

PARADISE - PURGATORY - PERDITION

A short time before the Lord Jesus Christ went to the cross of Calvary to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, He said, concerning His disciples:

“While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name: those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of PERDITION: that the Scripture might be fulfilled:” John 17:12.

Judas Iscariot was “the son of perdition.”

Then note II Thessalonians 2:3:

“Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of PERDITION.”

The coming of the “man of sin” will also be “the son of perdition.”

Then note Revelation 17:8:

“The beast that thou sawest was and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into PERDITION: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they, behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.”

Then we read in Hebrews 10:39 and II Peter 3:7 concerning some who shall go to perdition:

“But we are not of them who draw back unto PERDITION; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”

“But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and PERDITION of ungodly men.”

PARADISE

When the Lord Jesus was dying on the cross, a thief near by on another cross called on Him. Note this cry and the Lord’s response:

“And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with Me in PARADISE.” Luke 23:42 and 43.

Then some years later a converted Jew by the name of Paul had a unique and wonderful experience. Hear His Own words:

“I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth): How that he was caught up into PARADISE and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” II Corinthians 12:2 to 4.

That was indeed such an unusual experience, such a glorious visit, that the Lord had to do something about it. Note what happened to the apostle Paul:

“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.” II Corinthians 12:7.

Then some time later the Lord Jesus appeared to the apostle John for a revelation of Himself on the isle of Patmos. Among other things Christ said to John:

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the PARADISE of God.”

Even if we have not studied the Bible to learn the difference between paradise and perdition, we may well imagine that there is a very great difference. We would not object to an extended sojourn in paradise but we would not care for even a brief visit to perdition.

Now purgatory is supposed to be the temporary abode of some religious people who at the time of death are too religious, too good for entrance into perdition, but are not sufficiently religious or good enough for paradise. So they must stop off at the intermediate place of fire, torment and agony and spend a few years or a few centuries there and “be saved so as by fire” in accordance with I Corinthians 3:15. Note this verse, and with it read the context and see that it has no reference to purgatory:

“If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.”

Purgatory then is supposed to be a place where sin is put away.

You will observe that we quoted from the Bible concerning “perdition” and “paradise,” but “we did not quote from the Bible concerning “purgatory.” Why” Because purgatory is neither mentioned nor suggested in the Bible. It is an imaginary place of some religious potentates who invented it to make merchandise of the souls of their followers. There is a Divine place for “the purging of sins” definitely stated in no uncertain language in the Bible, and presently we shall study this. For the present we quote Hebrews 1:3 and Hebrews 10:2:

“Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself PURGED our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

“For then would they not have ceased to be offered, because that the worshippers once PURGED should have had no more conscience of sins.”

But now let us consider:

THE BIBLE PARADISE

We have quoted the three verses of Scripture where the word “paradise” appears in the New Testament. The Greek word is “paradeisos.” The Hebrew word is “pardec.” The word is translated “orchard” in the Song of Solomon 4:13, and Ecclesiastes 2:5:

“Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard.”

“I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits.”

Most Christians, as well as all religious people, have a very vague, hazy conception of paradise. Many of these uncertain ideas or opinions have been formed by reading John Milton, rather than by a diligent, spiritual, prayerful study of the Scriptures.

Many Bible students tell us that we have the Scriptural right to call the Garden of Eden, “paradise.” Then they say that in the closing chapters of The Revelation, where we read again of the tree of life, we have paradise regained. Now this seems to be supported by the statement of Revelation 2:7:

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the PARADISE of God.”

But how about II Corinthians 12:4:

“How that he was caught up into PARADISE, and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”

Paul was caught up to the third heaven when he was caught up to paradise. Was Paul permitted to visit paradise up in heaven where Christ is sitting at God’s right hand? Or did the lord Jesus reveal to him the paradise that is to be restored by and by? There are some who teach that Paul was caught away to see the paradise that is to be; that is, the beautiful city in Revelation 21:10, that is to descend out of heaven:

“And He carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.”

The Bible-teachers, who give this interpretation of II Corinthians 12:4, differ with the majority of Christians as to the meaning of Luke 23:43, Christ’s words to the dying thief:

“And Jesus said unto him Verily I say unto thee, Today shall thou be with me in PARADISE.”

They translate this: “I say unto you today, thou shalt (some time in the future) be with Me in paradise.”

The brethren who thus translate Luke 23:43, dogmatically affirm that the Lord’s message concerning “the rich man and Lazarus,” in Luke 16:19 to 31, is a parable. The brethren with whom they disagree call this “parable” interpretation rank heresy.

Well let us consider Luke 16:19 to 31:

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: and the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Some years ago some man of God decided that the rich man was in the lower compartment of sheol, a place of torment, which was the temporary abode of the unsaved people who died before Christ died on the cross and went back to heaven. That man decided that Abraham’s bosom was the upper-compartment of Sheol, a place of conscious bliss, which was the temporary abode of the saved people. Therefore he called Abraham’s bosom the Old Testament paradise.

That man taught that all disembodied redeemed human spirits went to that Sheol “paradise” where they remained until after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Then Christ abolished death and brought life and incorruptibility to light in the gospel. (II Timothy 1:10).

When Christ ascended He is supposed to have taken the Old Testament saints (their spirits) from the upper compartment of Sheol into the New Testament heavenly paradise. As Scriptural proof, Ephesians 4:8 is quoted:

“Wherefore He saith, when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.”

Now this is supposed to teach that when Jesus Christ was raised to heaven, He emptied the upper compartment of Old Testament Sheol and took the spirits of those redeemed people into a new paradise, a heavenly paradise. Without submitting this teaching to the Berean test (Acts 17:11) thousands have accepted this as Divine truth.

But the Berean has some questions to ask:

If the rich man and Lazarus represented the disembodied spirits, how about the finger and tongue in the story? Again, Abel died centuries before Abraham had a bosom, so also did Seth, Noah, Shem, Eber and others. Whose bosom did they go to? Again Abraham was not an Old Testament saint. He died before the Sinai (Old) Covenant was made with Israel.

It is far better for Christians, when uncertain about some difficult Bible truth, to keep quiet until they receive light from the Holy Spirit concerning its true meaning rather than to give some fanciful interpretation which creates a seeming contradiction in God’s infallible Book.

However we are all agreed that the thief on the cross did not go that day to the garden of Eden or to the restored kingdom of Revelation 21 and 22. And we are all sure that he did not go to a burning purgatory. The Lord Jesus spoke in very clear positive language when He said in John 5:24 and John 6:47:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life.”

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ means, for the believing sinner, eternal life. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ means that the believer will not come to judgment for the penalty of his sin. The purgatory preached by religious Christians is certainly a terrible judgment for sin. Christ did not say, “believe and you will pass out of purgatory into paradise after years of suffering.” He said, “believe and pass out of death into life and never come unto judgment.” “You hath He made alive who were dead, in trespasses and sins, and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 2:1, 5 and 6.

Concerning the efficacy of the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Word is, that the believers once purged shall have no more conscience of sin and need no additional offering or sacrifice for sin. Hebrews 10:2, Hebrews 10:10 to 18.

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ meant for that thief eternal redemption:

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

Let us compare spiritual with spiritual and get light from God’s Word, as to what happened to that thief after his death. Note what happened to a saved sinner who died some months later, faithful Stephen:

But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name

was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep. Acts 7:55 to 60.

As to his body. Stephen fell asleep, The Lord Jesus was in heaven and received Stephen's spirit. Did Stephen's spirit go to paradise? He certainly went to a pleasant place of security. It was truly for him a "happy landing."

Note again the words of faithful Peter in II Peter 1:14:

"Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me."

Note the words of the most faithful of faithful Christians who ever lived, the Apostle Paul:

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose, I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire TO DEPART, AND TO BE WITH CHRIST; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." Philippians 1:21 to 24.

"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body and TO BE PRESENT WITH THE LORD." II Corinthians 5:8.

"For whether we live, we live unto the Lord: and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living." Romans 14:8 and 9.

"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Ephesians 2:6.

It was Peter within his tabernacle who put off his tabernacle His tabernacle went to corruption, but not Peter. Peter departed to be with the Lord, which was far better. The Lord was not in purgatory. Was He in paradise? That is all according to the meaning of paradise. Some say that Christ is in the third heaven and that is paradise. II Corinthians 12:2 to 7. To be with Christ, where He is, is far better. Note Ephesians 1:19 to 23.

Of this we may be most certain, if paradise is the temporary abode of the Lord's redeemed people, purgatory is the way to paradise, but it is no half-way station where believers are saved through fire. The purgatory by which believers reach their heavenly home and enjoy their spiritual blessings is a purging of sin by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE BELIEVER'S HEAVENLY POSITION AND HOPE

Let its carefully note Colossians 1:5:

"For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the Word of the truth of the gospel."

For every individual who believes the gospel, there is a hope laid up in heaven. This hope is realized by faith in Jesus Christ, not by suffering in some imaginary, mythical purgatory. Paul wrote that the Lord Jesus Christ is our hope. I Timothy 1:1. He wrote that those who are without Christ are without hope. Ephesians 2:12.

Those who believe in purgatory claim to have much confidence in the Apostle Peter. Note what he wrote:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ

from the dead. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.”

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the gospel by which believers are saved. I Corinthians 15:2 to 4.

Note some of the spiritual benefits that the individual enjoys when and because he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ:

“And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye would not be justified by the law of Moses.” Acts 13:39.

“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.” Colossians 2:13.

“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” Hebrews 10:10.

We have learned from the Bible that the sinner is saved by believing; in Christ; that when he believes he passes out of death into life. The believer is forgiven. Not some of his sins are forgiven, but all of his sins. He is justified from all things. He is sanctified once for all by faith in the once-for-all sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. The believer is made alive and he is raised up. He is seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.

Then he joins with Paul, in Philippians 3:20 and 21:

“For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”

He joins with John in I John 3:2 and 3:

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”

Let us note carefully the believer’s position and hope in Colossians 3:1 to 4:

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.”

In these Scriptures the believer is assured that he will receive a glorified, incorruptible body when the Lord Jesus Christ appears in glory. Note what is to happen:

“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” I Thessalonians 1:16 and 17.

How many believers will be here on earth when the Lord appears for His Church? Perhaps the greatest number of Christians who ever lived on earth at any one time. How many of these believing saints, who are alive and remain for Christ’s appearing, are to be raptured? Every single one of them. Are any of these living saints going to glory by the way of the fires of purgatory? Hear God’s Word:

“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” I Corinthians 15:51 and 52.

If every living believer is to go to heaven in a resurrection body, when the Lord Jesus comes for His Church, without going through purgatory, we may be sure that God will not

discriminate against those believers who have fallen asleep in Jesus and consign any of them to purgatory for further preparation for heaven. Such a salvation would be wholly contradictory to Ephesians 2:8 and 9 and Titus 3:5 and 6:

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: Not of works lest any man should boast.”

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit, Which is shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour:”

The Bible does seem to teach that the “sheol” in the Hebrews scriptures is the “hades” of the New Testament Scriptures. This word “hades” comes from a Greek word meaning “not seen.” It is frequently translated “hell.” It is translated “grave” in I Corinthians 15:55:

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?”

Let us note the Lord’s answer to this question. The Lord Jesus, before His death said:

“I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall be live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?” John 11:2 and 26.

Note what Christ accomplished by His death and resurrection:

“But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel.” II Timothy 1:10.

Then note what the resurrected Christ said to John on the Isle of Patmos:

“I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hades and of death:” Revelation 1:18.

Then note the destiny of those who refuse to accept Christ as Saviour:

“And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hades delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works:” Revelation 20:13.

From these Scriptures we may well believe that the unbeliever at death will be in hades until the white throne judgment. But there is not one single line of Scripture to support the foolish doctrine that those who have passed out of death into life, by faith in the crucified, resurrected and glorified Christ, will have to go to heaven by the way of the fires of purgatory.

As to the whereabouts of the dead, the general statement is made in Ecclesiastes 12:6 and 7:

“Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern, Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return to God Who gave it:”

Note the words of the Lord Jesus in Matthew, that is, God is the Father of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, not the God of the dead, but of the living:

We have learned what became of Stephen’s spirit and body at death. His body fell asleep. The Lord Jesus in heaven received his spirit.

Note Paul’s clear statement in II Corinthians 5:8:

“We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”

So the Scriptural teaching is, that members of the Church of Jesus Christ go to the Lord Jesus when death overtakes them. Therefore both purgatory and soul sleeping are human theories contrary to sound Bible doctrine.

The Epistle to the Ephesians is God's answer to all the false teaching concerning soul-sleeping, partial-rapture, purgatory, and other foolish vagaries. In that Epistle we learn that the sinner's salvation is because God is rich in mercy and great in love. Ephesians 2:4 and 5. The sinner's salvation is by grace, without works, the gift of God. He is redeemed and forgiven according to the riches of God's grace and because he was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world.

When the believer is saved by grace, he is sealed by the holy Spirit unto the day of redemption. He is therefore saved, sanctified, sealed, secure, and seated in the heavenlies. All of this is according to God's good pleasure which he purposed in Himself by Christ Jesus to praise of His glory, according to the riches of God's grace. Read it in Ephesians 1:6 to 11.

But alas! Ninety-nine plus percent of Christians are as ignorant of the Epistle to the Ephesians as though it had never been written.

Many times you and I have asked this question: Why are so many people so brilliant and intelligent in all other matters and yet so bewildered, deceived and deluded in their religious thinking, creeds and practices? They could open the particular Bible which their denomination endorses and see that their own Bible condemns their own religious creed and doings.

If there is anything that is clearly taught in all Christian Bibles, it is the fact that there is one and only one Church of Jesus Christ in this age of grace and that Church is the Body of Christ; not primarily an organization but an organism. Ephesians 4:3 to 7. Note carefully I Corinthians 12:12 to 14 and Ephesians 5:31 and 32.

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they too shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.”

Only God, by His own Divine baptism, can put an individual into His one Bible Church, outside of which there is no salvation. The individual who receives Christ as his or her own Saviour is immediately saved by grace and becomes a member of the true Bible Church, the very moment he or she believes the gospel of salvation. “Joining the church,” is an unscriptural term except as God, by the Holy Spirit joins the believer to Christ. Neither is it the will of God that a truly regenerated person should join some religious organization that propagates a perverted gospel.

EVERY BELIEVER IS A SAINT

Every saved person is not only a member of the true Bible Church, but is also a true Bible saint. Note Hebrews 10:10 and 14—Hebrews 13:12—I Corinthians 6:11—I Corinthians 1:30—II Thessalonians 2:13:

“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all.” “For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” Hebrews 10:10 and 14.

“Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate.” Hebrews 13:12.

“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” I Corinthians 6:11.

“But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” I Corinthians 1:30.

“But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:” II Thessalonians 2:13.

In these Scriptures we learn who are saints and how to become a saint. How true it is, that those who teach heresy concerning “purgatory” teach heresy concerning the making of saints. The religious operators who consign their victims to the fires of purgatory, charge for their religious prayers and ceremonies, to get their sufferers out of purgatory. They claim to bring them forth as ready for paradise.

THE BIBLE PURGATORY

Many religious people who claim to be Bible Christians have been taught by their religions leaders that few, if any, Christians are fit to go into God’s presence at death, but that God has a purgatory in which they must endure further suffering and go through a fiery purging for their final preparation for heaven.

This unscriptural purgatory has proved one of the best religious money-making schemes known to man. But what saith the Scriptures:

“For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.” I Peter 1:18 to 20.

This should be of special interest to the “purgatory” religious people because Saint Peter wrote it.

On the authority of Saint Peter, silver and gold cannot help and religious sinner to get into heaven.

Then a message to the Christians at Rome should be of special interest to the “purgatory” religions people. Note carefully the plain declaration in that Epistle:

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

Then note Romans 11:6:

“And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work.”

So we learn that neither money nor good works will help any religious sinner to reach heaven.

Note also Romans 3:28 and 3:24:

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

“Being justified without a cause by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

Salvation is by grace. Salvation is God’s free unearned, undeserved gift. Salvation is not for sale. Man is absolutely helpless and powerless to take one meritorious step to aid in his salvation, except the step of faith. Divine truth clearly states that the believing sinner is declared righteous “without a cause,” without religion, all by grace. In Romans 6:23, note: “the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

It is certainly true that sin must be purged before man can get into heaven. But let us note the true Bible way:

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and PURIFY unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Titus 2:11 to 14.

The grace of God hath brought salvation. The grace of God hath appeared to all men. Jesus Christ gave Himself for us that He might purify (purge) unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. The Greek word translated “purify” is “katharizo.” This is the word that is translated “purge” in the Bible. It is translated “cleanse” in I John 1:9—Ephesians 5:26—Matthew 10:8. It is translated clean in Matthew 8:3—John 15:3—Acts 18:6. This word “katharizo” is translated “purge” in Hebrews 9:14—Hebrews 1:3 and Hebrews 10:2. Note the use of the word in these three verses:

“How much more shall the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, PURGE your conscience from dead works to serve the living God:”

“Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the Word of His power, when He had by Himself PURGED our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:”

“For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once PURGED should have had no more conscience of sins.”

If “purgatory” is the place where sins are put away, then we may call Calvary’s cross, “purgatory:” Sins are not put away by fire. “The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth (purgeth) us from all sin:” I John 1:9.

Note carefully Ephesians 1:6 and 7 and Hebrews 10:16 to 19:

“To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”

“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.”

Then let us see God’s answer to all the absurd and unscriptural teaching concerning a purgatory that is supposed to supplement the finished work of Christ on the cross.

“For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” Hebrews 10:26.

“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” Hebrews 10:10.

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

“Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.” Hebrews 10:18.

There remaineth no more sacrifice and no more offering for sin, because the worshipper once purged hath no more conscience of sin. The believer is sanctified once for all by the offering of Jesus Christ Who offered Himself once for all on the cross. It is an insult to God and

a spiritual crime to offer any propitiation or sacrifice in any kind of a religious ceremony seeking to make the blood of Christ more efficacious.

ONE SACRIFICE FOR SIN

Jesus Christ, the perfect Man, made one sacrifice for sins when He offered Himself to God without spot. He entered once into heaven having obtained eternal redemption for us. Hebrews 9:12 and 14.

Note the question and answer in Romans 8:33 and 34:

“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth, Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession.”

Now note carefully Romans 6:10—Hebrews 10:12—Hebrews 9:25 and 26:

“For in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.”

“But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.”

“Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”

If you have been deceived by religious priests with religious robes, and the religious chalice bearing letters I.H.S., I beseech you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, use the common sense with which you are endowed. Read in your own Bible the verses which we have quoted. Jesus Christ on the cross said, “finished.” He put away sin. He died once for sin. He made one offering for sins for ever. There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.

The Epistle to the Hebrews was written to instruct and condemn those foolish religious people who were determined to supplement the once-for-all sacrifice of the Son of God with their Old Testament religions offerings.

The Epistle to the Galatians was written to instruct and condemn those foolish Galatians who were trying to make the grace of God more effective, and the perfect redemptive work of Jesus Christ more efficacious, by adding religions ceremonies and religious days and ordinances. Paul called them “foolish Galatians.” Galatians 3:1. Their attempt to supplement the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ was not only foolish and futile, but it frustrated the grace of God, perverted the gospel, subverted souls, and caused some of the Galatians to fall from grace.

Any sane student of the Scriptures knows that neither Peter nor Paul wore the religious robes of a priest. Paul belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. Paul, therefore was ineligible for the priesthood. So was the Lord Jesus Christ. Read Hebrews 7:14 and 8:4. Numbers 3:6 to 10.

“Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him. And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle. And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle. And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons; they are wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel. And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest’s office; and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.” Numbers 3:6 to 10.

In Hebrews 7:14 and Hebrews 8:4 we learn that Jesus Christ was of the tribe of Judah and would not be a priest if He were on earth.

Peter was no Aaronic priest. He wore no religious robes. He never celebrated mass. Note how he forgave sins:

“To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.” Acts 10:13.

Open your Bible. Read Acts 8:1—Acts 11:1 to 9—Acts 15:1 to 15, Galatians 2:1 to 9, and you will learn some interesting facts concerning Peter. You will learn that during the “Acts” period Peter remained in the land of the Jews, that he preached to one company of Gentiles, and that he then agreed to confine his testimony to Jews. Galatians 2:9. The only time Peter left the land of Israel, during the “Acts” period, so far as we have any Bible record, he got into serious trouble. Read carefully Galatians 2:9 to 13. Peter would not sit down and eat with Gentile Christians. Do you think the Lord would have sent such a man to Rome to preach to the Gentiles? He sent a different man, the apostle Paul. Note what the Lord said to Paul: “And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.” Acts 23:11. Then Paul wrote to Rome:

“I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.” Romans 1:14 and 15.

“Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you; for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought up on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company.” Romans 15:24.

“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.” Romans 11:13.

In his Epistle to the Romans Paul wrote that religion would not in any way save any Jew, or Gentile. And after Paul reached Rome he wrote to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Titus, and II Timothy from the Roman jail. In these Epistles the message of grace is unmixed with any kind of religion.

The Lord Jesus Christ in heaven revealed “Church” truth to Paul. Then Peter learned it from Paul; that is, truth concerning the Church which is Christ’s Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. Ephesians 1:19 to 23.

None of the Lord’s apostles used a chalice. Not one of them committed the spiritual crime of resacrificing Jesus Christ. Not one of them taught or believed in celebrating the mass. Not one of them believed that there was any human priest in charge of a confessional. Note what Peter himself wrote to the church leaders, rulers and officials

“Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.” “Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.” I Peter 5:3 and 5.

On the chalice are stamped the letters “I-H-S,” “Jesus the Saviour of man.” A very religious dignitary who was one of the outstanding lords over his religious followers said that, in the celebration of the mass, the priests offer the same Jesus Christ Who offered Himself on the cross. They do this in spite of the plain statement in their own Bible:

“For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” Hebrews 10:26.

“And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.” Hebrews 10:17 and 18.

Dear friend, if you have been deluded by this false teaching, remember God will not forgive your ignorance because you are following a blind leader. Note God’s plain words:

“These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of Him, abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him.” I John 2:26 and 27.

Forsake all of these fallacies, throw off these religious and superstitious shackles and believe God’s Word, “ye are complete in Christ.” Colossians 2:10.

Note carefully Ephesians 2:8 to 10: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

We have mentioned these unscriptural practices in the light of Bible truth because those who teach “purgatory” have linked With their false “purgatory” doctrine other false doctrines, such as penance, the confessional, the mass, and the intercession of saints.

This whole religious scheme and program of this mammoth religious organization is contrary to the plain teaching of the very Bible which they claim to be the only true and genuine Bible.

As we have seen that “purgatory,” “the mass,” and “the confessional” are contrary to sound Bible doctrine; so also is the teaching and practice of penance and indulgences. There is not one line in any Christian Bible to support such doctrines. There is not a single line in any Christian Bible that would even faintly suggest that the virgin Mary is in heaven as any kind of a mediator or intercessor. When Mary was on earth she was not a member of any church in Rome, or of any church that practices what the present Roman church practices. There is not one line of Scripture to support the teaching that the intercession of saints in heaven aid in the purging of the sins of religious people either here on earth, or in any imaginary purgatory.

In the light of Numbers 3:6 to 10, we might well imagine what God Would do to every usurper pretending to be a priest, ministering at God’s altar With the sacrifice of His Son, if we were not living in the day of grace. We leave with you I Timothy 2:3 to 6:

“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”

And rejoice in the truth of Acts 13:39 and Ephesians 1:6 and 7:

“And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

“To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”

Just one Mediator between God and men. Read in your own Bible Matthew 23:9:

“Call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven.”

All who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and accept His once-for-all sacrifice are redeemed, forgiven, and justified from all things according to the riches of God’s grace.

They are by the precious blood of Jesus Christ saved from perdition.

WHAT ABOUT PERDITION?

We learned that Judas was called “the son of perdition” and that he was lost. Does that mean that when Judas committed suicide, that was the end of Judas? Does perdition mean annihilation as the cessation of consciousness and existence?

In the same tenth chapter of Hebrews, in which we read, “We are not of them who draw back unto PERDITION; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul,” (Hebrews 10:39). we read also:

“He that despiseth Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Hebrews 10:28 to 31.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Does this mean that it is a fearful thing to die and be annihilated? What meaneth the vengeance of God for those who despise His grace and treat Christ’s blood as an unholy thing? What is the sorer punishment for these unbelievers? Under the law, transgressors were stoned to death. But even the faithful saint, Stephen, experienced that Stephen was stoned to death. But when Stephen’s body went to corruption, he went to heaven to be with Christ. Saints as well as sinners, experience physical death. But note the great difference: “There is therefore now no judgment for them who are in Christ Jesus.” Romans 8:1. But for all others note these plain words, “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” Hebrews 9:27. Death is not the judgment. The judgment is after death.

Note the awful judgment mentioned in Revelation 21:8 and Revelation 20:12 to 15:

“But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it: and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

Then let us read together Revelation 20:10 and Matthew 25:41:

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

“Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

I think from these verses we can understand something of the meaning of Luke 3:7. I Thessalonians 1:10 and 5:10, and John 3:36.

“Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”

“And to wait for His Son from heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”

“God hath not appointed us (believers) unto wrath but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

Note the words of the Lord Jesus, in Matthew 7:13 and 14: “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to DESTRUCTION, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

It is true that the reward of the believers is here called “life,” and the punishment of the unbelievers is called “destruction.” But this word “destruction” is the same Greek noun translated “perdition.” The word is “apoleia” and does not mean annihilation or the cessation of consciousness. It is translated “destruction” in Romans 9:22 and 23: “What if God, willing to shew His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to DESTRUCTION: And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory.”

This same Greek word “apoleia” is translated “damnation” in II Peter 2:3—“And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their DAMNATION slumbereth not.” Note concerning these unbelievers, in verse 9—“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.”

(II Peter 2:9). Any ungodly man would elect to be annihilated. Sorely annihilation, and complete oblivion, and cessation of all consciousness would be a blessing for the wicked instead of punishment.

Of this we may be sure, the Judge of all the earth will do right and all of God’s judgments are holy and righteous. Note again I Timothy 2:4, II Peter 3:9 and John 3:16:

“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

God is a merciful, compassionate, loving, gracious Saviour. He calls Himself “the God of all grace.” I Peter 5:10. And God declares that His grace abounds towards lost sinners more than their abounding sin. Romans 5:20.

But God is a just and a righteous Judge. “The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked.” Nahum 1:3.

Jesus Christ was God in heaven, and became a Man on earth. “But we see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” Hebrews 2:9. He died for our sins. He was made a curse on the cross. Note in II Corinthians 5:21, that the sinless Christ was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Christ was obedient unto the death of the cross. Read the wonderful story of redemption by Christ in Philippians 2:5 to 10 and in I Peter 1:18 to 20.

This is wonderful truth for poor lost sinners:

“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”

Because the sinless Christ was made sin on the cross, because He was the Just and died for the unjust, God declared that He can be, and will be, just and the justifier of every one who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Note Romans 3:26 and Romans 4:5:

“TO DECLARE, I SAY, AT THIS TIME HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS: THAT HE MIGHT BE JUST, AND THE JUSTIFIER OF HIM WHICH BELIEVETH IN JESUS.” Romans 3:26.

“BUT TO HIM THAT WORKETH NOT, BUT BELIEVETH ON HIM THAT JUSTIFIETH THE UNGODLY, HIS FAITH IS COUNTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” Romans 4:5.

AFTER DEATH THE JUDGMENT

There is not one verse of Scripture that suggests “after death a second chance to be saved.” There is not one verse of Scripture in the Bible of any so-called Christian church that would give any religious church-member any hope of ever leaving perdition for paradise by the way of any after-death purgatory. Sometimes the religious leaders quote and misinterpret I Corinthians 3:15 and Luke 12:48 to prove their false teaching. Note these two verses:

“If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” I Corinthians 3:15.

“But he that knew not and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.” Luke 12:48.

These Scriptures have no reference to a place through which Church members saved in part are made ready for heaven by the fires of purgatory.

In spiritual matters the average person does not seem to have a sound mind. Moreover, fully ninety-five per cent of people who have joined some religious organization permit religious leaders to formulate their creeds and doctrines for them. Therefore we have about four hundred different religions sects in our own country.

Genuine Christians are Bible Christians. Spiritual Church members belong to the one true Bible Church. Note some plain instructions in the Bible:

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Ephesians 4:1 to 6.

Christians are to obey these instructions. They can learn how to obey them by diligently and prayerfully studying the Bible, following the Holy Spirit as the infallible Divine Teacher. What an appalling ignorance of the Bible we behold among church-members!

But the use of just a little common sense should convince any superficial student of the Bible that the awful sacrifice of the Lord of Glory on the cross of Calvary proves that an awful, terrible penalty awaits the sinner who rejects the Son of God as his or her own personal Saviour and refuses to believe in salvation by the blood of Jesus Christ.

The Bible plainly teaches that for every individual it is either the cross of Calvary or the sorrows of the second death and no temporary stop at any half-way station for further purging.

We leave with you John 3:36 and I John 5:13:

“HE THAT BELIEVETH ON THE SON HATH EVERLASTING LIFE: AND HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT THE SON SHALL NOT SEE LIFE; BUT THE WRATH OF GOD ABIDETH ON HIM.”

“THESE THINGS HAVE I WRITTEN UNTO YOU THAT BELIEVE ON THE NAME OF THE SON OF GOD; THAT YE MAY KNOW THAT YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, AND THAT YE MAY BELIEVE ON THE NAME OF THE SON OF GOD.” I John 5:13.

REPENTANCE—RECONCILIATION—RESTITUTION

Perhaps you have read in the Bible the words of the apostle Paul. in Romans 11:33: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!”

That outbreak followed the apostle’s declaration of a great mystery which the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven had revealed to him. That mystery was concerning a great blessings that had come to the Gentiles when and because God dealt in awful judgment with the Jews. Note the thirtieth verse of this eleventh chapter of Romans “for as ye (Gentiles) in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their (Israel’s) unbelief.” Note how this truth is stated in the twenty-fifth verse, “blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” Note again the fifteenth verse, “if the casting away of them (Israel) be the RECONCILING of the world (Gentiles), what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?”

Because of this radical change in God’s dealings with the Jews and a new Divine movement with the Gentiles Paul broke forth in the words we quoted, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!” The Jews’ loss meant great gain for the Gentiles. The Jews were cast away. That brought RECONCILIATION for the Gentiles. The Jews’ unbelief brought special mercy from God toward the Gentiles. The blindness of the Jews meant salvation for the Gentiles in a manner they had never enjoyed.

When the Holy Spirit stated that RECONCILIATION was offered to the Gentiles when and because Israel was cast away, what did He mean by Israel being cast away? Surely the Bible teaches that any Jew, who will believe the gospel of Christ and receive Him as Saviour, can be and will be, saved in this day of Grace. In Ephesians 2:16 we learn that both Jews and Gentiles are reconciled unto God by the cross and are united in one Body.

In Acts 2:22 to 47 we have the record of the Holy Spirit’s message to the Jews. Peter was the human messenger of the Lord. He addressed the Lord’s message to “ye men of Israel.” Acts 2:22. They cried out, “men and brethren, what shall we do?” Verse 37. Note the answer,

“REPENT, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Verse 38.

“And the same day were added unto them about three thousand souls.” Verse 41.

WHO REPENTED ON PENTECOST?

According to the Divine Record, three thousand Israelites repented and were baptized for the remission of sins. Note what the same messenger, Peter, later preached to Israel in Jerusalem.

“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.” “Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” Acts 5:29 to 31.

The statement here is very plain and positive. God had raised Jesus Christ up to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel. What about the Gentiles? Their time had not yet come. Hear Peter’s own words:

“And He said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” Acts 10:28.

It was unlawful for the Lord’s messengers to go with their message to Gentiles. They were still obeying Matthew 10:5 and 6 and 23. But now came the change; about seven or eight years after the death of Christ. The apostle Peter preached to a company of Gentiles, the household of Cornelius This seems to be in harmony with the command which the Lord Jesus gave to Peter and the Eleven after He had been raised from the dead:

“And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.” Luke 21:46 to 48.

The eleven apostles condemned Peter for preaching to Cornelius and his household. Acts 11:1 to 4. But after Peter had rehearsed the whole matter with them, note the results:

“When they heard these things they held their peace and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” Acts 11:18.

Certainly God’s dealings with Cornelius, the Gentile, marked a radical change. About 1900 B.C. God had decreed that no uncircumcised man could have any fellowship with His people. Genesis 17:4 to 17. Believing Gentiles were brought into fellowship with the children of Abraham under the covenant of circumcision. Acts 7:8. They became proselytes, and under the reign of law they became Jews by religion. Esther 8:17.—Acts 2:10. Cornelius was uncircumcised. After he was saved the Christian Jews insisted that no Gentile could be saved without being circumcised.

“And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.” “But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.” Acts 15:1 and 5.

About that time they tried to force Paul to have Titus circumcised; but Paul protested and won the argument against tremendous opposition. Galatians 2:2 to 6. In the light of Acts 15:1 to 5 and Galatians 2:1 to 14, we might well presume that the Jewish Christians either persuaded Cornelius to be circumcised or they would have disfellowshipped him. Read carefully Galatians 2:11 to 14. We learn in Acts 16:3, that Paul had Timothy circumcised because of the Jews. Timothy’s father was a Jew.

From the day John the Baptist introduced Jesus Christ to Israel until the day that Peter preached to Cornelius, no uncircumcised man, Jew or Gentile, was baptized. In Luke 1:16—

Luke 1:80—John 1:31—and Acts 13:24, we learn that the ministry of John the Baptist was to and for Israel.

Note the words of the Lord Jesus to Israel concerning the ministry of John the Baptist to them:

“And His disciples asked Him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist.” Matthew 17:10 to 13.

“For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold I send my messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee.” “For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” Matthew 11:10, and 13 to 15.

Strange and significant language! John the Baptist was the Elijah promised in Malachi; if Israel had received the message and this Messiah.

Israel rejected both John the Baptist and Jesus Christ. Then they rejected the testimony of the Twelve, and the witness of the Holy Spirit. Acts 5:32; Acts 7:51. They rejected the testimony of the apostle Paul. Acts 13:46, Acts 18:5 and 6. Then something happened to Israel:

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” Romans 11:25.

Note the sad and awful words of the Lord Jesus to and concerning Israel:

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” Luke 13:31 and 35.

“And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, THE THINGS WHICH BELONG UNTO THY PEACE! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side. And they shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because THOU KNEWEST NOT THE TIME OF THY VISITATION.” Luke 19:41 and 42 to 44.

“Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” Matthew 23:32, 33 and 38.

“They say unto Him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out His vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render Him the fruits in their season.” “Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” Matthew 21:41 and 43.

In these words of the Lord Jesus Christ, we understand more of the meaning of John 1:11:

“HE CAME UNTO HIS OWN, AND HIS OWN RECEIVED HIM NOT.”

Jesus Christ came unto Israel and Israel received Him not. Many individual Israelites received Christ as their Saviour but the rulers rejected Him as their Messiah and Redeemer. They knew not the time of their visitation. They knew not the things that belonged to their peace. Their house was left unto them desolate. They will not see the Lord Jesus again until His return as the Son of men. Note Luke 21:23, 24, 27, 28 and 31:

“But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days? for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” “And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” “So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.”

Israel’s redemption has been postponed, but not the redemption of individual Israelites. Thousands of them were saved when the Lord Jesus, the Twelve and Paul preached to them. Israel is going to be redeemed. The Son of man is coming to Israel for this purpose.

CHRIST BORN FOR DAVID’S THRONE AND ISRAEL’S REDEMPTION

“And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.” Luke 1:31 to 33.

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David; And He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us.” Luke 1:67 to 71.

Even after the Lord Jesus Christ pronounced the awful judgment upon Israel, He prayed for them on the cross. Note Luke 23:34:

“THEN SAID JESUS, FATHER, FORGIVE THEM; FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO. AND THEY PARTED HIS RAIMENT AND CAST LOTS.”

Then followed the message of Acts 3:14 to 26. We quote several verses: “But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of Life, Whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.” “And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled.” “Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.” Acts 3:14, 15, 17, 18, 25 and 26.

What a change in God’s attitude toward Israel! In Matthew twenty-three, they were serpents and a generation of vipers; their house was desolate. But Christ’s prayer on the cross was heard. Israel could be forgiven on the grounds of ignorance. They are now the children of the covenant. Acts 3:25. Note again Acts 5:30 and 31:

“The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.”

So Israel was given another chance to receive Jesus as their Messiah for:

THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS

“REPENT YE THEREFORE, AND BE CONVERTED, THAT YOUR SINS MAY BE BLOTTED OUT, WHEN THE TIMES OF REFRESHING SHALL COME FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD; AND HE SHALL SEND JESUS CHRIST, WHICH BEFORE WAS PREACHED UNTO YOU: WHOM THE HEAVEN MUST RECEIVE UNTIL THE TIMES OF RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS, WHICH GOD HATH SPOKEN BY THE MOUTH OF ALL HIS HOLY PROPHETS SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN.” Acts 3:19 to 21.

Let us trace the message of repentance through Luke and Acts, the two Books that the Holy Spirit dictated to the name human author:

LUKE 3:3:

“And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”

LUKE 3:8:

“Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.”

LUKE 5:32:

“I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

LUKE 10:13:

“Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.”

LUKE 11:32:

“The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.”

LUKE 15:7:

“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.”

LUKE 15:10:

“Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”

LUKE 24:47:

“ And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

ACTS 2:38:

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

ACTS 3:19:

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;”

ACTS 5:31:

“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.”

ACTS 8:22:

“Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.”

ACTS 11:18:

“When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.”

ACTS 13:24:

“When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.”

ACTS 17:30:

“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.”

ACTS 19:4:

“Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.”

ACTS 20:21:

“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The words “repent” and “repentance” are found in Luke’s two messages twenty-five times. In every instance the Greek words “metanoeo” and “metanoia” come from the word “noieo,” “to think” and “meta,” “change.” The verb means “to change one’s mind,” “to think differently,” “to reverse one’s decision” The word is certainly not the synonym of “penance.” In preaching the “grace gospel” Paul said: “I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” Galatians 2:21. To mix any act or doing of penance with the gospel of grace is to frustrate the grace of God and pervert the “grace gospel.”

In the Gospel according to John, the word “repent” is not found. But the word “believe” is found one hundred times. Any one who believes, according to the Lord’s message in John’s Gospel, certainly repents. Let us compare John 3:16 and John 8:24 with Luke 13:5:

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.”

“I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, Ye shall all likewise perish.”

Here we see the same punishment for the person who does not repent and the person who does not believe. The very moment the unbelieving person believes in the Lord Jesus Christ his mental attitude toward God is changed. He has repented.

Let us note the words of Paul. In Acts 20:21. “Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Some Christians would endeavor to prove by this verse that salvation is the result of two different steps taken by the sinner, repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Their idea of repentance is a combination of sorrow and confession with a firm determination to forsake sin. And even then they say that God may demand that the individual practice restitution before he will save them.

Some Christian workers quote to the convicted sinners, Luke 18:13—I John 1:9—Acts 2:38—Acts 10:4 and 35—Isaiah 55:7 and 8—and Luke 3:3 and 3:8. Note these verses:

“And the publican standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.”

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

“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.”

“And when he looked on Him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.”

“But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.”

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts; neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord.”

“And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”

“Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves We have Abraham to our father, for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.”

Not one of these messages is compatible with the gospel of grace and the ministry of reconciliation which the risen Christ gave to the apostle Paul by special revelation. Note carefully the salvation “grace” messages in Romans 4:4 and 5—Romans 3:24 and 2:5—II Timothy 1:9 and 10—Ephesians 2:8 to 10 and II Corinthians 5:18 to 21.

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

“Being justified without a cause by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.”

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

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them:”

“And all things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. 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.”

The publican’s prayer was prayed by a son of Abraham under the law, before Christ became the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. The message of I John 1:9, If we confess our sins, is written to a saved man. The message of Acts 2:38, “repent and be baptized for the

remission of sins,” and the messages of John the Baptist, “the baptism of repentance for (unto) the remission of sins,” and “bring forth fruit meet for repentance,” were preached to the children of the covenant (Acts 3:25), the children of the kingdom (Matthew 8:12), preserved and protected by God’s covenants with Israel. Concerning the salvation of Cornelius and the message which Peter preached to him, remember that Cornelius was a just and devout man of prayer. He loved Israel’s God, and loved the Jews, and gave them money. Acts 10:2 and 22. His prayer, and good works helped him out.

But compare Acts 10:34 and 35 with Paul’s grace message in Romans 4:4 and 5:

“Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons. But an every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.”

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

Then let us note Paul’s words, in Galatians 2:7 and in Acts 20:24—Ephesians 3:1 to 3 and Romans 16:25:

“But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter:”

“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God:”

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

“Now to Him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began:”

What folly to bring Isaiah 55:7 and 8 into the “dispensation of the grace of God.” How foolish to confuse Peter’s “gospel of the circumcision,” his message of repentance and restitution with Paul’s “my gospel,” and “the ministry of Reconciliation:” Note again II Corinthians 5:19 and 21:

“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.” “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.”

To bring in the element of works, whether religious acts, ritualism, penance, or water baptism into the gospel of grace is to pervert that gospel.

Note in Ephesians 2:12 and Ephesians 4:18 and Ephesians 2:1 to 3, the condition of the Gentiles to whom Paul preached. They were aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers from Israel’s covenants. They were without God. They were alienated from the life of God. They were dead in trespasses and sins, and by nature the children of wrath.

There was a great difference between those who were nigh to God, the children of the kingdom, the children of the covenant, and those who were aliens afar off, those whom Christ called “dogs” when He was on earth.

Note what Christ said to a Gentile, “But He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and cast it to dogs.”

Surely the dead men, of Ephesians 2:1 to 12, could not bring forth any spiritual “repentance” fruit until they had experienced Ephesians 2:6 and 2:10. Note the change which they experienced.

“And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

It was after the apostle Paul received, by revelation, a new commission, ministry and message from Christ in heaven that he preached Romans 10:12, Ephesians 2:16 to 18 and Colossians 1:20 and 21.

“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him.”

“And that He might RECONCILE both unto God in one Body by the cross, having slain the enmity there by; and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father:”

“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.”

After this glorious revelation Israel was set aside or cast away. Then the ministry of RECONCILIATION was sent to Gentiles.

Note Romans 5:10 to 12—“For if, when we were enemies, we were RECONCILED to God by the death of His Son, much more, being RECONCILED, we shall be saved by His life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the RECONCILIATION. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”

RECONCILIATION

By Christ we have received the RECONCILIATION. Romans 5:11. Then read the next following verse. “Wherefore as by one man.” Who was that one man? Adam. Adam left the garden of Eden nearly 2100 years before Abram left his city, home and family, (Genesis 12:1 to 5). Note in Genesis 12:1 to 5 that Abram was 75 years old when God called him. Twenty-four years later God gave Abram a new name with the covenant of circumcision. Genesis 17:5 to 18. Acts 7:8. Then and there all the other sons of Adam were cut off except those who sought God’s blessings in the Abrahamic household and covenant.

“The covenant of circumcision” was abolished after Paul went out with “the gospel of the uncircumcision.” Acts 7:6 to 8, Galatians 2:7 and 3:8. Israel was set aside under the ministry and authority of Paul, and not by Jesus of Nazareth on earth, not by the twelve apostles in their “Acts” ministry. When Israel was set aside the Lord sent Paul to proclaim reconciliation for Gentiles.

“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He RECONCILED.” Colossians 1:21.

Then Israel’s time of reformation was at hand. “Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.” Hebrews 9:10.

“And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” Acts 10:28.

We note in Acts 10:28 that God’s law and “the covenant of circumcision” were still binding at the time Peter was told to go to Cornelius.

Israel’s religion and all the ordinances, ceremonies, and ritualism were abolished by God when Israel was set aside. After that, the sons of Abraham had no special privileges or covenant, priority rights. There was no longer any profit or advantage in circumcision. The Jews had to come as the sons of Adam along with all the other sons of Adam.

Then Paul was directed to write Ephesians 3:6 to 11:

“THAT THE GENTILES SHOULD BE FELLOWHEIRS, AND OF THE SAME (JOINT) BODY, AND PARTAKERS OF HIS PROMISE IN CHRIST BY THE GOSPEL; WHEREOF I WAS MADE A MINISTER ACCORDING TO THE GIFT OF THE GRACE OF GOD GIVEN UNTO ME BY THE EFFECTUAL WORKING OF HIS POWER. UNTO ME WHO AM LESS THAN THE LEAST OF ALL SAINTS, IS THIS GRACE GIVEN, THAT I SHOULD PREACH AMONG THE GENTILES THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST; AND TO MAKE ALL MEN SEE WHAT IS THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE MYSTERY, WHICH FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD HATH BEEN HID IN GOD, WHO CREATED ALL THINGS BY JESUS CHRIST: TO THE INTENT THAT NOW UNTO THE PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS IN HEAVENLY PLACES MIGHT BE KNOWN BY THE CHURCH THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD, ACCORDING TO THE ETERNAL PURPOSE WHICH HE PURPOSED IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.”

God’s eternal purpose was God’s own secret until Christ revealed it to Paul. It was called “the unsearchable riches of Christ.” This word “unsearchable” is from the word “ichnos,” meaning in the Greek, a “step” or a “track.” The word means “not to be tracked,” “untraceable.” This means that God’s secret concerning “the dispensation of the grace of God,” committed to Paul, and the Joint-Body, which was God’s eternal purpose, was not prophesied by Israel’s prophets. There is no trace of this eternal purpose in any Book or Message of the Bible until Paul made it known. Note Ephesians 1:9 and 1:11:

“Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself.”

“In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.”

But now every Christian’s duty, with respect to this Divine purpose and program, is clearly stated in Ephesians 3:9:

“AND TO MAKE ALL MEN SEE WHAT IS THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE MYSTERY, WHICH FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD HATH BEEN HID IN GOD.”

REPENTANCE AND RESTITUTION

God’s message of repentance and restitution was related to God’s covenants with Israel. When Israel repents during the coming tribulation then Acts 3:21 will be fulfilled.

“Whom the heaven must receive until the times of RESTITUTION of all things, which God path spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.”

This will be the fulfillment of Luke 1:68 to 70 and 71.

Every Christian should hear again the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, in Luke 24:25, and the words of the Holy spirit. in II Peter 1:19.

“THEN HE SAID UNTO THEM O FOOLS, AND SLOW OF HEART TO BELIEVE ALL THAT THE PROPHETS HAVE SPOKEN.”

“WE HAVE ALSO A MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY; WHEREUNTO YE DO WELL THAT YE TAKE HEED, AS UNTO A LIGHT THAT SHINETH IN A DARK PLACE, UNTIL THE DAY DAWN, AND THE DAY STAR ARISE IN YOUR HEARTS.”

Many wonderful things are to transpire on this earth in connection With the coming of the King to bring about the restitution. Israel will be restored to God, and the kingdom to them.

“And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.” Isaiah 49:6.

“In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old; That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by My name, saith the Lord that doeth this. Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of My people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the water thereof; they shall also make gardens and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them again upon their land and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given him them, saith the Lord thy God.” Amos 9:11 to 15.

“OF THE INCREASE OF HIS GOVERNMENT AND PEACE THERE SHALL BE NO END, UPON THE THRONE OF DAVID, AND UPON HIS KINGDOM, TO ORDER IT, AND TO ESTABLISH IT WITH JUDGMENT AND WITH JUSTICE FROM HENCEFORTH EVEN FOREVER. THE ZEAL OF THE LORD OF HOSTS WILL PERFORM THIS.” Isaiah 9:7.

But during this parenthetical, unprophesied “grace” period let us not confuse “the gospel of the kingdom” with “the gospel of the grace of God,” or “the message of repentance and restitution” with “the message of reconciliation.”

Remember, with the first mention of Adam as the first man and the head of the human race by Paul, we find in the Bible the first presentation of the ministry of reconciliation.

If you are saved read carefully II Corinthians 5:17 to 21:

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 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.”

If you are unsaved, hear these words:

“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.”