

THE POOR JEW AND THE RICH CHRISTIAN

HOW RICH IS THE CHRISTIAN?

Some years ago there came to this country a very poor young man. He found a job in the timber lands of the north. He was industrious and gradually accumulated some timber acreage in his own name. He soon began to prosper, and after a few years he invested in the manufacture of lumber. It was not very long until he owned more than one mill and he expanded in northern Wisconsin and Minnesota; and he became very rich. Then he invested in timber acreage in the far northwest until he owned that valuable land by the thousands of acres, the very finest timber in this country. At the time of his death neither the man himself nor his relatives nor friends knew what he was worth; he was so very rich. But when he died he could not take one cent of his riches with him.

For some people the words of I Timothy 6:7 are rather sad words: “For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.” And it is just about impossible to teach the great majority of the people on this earth the truth taught by Christ in Luke 12:15, “a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” Christ followed this statement with the story of the rich fool who did not believe what Christ said. That rich man tried to prove otherwise until He heard God say, “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall these things be?” “So is he that is not rich toward God.” (Luke 12:21). In God’s message of grace in the Bible He shows how very rich He is toward us. (Ephesians 2:4 to 7, Titus 2:11).

Every Christian is rich; potentially very, very rich. But it is not exaggerating to say that not one per cent of all Christians have more than the slightest idea of the unlimited resources that they have in Christ. Like the rich lumber-man, the large majority of Christians leave this world, with the most limited knowledge of their true riches. This is because of their most limited knowledge of the Bible truth, as to how they became rich; why they are rich; how the riches of the Christians in this present reign of grace differ from the riches of God’s people in former periods; and just how they can be appropriated and appreciated.

If Christians should join with Paul and say, “O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out” (Romans 11:33), and know why he said it, they would obey Romans 11:18 and never boast against the Jews. In this wonderful chapter of Romans we learn that the Christian is where he is today because the Jew is where he is. The Jew is poor. The Christian is rich. But the Jew also is where he is in this age of grace; because God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all. (Romans 11:32). However, by grace the Jew can become rich by becoming a Christian.

FORSAKEN . . . HEPHZIBAH

The Jew knows that in the Scriptures, which he claims to be the Jewish Scriptures, God calls him ‘FORSAKEN (Isaiah 62:4). But some day, yet future, the Jew is to be ‘HEPHZIBAH,’ “the Lord delighteth in thee.” The Jewish Scriptures call the Jew, ‘OUTCAST’. (Isaiah 56:8 . . .

Jeremiah 30:17 . . . Isaiah 11:12). In Jeremiah 50:6 God said, “My people have been lost sheep . . . they have forgotten their resting-place.” In Ezekiel 34:12 God said, “So will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.”

The summary of God’s charges against the Jew is recorded in I Thessalonians 2:14 to 16, written after they had killed the Prince of life (Acts 3:14 and 15) and had refused God’s offer of mercy, if they would repent: “The Jews who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us: and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.” But even after this awful indictment the same man of God was led to write concerning the Jews: “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. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles: how much more their fulness?” (Romans 11:11 and 12). And when the fulness of the Gentiles be come in the Jews will be saved. (Romans 11:25 and 26 to 29).

Christians are rich in God’s grace because of the fall of the Jews. The Jews would not believe that God broke down the wall that stood between them and Gentiles. (Ephesians 2:14 to 18 . . . Colossians 2:13 to 15). The Jews not only insisted that the wall was still standing, shutting out the Gentiles, but they sought righteousness the other side of the wall, under the law; and they stumbled at that stumbling stone; and therefore Israel did not attain to God’s righteousness. (Romans 9:30 to Romans 10:4).

ISRAEL’S GREAT FALL

We are here reminded of the ‘egg’ riddle: “Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall: Humpty Dumpty had a great fall: all the king’s horses and all the king’s men cannot put Humpty Dumpty together again.” Israel had a very great fall, after they had rejected Christ in resurrection as well as in incarnation. All of the king’s horses and all of the king’s men of Great Britain failed to put Israel together again; so they gave up the job. Now the UN will use their horses and men. They too will miserably fail; as will ever human endeavor, including the weapons of war by the Jews themselves. The Jews will be where Christ, in Luke 21:24, said they would be until Christ comes for their national redemption, as He said He would, in Luke 21:27 to 33, in the clouds, as the Son of man, with power and great glory. Out of Zion shall come the Deliverer to save Israel and take away their ungodliness. (Romans 11:26 to 29). At that time the people now called ‘Christians’ will have left this earth and will have been presented by Christ to Himself as a glorious, holy, spotless Church. (Ephesians 5:24 to 27). Of course, there are more than a few saved Jews in this Church, the Body of Christ. (I Corinthians 12:13)

As we read in Romans 11:5 to 15 what God did to Israel, let us never forget His words in Romans 11:21 and 22: “For if God spared not the natural branches (the Jew), take heed lest He spare not thee (the Gentile) . . . Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God.” Read the profound truth of Romans 11:15; that the casting away of Israel brought reconciliation for Gentiles.

After 1900 years the Jew has learned very little by experience. He still resists the grace of God, preferring Moses, the darkness and blackness of Sinai, to redemption by grace through faith in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was the Jew that taught us that self-righteousness in God's sight is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6); and still today the great majority of the Jews offer these filthy rags to God. O how blind they are! But perhaps not any worse than millions of religious Gentile church-members, who bear the name of Christ and want to be called 'Christians' but they prefer what they call the modern interpretation of Christianity, despising the grace of God and making very little of the precious shed blood of the eternal Son of God. They are described in Revelation 3:17, "thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked." What a spectacle!

Think of the awful predicament of the religious person who is blind and thinks he can see, who is poor and thinks he is rich. But this delusion is nothing compared with the judgment ahead when "God shall send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth." (II Thessalonians 2:11 and 12).

FALLING ON THE STONE

In Matthew 21:42 the Lord Jesus Christ referred to Himself as the Stone Which the Builders rejected. Then He added, "Whosoever shall FALL on this STONE shall be broken; but on whomsoever IT shall FALL, IT will grind him to powder." (Matthew 21:44). Simeon, the man of God, delivered to Mary, the mother of the Saviour, God's message when he said concerning Christ, "This Child is set for the FALL and rising again of many in Israel." (Luke 2:34). The eleventh chapter of Romans is truly the record of the FALL and rising again of Israel. Israel fell on that STONE, and Israel was broken; and Israel is still broken. Every Christian today should be like Paul, in Romans 11:14, and try to save some Jews; remembering the truth of Romans 11:31, that the Jews are to obtain God's mercy through the mercy of the Gentiles.

Apparently very few Christians seem to understand or even seriously consider the truth of Romans 11:30, the truth that Gentiles obtain God's mercy because of the unbelief of the Jews. This truth should be carefully studied with the truth of John 1:11 and 12 and Acts 13:46 and Acts 18:5 and 6.

Let us ever remember the question and answer in Romans 11:11 and 12, concerning the Jews, "Have they stumbled that they should FALL? Through their FALL salvation is come unto the Gentiles." The FALL of the Jews—the RICHES of the Gentiles.

A RELIGIOUS JEW WHO BECAME A SPIRITUAL CHRISTIAN

About twenty-five years after the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ one of His faithful apostles was apprehended by some angry Jews, because that faithful apostle declared that he had seen the resurrected Christ in a trance in the Jerusalem temple and that that resurrected Christ had said to him, "get thee out of Jerusalem and I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." (Acts 22:17 to 21). The angry Jews said concerning this apostle, "away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live." (Acts 22:22). But he did live for some years after

that experience, in spite of the fact that “certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul.” (Acts 23:12). But Paul was miraculously protected: “the Lord stood by him, and said, be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou also bear witness at Rome.” (Acts 23:11).

Paul had written to some of Christ’s disciples in Rome, “I will come to you; for I trust to see you in my journey . . . but now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.” (Romans 15:24 and 25). In that same Epistle to the Romans the apostle Paul wrote, “I speak unto you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles. I magnify (glorify) mine office.” (Romans 11:13). He also wrote in that same Epistle, “What advantage then hath the Jew? Much in ever way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.” (Romans 3:1 and 2). Perhaps, the majority of Christians do not appreciate or understand what they have received from and through the Jew. Read Romans 9:5 and 6—Romans 5:27.

When the angry mob attempted to destroy the apostle Paul he said, “I am verily a man which am a Jew.” “I persecuted this way (the Christians) unto the death.” (Acts 22:3 and 4). As Saul of Tarsus, this apostle had profited in the Jews’ religion more than others. (Galatians 1:14). In the presence of the Gentile judge and the high priest of the Jews Paul (Saul) said, “I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee.” (Acts 23:6). Later on this same Jew wrote, “I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles.” (Ephesians 3:1). “Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ and lie not), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.” (I Timothy 2:7).

No intelligent, informed Christian, Jew or Gentile, will deny that Paul was the greatest of all Christians. Undoubtedly he did not want to be called ‘a Jewish Christian’ or ‘a Christian Jew’; for he wrote: “ye are all one in Christ Jesus . . . there is neither Jew nor Greek.” (Galatians 3:28 . . . Colossians 3:11). “For He (Christ) is our peace, Who hath made both one . . . for through Him (Christ) we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” (Ephesians 2:13 to 19).

MOST OF THE FIRST CHRISTIANS HAD BEEN JEWS

The apostle Paul had rather a unique experience, having been the only unsaved Jew (or person) on earth who saw the Lord Jesus Christ after His resurrection from the dead. (I Corinthians 15:8). However, Paul was by no means the first Jew who became a Christian. We read in Acts 11:26, “the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.” Very few of those disciples were Gentiles, or had been Gentiles, as we can learn by reading Acts 10:28 . . . Acts 11:1 to 5 and Acts 11:19. In the light of Acts 5:29 to 32 we may be sure that the 5,000 disciples of Acts 4:4, saved before Saul was saved (Acts 9:1 to 8), were Jews or proselytes. There was a difference between the Grecians (Jews) and the Greeks (Gentiles). Then after Acts 4:4 many Jews became Christians. It is quite interesting to compare this statement with Esther 8:17 where we learn that many Gentiles became Jews.

In Galatians 2:9 Paul wrote that James and Peter and John seemed to be pillars. Then Paul added that he said to Peter, “If thou, being a Jew.” (Galatians 2:14). Paul was not of the tribe of Judah, but of the tribe of Benjamin. (Philippians 3:5 to 8). We do not know to what tribe Peter belonged, although his name ‘Simeon’ (Acts 15:13) might be significant. But both Peter

and Paul were Jews. Therefore, we learn that whether the Israelites descended from Judah or one of the other eleven sons of Jacob (Israel) they were called Jews, referring to their religion (Judaism) rather than to a particular tribe.

It is interesting to note that the word ‘Jew,’ in the singular and plural, is found more than 280 times in the Bible and the word ‘Christian’ just three times. A favorite Book with Christians is The Gospel of John. In that Book we do not find the word ‘Christian,’ but we find the word ‘Jew’ about 70 times. In The Gospel of John we find these very interesting words spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ:

“SALVATION IS OF THE JEWS”

Yes, the Lord Jesus Christ said, “Salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22), and we learn in Hebrews 1:2 that, when the Lord Jesus on earth, spoke, God was speaking in Him. We read in Matthew 7:29 that Christ taught as one having authority. The Father spoke from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.” (Matthew 17:5).

Let us hear a part of His conversation with the woman at the well in Samaria: Christ said to that woman, “give Me to drink” (John 4:7). “Then saith the woman of Samaria unto Him, how is it; that thou being a Jew, asketh drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria; for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.” Then in John 4:22 Christ said to the woman, “Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews:” It is interesting to compare this statement of Christ with a statement which the Holy Spirit led the apostle Peter to make concerning Christ and salvation, in Acts 4:12, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved:”

The woman of Samaria recognized that the Son of God was a Jew. In Hebrews 2:16 and 17 we read that Christ did not take the nature of an angel; “but He took on Him the seed of Abraham: Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren.” In Romans 8:3 we learn that Christ was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. In Acts 13:23 we learn that God raised Christ from the seed of David to be Israel’s Saviour. Was Christ a rich or a poor Jew? In Hebrews 1:2 we read that God hath appointed Christ Heir of all things: and yet in Luke 9:59 we have these words from the heart and lips of Christ, “the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.” The eternal Lord of glory was born in a manger and buried in a borrowed sepulchre. As a Jew on earth Christ was not a rich man.

SOME OTHER POOR JEWS

In II Corinthians 6:10 the apostle Paul referred to himself and his fellow-laborers when he said, “As poor, yet making many rich.” Paul’s testimony was that he suffered the loss of all things that he might win Christ. (Philippians 3:8). Paul was not here referring specifically to material wealth, but that too went with his religious and social standing and reputation. This Jew was very poor; but he made many rich. Yes, they became so rich that they could never on this earth learn how rich they were, because their riches were according to the riches of God’s grace

(Ephesians 1:6 and 7), which will not be fully revealed until the ages to come. (Ephesians 2:7). If you are a Bible Christian, how rich are you?

Peter wrote of the Christian's riches as "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven." (I Peter 1:4). This is the same Peter, who said in Acts 3:6, "Silver and gold have I none." Peter, in Matthew 19:27, reminded the Lord Jesus that he had given up his money and home and friends to be His disciple; and Peter wanted to know what he would get for such sacrifices and poverty. The Lord promptly answered, as recorded in the next verse, that Peter will be one of the twelve apostles who will sit on thrones when Christ returns to this earth as a King in His glory.

The true riches of Peter and Paul are described in James 2:5, "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?" The writer of this Message, James, was speaking primarily to Jews, the twelve tribes of Israel (James 1:1); but in Galatians 4:6 and 7 and Romans 8:17 we learn that believing Jews and Gentiles are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. An heir of God is so rich that neither he nor any other person on this earth can fully comprehend or appreciate or know just how rich he is. When we read concerning redeemed Gentiles, in Ephesians 2:19, that they are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God, let us never forget that this is because of the truth of Ephesians 2:4 to 6: "But God, Who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins hath made us alive together with Christ: and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus." Not only are these believers seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, but in Him they are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, according as God hath chosen them in Christ before the foundation of the world. (Ephesians 1:3 and 4).

THE RICH CHRIST BECAME POOR

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." (II Corinthians 8:9).

The Christian would not be rich, if Christ had not become poor. No one would be a Christian, if Christ had not been made sin on the cross, that believers might be made the righteousness of God in Him. (II Corinthians 5:21). Christ was made lower than the angels for the suffering of death, that He might by the grace of God taste death for every man. (Hebrews 2:9). Christ was lifted up on the cross and made a curse, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. (John 3:14 and Galatians 3:13). When wicked men killed the Prince of life He was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. (Acts 2:22 and Acts 3:14 and 15). Because they knew not, they crucified the Lord of glory. (I Corinthians 2:8). Christ was in the form of God and took upon Himself the form of man to become obedient unto the death of the cross. (Philippians 2:5 to 8). This was what Christ had in mind when He said, "I came down from heaven not to do mine own will but the will of Him that sent Me." (John 6:38). "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (I Timothy 1:15). Is it any wonder that the greatest of all Christians said, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ?" (Galatians 6:14). And he also said, "by the grace of God I am what I am." (I Corinthians 15:10).

The Christian knows that he is reconciled to God by the death of His Son. (Romans 5:10). And he should know that he is saved by grace through faith, not of himself: it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8 and 9). Grace has the thought of bestowing a gift upon a bankrupt. In Ephesians 1:6 and 7 we read, "To the praise of the glory of His GRACE, wherein He hath (GRACED us) 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." "Made us accepted" is literally "GRACED us." So we should know the GRACE of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, for our sakes He became poor that we through His poverty might be rich.

HOW RICH WAS CHRIST BEFORE HE BECAME POOR?

In Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. (Colossians 2:9). By Christ and for Christ were all things created, in heaven and on earth. (Colossians 1:16 and John 1:1 to 4). Christ is before all things and by Him all things consist. (Colossians 1:17). Christ is the express image of God's person and the effulgence of His glory, the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, Who only hath immortality dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto. (Hebrews 1:1 to 3 and I Timothy 6:15 and 16). Christ had glory with the Father before the world was. (John 17:5). Some years after His death and resurrection the Lord Jesus appeared to John and said, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, with the Lord, Which is, and Which was and Which is to come, the ALMIGHTY." (Revelation 1:8). Christ was in the world and the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not. (John 1:10). How many people on this earth really know Christ after all these so-called Christian centuries? "This is life eternal that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent." (John 17:3).

Surely every person on this earth is a spiritual bankrupt apart from the grace of God and faith in the shed blood of the Son of God, Who, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man; and every unsaved sinner will be worse than a spiritual bankrupt, when he receives his after-death judgment. (Hebrews 9:27). No person, who has not had his guilty soul washed by the blood of God's spotless Lamb, is a Christian. That person may have untold material riches and have every honor bestowed upon him and he may be moral, benevolent, kind, courteous, gentle, cultured and very religious, and still be like the Laodicean who said, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable and poor, and blind and naked." (Revelation 3:17).

To be without Christ means to be without hope; dead in sin; by nature the child of wrath; condemned and headed for the awful wrath of God. (Ephesians 2:12 . . . Ephesians 2:1 to 3 . . . John 3:18 . . . John 3:36). Surely to be without Christ means to be very poor. By the grace of God, without religion or ceremony or worthiness or merit, without struggling or striving, without working or serving, the poor sinner can become a rich Christian in less time than is required to explain the great transformation. (Titus 3:5 to 8 . . . Romans 4:4 and 5).

How little do we really understand the truth of Romans 5:20, "where sin abounded grace did much more (over) abound." Then we are completely overwhelmed when we read, in II Timothy 1:9, that this grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, or, in Titus 1:2,

“in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began.” Then, in Ephesians 1:3 to 5, after we are told something of how rich the Christian is, we read, “according as He (God) has chosen us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.” Little wonder that Christians are told, in Ephesians 1:14 to 17, that they need to pray to the Father of glory for the spirit of wisdom and revelation to have the eyes of their understanding enlightened, so that they can know the riches of the Christian’s inheritance in Christ (Ephesians 1:11) and the riches of the glory of God’s inheritance in the Christian (Ephesians 1:18).

NO PARTICULAR DISGRACE TO BE A GENTILE

Before God revealed to and through the apostle Paul the truth contained in the eleventh chapter of Romans it was a disgrace, in God’s sight, and in the sight of the Jew, to be an uncircumcised Gentile. In Romans 10:19 God’s Word tells us that the Gentiles had been ‘no people’. In Ephesians 4:18 we learn that the Gentiles had been alienated from the life of God. Christ, on earth, said to His apostles, “go not into the way of the Gentiles” (Matthew 10:5). To a Gentile, Christ said, “it is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs” . . . “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” (Matthew 15:27 and 24). Some years later Peter declared that it was not lawful for Jews to associate with Gentiles. (Acts 10:28).

Until and unless we understand the truth of the first chapter of Romans, how and why and when God gave up the Gentiles, and how they were alienated by ‘the covenant of circumcision’ (Acts 7:8 . . . Genesis 17), and how God separated the Gentiles from the Jews by the wall erected at Sinai, which was standing while Christ was on earth, made under the law, a minister of the circumcision, (Galatians 4:4 . . . Acts 13:23 . . . Romans 15:8), we cannot appreciate or understand the meaning of Ephesians 2:11 to 13 and Ephesians 2:19: “Wherefore remember, that ye, being in times past Gentiles . . . without Christ . . . aliens from Israel . . . strangers . . . no hope . . . and without God in the world . . . But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ . . . No more strangers and foreigners (aliens) . . . but of the household of God.”

When the foolish hearts of the Gentiles were darkened (Romans 1:21) and they became idolaters and worse than adulterers (Romans 1:23 to 28) God gave them up. That was nearly 2,000 years before Christ was on earth. Then after Paul’s warning to the Jews in Acts 13:40 and 41 God gave the Jews up. God had a remnant of Jews according to the election of grace: “the rest were blinded.” (Romans 11:5 to 9). In the days of Abram when God gave up the many nations He turned to one nation (Israel), with the covenant of circumcision. In the days of Paul God turned from the one nation, in grace, and with the gospel of the uncircumcision (Galatians 2:7 to 9), to the many nations. This truly was ‘a new deal’ for the human race; all grace, and no religion.

IN THE HEAVENLIES

For two reasons the Gentiles were offered reconciliation. Because Christ died on the cross, as the expression of God's love. (Romans 5:10 and Colossians 1:20 and 21). And because God cast Israel away. (Romans 11:15). For two reasons Gentiles obtained God's mercy. Because Christ on the cross was the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. (I John 2:1 and 2). And because of Israel's unbelief. (Romans 11:30). The Gentiles were offered salvation by grace, because of the FALL of Israel. (Romans 11:11). By simple faith in the crucified and resurrected Christ the believing Gentiles became new creatures in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17 to 21); they were baptized into the death of Christ, buried with Him by baptism, raised to sit in the heavenlies in Christ (Ephesians 2:5 to 7), to seek those things above (Colossians 3:1 to 3). Yes, the Christian is complete in Christ (Colossians 2:10). and a member of His Body (I Corinthians 12:13), to be joined to Him forever as one flesh (Ephesians 5:31 and 32). All of this is the most radical change any human being can experience; from dead, alienated, far-off, condemned 'no people' to the highest place either earthly or heavenly creatures could possibly reach; made alive and raised up and seated in the heavenlies. (Ephesians 2:1 to 6). And all of this wholly by the infinite, marvelous, wonderful grace of the God of all grace. No place for religious doings in any of this.

And the best is yet to come; for Christ is going to present the Church unto Himself as a glorious, holy, spotless, blameless Church; made so by the precious blood He shed when He loved the Church and gave Himself for the Church. (Ephesians 5:24 to 28). It is wonderful to know that 'FORSAKEN' Jews are going to be 'HEPHZIBAH,' 'THE LORD DELIGHTETH IN THEE'. (Isaiah 62:1 to 4). Not for Israel's sake; but for the Lord's sake. (Ezekiel 36:21 and 22 and 32). God will save the poor Jews, because His gifts and calling are without repentance. (Romans 11:26 to 29). God now forgives us, in grace, all our sins (Colossians 2:13), for Christ's sake. (Ephesians 4:32). Surely we will be more than 'HEPHZIBAH' when Christ presents us unto Himself. (Ephesians 5:27).

In this great truth, called the GREAT MYSTERY (Ephesians 5:31 and 32), we never cease to praise our heavenly Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, for our knowledge (however limited) of our inheritance in Christ; but we are stunned and bewildered beyond any adequate expression when we learn in Ephesians 1:15 to 18 and Ephesians 5:25 to 28 that the highest truth in the Bible, called 'THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST,' is what God and Christ have in the Christian, rather than what the Christian has in Christ. All according to the riches of God's grace. "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:19). All of God's grace is at the Christian's disposal. (II Corinthians 9:8). The great power of God is to the Christian and for him. (Ephesians 1:19 to 21). The Christian is blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. (Ephesians 1:3). The Christian is in Christ. Christ is in the Christian: the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:27). The Christian's citizenship is in the heavenlies and he is waiting for Christ to appear for him with a body like the glorified body of Christ (Philippians 3:20 and 21) . . . "And so shall we ever be with the Lord." (I Thessalonians 4:17). How rich is the Christian? We do pity the poor blind Jew, as well as the poor blind Gentile, including the religious church-member who is trying to add something to the grace of God and the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ to make that grace and perfect work of redemption more efficacious, to make the believer's completeness in Christ more complete. (Colossians 2:10).

Perhaps, you have read that the highest point in the United States, more than 14,000 feet above sea-level, and the lowest point, almost 300 feet below sea-level, are located in the same county in California. So it is interesting to know that a person can go in a very short time from the lowest place to the highest place. But in very much less time the vilest, lowest, ruined, dead, condemned, lost sinner, by the infinite, marvelous grace and power of God, can be made alive, completely justified, forgiven, cleansed, redeemed and raised up to sit in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus; not by walking in the footsteps of the Master or by struggling with the golden rule or by practicing the philosophy of the Man of Galilee, but by coming to Christ and Calvary. Believing sinners are brought nigh to God by the blood of Christ; not by the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. (Ephesians 2:13 . . . Colossians 1:20 and 21 . . . Romans 5:6 to 10). This is the glorious gospel of the blessed God (I Timothy 1:11), the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24), which the risen Christ revealed to the apostle Paul. Is it any wonder that the Holy Spirit told that apostle to pronounce the anathema of God upon any religious man who perverted that gospel with religious doings, ordinances or ceremonies or rites? (Galatians 1:5 to 12). Surely that great apostle of grace was set for the defense of the gospel (Philippians 1:17) and would not for one moment, by one religious act, frustrate the grace of God (Galatians 2:21). Moreover he did his utmost to keep other Christians from frustrating the grace of God or perverting the gospel of grace; warning them that a little leaven would leaven the whole lump. (Galatians 5:9). Behold the crop in religious Christendom today, and know something of what that leaven has done.

This, of course, does not mean that Paul in any manner minimized the Christian's responsibility and privilege and duty in the matter of being, holy, (separated), spiritual, faithful and fruitful. Paul wrote that the same grace of God that was altogether sufficient for the salvation of the vilest sinner was wholly adequate for the Christian's victory over sin; for every task, trial and test; and for the performance of the good deeds in the name of Christ ordained by God. (Romans 6:1 to 23 . . . II Corinthians 9:8 . . . Titus 2:11 to 14 . . . and Ephesians 2:10). The highest plane of godly behavior, the highest standard of spiritual living, is set forth in the messages which the risen Christ gave to and through Paul for the member of His Body whose citizenship is in heaven.

MAN'S GREATEST NEED

Surely we should all agree that man's greatest need is a Person; and that Person is the Lord Jesus Christ, not in a religious setting but in the dispensation of the grace of God. (Ephesians 3:1 to 8). The religious leaders, who speak of building again with the Carpenter of Nazareth, would do well to read II Corinthians 5:16; not knowing Christ after the flesh; but knowing the truth of the verses that follow; "the new creation," "the old things," "the new things," including the new 'reconciliation' commission, which became effective when and because Israel was cast away, some years after Peter and the Eleven stood up on the day of Pentecost to present, not a new dispensation of grace for Gentiles, but a new 'kingdom' proposition to all the house of Israel. (Romans 11:15 . . . Acts 2:14 . . . Acts 2:36 . . . Acts 3:19 to 21). All of Israel's prophets spoke of the program presented by Peter and the Eleven. (Acts 2:16 to 32 . . . Acts 3:21 . . . Acts 3:24 . . . Acts 15:13 to 18). But no prophet of God ever had the slightest intimation of the program of 'the new creation' and 'reconciliation' commission Of II

Corinthians 5:17 to 21 and the ‘one new man’ of Ephesians 2:15 or the truth of Romans 11:25 and Romans 11:30 to 32. This was first revealed from heaven to the apostle born out of due time. “How that by revelation He made known unto me (Paul) the mystery.” (Ephesians 3:3). “But hath in due times manifested His Word through preaching, which is committed unto me Paul.” (Titus 1:3). “Whereof I (Paul) am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God . . . to complete the Word of God . . . the mystery.” (Colossians 1:25). “My (Paul’s) gospel, wherein I suffer as an evil doer.” (II Timothy 2:8 and 9). “That I (Paul) might preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable (past-tracing-out) riches of Christ.” (Ephesians 3:8).

Surely every intelligent, spiritual Christian should be a diligent student of the Scriptures, knowing that every servant of Christ is expected to be a faithful steward of the mysteries of God (I Corinthians 4:1 to 4) and a workman that needeth not be ashamed, ‘rightly dividing the Word of truth’ (II Timothy 2:15). Every such student should know that ‘the new deal’ (the dispensation of the grace of God), which God revealed to Paul for the nations, ‘the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery’ (Romans 16:25), did not begin with the twelve apostles at Pentecost when they preached to devout Jews from every nation under heaven (Acts 2:5); but with Paul, after the FALL of Israel, after Acts 13:40 to 46, as described in Romans 11:5 to 25 and in Romans 11:30 to 32.

WHY THEN IS THE CHRISTIAN VERY RICH?

Many very poor Christians in this country are working for rich Jews; so in earthly possessions or material riches many Jews are rich and many Christians are poor. But in this message we are considering true riches.

The Christian is rich because God is rich in mercy and great in love. (Ephesians 2:4). The Christian is rich because of God’s eternal purpose in Christ. (II Timothy 1:9 . . . Ephesians 3:11 and Ephesians 1:11 . . . Romans 8:28 to 32 . . . Ephesians 1:4 and 5 . . . Titus 1:1 to 3). Because of the riches of God’s grace. (Ephesians 1:7 and 2:7).

The Christian is rich because the rich Christ became poor. (II Corinthians 8:9).

When God sent upon the Jew the blindness, mentioned in Romans 11:5 to 9 and Romans 11:25, He presented, through the apostle Paul, something entirely new to the Gentiles, salvation by grace, through faith, not of works (Ephesians 2:8 and 9); revealing His long-unrevealed secret, that this grace was given them in Christ before the world began (II Timothy 1:9). God called this eternal purpose, ‘the mystery of God’s will’ (Ephesians 1:9), ‘the mystery of Christ’ (Colossians 4:4 and 5 . . . Ephesians 1:4). In order that we may understand this mystery, we must know that God will save Israel after this age of grace has been brought to a close; but this prophesied truth was no mystery, as we may learn by reading Romans 11:26 to 29. The mystery concerning Israel’s temporary blindness until the fulness of the Gentiles, as recorded in Romans 11:25, must be understood before we can understand ‘the mystery of Christ.’ God’s prophets did not foretell, or know, that for centuries Christ would remain in heaven, during the years of grace until God completes the unprophesied Body of Christ.

We cannot begin to understand ‘the mystery’ and obey Ephesians 3:9, by making other Christians to see it, until we understand that the Gentiles received the gospel of grace because of Israel’s unbelief. (Romans 11:30). Reconciliation for Gentiles, as described in Colossians 1:20

and 21 and II Corinthians 5:17 to 21, was first sent to Gentiles when and because Israel was cast away (Romans 11:15). This was after Paul's warning in Acts 13:40 and 41 and his all-important statement in Acts 13:46.

So the Christian is rich because of the FALL of the Jew. (Romans 11:12). And let every Christian know that the Jew can become rich by becoming a Christian, in God's way, obtaining God's mercy through the mercy of the saved Gentile. Remember, Christian, there is a sense in which you are where you are, because the Jew is where he is. The Jew, with all his earthly treasures and pleasures, like the Laodicean, is blind and miserable and poor. Christ was rich. Christ became poor, that the Christian, Jew or Gentile, might be rich. (II Corinthians 8:9).