

PAUL TAKES OVER

PETER AND PAUL AND THE BODY OF CHRIST

First let us carefully read several verses concerning the ministry of Peter and several of his messages.

“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Spirit, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him.” Acts 5:29 to 32.

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

“And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the Word of the gospel, and believe.” Acts 15:7.

“But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For He that wrought a effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles); And when James, Peter, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.” Galatians 2:7 to 9.

Now let us carefully consider several verses concerning the ministry of Paul and several of his statements.

“Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said (unto the Jews): It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken unto you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” Acts 13:46.

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

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

“Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.” II Timothy 4:17.

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

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

First concerning Peter and his messages. Peter told the rulers of Israel, in very plain language, that God raised Christ from the dead to be Israel's Prince and Saviour. Peter told them that the Holy Spirit and the apostles were God's witnesses to Israel of this fact. By the mouth of Peter, God proclaimed this message to Israel: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Acts 2:36.

Then note what he added—"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. God was willing to forgive Israel for their sin against the Son of man, if they did not sin against the Holy Spirit, by rejecting the witness of the Spirit concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ to be Israel's Prince and Saviour. Acts 3:12 to 18—Matthew 12:32—Acts 5:32, Acts 7:51, Acts 13:45, Acts 18:5 and 6.

Again, it was unlawful for Peter and the eleven to come unto an uncircumcised Gentile with the gospel until the Lord appeared to Peter, in the housetop vision, and told him to go to Cornelius, nothing doubting. Note carefully what the Lord and Peter preached to Cornelius the just, devout, alms-giving, God-fearing, praying Gentile. Note how Cornelius is described:

"A devout man, and one that feared God—with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway." "And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee." Acts 10:2 and 22.

Note carefully Acts 10:4 and 10:35:

"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."

At a glance we see that this is done different from Paul's "grace" message to Gentiles in Romans 4:4 and 5, Romans 3:24 to 28, Titus 3:5 to 8, Ephesians 2:8 and 9, and II Timothy 1:9.

This should teach us that when Peter preached to Israel, on the day of Pentecost, concerning Jesus of Nazareth and His works on earth (Acts 2:22), and to Cornelius about seven years later, the Word which God sent unto the children of Israel (Acts 10:36 and 7), concerning Jesus of Nazareth and His works on earth (Acts 10:38), Peter was using the keys of the kingdom of heaven given to him by Jesus of Nazareth, Matthew 16:16 and 18. It was all right with the other eleven apostles, who stood up with Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14), when Peter used the kingdom key with Israel. But they raised considerable disturbance when Peter used the kingdom key with the Gentile who stood well with Israel and gave them money. Acts 11:1 to 4. Acts 10:22. Peter described the "sheet" vision and they learned what a splendid, religious man Cornelius was, with this result: "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.

For some reason Peter and the eleven remained in Jerusalem, and so far as there is any record, in the Book of Acts, not one of them preached to uncircumcised Gentiles before or after Peter used the kingdom key with Cornelius. Acts 8:1, Acts 15:2, Galatians 1:18 to 2:7.

Now note Peter's statement about ten years after he preached to Cornelius and his household: "And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by MY mouth should hear the Word of the gospel, and believe." Acts 15:7. Let us emphasize "by MY mouth." Whose mouth did God choose of the twelve mouths to preach to Gentiles? Peter's mouth. One mouth. There were twelve mouths and all twelve preached to the twelve tribes of Israel. But one of the twelve preached to one household of Gentiles. If any one of the other eleven preached to even one Gentile there is no Bible record of it.

Now note this very important fact; about the same time that Peter delivered his message (Acts 15:7) he and his fellow-apostles agreed to go to the circumcision (Galatians 2:9). If they did not preach to Gentiles before this agreement, in Galatians 2:9, why should we turn away from the Bible to church history in an attempt to prove that they became missionaries to the Gentiles, after the agreement of Galatians 2:9, so that we might prove some unscriptural theory that is a part of our denominational creed and program? Now as we again think of Peter and the eleven on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14) and of the agreement in Galatians 2:9, let us carefully read Matthew 19:27 and 28:

"Then answered Peter and said unto Him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

The Twelve have not finished their ministry to the twelve tribes of Israel. Note carefully where they will be in the coming Kingdom Age, or the millennium.

When Peter wrote his first Epistle, he addressed it "to the dispersion" as did James, "to the twelve tribes scattered abroad" (I Peter 1:1 and 2). And then Peter wrote these words, in II Peter 3:15 and 16:

"And account that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned, and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction."

Before considering Paul's distinctive ministry, mentioned in the verses which we quoted, we call your attention to some true and helpful statements by several outstanding Bible teachers.

WHAT SOME BIBLE TEACHERS HAVE WRITTEN

Dr. Wm. L. Pettingill, in his book on Romans, pages 230 and 231, commenting on the 16th chapter of Romans says:

"Now to Him that is of power to stablish you (Romans 16:25 to 27). This closing paragraph is of great doctrinal importance as touching the person of Christ.

1. God is of power to stablish His people;

2. He establishes them according to Paul's gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ;
3. This preaching of Jesus Christ by which God establishes His people must be a preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery! There is much preaching of Jesus Christ which does not establish God's people, because it is not according to Paul's gospel, nor according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but was made manifest by revelation to the apostle Paul. (Compare Ephesians 3:1 to 7)."

Now read some comments of a Bible teacher who has been considered an outstanding grace messenger, Mr. William R. Newell:

"You can judge any man's teaching by this rule is he Pauline? Does his doctrine start and end according to those statements of Christian doctrine uttered by the apostle Paul? No matter how wonderful a man may seem to be in his gifts and apparent consecration, if his gospel is not Pauline, it is not the gospel, and we might as well get our minds settled at once on that point."

"For instance, if you were to take Paul's Epistles out of the Bible, you cannot find anything about the Church, the Body of Christ, for no other apostle mentions the Body of Christ."

"Would that we had grace to defend just as vigorously this great message today, FOR IT HAS MANY ENEMIES, and even real friends who do not yet see it clearly; and there are others, who like Peter (Galatians 2:11), THROUGH FEAR OF OTHERS, ARE READY TO COMPROMISE and tone down the gospel of God."

Mark his words, "ready to compromise and tone down the gospel of God." Why? "Fear of others." This is "multum in parvo." Think how the recovery of Pauline truth is being hindered because the Lord's preachers fear others. We have comparatively few fearless Bible teachers. Read carefully Galatians 1:10 and John 12:43.

Again we quote some true and important statements from the pen of Dr. H. A. Ironside:

"Peter never preached the mystery of the Body so far as the record goes. That was a special revelation to Paul."

"The Mystery of the Church, as the Body of Christ, was never made known in Old Testament times, nor yet in the days when our Lord was on earth. The Divine method of making it known was by a special revelation to the apostle Paul. It was a ministry committed unto Paul to pass on to the saints:"

"Paul was the chosen vessel to whom alone the mystery was given, to set it forth."

"That a doctrine so clearly revealed in the Scriptures could have become so utterly lost is only to be accounted for by the Judaizing of the Church." "Now if the Mystery be for those who have faith to obey, it is certainly of vast importance that every child of God be instructed as to its true character."

"A sacred secret never known to mankind until in due time opened up by the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul." "It was not hid in the Scriptures to be brought to light eventually; but we are distinctly told that it was hid in God until such time as He chose to manifest it." "This was not UNTIL ISRAEL HAD BEEN GIVEN EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO RECEIVE CHRIST, BOTH IN INCARNATION AND IN RESURRECTION."

"The mystery formed no part of the previous dispensations. Paul learned it not from the former Scriptures, but by direct revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ in glory."

It is of vast importance that every child of God search Paul's messages and be instructed as to the true character of the mystery, learning the difference between the prophesied riches of Christ and the unsearchable riches of Christ. Remember what Peter said; that in Paul's Epistles are some things hard to be understood but God has stated the Divine method in Ephesians 1:16 to 18.

How strange that Bible teachers will teach that God began the Body by Peter and that Peter never preached the mystery of the Body!

As Paul tells us in II Timothy 4:17 and 18 he was delivered from death and preserved "that all the Gentiles might hear." He was the apostle, and preacher, and teacher of the Gentiles. I Timothy 2:7—I Timothy 1:11—Romans 11:13. Paul was the prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ for the Gentiles. Ephesians 3:1 and 2. Christ did not give to Paul the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Christ, by revelation, gave to Paul for Gentiles the "grace" gospel, the ministry of reconciliation, the unsearchable riches of Christ, the dispensation of the grace of God, the gospel of the grace of God, the dispensation of the mystery, the eternal purpose of God. Galatians 1:11 and 12—II Corinthians 5:16 to 21—Romans 11:15—Ephesians 3:8 and 9—Ephesians 3:1 to 3—Acts 20:24—Ephesians 3:11.

Note Galatians 2:7—"But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me (Paul) as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter." The original Greek is the same as the translation, "OF the uncircumcision" and "OF the circumcision."

Philip in Samaria and Stephen and others were under the jurisdiction and authority of Peter and the Eleven—But not Paul. Paul was under the direct control of the glorified Christ from Whom he received His orders and messages by revelation.

PAUL TAKES OVER

Note what happened to one of the twelve apostles in Acts 12:1 and 2: "Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword."

Then note how Saul (Paul) was separated and commissioned in Acts 13:2: "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

On the day of Pentecost TWELVE apostles stood up. There were only eleven apostles after Judas died. But eleven were not enough. Twelve were needed. Twelve is a representative number in the Bible. It is the number of Israel; twelve tribes. If any number represents the Church, or Body, it is the number "one." The message of the Twelve on the day of Pentecost was for "all the house of Israel" (Acts 2:36), to devout Jews from every nation under heaven. (Acts 2:5). The far-off people of Acts 2:39 were the far-off Israelites of Daniel 9:6 to 8 For some years after Pentecost it was not lawful for the Twelve to preach to uncircumcised Gentiles. Acts 10:28.

One mouth of the twelve mouths of the twelve apostles was chosen by God to speak to one company of Gentiles. Acts 15:7. After this one mouth spoke to one company of Gentiles one of the Twelve died before God sent out the one man who was to become the apostle of the Gentiles.

When Judas, one of the Twelve, died, Matthias was chosen as his successor. Acts 1:16 to 26. It was necessary that Judas should have lost his place and another man should have taken it. The number must be “twelve” from Acts 2:1 to Acts 12:1, until after one mouth spoke to one company of Gentiles.

But now this thought-provoking question, “if it was necessary to choose an apostle to take the place of Judas when he died, why was it not necessary to select an apostle to take the place of James when he died?” Surely we should know that with the death of James and the sending forth of Barnabas and Saul God’s attitude toward Israel is going to change, for the number of apostles is no longer “twelve.” This change is indicated in the dispensational miracle of Acts 13:6 to 12. In this miracle we learn that a Gentile by the name of “Paul” believed and was saved when blindness happened to a Jew whose name meant “the Son of Jehovah the Saviour.” (Bar-Jesus). Israel was the child of Jehovah the Saviour. In Romans 11:8 to 26 we learn that salvation was sent to the Gentiles when blindness happened to Israel. This was a great dispensational change. Therefore, we call Paul’s experience with the Jew, “Bar-Jesus,” and the Gentile, “Paul,” a dispensational miracle. Because of this miracle, “Paul,” the Gentile, became a Christian and Saul of Tarsus became “Paul.” Acts 13:9.

But now for the meaning of the statement “Paul takes over.”

After James died and the number of the first twelve apostles was reduced to eleven, the Holy Spirit, in the Book of Acts, ceased to record the spiritual activities of Peter and his fellow-apostles, except as they had dealings with Paul. At the time James died, the twelve apostles had not left the land of Israel to go out and preach the gospel to every creature under heaven. Several years later they were still in Jerusalem. Acts 15:1 to 19—Galatians 2:1 to 14. And at this later date Peter and his associates agreed to go to Israel. Galatians 2:9. So not only as we search the first twelve chapters of the Book of Acts do we learn that there is no record, and not even the slightest suggestion, that any of the Twelve went forth on any missionary journeys out of their own land, but in the last sixteen chapters of Acts there is no record or suggestion of any such ministry.

Those last sixteen chapters of Acts record the acts and words of one man and only such other person as had dealings with that one man, Paul, who is mentioned by noun and pronoun in those chapters more than two hundred times. The two or three references to the other apostles were because they were in conference with Paul.

Paul first located in Antioch of Syria, then in Corinth, then in Ephesus, then in Caesarea, then in Rome. And note what he wrote from Rome: “For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the Word of the truth of the gospel; Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth.” “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; WHEREOF I PAUL AM MADE A MINISTER.” Colossians 1:5 and 6 and 23.

In those sixteen chapters of Acts four or five of Paul’s missionary journeys are recorded. Note, this is an interesting statement concerning his ministry while his headquarters were at Ephesus: “And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they that dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.” Acts 19:10.

Note Paul's changes from Acts 19:9 to Acts 28:31 and II Timothy 4:5 to 9. From the synagogue of the Jews to the schoolhouse of the Gentile to the king's court in Caesarea, to the jail in Rome. But he finished his course and testified of the gospel of the grace of God. Acts 20:24. He fought a good fight and kept the faith. All the Jews and Gentiles in Asia heard the gospel, as did every creature under heaven in all the world. God delivered and preserved Paul that the gospel might be fully known to the Gentiles.

PAUL AND HIS COMPANIONS

Then notice these changes; first Barnabas and Saul, then Barnabas and Mark (Acts 15:39 and 40). Then Barnabas carried away in the dissimulation (Galatians 2:12 and 13); then Paul and Silas (Acts 16:19). Barnabas, Mark and Silas were Jews from Jerusalem. Then we come to "I, Paul." II Corinthians 10:1—Galatians 5:2—Ephesians 3:1—Colossians 1:23—Philemon 19. From now on it is the one apostle and "Body" truth rather than the twelve apostles, Israel and the kingdom.

Then note Paul's testimonies:

"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office." Romans 11:13. "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 to me to you-ward: How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery (as I wrote afore in few words). Ephesians 3:1 to 3. "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." Ephesians 3:8. "Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ and lie not), a teacher of the Gentiles, in truth and verity." I Timothy 2:7. "Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles." II Timothy 1:11. "To every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister. Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body's sake, which is the Church: Whereof I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill (complete) the Word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Colossians 1:23 to 27.

Can we not see the significance of the "I, Paul"—the one outstanding apostle of the Gentiles with a distinctive ministry for Gentiles, given to him by revelation from the resurrected, ascended and seated Christ?

CHRIST—ISRAEL—GENTILES

Now let us note these statements:

"HE CAME UNTO HIS OWN AND HIS OWN RECEIVED HIM NOT." John 1:11. "OF THIS MAN'S SEED HATH GOD, ACCORDING TO HIS PROMISE, RAISED UNTO ISRAEL A SAVIOUR, JESUS!" Acts 13:23. "AND WE ARE WITNESSES OF ALL THINGS WHICH HE DID BOTH IN THE LAND OF THE JEWS, AND IN JERUSALEM; WHOM

THEY SLEW AND HANGED ON A TREE; HIM GOD RAISED UP THE THIRD DAY, AND SHOWED HIM OPENLY.” Acts 10:39 and 40.

“THEN PETER AND THE OTHER APOSTLES ANSWERED AND SAID, WE OUGHT TO OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MEN. THE GOD OF OUR FATHERS RAISED UP JESUS, WHOM YE SLEW AND HANGED ON A TREE. HIM HATH GOD EXALTED WITH HIS RIGHT HAND TO BE A PRINCE AND A SAVIOUR, FOR TO GIVE REPENTANCE TO ISRAEL, AND FORGIVENESS OF SINS. AND WE ARE HIS WITNESSES OF THESE THINGS; AND SO IS ALSO THE HOLY SPIRIT WHOM GOD HATH GIVEN TO THEM THAT OBEY HIM.” Acts 5:29 to 32. “GOD HATH FULFILLED THE SAME UNTO US THEIR CHILDREN, IN THAT HE HATH RAISED UP JESUS AGAIN; AS IT IS ALSO WRITTEN IN THE SECOND PSALM, THOU ART MY SON, THIS DAY HAVE I BEGOTTEN TREE. AND AS CONCERNING THAT HE RAISED HIM UP FROM THE DEAD, NOW NO MORE TO RETURN TO CORRUPTION, HE SAID ON THIS WISE, I WILL GIVE YOU THE SURE MERCIES OF DAVID.” Acts 13:33 and 34.

“THEN PAUL AND BARNABAS WAXED BOLD, AND SAID, IT WAS NECESSARY THAT THE WORD OF GOD SHOULD FIRST HAVE BEEN SPOKEN TO YOU: BUT SEEING YE PUT IT FROM YOU, AND JUDGE YOURSELVES UNWORTHY OF EVERLASTING LIFE, LO, WE TURN TO THE GENTILES.” Acts 13:46. “FOR AS YE IN TIMES PAST HAVE NOT BELIEVED GOD, YET HAVE NOW OBTAINED MERCY THROUGH THEIR UNBELIEF.” Romans 11:30.

Note the first statement, Christ came unto His own (Israel) and Israel received Him not. In the last verse we learn that the Gentiles obtained mercy because of Israel’s unbelief. Surely John 1:11 and Romans 11:30 offer us a most interesting Bible study if we will study with them the other Scriptures we have quoted.

All evangelical Premillenarians, who are true messengers of the grace of God, are dispensationalists. They desire to obey II Timothy 2:15 and Ephesians 3:9: “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.” “And to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.”

Those who are obeying these orders are teaching the dispensational change recorded in Romans 11:15: “For if the casting away of them (Israel) be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?” This is the same truth of Romans 11:30. It was necessary that the Word of God should have been preached to the Jews ONLY while Christ was here on earth as Israel’s Saviour, sent only to Israel. Matthew 10:5 to 8 and 10:23. And then to the Jews only in the first nine chapters of Acts. Then in Acts 13, to the Jews first.

The Twelve were to go over the cities of Israel and the Son of man was to come. Matthew 10:23. It was necessary that the Word of God should have been preached to the Jews first and that they should refuse it and blaspheme before the apostle of the Gentiles should say, “LO, WE TURN TO THE GENTILES!”

Many men of God teach that the apostles should have turned to the Gentiles on the day of Pentecost after Christ denounced Israel in Matthew 21:36 to 45 and Matthew 23:31 to 39, especially after the great commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20 and Mark 16:14 to 18.

We should all be unanimously agreed that reconciliation was sent to the Gentiles when and because Israel fell and was cast away. And we do know that it was sent to them in Romans 5:10 and 11 and I Corinthians 5:16 to 21, by the pen and mouth of Paul. But if we can positively prove that Israel fell and was cast away at Calvary, because of Christ's words in Matthew 23:31, to 39, then we should join with those who say that Peter and the Eleven did not go to the Gentiles, because of their prejudice, disobedience, lack of faith and spiritual energy. But I would not want to be numbered with those who bring this serious charge against those men who were filled with the Holy Spirit and who claimed that they obeyed God rather than men.

Note this statement as to the great truth that the Twelve and the Holy Spirit were witnesses:

“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins, And we are His witnesses of these things and so is also the Holy Spirit, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him.” Acts 5:29 to 32.

Surely, if it were not for sectarian traditions and personal prejudices, any intelligent, honest student of the Scriptures would learn in these verses that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead to be Israel's Saviour, just as much as He was raised up in incarnation to be Israel's Saviour. Acts 5:29 to 32. Acts 13:23 and 13:32 to 36. What was the Holy Spirit witnessing and what were the twelve apostles witnessing? That God had exalted Christ with His right hand to be Israel's Saviour. Later on Stephen saw Him there standing. Acts 7:51 to 58. Peter tenderly and affectionately addressed Israel and their guilty rulers, as the children of the prophets and of the covenants. Acts 3:25. When we look for the answer to the question, why the great change from Matthew 23:31 to 39 to Acts 3:14 to 26, the answer is in Luke 23:34 and Acts 3:18 and Acts 4:27 and 28. Christ's death was by God's decree and when Israel killed the Prince of Life it was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Acts 2:22 and 23. Israel did that which God before ordained should be done. Christ knew this and told Israel if they sinned against the Son of Man, Christ in incarnation, their sins would be forgiven. Hence Christ on the cross prayed, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” But according to Matthew 12:30 to 32, if Israel should later on sin against the witness of the Holy Spirit, that God raised up Jesus to be their Prince and Saviour, if they resisted the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51), if they blasphemed (Acts 13:45 and 46 and Acts 18:6), their sin would be unpardonable. When they committed the pardonable sin against the Son of Man, they said “His blood be on us, and on our children.” Matthew 27:25. Before they committed this great crime they were “serpents” and “a generation of vipers.” Matthew 23:31 to 39. Then surely when they added another crime to their crimes mentioned in Matthew 21:33 to 46 and killed the Prince of Life, they must have been worse than “serpents” and “vipers.” No, they were children again, children who had ignorantly killed the Prince of Life (Acts 3:17 and 15). When later on they blasphemed and rejected the resurrected Christ Paul said, “your blood be upon your own heads: I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.” Acts 18:6. This was nearly twenty years after they had said, “Christ's blood be on us and on our children.” Let us emphasize “and on our children.” This brings us right down to 1943 A. D.

So we ought to see that Christ's prayer on the cross brought to Israel one more opportunity to receive or reject their Prince and Saviour. It is interesting to compare the intercessions of Moses for Israel, the intercession of Christ on the cross and then the intercession of Stephen in Acts 7:60. Each of these prayers postponed the judgment of God upon Israel. If we are to understand the casting away of Israel and reconciliation for the Gentiles, then we must know that before the Lord's incarnation Israel rejected the Lord and the Lord rejected Israel; that during the incarnation, when Israel sinned against the Son of man; Israel rejected the Lord and the Lord rejected Israel, and after the incarnation, after God had exalted Jesus in resurrection, Israel rejected the Lord and the Lord rejected Israel. It was not until after this third mutual rejection that reconciliation was sent to the Gentiles. Romans 11:15. And let us not confuse the message of Peter to Cornelius (Acts 10:32 to 43), before the third rejection of Israel, with the ministry of reconciliation committed to Paul when and because something happened to Israel some years after Christ was raised from the dead to be Israel's Prince and Saviour. That something is told in Romans 11:7 and 8: "The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded . . . God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see . . ." It was then that the Gentiles obtained mercy, because of Israel's unbelief. Romans 11:30.

Surely Peter was not directed to preach reconciliation to Cornelius when and because Israel was cast away. Compare II Corinthians 5:16 to 21 with Acts 10:2 and 22, and Acts 10:32 to 43. God's "kingdom" gospel is proclaimed when Israel is in favor with God. God's "grace" gospel is proclaimed when Israel is in disfavor with God. Certainly in Acts 13:46 and Acts 18:6 and Romans 11:7 to 15 Israel was very much in disfavor with God. But Israel had not been rejected at the time of the Gentile salvation announced in Acts 11:18. The "grace" message is so clearly set forth in Romans 3:24 to 28 and in Romans 4:4 and 5; therefore, the rejection took place between the time Peter preached to Cornelius and Paul wrote Romans.

Most of the present day controversies among evangelical Premillenarians, who are "grace" messengers, is not because of the truth that reconciliation was sent to the Gentiles when and because Israel was set aside. The Scriptures teach this in clear, simple, positive language. Romans 11:15 and 30. The point of difference that causes these unpleasant controversies is, that some Christians teach that there were only two mutual rejections of Israel, but not the third mutual rejection after Christ went back to heaven.

We quoted from Dr. Ironside's own writings that this present dispensation of the mystery did not begin until after Israel rejected Christ in resurrection. This is vital truth, and if he would reaffirm this and contend for it, he would make a valuable contribution to the recovery of truth. But in other messages, he refers to his fellow-saints who teach this same truth as "Bullingerites," He speaks of "Bullinger and his ilk." And he has turned many of God's servants away from the blessed truth which he once proclaimed. He no longer can conscientiously pray the prayers of Ephesians 6:19 to 21, Colossians 4:4 and 5, and Ephesians 1:17 and 18.

THE ONE BODY AND THE UNITY

We referred to the Scriptures concerning, "I Paul." "I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles." Ephesians 3:1. "The mystery of the gospel for which I am an ambassador in bonds." Ephesians 6:19 and 20. Paul went to jail for us, and suffered much. He went to jail for

Christ. He went to jail for “the mystery.” The mystery was a message and ministry that no man at any time had ever preached before Christ revealed it to Paul (alone). It was not made known in other ages. It was hid in God from before the foundation of the world. Therefore, it is called “the unsearchable riches of Christ.”

The Lord’s prisoner for us beseeches us to do several things in Ephesians 4:1 to 7. Let’s do them no matter what it costs us. What say you? Let’s learn what is the hope of His calling and walk worth, of that calling. Let’s forbear one another in love. What a big order! But His grace is sufficient. What else? . . . “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Then note just how and why:

1. “ONE BODY.”
2. “ONE SPIRIT.”
3. “ONE HOPE OF YOUR CALLING.”
4. “ONE LORD.”
5. “ONE FAITH.”
6. “ONE BAPTISM.”
7. “ONE GOD AND FATHER.”

We will unite on the one Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But the Baptist Christians will not agree on the ONE BODY unless others agree that there are at least two baptisms and that the ONE BODY be called “The Baptist Church.”

They insist that there must be the Baptist water ceremony in addition to the ONE DIVINE BAPTISM by which believers become members of the ONE BODY. The Lutheran and Presbyterian Christians will not agree that the water ceremony should necessarily come after the individual believes and it should not be immersion, but sprinkling. So Baptists and Lutherans and Presbyterians cannot get together and endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit, because they disagree as to the ONE BAPTISM.

All sectarians shy away from Ephesians 4:3 to 7, and Ephesians 5:30 to 32, and Ephesians 2:15 and I Corinthians 12:12 to 14, I Corinthians 12:25, Romans 12:4 and 5, and Ephesians 1:22 and 23 and Ephesians 4:12 and 13. As you carefully read these Scriptures you should see that they are God’s death blow to all sectarianism. God’s “grace” messengers should resolve, by the grace of God, that they will earnestly contend not only for one faith, one hope, one Father, one Son, one Holy Spirit, but just as earnestly for ONE BIBLE CHURCH (BODY) and ONE BAPTISM.

How can servants of the Lord sanction sectarianism in the light of these Scriptures?

“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. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” Ephesians 4:3 to 7.

“For we are members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; But I speak concerning Christ and the Church.” Ephesians 5:30 to 32.

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

“For as the Body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one Body, being many, are one Body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the Body is not one member, but many.” I Corinthians 12:12 to 14.

“That there should be no schism in the Body, but that the members should have the same care one for another.” I Corinthians 12:25.

“For as we have many members in one Body, and all members have not the same office; So we, being many, are one Body in Christ, and every one members one of another.” Romans 12:4 and 5.

“And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” Ephesians 1:22 and 23.

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

Note carefully these last quoted verses in Ephesians 4:12 and 13. In Ephesians 2:15 we learn that God is making “One New Man.” In Ephesians 3:6 we learn that God is making a “Joint Body.” In Ephesians 4:13 we note the culmination or consummation “The Perfect Man,” “The Fullness of Christ.” In Ephesians 4:12 we have God’s program during the age of grace, God is building up the Body of Christ. This Body is composed of all who are saved by God’s grace and faith in the redemptive work of Christ.

What a pity, what a spiritual crime, that zealous immersionists, who claim to be “grace” messengers, will not endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit with other “grace” messengers because these other messengers want to stand for ONE BAPTISM and ONE CHURCH, whereas the “grace” immersionists insist on two baptisms, God’s baptism and man’s baptism. When the “One Baptism” grace preacher asks the “Two Baptisms” grace preacher if his water ceremony has any saving value, or is necessary for membership in the ONE BODY of Ephesians 4:4 or will in any way help to get the believer to heaven, he receives a positive “No.” But with this “No” invariably there is a “but.” And the “buts” vary. They have quit saying “but we should follow our Lord in baptism,” because they know that Christ’s baptism took place on the cross (Luke 12:50) and that every believer has Christ’s death baptism the moment he receives Christ, at which time he is not only baptized into Christ’s death but is raised and seated in the heavenlies without any water ceremony. He also knows that Christ on earth was not only baptized with water, but He was circumcised and attended the Jewish synagogue on the Jewish Sabbath (Luke 4:16) and that He was under the law, and instructed His disciples to live under the law . . . Matthew 3:3 to 6, Matthew 23:1 to 3. So they know if we follow Jesus of Nazareth in baptism, we should follow Him to the synagogue and in circumcision and obey Moses. It is sad that they cherish their sectarian ceremony more than they do any desire to obey Ephesians 4:3 to 7, far more than they do to fellowship with their fellow-saints who are earnestly contending for the ONE BAPTISM, while they contend for the ONE FAITH.

The Church, with Christ, is Christ, the fullness of Him who filleth all in all. The Church with Christ is one flesh. The Church and Christ will be One New Man. Christ and the Church will be the Perfect Man. There is only One Body and one and only one way to become a member of that ONE BODY, and that is by the ONE BAPTISM of Ephesians 4:5, and surely I

Corinthians 1:14 to 17 and I Corinthians 12:12 to 14 proves that there is no water or human hands in that ONE BAPTISM.

Mark the “ones” and the “unity” in Ephesians, the message written by the one apostle who speaks of the Body. Surely “One” is the number of the Church. “By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.” Romans 5:19.

KEEP THE ONENESS OF THE SPIRIT TILL WE ALL COME IN THE ONENESS OF THE FAITH

Certainly every- Bible Christian should earnestly desire and endeavor to obey Ephesians 4:3: “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” This is to be done. “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.”

Christian unity is a beautiful doctrine. Christians should not do one thing to hinder the answer to the prayer of Christ in John 17:21 and 22: “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. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.”

With this prayer let us note carefully I Corinthians 12:12 to 14: “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the Body is not one member, but many.”

Christ is one and hath many members. Christ and the members are one Body. Note how this is stated in Romans 12:4 and 5: “For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one Body in Christ, and every one members one of another.” Members of Christ and members one of another.

Then note Ephesians 2:13 to 15: “But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ, For He is our Peace, Who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain ONE NEW MAN, so making peace.”

Here believing Jews and believing Gentiles, together with Christ, are called “ONE NEW MAN.” This then is what God is doing during this present economy and age.

Then note Ephesians 5:31 and 32: “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.” The members of Christ’s Body are being fitly framed together: “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.” They are members of the Household of God (Ephesians 2:19); “having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His Will.” Ephesians 1:5.

God predestinated the members to be His children. Note something of the Divine process and the human responsibility in Galatians 3:26 to 28: “For ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” All believers are the children of God and are one in Christ Jesus.

Outside of Christ, all members of the human race are one in Adam and they are in a deplorable predicament: “For if by one man’s offense death reigned by one much more they which receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One Jesus Christ.” “Therefore, as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.” Nothing here of the universal brotherhood of man and the universal Fatherhood of God. There is as much difference between members of the human race, who are in Adam, and members of the Body of Christ, who are in Christ, as there is between hell and heaven, the destinations of the two different classes.

Note these interesting statements concerning Christ and Christians in Romans 6:9 and 10 and II Corinthians 5:14 and 15: “Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once.” “For the love of Christ constraineth us: because we thus judge, that if One died for all then were all dead; And that He died for all, that they, which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.” Christ died unto sin once. The believer is dead with Christ. Romans 6:3—Galatians 2:20—Colossians 2:20. “For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye appear with Him in glory.” Members of Christ’s Body have been crucified with Christ and also raised with Christ. Romans 6:3 and 4—Ephesians 2:6—Colossians 3:1 and 2.

Again hear the glorious news in Hebrews 10:10 to 14: “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all.” “But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” One sacrifice offered one time. By this the believer is sanctified and perfected once for all.

Meditate upon the good news in I Peter 3:18 and Hebrews 9:12: “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” Christ suffered for sins once. This was sufficient to bring sinners to God. Here is God’s will and plan for lost humanity: “Who will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man, Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time.” I Timothy 2:4 to 6. Believe this. One Mediator. One sacrifice, one offering, one entrance into heaven. One way to be saved. Note Hebrews 9:26 to 28: “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. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was

once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”

Do you really want to know God’s program for today and how to understand and enjoy the Bible and walk worthy of the calling Wherewith you are called? Then read and obey Ephesians 4:3 to 7: “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. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”

Is it possible for members of Christ’s Body to obey these Divine instructions in the midst of all the religious confusion of the day with more than two hundred sectarian Christian churches? It is only possible to keep the unity on the basis of this seven-fold unity. If members of the Body of Christ should insist that there are two Fathers, two Sons and two Holy Spirits, there would be no unity. If members of the Body of Christ contend for a Lutheran Body, a Baptist Body and a Presbyterian Body, a Methodist Body or a “whatnot” Body, there would be no unity. There is one Body and it is not called in the Bible by any of these sectarian names. Note I Corinethian 12:25: “That there should be no schism in the Body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.”

In all of these sectarian bodies much is said about joining the church, but note what God’s Book says: “But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.” I Corinthians 6:17. And remember Ephesians 5:31 and 32, Christ and the Church, “one flesh.” And Ephesians 2:15, Christ and the Church, “one new man.”

When we behold the disunity and sectarian confusion of this present time we surely thank God for the future of the Church, not here on earth but in heaven. “Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it; That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” Ephesians 5:25 to 27.

There is one Body. There is one hope. What is that one hope? Only as we join in the prayer of Ephesians 1:16 to 23, and have this prayer answered shall we understand this hope and know the difference between this hope and other hopes of God’s people in the Bible. We read in Romans 5:2 of the hope of the glory of God, and in Colossians 1:27 of the hope of glory, Christ in you. And in Titus 2:13 we read of the blessed hope, the appearing in glory of Christ.

There is one faith. Members of Christ’s Body should earnestly contend for this one evangelical faith and should use the shield of faith to quench the fiery darts of the devil. And concerning the one faith, we read in Ephesians 2:8 and 9: “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.”

Now after we have agreed on these six unities, if we have, what shall we do concerning the seventh unity, “there is one baptism?” The Holy Spirit is omniscient and infallible. He knew that in 1943 religious Christians would be contending for a variety of water baptisms which have done more to cause disunity in the Body of Christ than any other one thing. Even evangelical orthodox Fundamentalists, are much divided because of their “water” theories and ceremonies. Many of them are uncertain, if not utterly confused, when asked to defend their water baptism teaching and practice with the Scriptures. They substitute tradition for sound doctrine and, if zealous for their tradition, of course they do not endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit except

with such members of the Body of Christ as accept their “water” theory. They cannot and do not obey Ephesians 4:3 to 7, because they have added a human baptism to the one Divine baptism; and two is not unity. Two baptisms cannot be one baptism any more than two Gods can be one God.

The Church will make little progress in obeying Ephesians 4:3 and 7 until the outstanding leaders among Fundamentalists set the example by contending for the one Body and the one baptism just as earnestly as they do for the one Church and the one faith.

But surely we have seen that the number of the Church is number One, and the hope, calling, and program of the one Church has been revealed to us by one apostle. Only as we carefully and prayerfully interpret, appropriate, and apply all other Scriptures, in the light of the writings of the one apostle, shall we be workmen who need not to be ashamed and be able to walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are called. Of course, this means also that in observing; the important principle of progressive revelation we should study and interpret Paul’s “Acts” ministry in the light of his prison Epistles written after the close of the “Acts” period.

Only as we do this do we have the explanation for the presence of signs and sign-gifts during the “Acts” period (I Corinthians 12:8 to 11 and 28 and Romans 15:18 and 19) and the absence of signs and sign-gifts in the Epistles of Paul written after the close of the “Acts” period and among even the most spiritual and consecrated saints today. Read I Corinthians 13:8 and 13. And compare Acts 19:10 and 11 with I Timothy 5:23. II Timothy 4:20 and Philippians 2:25 to 28

HOW TO KNOW GOD’S MESSAGE AND SPIRITUAL PROGRAM FOR HIS CHURCH

Here are some interesting words recorded in Hebrews 5:13 and 14: “For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age.”

When a person is saved by grace through faith he should immediately desire the sincere milk of the Word that he may grow thereby. I Peter 2:2. As to how soon the saved person will be able to change from the milk to the meat diet depends much upon the person, as to how and how much he studies the Bible and how soon he is taught by the Holy Spirit and some human teacher the principle of rightly dividing the Word of Truth. II Timothy 2:15. Pride, prejudice, sectarianism and tradition are some of the barriers that hinder the spiritual understanding of the Scriptures. Christians should learn in the very beginning to be like the noble Bereans. Acts 17:11.

When asked the question why members of the Body of Christ, during this age and economy of grace, do not worship God in a Jewish synagogue on the Jewish Sabbath, even the babe in Christ answers, “because we live under grace, a new economy, and not under the law or the Old Testament.” Most Christians say that a Christian is one who follows Jesus Christ. But when the question is asked, “why did Jesus Christ attend the Jewish synagogue when He was here on earth (Luke 4:16), if Matthew 1:1 marks the beginning of the new testament,” the great majority of the members of the Body of Christ prove by their answers, or their no answers, that they are workmen who need to be ashamed.

Before this great majority of members of the Body of Christ can intelligently interpret, appropriate, apply and enjoy the Bible, they must be delivered from three common but serious blunders.

First they must learn that there is not one line of what is called “the old testament” in the Book of Genesis, or in the first chapters of Exodus. The testament, called “the old testament,” was made old after the death of Christ on the cross, and it was by that act of Christ that the old testament or law was abolished. Hebrews 8:11 to 13. II Corinthians 3:11 to 17. Colossians 2:13 to 16. While it is true that the Lord’s kingdom program included in Divine covenants, or testaments, recorded in Genesis, have been suspended or temporarily interrupted to be fulfilled in a future economy, they have not been abolished and some of the spiritual blessings enjoyed by members of the Body of Christ during this age are in fulfillment of some of God’s covenants and promises made before God added the law.

The testament, called the old testament, entered that the offense that entered by Adam might abound. Romans 5:20. When that testament was made between Jehovah and Israel, Moses was eighty years old. It was an entirely new and revolutionary testament. It was added to the gospel which God preached to Abram. Galatians 3:19 and Galatians 3:8. It was added 430 years after God first preached to Abram. Galatians 3:16 and 17. It was added 2500 years after Adam left Eden, because Adam transgressed the law of sin and death. It was added after Israel and all of his twelve sons had died.

Remember the two statements, “the law entered that the offense might abound.” Romans 5:20. The law entered by Moses about 2500 years after the offense entered by Adam. “The law was added because of transgression.” Galatians 3:19. It was added 430 years after God’s covenant and promise to Abram entered; 430 years after God preached the gospel to Abram when he was an uncircumcised heathen. Romans 4:7 to 11. Galatians 3:6 to 8.

Under the reign of law, from Sinai until after Christ’s death on the cross, Israel received the spirit of bondage unto fear. Romans 8:15. They were shut up unto the faith that was afterward revealed. Galatians 3:23. The law was Israel’s schoolmaster to bring them to Christ to be justified by faith. Galatians 3:24.

In Colossians 2:13 to 16, and II Corinthians 3:11 to 17, and Hebrews 8:9 to 13 and Ephesians 2:13 to 17 and Galatians 3:13 and 14 we learn that God took the law out of the way, and the Lord Jesus Christ became the end of the law for righteousness to believers by His own death and resurrection.

In Exodus, chapters nineteen and twenty, we learn to whom the law was given, where it was given, when it was given and why it was given. With the law God imposed upon Israel, until the time of the reformation, a religious system called “meats and drinks and divers baptisms and carnal ordinances.” Hebrews 9:10. Israel was God’s religious nation, and it was to that nation that Jesus of Nazareth came. Acts 13:23. Acts 2:22. Matthew 15:24. John 1:11. Romans 15:8. Israel was God’s circumcised nation and they were under the law at the time Christ came unto His own. So Christ was circumcised (Luke 2:21) and He was made under the law. Galatians 4:4.

So let us remember these facts: the law was given at Sinai, as recorded in Exodus 20, and there is nothing of the old testament in Genesis, and Jesus Christ was born under the law, lived under the law and died under the law.

The second serious blunder is the teaching or belief that Matthew 1:1 marks the beginning of the new testament.

In the synoptic Records, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, we find much concerning the King and kingdom. The kingdom of the heavens is mentioned more than thirty times in the Book of Matthew alone. In these three Records many of the principles and blessings of the new testament (covenant) are presented. But in studying the earthly ministry of Jesus of Nazareth we should first keep in mind His own words: "But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matthew 15:24.

Also mark carefully these statements:

"Of this man's (David's) seed hath God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus." Acts 13:23.

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

We often quote John 1:11, but many fail to fully comprehend its meaning. Note this important statement: "Christ came unto His own and His own received Him not." John wrote years after Christ died, perhaps after all the other apostles had died. John tells us several times in his Gospel that many Jews received Christ. In Acts we read that 3,000, 5,000 Jews believed in Christ. Acts 2:41 and Acts 4:4. Then Christ's own (the Jews) did receive Him. But John declares, "His own received Him not." Is there here a contradiction? There is, unless we see the two-fold program of God during the earthly ministry of Christ and until the casting away of Israel, recorded in Romans 11:5 to 26. Christ not only saved individual Jews, but He was born, and lived and died as King of the Jews. Note carefully Luke 1:32 and 33 and Luke 1:68 and 71:

"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."

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people."

"That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us."

Did Christ take the throne of David? No. But He will. He was born for that purpose. He was raised from the dead for that purpose. Acts 2:27 to 34. Carefully compare Luke 1:72 with Acts 13:31 to 35. Christ is coming back to earth as the Son of man for that purpose. Acts 15:15 to 18, Isaiah 9:6 and 7, Matthew 25:31 to 35.

Christ came to deliver Israel from the hands of Caesar. But the rulers knew Him not and crucified the Lord of glory. I Corinthians 2:6 to 8. They said, "we will not have this man to reign over us"; "we have no king but Caesar." They knew not the time of their visitation, the things that belonged to their peace. Luke 19:41 to 44.

But compare Luke 1:70 and 71 with Acts 3:19 to 21:

"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."

"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."

Here we learn that after Israel had crucified the Lord of glory, the King and the kingdom was offered to their rulers, the restitution of all things. But again they refused to repent.

Note carefully the Lord's message to the rulers in 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." What meaneth this statement? Does it not mean much more than that individual Jews could be saved by repenting and receiving Christ? Certainly, it was the Lord's message to the nation Israel, another opportunity to receive Christ as Israel's Prince and Saviour.

Note again Acts 13:23 "Of this man's seed hath God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus."

Christ in incarnation came unto His own (nation). Now note Galatians 4:4 and Hebrews 9:15 to 17:

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law."

"And for this cause He is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament . . . For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."

Jesus of Nazareth was made under the law. Read Luke 2:39, Luke 4:16, Matthew 8:4, Matthew 23:1 to 3, Luke 22:15 and 16.

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

"And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read."

"And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them."

"Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to His disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not."

"And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

These are very important facts to be observed. Truly Christ was made under the law. Christ lived under the law. Christ recognize Moses' seat. Christ died under the law. John 19:7.

Even the apostles and disciples of Christ lived with Him under the old testament. Christ did not interfere with the sacrifices and offerings authorized in the law of Moses. Note Hebrews 9:10:

"Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation."

Christ, while on earth, taught no one not to carry on this God-given religious program. We read of two Gentiles who received blessings from Christ while He was on earth; and even that is more than was received by Gentiles during the first nine chapters of Acts, except the proselytes. The records concerning the two Gentiles are Luke 7:1 to 12 and Matthew 15:21 to 27.

If these Gentiles were saved, they became old testament saints or Jews (Esther 8:17), for they were saved before the Testator shed His blood of the new covenant. Matthew 26:28.

Surely the only intelligent way to study, appropriate and understand the teachings of Christ, in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, is to study them in the light of Ephesians 3:1 to 11. Jesus of Nazareth was under the law. Galatians 4:4. Members of Christ's Body are not under the law. Romans 6:14. The law was the ministration of condemnation. II Corinthians 3:9. In this age of grace there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Since Sinai down to the present time God's people have been either "under the law," or "in Christ Jesus." If "in Christ Jesus," not "under the law." But they were under the law until the reign of grace began after Christ's death on the cross. Note Romans 5:20 and 21: "Moreover the law entered that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Now let us join with Paul by word and practice—"I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ has died in vain." Galatians 2:21.

When we understand this Divine principle we shall know how to study the "Our Father" prayer of the Lord Jesus in the light of the "grace" message which Christ revealed to Paul. For example, note Matthew 6:14 and 15: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Now study this in the light of Colossians 2:13 and Ephesians 4:32

"And you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses."

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Now compare Luke 12:33 with I Timothy 5:8:

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

"But if any provide not for His own and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

Study Matthew 10:8 in the light of I Timothy 5:23 and II Timothy 4:20:

"Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give."

"Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities."

"Erastus abode at Corinth; but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick."

Only as we are taught by the Holy Spirit that the kingdom program of Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, must be studied and applied in the light of Christ's revelation of the mystery to Paul, will we be intelligent Christians and know how to understand and enjoy the Scriptures.

The other serious blunder is the assumption, or presumption, that "the dispensation of the grace of God," mentioned in Ephesians 3:1 to 3, began when Peter and the Eleven (Acts 2:14) stood up on the day of Pentecost. Let us note carefully Ephesians 3:1 to 3: "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus of 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).” Note also Ephesians 3:8 and 9 and 11: “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.” “According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Here the apostle Paul states that “the dispensation of the grace of God” was God’s mystery revealed to him. He was given grace to preach the unsearchable (untraceable) riches of Christ to the Gentiles. The dispensation of the grace of God is mentioned in connection with a revealed mystery, the untraceable, or unprophesied, riches of Christ, “the dispensation of the mystery, the eternal purpose of God in Christ Jesus.”

Did the message and program of Peter and the Eleven in the second chapter of Acts have anything to do with the message and program of the third chapter of Ephesians? Surely not. So many Christians have accepted the faulty dispensationalism of those who have taught that Israel was set aside when Christ said, “Your house is left unto you desolate.” Matthew 23:38. But they have failed to study this statement in the light of Luke 21:20, Matthew 22:7, Luke 23:34, Acts 3:26 and Acts 5:31 and Acts 13:31 to 46.

In this connection, let us note another mystery in Romans 11:25 and 26: “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 Gentile; be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”

With this mystery note three other statements in the same chapter: “For as ye (Gentiles) in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their (Israel’s) unbelief.” “For if the casting away of them (Israel) be the reconciling of the world, (the Gentiles), what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?” “I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.” Romans 11:30 and 15 and 11.

Did Peter and the Eleven, on the day of Pentecost, preach reconciliation or salvation to the Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy or because Israel had been cast away, because Israel had stumbled and fallen? The answer to this is Peter’s own words in Acts 10:28, some seven years after the day of Pentecost, and the attitude and action of the other eleven apostles toward Peter, recorded in Acts 11:1 to 3: “And he (Peter) said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” Acts 10:28. “And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the Word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, Saying, Thou wentest in unto men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.” Acts 11:1 to 3. After Peter’s detailed explanation, note the statement in 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.”

When did God show Peter that he could go to the Gentiles? Several years after Pentecost.

Note carefully Acts 5:31, Acts 15:7 and Gal. 2:9: “Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” “And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and Brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by MY mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.” “And when James, Peter and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.”

Christ was raised from the dead to be Israel’s Saviour, just as much as He was born of David’s seed to be Israel’s Saviour, Acts 13:23. Acts 13:31 to 35 and Acts 5:31. Later on one mouth (Peter’s) of the twelve mouths of the twelve apostles was chosen to preach to the one company of Gentiles. This Peter rehearsed in the Jerusalem council some years after he used the key of the kingdom of heaven with Cornelius. But note the agreement about the time of that council: “And when James, Peter and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.” Galatians 2:9. How are we to reconcile Mark 16:15 with Acts 10:28 and Galatians 2:9?

There is no record that eleven of the twelve apostles went to the Gentiles to preach reconciliation, because Israel was cast away either before or after that Jerusalem council.

In the second and third chapters of Acts, Peter and the Eleven were not preaching to Gentiles the untraceable riches of Christ, but they were preaching to Israel the traceable riches of Christ, truth prophesied by Joel, David, Moses, Samuel and all the holy prophets. Acts 2:16 to 18, Acts 2:27 to 34, Acts 3:24, Acts 3:21. Peter on the day of Pentecost preached concerning Israel’s last days, “Kingdom” days—Acts 2:16 to 19.

The message and program of Acts 2 and 3 cannot fit into the message and program of Ephesians 3, and surely it is a great blunder to teach that “the mystery among the Gentiles (Colossians 1:27 and Ephesians 3:8 and 9)” began on Israel’s Pentecost when twelve preachers preached to the twelve tribes of Israel. Acts 2:36 and 5. Truly this is wrongly dividing the Word of truth.

Have you ever asked a “grace” messenger, a Premillenarian, who teaches that the dispensation of the grace of God began on the day of Pentecost, why he does preach Acts 2:38 or Acts 10:35 today or why he does not preach Acts 2:44 and 45 and Acts 4:34 and 35? We quote these six verses:

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Acts 2:38. “But in every nation He that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.” Acts 10:35 “And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.” Acts 2:44 and 45. “Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles’ feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.” Acts 4:34 and 35.

When the question is asked, the answer is invariably evasive or unintelligent, because if the “grace” messenger could give the proper Scriptural answer, he would say that in the first eleven chapters of Acts the Holy Spirit has recorded a “kingdom of heaven” program and not “the dispensation of grace” mentioned in Ephesians 3:1 to 11. And he would reply that the message and program of Romans 11:15 and 30 was not proclaimed until after the Holy Spirit’s commission in Acts 13:2: “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.”

Never will Christians cease to be ashamed workmen so long as they teach or believe that Matthew 23:38 marked the fall of Israel described in Romans 11:5 to 15. It is true that Israel was bitterly denounced in Matthew 23:33, as serpents and vipers: but in Acts 3:25 they are addressed as children. How did the serpents once more become children? By the prayer of Christ on the cross. Luke 23:34. This brought the message of Acts 3:16 and 18, and the “first” of Acts 3:26. Christ was raised from the dead to be Israel’s Saviour. Acts 5:31.