

THREE BLIND JEWS

Much is said about blindness in the Bible. We read of one man in the Bible who was born blind, “that the works of God should be made manifest in him.” John 9:3. This man was a Jew. But he is not one of the three blind Jews of the Bible of this message. However, there is a very interesting study concerning this blind man in the ninth chapter of John. When Jesus met this man in physical darkness, He said, “I am the light of the world.” John 9:5. “When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, “Go wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.” John 9:6 and 7.

The Christ who used clay to restore eyesight to that boy, created all things. John 1:3. He made Adam, the first man. He made Adam’s body out of clay. Therefore it was no difficult task to heal this blindness with clay. Then the Lord sent the blind man to wash in the pool called “Sent.” He washed and came seeing.

In John 3:3, Christ said to another Jew: “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” How is a man born again? “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit; Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.” Titus 3:5 and 6. “By the washing of regeneration. More than forty times in the Gospel of John, Christ is mentioned as “the Sent One.” The only way by which a sinner, moral or immoral, can receive this spiritual vision is to be washed in the pool of Siloam, the shed blood of Christ, Whom God the Father sent to be the propitiation for the sins of the world. “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” I Corinthians 2:1

Concerning the present blindness of the Jews, God’s Book says “Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart: that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converter and I should heal them.” John 12:39 and 40. “For I would not brethen, 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 fullness of the Gentiles be come in.” Romans 11:25. “(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear) unto this day.” Romans 11:8. “But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.” II Corinthians 3:14 and 15.

Concerning the blindness of the Gentiles. God’s Book says, “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.” Ephesians 4:18. Note also II Corinthians 4:3 and 4: “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

Strange statements. The Jews blinded by God. The Gentiles blinded by Satan. But both blinded and all needing Christ, the Light of the world.

The three blind Jews that we have in mind are ZEDEKIAH, BARJESUS and SAMSON.
First let us read the Bible story concerning all three of these Jews:

1. ZEDEKIAH About 600 B. C.

“Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother’s name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

And he did that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. For through the anger of the Lord it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, till he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth moon, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it and built forts against it round about. So the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. And in the fourth month, in the ninth day of the month, the famine was sore in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land. Then the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled, and went forth out of the city by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king’s garden: (Now the Chaldeans were by the city round about): and they went by the way of the plain. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho; and all the army was scattered from him. Then they took the king, and carried him up unto the king of Babylon to Ribald in the land of Hamath; where they gave judgment upon him. And the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes; he slew also all the princes of Judah in Ribald. Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah: and the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death. Now in the fifth month, in the 7th day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, which served the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem. And burned the house of the Lord, and the king’s house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the great men burned he with fire: And all the army of the Chaldean that were with the captain of the guard, brake down all the walls of Jerusalem round about. Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away certain of the poor of the people, and the residue of the people that remained in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the multitude.”

2. BAR-JESUS About 45 A. D.

“And when they had gone through the isle into Paphos they found a certain sorcerer a false prophet, a Jew, whom name was Bar-Jesus: Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus. A prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the Word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul (who also is called Paul), filled with the Holy Spirit, set his eyes on him, and said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about

seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the deputy when he saw what was done believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.” Acts 13:6 to 12.

3. SAMSON About 1100 B. C.

And the woman bare a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew and the Lord blessed him, And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.” Judges 13:24 and 25. “Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and behold, a young lion roared against him. And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done. Judges 14:5 and 6. “And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands. And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith.” Judges 15:14 and 15.

“Delilah therefore took new ropes, and bound him therewith, and said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee Samson. And there were liers in wait abiding in the chamber. And he brake them from off his arms like a thread.” Judges 16:12. “And he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head: for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother’s womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man. And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath shewed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand. And she made him sleep upon her knees: and she called for a man and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him. And she said, The Philistines be upon thee Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said. I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him. But the Philistines took him and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house.” Judges 16:17 to 21.

“Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven. Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. And when the people saw him they praised their god: For they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us. And it came to pass when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house, and he made them sport; and they set him between the pillars. And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them. Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport. And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O, Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of

the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life. Then the brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zorah, and Eshtaol in the burying-place of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel 20 years.” Judges 16:22 to 31.

Thus we have the Bible story of three blind Jews. Let us keep in mind these Scriptures when thinking of these three blind Jews, namely, Deuteronomy 28:28 and 29, Isaiah 6:9 and 10 and Romans 11:25 and 26.

“The Lord shall smite thee with madness and blindness. and astonishment of heart. And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee.” Deuteronomy 28:28 and 29.

“And he said, Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and convert, and be healed.” Isaiah 6:9 and 10.

“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. 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.” Romans 11:25 and 26.

We shall note a Gentile movement in connection with each of these blind Jews.

The blindness of Zedekiah tells of the blindness of Israel when “the times of the Gentiles,” politically, began. The blindness of Bar-Jesus, about 650 years later, tells of the blindness of Israel, when the times of the Gentiles began spiritually. Samson speaks of the judgment of God upon both Jews and Gentiles at the close of this present day of grace.

Then follows that day of distress and Romans 11:26 will be fulfilled and “Israel shall be saved.” Then what?

“And in That day shall the deaf hear the words of the Book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness. The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.” Isaiah 29:18 and 19.

“I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles. To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.” Isaiah 42:6, 7, and 16.

“For thus saith the Lord: Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame. the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither.” Jeremiah 31:7 and 8,

ZEDEKIAH

Before Zedekiah, physically blind and the Jews spiritually blind, were taken to Babylon, God announced His judgment of blindness upon His people, as we read in Isaiah 6:9 and 10. The condition of Israel and Israel's blind leaders at the time is told in Isaiah 59:10 and Isaiah 56:10: "We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes; we stumble at noonday as in the night we are in desolate places as dead men." "His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber."

That condition had not changed very much when the Lord Jesus Christ came unto His own and His own received Him not. He said to them:

"Let them alone, they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." Matthew 15:14.

"Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctified the gold? Ye fools and blind; for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel." Matthew 23:16, 17, 19 and 24.

We think of Zedekiah's blindness in connection with God's judgment upon Israel when God's people were turned over to Nebuchadnezzar and the Gentiles, when the times of the Gentiles began about 600 B. C,

BAR-JESUS

"Bar-Jesus," a good name: a name with a meaning and a story with significance; a big story. Note this difference between the blindness of Bar-Jesus and that of Zedekiah and Samson. The blindness of these two was total and unending. The blindness of Bar-Jesus was temporary. "thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season." Again, while God permitted Gentiles to blind Zedekiah and Samson. God Himself sent the blindness upon Bar-Jesus. The blindness of Bar-Jesus, by the hand of God, speaks of Romans 11:7, 8 and 10:

"What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see, and bow down their back alway."

"Bar-Jesus," literally, the child or son of Jehovah the Saviour. Concerning Israel, note God's Word.

"This people have I formed for Myself; they shall shew forth My praise." "Who is blind but My servant? or deaf, as My messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant?" ". . . For I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn." Isaiah 43:21; Isaiah 42:19; and Jeremiah 31:9.

For what purpose did God call the Seed of Abraham and give them such a name "Israel (prevailing with God)?"

"I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles. To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. I am the Lord: that is My name: and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images." Isaiah 42:6 to 8.

But what did Israel, “the son of Jehovah”, do concerning the sacred trust? “When they entered unto the heathen whither they went they profaned My holy name.” Ezekiel 36:20. They were called to turn Gentiles to Jehovah; but they actually turned them against Him.

We read in our story of Bar-Jesus, the Jew, and Sergius Paulus, the Gentile, that the Gentile “desired to hear the Word of God.” But Barjesus sought “to turn away the deputy from the faith.” So we see something of the Divine program in this story of the Apostle Paul (us) , Sergius Paulus, and BarJesus.

Bar-Jesus was a Jew with a good name. But he was a false-prophet, full of all subtilty (guile), a sorcerer, an enemy of righteousness, a child of the devil. What a paradox, the child of Jehovah, the child of the devil? Are there not many unregenerate! servants of Satan serving in Christian pulpits?

Note II Corinthians 11:13 to 15:

“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel: for Satan Himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness: whose end shall be according to their works.”

“Thou, Bar-Jesus, child of Jehovah (Israel), shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a season.” Acts 13:11. For a season. Then what? “But unto you who fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.” Malachi 4:2.

Then there will be the fulfillment of Isaiah 43:4 to 7: “Since thou wast precious in My sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not, for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east. and gather thee from the west: I will say to the north, Give up: and to the south. Keep not back: bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the ends of the earth: Even every one that is called by My name: for I have created him for My glory, I have formed him, yea, I have made him.

“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be My people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleanness: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, and ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen.” Ezekiel 36:25 to 30.

In the meantime Luke 21:24 and Romans 11:25 and 26 will be fulfilled:

“And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. Luke 21:24.

“For I would not brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits: that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. 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.” Romans 11:25 and 26.

To Nathanael, Christ said, “Behold an Israelite in whom there is no guile (subtilty).” The same word is used in John 1:47 and Acts 13:10. Nathanael means “the gift of God.” Note

Nathanael's salutation: "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel." John 1:49. Nathanael was under the fig tree. Israel redeemed will be under the fig tree. Micah 4:4.

Bar-Jesus speaks of the Jew in Romans 11:25; Nathaniel speaks of the Jew in Romans 11:26; after God has redeemed and cleansed him. But now the dispensation and doctrinal truth in God's gospel program. Note in Romans 2:16: "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to My Gospel."

"Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to My Gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began." Romans 16:25.

"Remember that Jesus Christ of the Seed of David was raised from the dead according to My Gospel." II Timothy 2:8.

Paul refers to "My Gospel." Note his words in Romans 11:13: "For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office." In the same chapter, telling the story of Barjesus and Sergius Paulus, the Holy Spirit spake by the mouth of Paul the words of Acts 13:46: "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 you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." Here we have the truth of Romans 11:28: "As concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sakes." "For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief." Romans 11:30. "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 11:11.

Here we have the great doctrine of the Lord that brought the radical change related in Acts 14:27: "And when they were come and had gathered the Church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them and how He had opened, the door of faith unto the Gentiles."

Now note Acts 13:12: "Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord."

The Gentile saw what God had done to the Jew. Have you seen what God has done to the Jew? First, let us note what God did to Saul of Tarsus in Acts 13. He gave him the name of (Sergius) "Paulus." This is quite significant. Within a few years he was to declare the truth of Acts 28:25 to 28:

"And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Spirit by Esaias the Prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it." Acts 28:25 to 28.

The student of the Word of God who fails to see the radical change indicated by these words concerning Israel and the nations will miss one of the important keys to the Scripture.

The Book of Acts suddenly closed several years before the acts of Paul closed. In the messages which the Lord gave to Paul after Acts 28:31, we note a spiritual program quite different in many respects from God's program before that Divine judgment pronounced in the last chapter of Acts.

The Divine proclamation here was “blindness upon Israel” and “salvation to the Gentiles.” This is the truth suggested in the story of Bar-jesus and Sergius Paulus.

As we develop this Divine program from Acts 13 to the close of the Book of Acts, then to the death of Paul and the destruction of Jerusalem, in the year 70 AD, we see that as “the times of the Gentiles”, politically, began with blindness of Zedekiah, “the times of the Gentiles,” spiritually, began after the blindness of Barjesus and Israel.

Read again the words of the Saviour, on earth, recorded in John 12:39 and 40, which we quote: “Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.”

As we connect these words of the Lord with Isaiah 6:9 and 10, Acts 28:25 to 28, and study them with the 11th chapter of Romans, we too will join in the words of Romans 11:33: “O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!”

There are today about 18 million Jews. More and more among them there seems to be the spirit of unrest and uncertainty. They are being supernaturally preserved by God, for God’s purpose and glory. For more than twenty-five centuries they have been out of the place of political leadership.

We shall now go into their past history and their future in the story of the blindness of Samson.

THE BLINDNESS OF SAMSON

And the woman bare a son and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him.” Judges 13:24.

“There hath not come a razor upon mine head: for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother’s womb: if I be shaven then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.” Judges 16:17.

Note these words of Samson: “My strength will go from me.” “I shall become weak and be like any other man.”

Samson was different from other men. God made him different. God’s promise and Samson’s birth, by Divine intervention, is recorded in Judges 13. It is a most interesting story. God brought forth Samson for His own Divine purpose, “For the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.” Judges 13:5.

In the miraculous birth and Divine election of Samson, we think of the words concerning Israel, in Isaiah 44:1 and 2: “Yet now hear, O Jacob, my servant: and Israel whom I have chosen: thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee.” “This people have I formed for myself: they shall shew forth My praise.” Judges 43:21, “I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.” Judges 43:7.

Note these words of God concerning Israel in Exodus 11:7 “ . . . that ye may know how the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.” We shall see that Samson speaks of Israel in many ways. God was with Samson in power until he profaned the name of God among the Gentiles. Note Judges 13:25: “The Spirit of the Lord began to move him.” Judges 14:6: “The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him.” “He rent the lion as he would have rent a kid and he had nothing in his hand.” Judges 14:19: “And the Spirit of the Lord came

upon him.” Judges 15:8: “And he smote them hip and thigh with great slaughter.” Judges 15:14 and 15: “And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands. And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith.”

Here we have the story of Samson in power and the picture of Israel in power. Samson’s long hair was the emblem and secret of the power of God in his life. “Israel” means “power with God” or “prevailing with God.”

Israel was chosen by God to witness concerning Him to the idolatrous nations of the earth, and to subdue by force those who would not receive their testimony, and worship the God of Israel, Who said: “I am the First, and I am the Last; and beside Me there is no God.” Isaiah 44:6. “Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God and there is none else.” Isaiah 45:22.

The story of Samson is a story of compromise, dishonour, defeat and disgrace. This too is the story of Israel. Note Isaiah’s confession concerning God’s great Nation. His peculiar treasure in the earth.

“Ah sinful Nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.” Isaiah 1:4. “Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy; and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed.” Isaiah 6:5 and 10.

Israel profaned God’s holy name among the Gentiles even as did Samson.

“And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned My holy name, when they said to them. These are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of His land.” Ezekiel 36:20.

When Samson lost his testimony by sinning with the Gentiles, he lost his hair, he lost his power with God, then he lost his eyes. Then in humility and disgrace and sorrow he was worse than a slave in the hands of God’s enemies. They mocked not only the chosen one of God, but God Himself and they had a great time of sport at the expense of Samson.

“Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon, their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand.” Judges 16:23.

For a while Samson “west not that the Lord was departed from him.” Judges 16:20. Behold, today the powerless blind rabbis in their synagogues! Surely they must know that the Lord has departed from them?

The student of the Scriptures who does not know the place of Israel in the purpose, plan and program of God, past, present, and future, does not understand much of the Bible.

Blind Samson, the laughing-stock of the Philistines, disgraced, mocked in cruel servitude, is surely the picture of the wandering Jew, under the heel of Gentiles, who might have found deliverance when their Messiah came from heaven. Pilate wanted to let Him go, but Israel’s rulers cried, “Away with Him, crucify Him, we have no king but Caesar.” John 19:15. Matthew 27:25: “Then answered all the people and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.” Messiah cried over them saying, “If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days

shall come upon thee, what thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side.” Luke 19:42 and 43. “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me until the time come when we shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” Luke 13:35.

Note again Luke 21:24: “And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” And 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 Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: As it is written: There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”

But note concerning Samson’s hair that had been shaven “Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven.” Judges 16:22.

Then what happened?

Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there: and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport.” Judges 16:27. “And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray Thee, and strengthen me I pray Thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines, for my two eyes. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right and of the other with his left. And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.” Judges 16:28 to 30.

Surely Israel’s hair will grow again.

While only one per cent of the inhabitants of the earth are Jews, they are a very conspicuous people. They are giving the Gentiles some trouble! Many of the Gentile rulers suspect and distrust them. The Gentiles are giving the Jews some trouble. Among the Jews there is a spirit of unrest and uncertainty, even though many of them are enjoying material prosperity. A few of them are coming into political power. Many more of them have dominion over Gentiles in their business establishments.

But Israel is headed for judgment. The unsaved Gentiles are headed with them. In fact, civilization is fast heading up for the time of distress so frequently mentioned in God’s Book. It will be peculiarly the “time of Jacob’s trouble,” the great tribulation: but as blind Samson took the Gentiles down with him, so blind Israel will take down apostate professing Christians and the ungodly Gentiles: “For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee.” Romans 11:21.

Note again, in closing, these three verses:

“And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive unto all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” Luke 21:24.

“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” “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” Romans 11:25 and 26.

THREE VERY SPECIAL GENTILES

As we look into the Bible record of these three Gentiles, you will see why we call them “very special Gentiles.” The Jew has an important place in each one of the stories. The names of two of the Gentiles are mentioned. The first one is simply “a certain centurion;” the second one is called “Cornelius;” and the third is “Sergius Paulus.” Each of these three Gentiles was a Roman official. As to just how many Gentiles received blessings from Jesus on earth, we have no information outside of the Bible. But so far as the Bible record is concerned, no mention is made of a Gentile man other than this certain centurion of Luke 7:1 to 10 and Matthew 8:5 to 13.

Let us remember the words spoken by Christ Himself, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel.” Matthew 15:24. About eight years later these words were uttered by Peter at the time he ministered to Cornelius: “And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” Acts 10:28.

The Lord’s orders to Peter to preach to Cornelius and his household were quite a change from his orders some years before: “Go not into the way of the Gentiles.” Matthew 10:5. From the Bible record we can say that the “certain centurion” is the first Gentile to whom Christ on earth ministered. Cornelius is the first Gentile to whom Peter ministered and Sergius Paulus is the first Gentile to whom Paul ministered. There may have been others, but the record is missing.

As we go into the Bible record of these three Gentiles, let us keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus, spoken to the certain centurion: “And I say unto you. That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, But THE CHILDREN of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Matthew 8:11 and 12, and the words of Romans 11:19 and 30: “Thou wilt say then the branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief.” And Matthew 12:14 and 21: “Then the Pharisees went out and held a council against Him, how they might destroy Him.” “And in His name shall the Gentiles trust.”

THE CERTAIN CENTURION.

“Now when he had ended all His sayings in the audience of the people, He entered into Capernaum. And a certain centurion’s servant, who was dear unto him, was sick and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto Him the elders of the Jews, beseeching Him that He would come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they besought Him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom He should do this: For he loveth our Nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. Then Jesus went with them. And when He was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying unto Him, Lord, trouble not Thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto Thee: but say in a word and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh: and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard these things, He marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed Him, I say unto

you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.” Luke 7:1 to 10.

CORNELIUS THE CENTURION

“While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.” Acts 10:19 and 20.

“There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band. A devout man and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. 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.” Acts 10:1 to 4.

“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 10:22.

“Then Peter opened his mouth and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.” Acts 10:34.

“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.

SERGIUS PAULUS THE ROMAN DEPUTY

“And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was BarJesus; Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the Word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul (who also is called Paul) filled with the Holy Spirit set his eyes on him, And said, O full of subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.” Acts 13:6 to 12.

We can begin to see from these records why we say “three very special Gentiles.” An important Divine truth is taught with each of these experiences and in all three of them we have, what we might call, the evolution of Gentile salvation.

First, concerning the certain centurion of Luke 7:1 to 10, we emphasize the truth of verses 3 to 5: “and when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews. beseeching Him that He would come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus they besought Him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom He should do this.” This Gentile loved the Jews and had built them a synagogue.

In verses 6 and 7, the centurion declares himself unworthy to even go into the presence of the Lord. He knew that Jesus was sent to Israel, so he reached Jesus through the Jews. For the Jews he had built a place of worship. He loved the Jews. Like Cornelius, this Gentile stood well

with the Jews. He had extraordinary faith. No one in Israel had faith equal to his. Matthew 8:10. Because of his faith, his humility, his love for Israel, and his approach through Israel, that certain centurion received the definite answer to his petition.

This experience with this very special Gentile was used by the Lord Jesus to teach the great lesson, that Israel was going to receive blindness as a judgment from God and the Gentiles would be brought into the place of Divine blessing.

“But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Matthew 8:12.

“But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.” Matthew 22:7. The children of the kingdom were sent into darkness. The story is told in Romans 11:8,10 and 11.

Concerning the children of the kingdom, it is recorded in John 12:39 and 40: “Therefore they could not believe, because that Isaiah said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes nor understand with Meir heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.”

When the Jews received darkness and judgment, the Gentiles received light and blessing: “For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?” Romans 11:15.

About the time that the Lord Jesus said to the certain centurion, “the children of the kingdom will be cast into outer darkness,” He said to a Gentile woman whom he blessed, “Let THE CHILDREN first be filled.” Mark 7:27. Like the certain centurion, the woman was of great faith and she obtained the blessing she sought. But after the Gentile woman and the Gentile man received these blessings, the Lord’s program was in this order: “the children (Jews) first filled” and then “the children (Jews) cast into outer darkness.” This is exactly the order and program of the “Acts” period until the Jews were set aside.

The story is told in I Thessalonians 2:14 to 16:

“For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of 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 alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.”

We shall see that when Bar-jesus, the Jew, forbade Paul to speak to Sergius Paulus, the Gentile, God’s judgment fell upon Bar-jesus, the Jew, who was the representative of his Nation.

The good news for Gentiles is told in Ephesians 2:12 and 13:

“That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having 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.” And Ephesians 3:6:

“That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same Body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.

Cornelius came to sit down in the kingdom of heaven with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, before the children of the kingdom were cast out into outer darkness. To Peter were given the keys of the kingdom of heaven: “And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father Which is in heaven. And I say

also unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. “Matthew 16:17 and 18.

Note again 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.” The facts recorded in Acts 11:1 to 18 should convince even the superficial student of the Scriptures that Cornelius and his household were the first Gentiles (other than circumcised proselytes) to whom the twelve apostles preached. They were undoubtedly working under the commission of Matthew 10:5 to 8, and had not gone in the way of any Gentiles. In fact it would seem in the light of the words of Acts 11:19, “to none but Jews only”, that the people to whom Philip preached in Samaria were Jews (Acts 8:5 to 13) , and that the Ethiopian eunuch was a proselyte or Jew by religion.

So far as we have any record in the Book of Acts, none of the twelve apostles preached the gospel outside of the Holy Land or the land of the Jews. And not one of the Twelve preached to any company of Gentiles except the one message of Peter to the household of Cornelius. Note our statement: “so far as we have record during the Acts’ period”. Note the special ministry and message of the twelve apostles mentioned in Galatians 2:8 and 9:

“For he that wrought effectually in Peter to THE APOSTLESHIP OF THE CIRCUMCISION, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles; And when James, Cephas, 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.”

“Several years after Peter had preached to Cornelius Peter and his associates agreed to confine their testimony to the circumcision. About that time Peter and James made the declaration recorded in Acts 15:13 to 18:

“And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me; Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.”

Here we note that Peter’s ministry to Cornelius was in fulfillment of Amos 9:13. This spiritual program of God differed somewhat from His program mentioned in Ephesians 3:5 and 6 and Ephesians 2:15, which we quote:

“Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same Body (JointBody) and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel.” Ephesians 3:5 and 6. “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.

It was one thing for God to take out of the Gentiles a people. It was another thing for Him to make of believing Jews and Gentiles “One New Man”, forming the Body of Christ, about which Amos prophesied nothing. Neither Amos nor any other of Israel’s prophets knew the first thing about the truth of Ephesians 3:5 and 6. But now as to our third Gentile:

THE STORY OF SURGES PAULUS AND SAUL OF TARSUS

Sergius Paulus was a Roman deputy or pro-consul. He desired to hear the gospel. His companion had a good name. His name was "Barjesus," meaning, "the son of Jehovah-Saviour." Salvation is of the Jew, and being a Jew Barjesus should have encouraged Sergius Paulus to be saved; but instead he sought to turn him away from the truth. Immediately there was the visitation of God's judgment upon Barjesus. By the hand of the Apostle Paul the Lord sent blindness upon "the child of Jehovah-Saviour." Note what happened to Sergius Paulus, because of this Divine judgment upon the Israelite:

Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord." Acts 13:12. Saul became "Paulus," taking the name of the Gentile who believed, because of the Jews' blindness. The Gentile believed because of the doctrine of the Lord; that is what the Lord did to the unbelieving Jew.

We have Scriptural right to call this a dispensational miracle for it certainly marked a dispensational change; the beginning of a new spiritual program. This change is suggested in Acts 13:46 and all through the eleventh chapter of Romans.

We quote Acts 13:46 - Acts 18:6 and Romans 11:11.

"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.

"And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." Acts 18:6.

"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 11:11.

Later on the Holy Spirit led Paul to reveal the truth of Galatians 2:7 and Ephesians 3:8 and 9. Surely these were special revelations.

"But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter." Galatians 2:7.

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship (dispensation) of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." Ephesians 3:8 and 9.

Thus we see that Paul was sent out of Jerusalem far hence to the Gentiles (Acts 22:17 to 21) to preach what he called "my gospel" (Romans 2:16 - Romans 16:25 - II Timothy 2:8) to Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy. The Lord revealed to Paul the gospel of the uncircumcision for the uncircumcision, and the unsearchable riches of Christ for the Gentiles. Note his testimony in Ephesians 3:1 to 3: "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to youward: How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery: (as I wrote afore in few words)."

Thus we see that during the "Acts" period the children of the kingdom were first being filled and then the children of the kingdom were cast into darkness.

While Christ was on earth two special Gentiles received His blessing because they were of great faith.

But now any kind of a Gentile can receive a richer blessing, not because of great faith, but because this is peculiarly the day of grace, the time of God's special favor upon the Gentiles, because of God's great love: because God is rich in mercy. Ephesians 2:4.

"But God who is rich in mercy, for His GREAT LOVE wherewith He loved us." Ephesians 2:4.

"But now an Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Ephesians 2:13.

"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." "Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles." II Timothy 1:9 and 11.

Let the Gentiles remember God's warning to them in Romans 11:21: "For if God spared not the natural branches take heed lest He also spare not thee." Note why Israel rejected the gospel and then what followed:

"As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all. 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! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor?" Romans 11:28 to 34.

THREE SINFUL WOMEN AND THE SINLESS MAN

The first of these sinful women said to the sinless Man: "I know that Messiah cometh which is called Christ; when He is come He will tell us all things." Then the reply: "I that speak unto thee am He." John 4:25 and 26 "But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men. And needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man." John 2:24 and 25. "He will tell us all things." "He knew what was in man." Peter stated it in these words: "Lord, Thou knowest all things." John 21:17.

The sinless Man of our story was Jesus, the Messiah promised to Israel; Christ, the Man who knew what was in man, who could indeed tell all things because He was omniscient. He knew all things.

In His dealings with the second of the three sinful women, He was in the home of a very religious gentleman when the woman, unbidden, came into that home, not to see the religious Pharisee, but to see the sinless Christ. Christ, Who knew all things, read the mind of the Pharisee who looked with scorn and contempt upon the sinful woman. These are the unspoken words of the religious gentleman as Christ read them: This Man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him: for she is a sinner." Luke 7:39. Christ knew all about the sinful woman, and He knew all about Simon, the Pharisee. But Simon did not know his own Messiah. In this respect Simon represented his Nation. who knew not the time of their visitation: that Christ was their long promised Messiah and Deliverer. Luke 19:44. "He came unto His own and His own received Him not." John 1:11. But many, like that sinful woman, received Him.

Concerning the Messiah the Pharisees said: "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." Luke 15:2.

The third sinful woman was caught in the act of adultery and the Pharisees, with disgust, but delight, dragged her into the presence of the Man without sin for the death sentence upon the sinful woman according to the law; "They say unto Him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned: but what sayest Thou?" John 8:4 and 5.

The same Lord Who had written the law, stooped down and wrote on the ground while the condemned Pharisees left Him alone with the woman. Did Christ condemn her to death? Not much. Hear His words: "Neither do I condemn thee, go, and sin no more."

In these three stories, which we shall now quote from the Divine Record, we shall catch something of the meaning of Luke 19:10, I Timothy 1:15 and John 3:17."

For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." Luke 19:10.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." I Timothy 1:15.

"For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved." John 3:17.

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

"Then cometh He to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son, Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give Me to drink. (For His disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat). Then saith the woman of Samaria unto Him, How is it, that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria: for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and Who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto Him, Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast Thou that living water? Art Thou greater than our father, Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto Him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her. Thou hast well said I have no husband: For thou has had five husbands: and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. The woman saith unto Him, Sir, I perceive that Thou art a Prophet. The woman saith unto Him, I know that Messias cometh, Which is called Christ: when He is come He will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He. The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a Man, Which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"

And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on Him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did." John 4:5 to 19, 25, 26, 28, 29 and 39.

THE WOMAN IN SIMON'S HOUSE

“And one of the Pharisees desired Him that He would eat with him. And He went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment. And stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden Him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This Man, if He were a Prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him: for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love Him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And He said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And He turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest Me no water for My feet: but she hath washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest Me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed My feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven: for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with Him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And He said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.” Luke 7:36 to 50.

Because the Lord Jesus knew what was in the human mind and heart, it did not take Him very long to get right to the consciences and hearts of those whom He met. The self righteous, religious people generally hated Him because of this. Being blind, they hated the light. He said to them: “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.” John 3:19 and 20. It was because of this that those self-righteous, blind, religious leaders, condemned by the sayings of Christ, had Him put to death.

But all of the sinners, convicted by the presence and speech of the Lord Jesus, who repented, received pardon, comfort and peace.

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

She was not a respectable lady. “Thou has had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband.” Measured by human standards, she was unfit to move in decent social circles. What decent, moral man or woman would want to associate with such a woman? She was a disgrace to her town. Many preachers have taught that she was fully conscious that she was looked upon as a disreputable character, shunned and condemned by her neighbors, and that is the reason why she was at the well for water about the sixth hour, high noon, when others were not at the well. But there she was for water and she went away from that well with water that is still satisfying her after all these centuries, and she will never cease to be satisfied with it, for Christ said to her: “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” And the woman responded, “Sir, give me this water that I thirst not.”

A woman not fit for human society was in the presence of the sinless, holy Man from heaven. And without a doubt she has been in His holy presence in heaven since the day she said goodbye to earth. And, in eternity, there will be in heaven in the presence of the holy God millions of redeemed adulterers, drunkards, thieves, murderers, self-righteous religious people and some redeemed nice people. "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." I Corinthians 6:11. "That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Ephesians 2:7.

What a transformation took place in the life of that sinful woman. She was changed; so filled with the glory of salvation that her fellow-citizens forgot their contempt and disrespect when she cried out, "Come, see a Man." What Man? The Bible calls Him "the Second Man from Heaven." "The Man Christ Jesus." "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." Acts 13:38. "But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God." Hebrews 10:12.

"This man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" Surely these are words that should startle saint and sinner. If you are a redeemed sinner Christ can tell you all things you have done both before and since you were saved. Are you not glad that he is not telling your "all things" to other folks? How would you like to have the Lord Jesus tell your every evil thought that has been in your mind, every evil word that has proceeded out of your mouth, and every evil deed that you have committed? You say, "No, not for a million dollars."

If you have been to Calvary for redemption by the blood of God's spotless Lamb, here is God's good news: "In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according To the riches of His grace." Ephesians 1:7. "Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Romans 4:7 and 8. "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Hebrews 10:17.

What we did, as sinners, before we went to Christ and Calvary for forgiveness and justification, our Lord does not choose to remember. All of that past has forever been put away. Note Colossians 3:24 and 25: "Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons." Colossians 3:24 and 25.

But poor unsaved sinner, do not be deceived. The Lord Jesus Christ will some day tell you all things that ever you did. You must meet this Man as a loving, gracious Saviour in this world, or as a just and righteous Judge in the world to come. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36.

Hear and heed the testimony of this woman and do what many of her fellow-citizens did: "And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on Him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did." John 4:39.

Remember that last invitation in the Bible: "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17. The Holy Spirit of God will come in to abide with you, to comfort you, to witness to you, to guard you, to assure you, to fill you with joy and peace in believing, to teach you and make God's love abound in your heart, if you will first receive the water of life through Christ Jesus our Lord. "And Jesus said unto them, I am the

Bread of Life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger: and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.” John 6:35.

THE WOMAN IN SIMON’S HOUSE

Behold a woman who was a sinner. Behold a Pharisee who did not consider himself much of a sinner. Behold the sinless Man, the Son of God. An interesting scene. The Pharisee was somewhat different from many of the Pharisees of his day. He did invite Jesus to his home for a meal. Think of the privilege that was his: sitting down at a table to eat with the Lord of glory, the Creator of the universe. Are you going to spend eternity with Him?

The dinner-party was suddenly disturbed by the appearance of a very sinful woman. She was rather rude, perhaps not asking Simon whether she could enter into his home. Undoubtedly he knew her reputation. So far as he was concerned, she was an unwelcome guest. But she was different from most sinners of today, who will not come to Christ and go to heaven, because there are hypocrites in the Church. She was determined to reach Jesus and she did, and she was never sorry thereafter.

“Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, “This Man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him, for she is a sinner.” Luke 7:39.

Jesus Christ was the Prophet and He knew all things. He knew all about that woman. But He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He was the friend of publicans and sinners. He came to seek and save that which was lost. “This man receiveth sinners.”

“And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon. I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most. “Luke 7:40 to 42.

“Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven: for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.” Luke 7:47 and 48.

Note, Simon owed fifty pence. The woman owed five hundred pence. Does that mean that the woman had sinned ten times as much as Simon? Today, God says, “There is no difference.” “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” God’s Book does not say that we have all sinned alike: but it does say that we have all alike sinned. “There is none righteous, no, not one.” Self-righteousness does not count with God for righteousness. It does count for sin. God’s righteousness is available for any sinner who really wants it. It is found at Calvary. “For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” II Corinthians 5:21. “But to him that worketh not but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Romans 4:5.

But to Simon and the woman, the Creditor said, “You have nothing to pay. NOTHING TO PAY.” Neither of them had anything by natural endowment or by human attainment with which to pay the debt. God is the Creditor and His cancellation of the sinner’s debt cannot be purchased by any payment that the sinner thinks he can make. Man has nothing of worthiness, wealth, or works that can bribe, influence, or encourage God to forgive him his debt.

But hear this news. “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by Him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” Acts 13:38 and 39. “And be

ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Ephesians 4:32.

Now note Romans 3:25: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins, that are past, through the forbearance of God." Good news sinner. Believe it. Accept it. Trust Christ Because of His death on the cross God can be both just and merciful. Christ there put away sin. "For Christ also hath 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."

"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Romans 8:8. As sinners we have nothing with which to pay. And thank God, since Jesus Christ put away sin on the cross, abolished death, and went back to heaven, we do not have to pay. So today "Nothing to pay" has a twofold meaning.

"Her sins, which are many, are forgiven." How many? The Lord never asks any sinner, How many sins have you committed? How many times have you broken My commandments and how many of them. No, here is what God says: "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, ever so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 5:20 and 21.

How many of the many sins of a sinner are forgiven when that sinner comes to Christ? All of them. The sinner's sins are not only forgiven, but pardoned. The sinner stands in the presence of the Holy God as though he had never sinned. Such is the grace of God. The love of God. And the value of the precious shed blood of Christ?

"And He said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." Luke 7:50.

Have you received this blessing: If not, up to now, why not now?

THE WOMAN TAKEN IN THE ACT

"And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto Him a woman taken in adultery: and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto Him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting Him, that they might have to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground, as though He heard them not. So when they continued asking Him, He lifted up Himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted of their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up Himself, and saw none but the woman, He said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus saith unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." John 8:3 to 11.

In Hebrew 13:4, the words are very plain: "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Also in I Corinthians 6:9 and 10, we read: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

“Nor adulterers shall inherit the kingdom of God.” But then is added: “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” I Corinthians 6:11.

Here we learn that God is willing and able to make believing adulterers fit for the kingdom of God by washing them and sanctifying them and justifying them. God has a Divine cleansing process that works wonders for any kind of a sinner. Adulterers God will judge. But in the shadow of the cross Christ cried: “Now is the judgment of this world.” John 12:31. The sinless Son of God was judged for sinners of every sort when He bare our sins in His own body on the tree. There He was delivered for our offenses. “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” Romans 5:6.

Every human being has broken God’s holy law. “By the law is the knowledge of sin.” What folly then for any sinner to try to get into the kingdom of God by struggling with the ten commandments, by striving to practice the Sermon on the Mount or by taking on any kind of a religious program.

It seems almost an impossible task to teach sinners that Christ sent the Holy Spirit to convict the world of the sin of unbelief. Hear Christ’s own words: “And when He is come He will reprove the world of sin. and of righteousness and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on Me.” John 16:8 and 9.

Hear it sinner, “BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE NOT ON ME.”

If Jesus Christ, the perfect law keeper died for the law-breakers, and if God has accepted for the lawbreaker the death penalty received by Christ, why cannot sinners see that God’s message of salvation is “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved?”

Hear these words of Christ: “Verily. verily. I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.” Read again Acts 10:43 ; John 3:36 and John 3:17 and 18.

The Pharisees wanted to stone to death the poor condemned sinful woman. They had that right under the law. But Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Note in John 8:6 that Jesus wrote with His finger on the ground. More than 1500 years before that time that finger had written the law by which the woman was being judged. This is all that we may be sure that Jesus wrote: that is, so far as we have any record. He must have written something of interest on that ground.

And as He arose He said, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.” Some months later they were casting stones at Stephen, not for committing adultery; but they stoned him to death because he saw the Lord Jesus in heaven and accused them of the great sin of rejecting Him as their Messiah and Saviour. They used the stones quite freely when their self-righteousness was condemned and their religious pride was wounded. They were not as angry at the woman in adultery as they were at Christ. They were constantly trying to tempt and trap Him.

From what we read concerning the Pharisees in the Four Gospels, we wonder why some one of them did not consider himself without sin and stone the woman. But the Record is, being convicted by their own conscience went out one by one.” They were not so easily convicted by their conscience. It must have been the condemnation that came from being in the presence of the Holy Son of God.

“Jesus was left alone and the woman standing in the midst.”

When the Lord Jesus comes again He will come as a Judge and after He judges this earth there will be a more terrible and awful judgment. It will be far worse than casting stones. Hear God’s words, “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.”

John 5:22. Then see this picture of Him ready for judgment: “His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire, And His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. I am He that liveth, and was dead: and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen: and have the keys of hell and of death.” Revelation 1:14, 15 and 18.

When Christ came the first time He came to be judged and thus to become the condemned sinner’s Saviour. When He comes again the judgment will be reversed. The creatures will not then judge the Creator.

How foolish are the sinners who will not meet Christ here as Saviour! Surely they must meet Him hereafter as Judge. And what judgment it will be!

Christ was without sin and He could have stoned the woman to death, according to the law. Christ was made under the law to redeem them that were under the law. Christ did not come to stone sinners. He came to save them by grace. God’s reign of grace is still on. Grace reigns unto righteousness and eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Instead of receiving stones on her body the woman received peace in her soul. “Neither do I condemn thee.” “The law was the ministration of condemnation.” II Corinthians 3:9. By the law the woman was condemned. “But he that believeth on the Son is not condemned.” “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.”

“Go and sin no more.” “How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?” “Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?” Romans 6:3,

“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” Jude 24 and 25.

“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children: And walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints: neither filthiness nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.” Ephesians 5:1 to 4.

The Lord saves not only from the penalty of sin but is omnipotent to keep from the practice of sin. Note the prayer of Christ for His saints: “I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.” John 17:15.

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not, And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. I John 2:1.

But to saints God has written:

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” I John 1:9.

THREE HOUSES OF THE BIBLE

THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE—THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL—THE HOUSE OF GOD

Long before Jacob’s name was changed to Israel, yes, before Jacob’s father, Isaac, was born, God spake to Jacob’s grandfather. “And He said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them: and they shall afflict

them four hundred years: And also that Nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.” Genesis 15:13 and 14.

Before the children of Israel went to Egypt, before Jacob’s (Israel’s) twelve sons were born, Jacob was on the road to Haran, “And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place This is none other but the House of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And he called the name of that place Bethel.” Genesis 28:12, 16, 17 and 19. Bethel means “the House of God.”

Israel was not in a beautiful cathedral. A stone was his pillow. God was in the place. So Jacob called it “the House of God.” “Bethel.” Later on God moved into His tabernacle and temple to commune with Israel. In two buildings, constructed according to God’s pattern, Israel worshipped God.

In Exodus 1:13 and 14 we learn how Genesis 15:13 and 14 was being fulfilled. “And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.” Exodus 1:13 and 14.

God promised to deliver Israel from Egypt and from Pharaoh, from the house of bondage, and more than 400 years after God made this promise (note God’s faithfulness): “And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His Covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.” Exodus 2:23 to 25.

From Exodus 2 to Exodus 12:51. we find the record of Israel’s miraculous deliverance. Safely across the sea, and their enemies destroyed, Moses said unto the people “Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage: for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten.” Exodus 13:3,

Several months later God called Moses up on Mount Sinai to receive the Holy Law. Note how He began: “And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.” Exodus 20:1 to 3.

God brought Israel out of one bondage into another; out of Egypt to “under the law.” “Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman.” Galatians 4:22 to 27. The bondwoman, Hagar, was an Egyptian. Genesis 16:1 to 3. “Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants: the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.” “For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.”

Abraham, the father of us all (Romans 4:16), was married to the bondwoman first and after that to the freewoman. God preached the gospel to Abraham and then added the yoke of bondage (the law) until Christ came. Galatians 3:8 and 19. “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law.” Galatians 4:4. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” Galatians 3:13 “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” Galatians 5:1.

When Christ was on earth, He said to Israel, under the law, “And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.” John 8:32. And note their reply: “We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest Thou, Ye shall be made free?” John 8:33.

“We never were in bondage to any man.” “Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever; but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” John 8:34 to 36.

How foolish these poor blind Jews: Never in bondage to any man. They had forgotten Deuteronomy 6:12 and Deuteronomy 8:14. “Then beware lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.” “Then thine heart be lifted up and thou forget the Lord thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.”

They were in bondage under the law. They were in bondage in sin, religious sinners, deceived by Satan. The seed of Abraham was present to set them free. But they would not let Him. They were like the great majority of religious people today, they cherished their legalism more than they desired to be set free by the Son. They were ignorant of the glorious truth of Galatians 3:24. “The Law was their schoolmaster to bring them to Christ.”

How true the words of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 12:29: “Or else how can one enter into a strong man’s house, house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.” Every sinner, Jew or Gentile, is today the strong man’s house. Satan is the strong man. But Christ is stronger and can set the captive free. “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same: that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Hebrews 2:14 and 15.

Why and how did Israel get out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage? By the grace of God; not by works or religion. Because God remembered. God remembered! What did God remember? “And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His Covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob.” Exodus 2:24.

“I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” Galatians 2:21.

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” Romans 3:20.

“For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.” Hebrews 7:19.

What did the better hope do? What is the better hope? “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” Hebrews 10:10 and 14. “And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” Acts 13:39.

Then what? “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” Romans 6:14. “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses: Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.” Colossians 2:13 and 14.

Then the question: “Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?” Acts 15:10,

Thus we see that the Lord first delivered the House of Israel from the Egyptian House of bondage and then He wanted to deliver the House of Israel from the bondage of the Old Covenant. But they would not. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen Both gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not? Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” Luke 13:34 and 35.

“But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.” II Corinthians 3:14 to 16.

Visit any Jewish synagogue and you will find Israel under the law, in bondage and blindness: religious, but not spiritual.

But as God once visited Egypt and delivered Israel and freed them because His gifts and calling were without repentance (Exodus 2:23 to 25), He is going to again deliver Israel.

Note why. “And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, For this is My Covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins, As concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. Romans 11:26 to 29.

Note these two Covenants.

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL and with THE HOUSE OF JUDAH. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I look them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt: which My Covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them saith the Lord: But this shall be the Covenant that I will make with THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL: After those days, with the Lord. I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts: and will be their God and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” Jeremiah 31:31 to 34.

Both of these covenants concern the house of Israel. One of them has run out. The literal and final fulfillment of the other will be after God has accomplished His purpose in this age. God’s purpose in this age has to do with the House of God, mentioned in I Timothy 3:15 and 16 and Ephesians 2:13 to 22, and not with the House of Israel. The House of God today is the Body of Christ, being built of human beings.

Much of the sectarianism, confusion, false doctrine, and bitter controversy among God’s people would have been avoided, if God’s servants had been faithful stewards of the mysteries of God in obedience to I Corinthians 4:1 to 4 and II Timothy 2:15, if they had taught the great difference between the House of Israel, under the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, and the House of God which is the Body of Christ. In this Body there is neither Israelite nor Gentile. This House of God is not the House of Israel. Individual members of the Body of Christ receive some of the spiritual benefits of Israel’s New Covenant (Testament), but we should even be careful about calling members of Christ’s Body New Testament saints. Note what God is going to do with Israel under the New Testament. “And they shall not teach every man his neighbor,

and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” Hebrews 8:11 and 12. There is to be a New Covenant Israelitish Church after this day of grace has ended, so we should do some explaining when we speak of the Body of Christ as the “New Testament Church.”

There will be no such universal salvation during this present dispensation, which will close with a period of universal sorrow after the House of God has been removed from earth to heaven. (This we will consider under “The House of God”).

But now

THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL

Let us read these interesting word in Christ’s conversation with the woman of Sychar: “Jesus with unto her, Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh when ye shall, neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.” John 4:21 to 24.

Now read Romans 9:4 and 5: “Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God and the promises: Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, Who is over all, God blessed for ever.”

The service of God and the Son of God belonged to the House of Israel. The service of God was carried on by the House of Israel in the House of God according to the instructions of God. Israel worshipped God in God’s House with their hands as well as their hearts; for God gave them a religious program along with their worship. They used their physical senses in their worship of God, for they had a house made of stone, wood, metal and cloth in which to carry on their religious worship, their program of carnal ordinances, meats and drinks and divers baptisms. Hebrews 9:10.

“In Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.” That was true. But a radical change came. A few years later Paul wrote “Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord with the church that is in their house.” I Corinthians 16:19. Note the church that is in their house. No longer the church in Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem. The House of God was now something entirely different; no longer a building of wood, stone, metal and cloth, but a building of human beings, “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.” Ephesians 2:21 and 22.

No longer is God to be worshipped with the hands and physical senses. He is to be thus served. But worshipping God and serving God are never confused in the Bible.

“But the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.” John 4:23.

THE TABERNACLE AND THE TEMPLE

Both the tabernacle and the temple are called the House of God. “The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the House of the Lord thy God . . .” Exodus 23:19.

“And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the House of the Lord.” I Kings 6:1. “And three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings and peace offerings upon the altar which he built unto the Lord, and he burnt incense upon the altar that was before the Lord. So he finished the house.” I Kings 9:25.

The temple at Jerusalem is called “the House of the Lord” or “the House of God” about 326 times. It is thus called 64 times in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, and 113 times in I and II Chronicles.

When Christ was preaching to the House of Israel He acknowledged that the Jerusalem temple was His Father’s House. “And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not My Father’s house an house of merchandise.” John 2:16.

After the death of Christ we read concerning the testimony of the twelve apostles: “And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.” Acts 5:42.

In Ezekiel 34:30, we read, “And that they even the House of Israel are My people, saith the Lord God.”

In Ezekiel the expression, “the House of Israel” is found more than 80 times. Twelve times in that prophecy the Lord calls them “a rebellious house.” “Therefore thou son of man, prepare thee stuff for removing, and remove by day in their sight; and thou shalt remove from thy place to another place in their sight: it may be they will consider, though they be a rebellious house.” Ezekiel 12:3.

In Genesis 46:27, we read these words: “And the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were two souls, all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten.” Thus about 1700 BC we have a record of the birth of God’s holy Nation. About 200 years later we find that, for the first time, the expression “the House of Israel” is used in Exodus 16:31. During these 200 years the number of Israelites had increased from less than one hundred to about one million. (Exodus 12:37).

In a sense, all Jews and Gentiles belong to the House of Adam. During the 1656 years before the flood, there were no Jews in the House of Adam. Some years after the flood the wicked idolatrous Gentiles became so corrupt that God gave them up. Romans 1:20 to 32. Out of the wreck He chose Abram, and out of Abraham came Isaac, Jacob and the House of Israel.

There was no House of Israel during the first 2200 years of the history of man. But with the establishment of the House of Israel, all men had to deal with God through the House of Israel. Jesus Christ was born in the House of Israel. Note God’s message concerning the birth of His Son. “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 (Israel) for ever: and of His kingdom there shall be no end.” Luke 1:32 and 33. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel: for He hath visited and redeemed His people. That He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear. To give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins.” Luke 1:68, 74 and 77.

There we see that Christ was born to be Israel’s King and deliver the House of Israel from the hands of their enemies. Note these words of Christ: “But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel.” Matthew 15:24.

“Christ came unto His own and His own received Him not.” John 1:11. Note what the House of Israel did with Christ. “But when the husbandmen saw the Son, they said among themselves, This is the Heir, come let us kill Him, and let us seize on His inheritance. And they caught Him, and cast Him out of the vineyard, and slew Him.” Matthew 21:38 and 39.

And then note the words of the Son to Israel: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee: how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not? Behold, your house is left unto you desolate, and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” Luke 13:34 and 35.

After that the Son on the cross prayed for the House of Israel: “Then said Jesus, Father forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted His raiment and cast lots.” Luke 23:30.

And then God sent Peter to them: “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.

“But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you: And killed the Prince of life, Whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.”

“And His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know; yea the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.”

And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things which God before both shewed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled.”

“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 3:14 to 21.

“Unto you FIRST God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.” Acts 3:26.

No student of the Scriptures will ever have an intelligent understanding of the Scriptures until he knows the place of the House of Israel in the Scriptures and in the plans and purposes of God. “Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God and the promises: Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, Who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.” Romans 9:4 and 5.

We must recognize this fourfold division of the House of Israel.

1. The House of Israel not under the law (Old Covenant) (about 200 years).
2. The House of Israel from Sinai to Calvary. (about 1530 years) .
3. The House of Israel from Calvary to the Divine judgment of Romans 11.
4. The House of Israel after this present age or reign of grace.

All Premillenarians study the Scriptures dispensationally and they recognize divisions 2 and 4 above, but most of them seem to forget divisions 1 and 3.

1. THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL—NOT UNDER THE LAW

There was no House of Israel until 2200 years after Adam brought sin and death into the world; until about 500 years after God judged the world with the flood.

Abraham was called about 430 years before the House of Israel received the Law Covenant at Sinai. Galatians 3:16 to 19. Isaac, Israel, and Israel's twelve sons had all died before the House of Israel had received the Law Covenant. Therefore, in rightly dividing the Word of Truth, we should keep in mind that neither Abraham, his son, grandson, nor his twelve great grandsons were under the law. They had nothing of Israel's Sabbath, or holy days, or carnal ordinances, or meats and drinks or divers baptisms. They had no religion except circumcision. The law and religion were given together through Moses, about 1498 B. C. These were added and imposed until Christ came and brought all to an end. Hebrews 9:10. Galatians 3:19. II Corinthians 3:9 to 16.

"In that He saith, A New Covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." Hebrews 8:13.

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross." Colossians 2:14.

"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith, But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." Galatians 3:24 and 25.

Moses was 80 years old when God gave him (Moses) the (Old) Testament, the law and religion for the House of Israel. Therefore, until Moses was 80 years of age, about 1498 BC, there were no Old Testament saints, for the simple reason that there was no Old Testament or Old Covenant. The Sinai Covenant was made Old at Calvary. There is not one word of the Old Covenant in Genesis. The Covenants which God made with Noah and Abraham have never been abrogated. But the Law Covenant served its purpose, is decayed and has vanished away. God made it Old. But He will make a New Covenant with the House of Israel. Jeremiah 31:31 to 34.

God preached the gospel to Abraham 430 years before He gave the law to the House of Israel. Galatians 3:8. The Abrahamic Covenant is not dead. It was not annulled by the Sinai Covenant. Galatians 3:16 to 19, If it had not been for the Abrahamic Covenant, God would have put an end to the House of Israel in the wilderness.

Read Exodus 32:13 and 14.

It is because of the Abrahamic Covenant that God will save Israel. Romans 11:26 to 29. Ezekiel 36:18 to 36.

"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed: not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all." Romans 4:16. Abraham not the heir of the world by law. Romans 4:16 to 20,

Note in Galatians 3:19 that the law was added to the gospel; that is, the Old Covenant was added to the Abrahamic Covenant until Abraham's Seed, Christ, came. Then the Abrahamic Covenant was stripped of the Old Covenant.

2. THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL UNDER THE LAW

"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster, to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. Galatians 3:24 and 25.

“For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.” Hebrews 10:1.

“Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.” Hebrews 9:10.

God’s Son was made under the law to redeem them that were under the law. Galatians 4:4 and 5.

Note the words “schoolmaster,” “shadow,” “figure.” The schoolmaster was to bring the House of Israel to a better covenant. The “shadow days” of the law pointed forward to the good things of grace. The religious things given the House of Israel pointed to the perfect work of Christ. Note also this interesting statement in Romans 15:8: “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.”

God’s Son was made under the law, sent only to the House of Israel to fulfill the law and the prophets, to confirm promises which God made to and concerning the House of Israel, and to redeem them that were under the law.

Let us ask this question, Did Jesus Christ come to start a new religion or to perpetuate an old religion with a new interpretation? He came to fulfill the law and the prophets. Matthew 5:17. In the law and the prophets much was said concerning the sufferings and glory of Christ, concerning Israel’s redemption and restitution, concerning redeemed Israel in their own land under the reign of their true King David and concerning the salvation of Gentiles in subjection to Israel in connection with this prophesied kingdom of Israel. The blessing of Israel and the earth under the New Covenant was prophesied. But Israel’s prophets never spoke or wrote concerning the present ministry of Christ as Head of the Church which is His Body or concerning the hope and calling of the members of that Body. That was God’s own secret withheld from the House of Israel. Colossians 1:24 to 28. Ephesians 3:9.

In the Four Gospels there is no suggestion that Christ would become the Head of this unprophesied Body and remain in heaven for nineteen centuries or more. After several years of intimate association with Christ on earth, shortly after His death, His chosen apostles asked, “wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” Acts 1:6. Some time later Christ presented for this age a new program of grace. The manner in which it was presented and the grace program are stated in Ephesians 3:1 to 3: “For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to youward: How that by revelation He (Christ) made known unto me the mystery: (as I wrote afore in few words) .”

Mystery? What was the mystery? “That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs (joint-heirs), and of the same body (joint-Body) and partakers (joint-sharers) of His promise in Christ by the gospel.” Ephesians 3:6.

Christ, on earth, was fulfilling the law and the prophets. From heaven later on He revealed a message and ministry which did not fulfill the law and the prophets. It fulfilled (completed) the Word of God:

“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.” Colossians 1:24 to 26.

Now the question: How much of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ was spent with the House of Israel under the ministry of the Old Covenant?

Under the reign of law the House of Israel was torn asunder. In the days of Samuel Israel rejected Jehovah as King and God permitted them to have King Saul, who confessed in the end, "I have played the fool." After the death of King Saul came David, the man after God's own heart and then King Solomon, who has been fitly called "the magnificent failure."

"And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, Who had appeared unto him twice," ". . . I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant." "Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom, but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen." I Kings 11:9, 11 and 13.

Then began the history of the House of Israel and the House of Judah. From that time no righteous king reigned over the House of Israel. Several men of God reigned in Jerusalem over Judah. But many more who were ungodly.

"For he rent Israel from the House of David; and they made Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, king: and Jeroboam drave Israel from following the Lord, and made them sin a great sin. For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam, which he did: they departed not from them: Until the Lord removed Israel out of His sight, as he had said by all His servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day." II Kings 17:21 to 23.

"Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of His sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only." II Kings 17:18.

Then regarding Judah, note Jeremiah 17:1: "The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars."

"Notwithstanding the Lord turned not from the fierceness of His great wrath, wherewith His anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked Him withal. And the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of My sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there." II Kings 23:26 and 27.

The history of Israel and Judah under the law is a history of sin and failure. Under the reign of law, with the fall of Judah, "the times of the Gentiles" began, about 600 BC Nebuchadnezzar took Judah to Babylon. Then several centuries later Jesus was born in the House of Israel in Israel's land under the government of Caesar.

"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed." Luke 2:1.

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law." Galatians 4:4.

"Nathanael answered and saith unto Him, Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel." John 1:49.

Jesus Christ was born King of Israel under the law, in the times of the Gentiles, politically. Hear His words: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets:

I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." Matthew 5:17. "But He answered and said. I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel." Matthew 15:24.

In support of the statement that God's Son was made under the law, we read in Luke 4:16, that when He was 30 years of age He went on the Sabbath to the Jewish synagogue as had been His custom. In Matthew 8:4, we hear the words of the ministering Christ: ". . . shew thyself

to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded.” In Matthew 23:1 to 3, we read: “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.”

Thus we see that Christ went about doing good in the land of the Jews (Acts 10:38 and 39) and spent His days on earth under the law.

Then how about Luke 16:16: “The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.”?

There is no suggestion here that the reign of law ceased when John the Baptist announced “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 3:2. John never lived a day under the reign of grace or under the New Covenant dispensation.

Let us keep in mind the question of Galatians 3:21: “Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.” And the statement of Galatians 3:17: “And this I say, that the Covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.” The law cannot disannul the Covenant which God made with Abraham and make the promise of none effect.

After the children of Israel entered into the Law Covenant with the Lord and immediately broke that law, He said to Moses, “Let me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them and that I may consume them.” Exodus 32:10. Note how Moses stayed the hand of God by pleading the Abrahamic Covenant. Exodus 32:13. Note Exodus 32:14: “And the Lord repented of the evil which He ‘thought to do unto His people.”

From Sinai to Calvary and up to the present time God has protected and preserved Israel because of His covenant of promise with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They are beloved for their fathers’ sake. Romans 11:28 and 29. Note what Christ said to the House of Israel: “Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth that law? Why go ye about to kill Me?” John 7:19.

How true the statement of Romans 9:29: “And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a Seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.”

When the Messiah comes the second time there will be a remnant of the House of Israel to receive Him. When the Messiah came the first time there was a remnant of the House of Israel. What happened?

“What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.” Romans 11:7. But let us remember that many more of the House of Israel received Christ after His death than before.

But finally they fulfilled I Thessalonians 2:15 and 16: “. . . 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.”

As John the Baptist said, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2) Christ proclaimed the same message to the House of Israel only. Matt. 4:17 and Matthew 10:5 to 8. Under the guarantee of the Abrahamic Covenant, the Davidic Covenant and the New Covenant, that Messianic kingdom will be established on earth. Christ was the promised Seed of Abraham, the promised Seed of David, and Israel’s promised Messiah and King. So while Christ was on earth, under the law, Israel was preserved by the Abrahamic Covenant and Christ was

proclaiming the Divine blessings of the New Covenant and the Davidic and the spiritual program and principles of the kingdom of heaven which are to be on earth with Israel in their land and King David on His throne. This is especially true in the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew Mark and Luke. We find in these Divine Records a mixture of the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, the law, mixed in with the kingdom program.

In the Parable of the vineyard in Matthew 21:33 to 45, we have the record of the mutual rejection of Israel and Jehovah, and finally these words: "Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Matthew 21:43.

To the House of Israel the Messiah said: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Matthew 23:38 and 39. Then He added: "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me; That ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Luke 22:29 and 30.

The Stone rejected by the builders went to Calvary to shed His blood of the New Covenant. Matthew 26:28. Note the truth declared in Hebrews 9:15 to 17: "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, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. 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."

By the death of Christ something happened to the law and the Sinai Covenant.

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross." Colossians 2:14.

"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." Ephesians 2:14 and 15.

"In that He saith, A New Covenant, He hath made the first Old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." Hebrews 8:13.

Therefore the truth of Galatians 3:25:

"But after that faith is come we are no longer under a schoolmaster."

3. THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL FROM CHRIST'S DEATH UNTIL THE JUDGMENT OF ROMANS 11.

Note the judgment of Romans 11. We quote Romans 11:8, 11 and 15: ("According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear) unto this day." "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." "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?"

In these verses we read of Israel's blindness, Israel's fall and Israel's casting away. By their fall salvation came to the Gentiles. The Gentiles obtained God's mercy by Israel's unbelief. Romans 11:30. Who cast away Israel? God. Who sent blindness upon Israel? God.

There is a great difference between the awful Divine judgment pronounced upon Israel in Romans 11 and the tender message of mercy preached to Israel in the first five chapters of Acts.

We quote a few of the verses with the message of mercy.

“And there were dwelling at Jerusalem JEWS, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.” Acts 2:5.

“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 they that gladly received His word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” Acts 2:41.

“But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you.” “And killed the Prince of Life, Whom God hath raised from the dead: whereof we are witnesses.” “And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.” “Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.” Acts 3:14, 15, 17 and 26.

“Howbeit many of them which heard the Word believed; and the number of men was about five thousand.” “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul, neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.” Acts 4:4 and 32.

“And believers were the more added to the Lord. multitudes, both of men and women.” “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.” “Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” Acts 5:14, 30 and 31.

“And the Word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly: and a great number of the priests were obedient to the faith.” Acts 6:7.

All of these believers added and multiplied belonged to “the House of Israel.” God was willing to forgive all their sins, including the murder of His Holy Son, if they would repent.

“Ye are the children of the prophets and of the Covenant.” Acts 3:25. “Unto you first.” “I wot that through ignorance ye did it.”

“Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” Acts 5:31.

“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.

Thus we see that in spite of the awful judgment of Luke 21:20 to 24, Matthew 22:7 and Matthew 23:31 to 39, pronounced upon the House of Israel by Christ on earth, God withheld His wrath. Instead of sending His army to burn up their city and destroy them as murderers, in accordance with Matthew 22:7, He sent His messengers first to those murderers to bless them. We would perhaps not exaggerate to say that fifty thousand Israelites believed and became disciples of Christ within seven years after the House of Israel crucified their Messiah, before the Lord sent Peter to Cornelius, the Gentile. In Matthew 23:33 these Israelites were called, “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers.” In Acts 3:25 and 26, “ye are the children of the prophets and of the covenant unto you first—to bless you—.” A great difference between the curse of Matthew 23 and the offered blessing in Acts 3:26. Surely God deferred action as to the curse and judgment. Divine Judgment of blindness was withheld. Salvation was not sent to the Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy until Israel had another chance. More members of the House of Israel were saved in the three and a half years after the judgment was pronounced upon Israel (in spite of the added sin of killing the Prince of Life), than during the three and a half years that Christ

was in the midst of Israel on earth. The prayer of Christ on the cross, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do”, brought a postponement of Israel’s judgment and a continuation of God’s offer of salvation to the House of Israel.

Although Christ had called the Jews “serpents and a generation of vipers”, the twelve apostles continued their testimony to “the lost sheep of the House of Israel only” for some years after the House of Israel had crucified Jesus and God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, to be a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins. Note Acts 11:19.

The Twelve were still working under the orders of Matthew 10:5 to 8. They were still going over the cities of Israel waiting for the Son of man to come. Matthew 10:23. Even after the Record closed as to the special ministry of the Twelve and Paul came to the front, God’s order continued to be “to the Jew first.” Acts 13:46.

During those years the dispensation of the grace of God for Gentiles (Ephesians 3:1 to 3) had not been revealed. No reference had been made to the peculiar ministry and message afterwards revealed from heaven to and through Paul concerning the Body of Christ, which is called “the House of God,” “the Household of God,” “the Household of Faith,” “The Joint-Body” and “the One New Man.”

It is no simple task to find in the Book of Acts the exact time when the House of Israel was cast aside and the House of God (the Body of Christ) had its historic beginning. We may be sure it was before Romans 5:8 to 11 and II Corinthians 5:16 to 21 were written: for in these Scripture we have the message of reconciliation for the Gentiles and this came by the casting away of Israel after God’s judgment of blindness; fell upon the House of Israel.”

To Israel Paul 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) Then came the Divine judgment of Acts 28:25 to 28 and the destruction of the House of Israel by the Roman army about 70 A. D. Read Matthew 22:7 and Luke 21:20 to 24.

But God is not through with “the House of Israel.” After God has finished His eternal purpose in this age concerning “the House of God” He has a new program for the House of Israel. Let us not confuse “the House of Israel” with “the House of God.”

4. THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL IN THE COMING KINGDOM AGE

Note these words of Christ to His twelve apostles: “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.” Matthew 19:28.

Then note Romans 11:26: “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.”

Then note Hebrews 8:8 and 11: “For finding fault with them, He saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying. Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest.”

Then note Zechariah 8:7 and 8: “Thus saith the Lord of hosts Behold, I will save My people from the east country, and from the west country, And I will bring them and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.”

Then note Ezekiel 36:37: “Thus with the Lord God: I will yet for this be enquired of by the House of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock.”

Then note Ezekiel 37:22, 24 and 25: “And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one King shall be King to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: And David My Servant shall be King over them and they all shall have one Shepherd: they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob My servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children for ever: and My Servant David shall be their Prince for ever.”

Then note Ezekiel 37:27 and 28: “My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.”

Now from these verses we can know much concerning the future of the House of Israel.”

THE HOUSE OF GOD—“THE DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD”

Paul wrote to Timothy these very interesting words:

“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God. which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” I Timothy 3:15 and 16.

“How thou oughtest to behave thyself in “the House of God.”

This House of God is the Church of the living God, which has to do with the mystery which Christ revealed to and through the Apostle Paul. Paul is not merely telling saints how to behave when they are gathered in a church building to worship God for an hour or two: But he is telling them how to behave as members of the Body of Christ all of the 24 hours of every day in every year that they live. He is simply using different language to express Ephesians 4:1: “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.”

The Psalmist said: “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.” Psalm 122:1. During the reign of Law the redeemed Israelites went time and again into “the House of God.” They went in and out. A short time ago I asked the members of one of our Bible classes, “how many of you have entered the house of God more than 500 times?” Many hands went up. I said: “You are mistaken. You have never entered the House of God but once, if you have entered at all.” During God’s reign of grace the believing sinner, the very moment he is saved enters “the House of God;” for he then becomes a member of the Body of Christ. He must enter as a sinner saved by grace. The believing sinner’s experience, and something of the description of ‘the House of God’ is set forth in the closing verses of the second chapter of Ephesians.

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes 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; And that He might reconcile both unto God in one Body by the cross, having slain the enmity

thereby; And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the Household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; In Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; In Whom we also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Ephesians 2:13 to 22.

Here we learn most definitely that “the House of God,” during this present reign of grace, is not constructed of stone, wood, metal and cloth, but is made up of individual sinners, Jews and Gentiles, saved by God’s grace through faith in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“The House of God” is synonymous with “the Body of Christ.” The truth concerning the Body of Christ was revealed by the risen Lord to the Apostle Paul. We learn something in his Writings concerning the different local Churches or Assemblies and a little about organization and discipline. However, the Body of Christ is not primarily an organization, but a Divine organism. Members of the Body of Christ are one flesh with Christ, (Ephesians 5:31); united to Him Who is the Head of the Church, seated in the heavenlies. The members of His Body are seated there with Him and blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, Ephesians 2:6—Ephesians 1:3 and 4 The Apostle Paul several times refers to “Churches”, meaning local assemblies; and several times speaks of “the Church” in some believer’s home. But never once does the Apostle Paul, in any of his writings in referring to “the House of God” or “the Body of Christ,” speak of any church-building constructed of inanimate building material.

Most Christians have an unscriptural habit of calling church-buildings “the Church.”

While Divine authority was in the hands of “the House of Israel,” “the House of God” was located at Jerusalem. The Gentiles could come to one of the outer courts. And as we read in Esther 8:17, a Gentile could become a Jew by religion. At that time the Gentiles, as a whole, were aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel. During those years Israel’s prophets had much to say about Israel’s future. Many of these prophecies are yet to be fulfilled, when under the terms of the New Covenant, Israel will be redeemed and given possession of the land of Canaan. However, not one of those Prophets had one word to say about “the Body of Christ” or “the House of God,” described in the Epistle to the Ephesians.

Concerning this, we quote Ephesians 3:5 and 6;

“Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same Body (Joint-Body), and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel.” The Greek word translated “same Body” should be “Joint-Body.” Thus we see that “the House of God”, during this reign of grace, is called in the Scripture “the Joint-Body”. This “Joint-Body” was a “mystery” or a “secret” unknown to the House of Israel either before Christ came to earth or while He was here on earth. When the Saviour was here He spent His days in the land of the Jews, and made this plain statement: “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Matthew 15:24. So while He was on earth He did not make known God’s purpose and program concerning “The House of God” or “The Body of Christ.” This purpose and program the Lord later revealed from heaven through His chosen vessel the Apostle Paul. Hear his words in Ephesians 3:8 and 9: “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable (untraceable) riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship (dispensation) of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God Who created all things by Jesus Christ.”

By this we may be sure that the Lord did not mean for Peter and the other eleven apostles to preach His unsearchable riches to the Gentiles either while He was on earth or in the first chapters of the Book of Acts.

In Acts 2:36 we read these words: “Therefore let all “the House of Israel” know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, Whom, ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” In Acts 2:5 we read these words: “And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.” In Galatians 2:8 we read these words: “For He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles.” By comparing these Scriptures and studying these three verses in the light of the first nine chapters of Acts, we learn that the Lord gave to the twelve apostles the message to “the House of Israel.” That message was not only to the House of Israel but concerning the House of Israel. “The House of Israel” is not “the House of God.”

If we would rightly divide the Word of truth, and thus know how to intelligently understand, interpret, and apply the Scriptures, we must learn when God set aside “The House of Israel” and “The House of God” had its historical beginning.

While God is now miraculously preserving the Israelites who are where Christ, in Luke 21:24, said they would be until His return, God is especially occupied and concerned with “The House of God”, “The Body of Christ.” After this present age of grace has been brought to an end, God will give His attention again to “the House of Israel.”

Members of “the Body of Christ” sinners saved by grace are in “the Household of Faith,” “the Household of God.”

“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal. The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour and some to dishonour, If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.” II Timothy 2:19 to 21.

Fellow-believers, we are in “a great House.” We are vessels in that House. We are identified with Christ the Head of that House. Let us be vessels of honour. Let us behave in “the House of God.”

SAVED BY GRACE

In Christ believers rest secure
Judgment passed and heaven sure;
No wrath to come; but blessed peace;
Life in Christ shall never cease.

Saved by grace; not what we do;
By faith in Christ we’re creatures new.
Complete in Christ and with Him one,
In heaven seated with God’s Son.

He brought with Him the reign of grace;

In death He took the sinner's place;
God spared Him not, but from above
He sent to earth His Son of love.

Made of woman, God's own Child
Was holy, harmless, undefiled;
He knew no sin, but on the tree
He was made sin for you and me.

Thereby reconciling God to man,
Such is God's redemption plan;
Yea, Christ Himself redemption is,
All the work and glory His.

His precious blood for us was shed;
In the tomb Christ three days dead.
Death abolished; an empty grave;
By this gospel God can save.

Sinful man with law had failed,
But to the cross that law was nailed.
The Saviour put our sin away;
His sacrifice, our judgment-day.

Nothing in the flesh we own,
Abounding grace, and grace alone,
Hath made us meet for heaven above.
Rich God's mercy; great His love.

Redeemed forever in God's own way,
There's joy and blessing day by day
By knowing Christ as Savior-Lord,
By daily feeding on God's Word.

By His Spirit led and taught
To do His will in word and thought;
Preaching Christ, the Truth, the Way,
Seeking those who've gone astray.

Holding forth His Word Divine,
Knowing God would have us shine
In this world so dark with sin,
Trying precious souls to win.

Beseeching men God's gift to take
And believe that God, for Jesus sake,

Will cleanse, forgive and justify:
Christ's shed blood will bring them nigh.

And as we worship, pray and preach,
Serve and witness and beseech,
Contending for God's truth, His Book,
For that Blessed Hope we'll look.

In God's Book 'tis said, "we know"
When He appears His saints shall go
To be with Him and like Him be
Forever more His glory see.