, the kingdom age, then we do err in differentiating between the Body of Christ of Ephesians 1:19 to 22 and the kingdom of Daniel

2:42 to 47. Let's put all the last days together and call the Body of Christ the kingdom promised to Israel, if the last days of Acts 2:16 and 17 were the first days of the Body of Christ. If the last days of Acts 2:16 and 17 were the first days of the Lord's Body, they must have been the first days of the last days. Now in 1936 we are living in the last days of the last days.

HOW CHRIST WAS MADE MANIFEST TO ISRAEL

Let us compare these three verses:

“AND I KNEW HIM NOT; BUT THAT HE SHOULD BE MADE MANIFEST TO ISRAEL, THEREFORE AM I COME BAPTIZING WITH WATER.” John 1:31.

“YE MEN OF ISRAEL, HEAR THESE WORDS; JESUS OF NAZARETH, A MAN APPROVED OF GOD AMONG YOU BY MIRACLES AND WONDERS AND SIGNS, WHICH GOD DID BY HIM IN THE MIDST OF YOU, AS YE YOURSELVES ALSO KNOW.” Acts 2:22

“BUT I HAVE GREATER WITNESS THAN THAT OF JOHN; FOR THE WORKS WHICH THE FATHER HATH GIVEN ME TO FINISH, THE SAME WORKS THAT I DO, BEAR WITNESS OF ME, THAT THE FATHER HATH SENT ME.” John 5:36

Certainly there is no reason why any student of the Word of God should misunderstand the plain language recorded in John 1:31. Here the significance of John's water baptism is clearly and specifically stated; that “Christ might be made manifest to Israel.” The Greek word here translated “manifest” is translated, in John 7:4, “shew”: “shew thyself to the world.”

Now by way of comparison. “Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God.” This word “approved” in the Greek is “apodeiknumi”, and literally means “to show off or to put on exhibition”. Without the prefix “apo”, the Greek word is translated “shew” 23 times in the New Testament Scriptures.. For example Matthew 16:21, John 14:8, I Corinthians 12:31 and: James 2:18.

In Acts 2:22, we learn that God was placing His Son, Jesus of Nazareth, on exhibition in the midst of Israel; that is, He was showing Him off; by miracles and wonders and signs. According to John 5:36 quoted above, these supernatural works of Christ were to bear witness that the Father had sent Him. According to the plain statement of Jesus of Nazareth, He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matthew 15:24.

Therefore, whatever new meaning may have been given to miracles and signs, as well as to water baptism, after the death and resurrection of Christ, it is plainly taught in the Four Gospels that both miracles and water baptism were to shew Christ to Israel.

In this connection we read in John 10:41, that John the Baptist did no miracle. We also read in John 4:2 that Jesus of Nazareth did no baptizing. We read in Luke 1:16 and 1:80 that John's commission and message was to Israel. In Acts 13:24 Paul confirmed this.

We may be sure, therefore, that the earthly ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, like the testimony of John the Baptist, was specifically, if not exclusively, for the children of Israel. And the diligent student of the Word of God has observed that signs, wonders, miracles, supernatural demonstrations, and manifestations are inseparably connected with water baptism.

We quote Luke 3:3:

“And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.” In this verse, as well as in Matthew 3:11 and Mark 1:4, we are taught

something of the significance of John's baptism with respect to Israel, sin and repentance. It was baptism of repentance for (unto) the remission of sin.

There is little or nothing said about water baptism, or signs, and miracles in the closing year of the Lord's earthly ministry. In fact, there is no record of any Israelite having received water baptism after the statement of Christ, recorded in Luke 12:50, which we quote. "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished" Perhaps the explanation of the absence of both miracles and water baptism is Matthew 16:20, which we quote "Then charged He His disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ." If twelve apostles were to no longer tell to Israel that Jesus was the Messiah, there was no further need for signs or water baptism until this order was rescinded and the Twelve again testified that Jesus was the Messiah; for signs and water were to shew Christ to Israel. After Christ's prayer on the cross for Israel, God instructed the Twelve to again shew Jesus, as Messiah, to Israel. Acts 2:36.

In Mark 16:16 to 18 we find the commission which the resurrected Christ gave to the Eleven. Most assuredly we again have signs and water baptism connected. We quote these verses: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My Name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

There are many baptisms in our day, but no signs except "counterfeit signs". On the day of Pentecost we learn by reading Acts 2:36 that the twelve apostles were doing what they were forbidden to do in Matthew 16:20. They were testifying that Jesus was the Messiah. As they were filled with the Holy Spirit and fulfilling the will of God, the Lord must have rescinded the order of Matthew 16:20. And therefore, immediately follows the same message of baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins. We quote Acts 2:38:

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Now let us bear in mind that it was the supernatural demonstration on the day of Pentecost, as well as the message, that caused the Israelites to say, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The Jews require a sign I Corinthians 1:23. The Jews always had signs and baptisms. Hebrews 9:10.

We turn now from the second chapter of Acts to Acts 19:1 to 7. Here we have the last Scriptural record of baptism of any of the Lord's disciples. After these disciples received water baptism they received the Holy Spirit, by the imposition of hand's, and immediately spake with tongues. In 19:12 we have the record of mighty signs. Between Acts 19 and Acts 28 we have no record of water baptism and the record of very few signs. However, by reading Acts 28:5 to 10, we learn that there is a record of miraculous healing after the last record of water baptism. By reading Romans 6:3 and 4 we learn of the abiding baptism, "not made with hands".

We also learn by comparing I Corinthians 12:8 to 11, wherein we find listed sign-gifts to members of the Body of Christ, that more emphasis is placed upon these gifts than upon water baptism, in the special ministry of Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles. It is interesting to compare I Corinthians 1:14, "I thank God I baptized none of you, but" and I Corinthians 14:18, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all". We would particularly emphasize the words of Paul "I thank God". Any honest student of the Word must acknowledge that Paul was more thankful to God for speaking with tongues than for baptizing with water. Most Christians make much of water today and wholly ignore signs, (many ridicule tongues).

In every Scriptural record of water baptism there is in the same chapter, if not in the immediate context, a record of either a supernatural manifestation or some other Jewish sign or program.

How strange, therefore, it seems that men of God, who claim to be expositors of God's truth, contend so earnestly for some kind of water baptism and are wholly indifferent as to whether members of the Body of Christ exercise any of the sign-gifts that are mentioned in the Bible after the last mention of water baptism. I Corinthians was written after the last recorded baptism in Acts 19:1 to 7. Signs were in the church as late as 58 A.D. What has become of them? We have held on to the water and let go of the signs. But we can't explain why. Hold on to both or give up both.

Surely we should have more respect for the consistency and sincerity of the Pentecostals who are contending for the signs with the water, than for the ability of our so-called leading Fundamentalist Bible teachers who have to resort to church history rather than to the Word of God for the explanation of the absence of signs and miracles in the spiritual program of the Body of Christ in this age. Many of them tenaciously, and sometimes belligerently, contend for water baptism, although there are more than a dozen different interpretations among them as to the mode, formula, and signification of the water ceremony. They think they are proving their practice by the Bible; but in reality it is by tradition.

We give here every reference to water baptism in the New Testament Scriptures. Search these Scriptures and find one where water baptism is a witness to the world and then mark every one proving that water baptism is both efficacious and meritorious: Matthew 3:7 to 16; Mark 1:4 to 9; Luke 3:3 to 21; John 10:40; Mark 10:38 and 39; Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:5 - Acts 2:38 to 41 - Acts 8:12, 13, 16, 36, 38 - Acts 9:18 - Acts 10:47 and 48 - Acts 11:16 - Acts 16:15,33 - Acts 18:8 - Acts 19:3,4, and 5 - Acts 22:11; I Corinthians 1:17; Romans 6:3; I Corinthians 1:3, 14, 16 - I Corinthians 10:2 - I Corinthians 12:13 - I Corinthians 15:29; Galatians 3:27; Hebrews 6:2 - Hebrews 9:10 (washings); I Peter 3:21; Colossians 2:12; Ephesians 4:5; Acts 18:25. Refer to I Corinthians 10:2; "baptized unto Moses", and I Peter 3:21, "Noah in the ark". We are sure that the Israelites crossing the Red Sea, and Noah with his family, did not get wet. They were all saved from the water.

We are all sure that the baptism of Romans 6:4, Colossians 2:12 and Ephesians 4:5, is the same baptism and if water, then we are saved by water. If so, then Romans 3:26 and 3:28, Ephesians 2:8 and 9 and Titus 3:5 to 8 are not true.

SOME BIBLE HOUSES

It is quite interesting to note that the word "house" is found in the Bible more than 1700 times. Although the same Hebrew and Greek words are used, there are a number of different meanings to these words. Sometimes the word is used to indicate a company of people; for example, the House of Israel. The "House of Israel" is found in the Bible 148 times. In the Old Testament Scriptures we find the "House of God" 80 times. This same expression is used 6 times in the New Testament Scriptures. Generally in the Old Testament Scriptures, the term "House of God" had reference to the temple which Solomon built in Jerusalem, according to the pattern the Lord gave unto him. In the New Testament Scriptures the "House of God" referred more particularly to the company of redeemed people, the "ekklesia", the "Church of God".

In I Peter 2:5, we read of redeemed ones who are “built up a spiritual house”. The Greek word here translated house is “oikos” which has the meaning of a house or a temple. The Greek word “naos” is also translated temple. In Ephesians 2:21 we read of members of the Body of Christ who “groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.” In I Timothy 3:15, there are instructions as to how to behave in the House of God. In Hebrews 3:6 we find these words: “But Christ as a son over His own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” Thus we see that the whole number of redeemed sinners is called, “The House of God.” In I Corinthians 3:16 and 17; I Corinthians 6:19 and II Corinthians 3:16 we find that members of the Body of Christ are temples of God. We quote II Corinthians 6:16. “And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

Before the sinner is redeemed he is spoken of, in Matthew 12:29, as “the strong man’s house.” Here Satan is referred to as the strong man, and the sinner as his house. The Apostle Paul declared that he was to turn sinners from Satan to God. Acts 26:18. Thus we are taught in God’s Word that the unbeliever is Satan’s house or temple, and the believer is God’s house or temple.

Unto the redeemed sinner the Lord Jesus gave this very precious promise and hope: “In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” John 14:2 and 3. The little company to whom He first made this promise were His disciples who belonged to the House of Israel. At that time, the Lord Jesus was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. Matthew 15:24. But His own received Him not, and He said to them: “Your house is left unto you desolate.” Matthew 23:38. But, according to Ezekiel 37, that same Son of man, as Israel’s Messiah and King, will return and Israel will be saved. We quote Ezekiel 37:11: “Son of man, these bones are the whole House of Israel; behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts.” This is confirmed in Romans 11:26; “All Israel shall be saved.” And then there will be the realization of Luke 1:33: “Jesus shall reign over the House of Jacob.” According to Luke 1:69, He came from the house of His servant David, and will yet fulfill Isaiah 9:6 and 7 as the Prince of peace on David’s throne.

There is one other house to which we would call your attention. We quote II Corinthians 5:1 and 2: “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.” Some day the Lord is to transfer His House from earth to heaven. Here the members of His household have earthly bodies, dwellings of clay; but each member is to have a house eternal, not made with hands.

According to Galatians 6:10, which we quote, we are of the household of faith. “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” According to Ephesians 2:19, which we quote, we are of the household of God. “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

Whatever may be the meaning of this statement, let us remember, according to I Peter 4:17, that judgment must begin at the House of God. We have mentioned a few of the houses of the Bible. To the sinner, we say, “Come in the house”, and also, let Christ come into your house. To Zachaeus He said “this day is salvation come to this house.” Luke 19:8 to 10.

“IS PHYSICAL HEALING PROVIDED IN THE ATONEMENT?”

BY CHARLES F. BAKER

Every true Christian believes that spiritual healing, salvation of the soul from sin, is to be found only in the death of Christ, but there is disagreement as to whether His death is supposed to provide physical health also for the believer. Some teach that Christ bore our sicknesses upon the Cross as well as our sins, and that it is therefore as much the will of God that we be healed of sickness as to be saved from sin. Since salvation is received through faith, healing must come in the same manner, and if one is not healed it proves he doesn't have faith. If the premise of this argument is true, i. e. that Christ died for our sickness and that God is not willing that any should be sick, then the above conclusion logically follows; but we ask: Is the premise true?

This teaching is based upon Matthew 8:17: “Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses,” a quotation from Isaiah 53:4. But the all important thing to see is that Jesus fulfilled this scripture three years before His death. He was bearing their sicknesses all during His earthly ministry, but He never bore any one's sins until He died upon the tree. Since the Bible declares that He fulfilled the work of bearing sicknesses before His death, any teaching is proved false which claims He fulfilled that work in His death.

The second important fact is found in the word “bare”. Peter tells us that Christ “bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” This word is “anaphero” in the Greek, and means to bring to the altar or to offer a sacrifice. It is used in Hebrews 9:28: “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many”; and most significantly the translators of the Septuagint chose this word in Isaiah 53:12: “and he bare the sins of many.” But there is an entirely different word used regarding the bearing of sickness in Matthew 8:17. It is “bastazo” and means to lift or to carry or to endure. It is never used of bearing sins. This is the same word John the Baptist used in Matthew 3:11: “whose shoes I am not worthy to bear.” Paul used it in Galatians 6:2: “bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Paul asked Christians to do in Romans 15:1 exactly what Christ did: “bear the infirmities (or sicknesses) of the weak,” but he never told any Christian to bear the sins of another. And again, most significantly the Septuagint uses this same word in Isaiah 53:4: “surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.” Thus Christ bore sicknesses in an altogether different sense from which He bore sins.

The third fact is based upon logic. If healing is in the atonement to the same extent as salvation, then one possesses salvation to the extent he enjoys physical health. But since all Christians in the past have died, and mostly from disease, this would prove that all had lost salvation; for all surely lost health.

Fourthly, Paul, the model Christian, gloried in his infirmities (II Corinthians 11:30; II Corinthians 12:9 and 10—this word means sickness, the same word as used in Matthew 8:17). If sickness is contrary to the will of God, then Paul gloried in being out of the will of God, and it was the grace of God which taught him to do it.

Fifthly, this teaching denies such scriptures as Romans 8:23: “but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” Yes, praise God, our salvation includes a body as

perfect as Christ's own glorious body, but none will receive it until the resurrection for which we wait.

Lastly, let it be noticed that God promised health to Israel along with other temporal blessings. He revealed Himself as Jehovah-Ropheca, the Lord that healeth thee (Exodus 15:26). See also Deuteronomy 28:1 to 14. But not one of these promises can be found directed to the Body of Christ, but often just the opposite. God not only promised to heal but to make rich (Deuteronomy 28:11 and 12). Therefore if you are not rich it is just as much a sign of unfaithfulness as if you are sick.

Surely we believe that God hears and answers prayer for the sick, but plain scripture forbids us to believe that healing is in the atonement or that sickness brands one as unfaithful or disobedient.

NOTHING NEW—ALL THINGS NEW

Let us compare

ECCLESIASTES 1:9 AND 10: "THE THING THAT HATH BEEN, IT IS THAT WHICH SHALL BE; AND THAT WHICH IS DONE IS THAT WHICH SHALL BE DONE; AND THERE IS NO NEW THING UNDER THE SUN. IS THERE ANYTHING WHEREOF IT MAY BE SAID, SEE, THIS IS NEW? IT HATH BEEN ALREADY OF OLD TIME, WHICH WAS BEFORE US."

with

REVELATION 21:5 "AND HE THAT SAT UPON THE THRONE SAID, BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW. AND HE SAID UNTO ME, WRITE: FOR THESE WORDS ARE TRUE AND FAITHFUL."

We have all been taught that the Bible is divided into the Old Testament and the New Testament; and we know that the Bible speaks of "the old man" and "the new man". The Bible also speaks of "a new thing", "a new song", "a new heavens and a new earth", "a new garment", "a new and living way", "a new birth", "a new-born-babe", "a new lump", "a new creation", "a new commandment", "new tongues", "a new Jerusalem", "a new fruit".

It will prove interesting and instructive to study these "New Things" and compare them with the "Old Things".

NEW THINGS

Isaiah 42:9 and 10: "Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles and the inhabitants thereof." ... Isaiah 43:19: "Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert..... Isaiah 48:6: "Thou halt heard, see all this; and will not ye declare it? ..I have shewed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them..... Jeremiah 31:22: "How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth. A woman shall compass a man."

A NEW COVENANT

Jeremiah 31:31 to 34: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt: which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” . . . Hebrews 8:13: “In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

A NEW SONG.

Psalms 33:3: “Sing unto Him a new song; play skillfully with a loud noise.”... Psalms 40:3: “And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God; many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.” . . . Psalms 96:1: “O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth.” . . . Psalms 98:1: “O sing unto the Lord a new song; for He hath done marvelous things! His right hand, and His holy arm, hath gotten Him the victory.” . . . Psalms 144:9: “I will sing a new song unto Thee.” . . . Psalms 149:1 “Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise in the congregation of saints.” . . . Revelation 5:9: “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue and people and nation.” . . . Revelation 14:3: “And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.”

NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH

Isaiah 65:17: “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.” . . . Isaiah 66:22: “For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I shall make, will remain before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your need and your name remain. “

ISRAEL’S NEW NAME

Isaiah 62:2: “And the Gentiles shall see Thy righteousness, and all kings Thy glory: and Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.”

ISRAEL’S NEW SPIRIT AND NEW HEART

Ezekiel 11:19: “And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh. . . . Ezekiel 18:31: “Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” . . . Ezekiel 36:25: “A

new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.”

ISRAEL’S NEW FRUIT

Ezekiel 47:12: “And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.”

NEW GARMENTS AND NEW WINE

Matthew 9:16 and 17: “No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse:” “Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.”

TREASURED THINGS NEW AND OLD.

Matthew 13:52: “Then said He unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.”

THE BLOOD OF THE NEW COVENANT.

Matthew 26:28: “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

THE NEW AND LIVING WAY.

Hebrews 10:20: “By a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh.”

THE NEW LUMP

I Corinthians 5:7: “Purge-out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”

THE NEW TONGUES

Mark 16:17: “And these signs shall follow them that believe: In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues.”

NEW BORN BABES

I Peter 2:2: “As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.”

NEW CREATION

Galatians 6:15: “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.” ... II Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

THE NEW MAN

Ephesians 2:15: “Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain, one new man, so making peace.”

ANOTHER NEW MAN

Ephesians 4:24: “And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” . . . Colossians 3:10: “And have put on the new man, which is renewed in KNOWLEDGE AFTER THE IMAGE OF HIM who created him.”

THE NEW LIFE

Romans 6:4: “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 7:6: “But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.”

THE NEW COMMANDMENT

I John 2:8: “Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in Him and in you: because the darkness is past; and the true light now shineth.” II John 5: “And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.” . . . John 13:34: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.”

ANOTHER NEW NAME

Revelation 2:17: “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit sayeth unto the Churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.” . . . Revelation 3:12: “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name.”

A NEW DRINK

Matthew 26:29: "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH

II Peter 3:13: "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." . . . Revelation 21:1: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."

NEW JERUSALEM

Revelation 21:2: "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

Revelation 21:5

"And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."

SOME BIBLE THOUGHTS

BY PASTOR HENRY BULTEMA

In regard to the death of Christ, it is too often forgotten that He did not merely die the death of a private person, but that of a public person and federal Head of the race. The first Adam brought sin into the world, the last One "taketh away the sin of the world."

Lord keep us from all unholy wars, for man really loves a scrap, but may we never forget that the Word is, besides milk and meat and honey, also a sword to be wielded, a hammer to pound, a staff to strike, a fire to burn, a lamp to show the yawning abyss and a light to detect the deep and dark things.

Behold how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! Pleasant it is in the sight of God and man and angels of Christ and His good Spirit, and yet this pleasant sight is not much seen in this world. If Satan can view anything as pleasant it must be a pleasant sight for him and his imps to see brethren dwell apart in disharmony and dissension.

Sin is the greatest wrecker in the world. It darkens the mind; it warps man's judgment; it vitiates his taste; it perverts his will; it stuplifies his conscience; it desecrates his affections; it pays in due time always the wages.

The demon cried: "Jesus I know and Paul, I know." Amazing knowledge! All Christians cannot say the last by any means.

Formerly infidelity made its base and blatant denials outside the church, in later years the attack was made inside the church and that is the power of the apostacy in our day. Modernism is nothing but churchified infidelity.

PURE RELIGION—PURE CHRISTIANITY

Perhaps the definition that we have heard of “religion” and “Christianity” are too general. The student of the Word of God desires something more specific, more comprehensive, more satisfactory. For a clearer definition of the terms we should appeal to the Bible rather than to the dictionary. In searching the Scriptures for these definitions, it will perhaps be less difficult to find “religion” clearly defined; than “Christianity”. In fact, unless we diligently and prayerfully search the Scriptures, from the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus to Paul’s farewell to earth in II Timothy 4:5 to 8, we may say that pure Christianity and pure religion are identical. “If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” James 1:26 and 27.

The Greek word translated “religious” is “THRESKOS”; “religion” is “THRESKEIA”, (this Greek word suggests the use of speech and the senses in worship). James was a religious man and wrote to a religious nation. James 1:1 and 2. Acts 21:18 to 25.

In Acts 26:5 Paul speaks of the particular sect of religion to which, as the devout Saul, he had belonged. He used the same Greek word, but qualified the religion, as “our religion”, meaning Israel’s religion.

Israel’s religion was “IOUDAISMOS”; that is, “Judaism”. This Greek word is used in Galatians 1:13 and 14. For have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ RELIGION, how beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, wasted it: And profited in the Jews’ RELIGION above many my equals in mine own Nation, being more zealous of the traditions of my fathers.”

In the verses quoted we have all the scriptures using the word “religion”. The “religious” proselytes of Acts 13:43 were devout worshippers.

Paul found some very religious Gentiles at Athens. He said to them, “Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are too superstitious.” Acts 17:22. This word “superstitious” in the Greek is “DEISDAIMONESTEROS”, and means literally “fearful of demons.” The heathen rulers used the same Greek word in referring to the religion of Israel and Paul. Acts 25:19. That particular “superstition”. was that “one Jesus, which was dead, Paul affirmed to be alive”.

The heathen in Paul’s day were very religious. There are many religious sects in this country who use the Bible in propagating their religious doctrines and practices, but yet they are anti-Christian.

The only people to whom the true and living God ever gave religion was Israel. “Meats and drinks, carnal ordinances and divers baptisms were imposed upon them until the time of reformation”. Hebrews 9:10. For more than fifteen centuries Israel was under Divine orders to carry on that God-given religion, It was given to Moses at Mount Sinai about 1492 B.C. Israel was God’s religious nation. “The Jews’ religion.”

Jesus Christ was born under that reign of religion. He was made under the law; circumcised when eight days old; attended the synagogue on the Jewish Sabbath and worshipped as a religious Jew. He observed the feasts of Jehovah and taught Israel to obey the Levitical law of rites and ceremonies, He respected the seat of Moses. Galatians 4:4. Luke 4:16. Matthew 8:4.

While on earth the Son of God Was Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God by signs; to Israel. Acts 2:22. He was Jehovah's servant to Israel to confirm promises made centuries before. Romans 15:8. Matthew 15:24.

Pure Christianity was not promised by Israel's prophets and confirmed by Jesus of Nazareth. Pure Christianity was given by Christ to the Apostle Paul some years after Christ's earthly ministry had come to an end. While on earth Christ did not preach the unmixed message of grace to Gentiles, although He taught Divine truth that was carried over into the dispensation of grace, which he afterwards committed to the Apostle Paul. Ephesians 3:1 to 11. There was grace the Old Testament message and the kingdom message, but religion was mixed with grace.

Neither did Christ instruct the Twelve Apostles to indoctrinate Gentiles in the pure grace gospel, nor propagate pure Christianity, as He gave it to Paul to proclaim. Some of the teachings of Christ on earth could apply only before His death or to His Kingdom reign over the house of Jacob on the throne of David.

Even during the "Acts" period there was a carrying-over of a mixed program and message of grace, law and religion. Acts 10:28. Acts 21:18 to 20. Acts 16:3. During that period Paul became a Jew to the Jews, as one under the law to those under the law." I Corinthians 9:20.

But with the close of that "Acts" period Paul declared himself through with religion and clearly stated that Israel's religion had been nailed to the cross of Christ and completely taken out of the way: "took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross." Colossians 2:14. Believers were no longer to be judged by religion. Colossians 2:15 to 18. Believers were complete in Christ. Colossians 2:10. A new law, the death and resurrection of Christ, the putting away of sin, the abolition of death, had supplanted the old law that worked wrath. Romans 8:1. II Timothy 1:9 and 10. Romans 4:15. Paul was the minister of this new message of Divine grace and special Divine favor upon the Gentiles, justified without the law; without religion or without a cause. In his last epistles there is nothing of religion, no signs, no ceremonies. "Now abideth faith, hope and love." I Corinthians 13:13.

Paul was crucified with Christ to the law; Christ lived in him. Galatians 2:20. "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain." Philippians 1:21. Paul rehearses his religious past in Philippians 3:4 to 6. Then adds: "what things were gain to me those I counted loss for Christ." He counted his past religion as "dung". He had Christ. Christ is the believer's life, the believer's hope, the believer's peace, the believer's righteousness, the believer's redemption and the believer's all. Christianity is Christ and eternal life. The believer is accepted in Christ, complete in Christ, blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, identified with Christ in death, burial and, resurrection, seated with Him in the heavenlies and waiting to appear with Him in glory. He is not under the law. He is saved by faith in the redemption work of the Lord Jesus Christ, by grace, and grace alone.

Pure, unmixed Christianity is founded in Paul's epistles, perhaps more clearly set forth in Romans, Galatians and those epistles written after Israel was judged with the close of Acts. Christianity is Christ, Christianity is life, love and glory. Christ is the believer's all sufficient One. It is all Christ.

GOD WILL HAVE ALL TO BE SAVED

I TIMOTHY 2:4

Our God is the Judge of all the earth. Hear His own question: "Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Genesis 18:25. Surely He will. But did He do right when He permitted His holy, obedient, sinless, innocent Son to die for guilty, condemned, sinful men? God is sovereign. He had the perfect right to vindicate His holiness and righteousness and to satisfy His justice by permitting Christ to suffer for sins once, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. I Peter 3:18.

Because God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, because Christ was both God and man, and the sins of men were imputed to Him, God has been reconciled to the world. II Corinthians 5:16 to 21.

Because Christ, the God-man, was obedient unto death, and then abolished death, God can be just and the justifier of every one who believes in Jesus. Romans 3:24 to 28. The question is so frequently asked, "if Christ so completely satisfied God, by taking the sinner's place in judgment, and declared that His death was the judgment of the world (John 12:31), and if God works all things after the counsel of His own will (Ephesians 1:11), and if God is not willing that any should perish (I Peter 3:9), will not all men be saved? "God our Saviour, Who will have all men to be saved." I Timothy 2:4.

In what sense does the Bible teach "universal reconciliation?" Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. I John 2:1. Christ gave Himself a ransom for all. I Timothy 2:6. The Lord Jesus, by the grace of God, "tasted death for every man." Hebrews 2:9. In the shadow of the cross the Saviour said, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all unto ME." John 12:32. And the risen Christ gave this message to Paul: "And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind, by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled."

When our appeal is to human reasoning, rather than to Divine revelation, we may be led to the conclusion that, as man is not responsible for his predicament under the universal law of sin and death, he is not under obligation to take any step to get himself out of his predicament; for God's Word declares that death is reigning in and upon all men by Adam's offence: that by the offence of Adam judgment came upon all unto condemnation. Romans 5:17 and 18.

If universal sin, judgment and death came by Adam, why not universal righteousness, salvation and eternal life by Christ, especially since God will have all men to be saved?

What saith the Scriptures? "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36. Christ said "And ye will not come to Me that ye might have life." John 5:40.

Reconciliation becomes mutual when the sinner, by faith in Christ Jesus, responds to II Corinthians 5:20: "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

There are several Greek words translated "will". They mean desire, resolve, determine, etc." Let us remember that "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared toward all men." That universal salvation or reconciliation provided is not universal salvation accepted and appropriated. The way of salvation is belief of the truth. II Thessalonians 2:13. "But he that believeth not shall be damned." Mark 16:16.

Let us be faithful ambassadors, get busy and keep busy, beseeching sinners to be reconciled to God.

"ALL THINGS ARE OF GOD, WHO HATH RECONCILED US TO HIMSELF BY JESUS CHRIST, AND HATH GIVEN TO US THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION; TO WIT, THAT GOD WAS IN CHRIST, RECONCILING THE WORLD UNTO HIMSELF, NOT

IMPUTING THEIR TRESPASSES UNTO THEM; AND HATH COMMITTED UNTO US THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION. NOW THEN WE ARE AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST, AS THOUGH GOD DID BESEECH YOU BY US: WE PRAY YOU IN CHRIST'S STEAD, BE YE RECONCILED TO GOD. FOR HE HATH MADE HIM TO BE SIN FOR US, WHO KNEW NO SIN; THAT WE MIGHT BE MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM." II Corinthians 5:18 to 21