

Greetings!

Here is your PDF of God's Truths Recovered.

I pray that God will give you a spirit of wisdom and understanding, in the realization of Him (Ephesians 1:17).

Feel free to share this PDF with others.

*Danny*

**Note:** Print drawings for reference and guidance.  
If you experience problems, email me and I'll send them to you in an attached file.

[dannyrussino@gods-truths-recovered.com](mailto:dannyrussino@gods-truths-recovered.com)



# God's Truths Recovered

*Beyond the Reformation*

Seated together among the  
celestials in Christ Jesus

*- Ephesians 2:6*

**DANNY RUSSINO**

# God's Truths Recovered

*Beyond the Reformation*

*Danny Russino*



B I B L E   S T U D E N T ' S   P R E S S <sup>TM</sup>  
*Windber, Pennsylvania*

***God's Truths Recovered – Beyond the Reformation***

by Danny Russino; 1122 Maple Ave; Verona PA 15147

*Copyright:* 1992, Daniel Russino, Registration number TX 3 567 675

*Second edition:*

Bible Student's Press™, © 2010

*Third edition:*

Bible Student's Press™, © 2011

*Fourth edition:*

Bible Student's Press™, © 2013

Executive Editor: André Sneidar

Layout and Design: Great Adventure in Faith

Cover design: Clyde L. Pilkington, III

© Can Stock Photo Inc.

ISBN-10: 1-934251-67-4

ISBN-13: 978-1-934251-67-6

Published by

Bible Student's Press™

An imprint of *Pilkington & Sons*

P.O. Box 265

Windber, PA 15963

For information on *Bible Student's Press* releases, visit

[www.BibleStudentsPress.com](http://www.BibleStudentsPress.com)

For information on other Bible study resources,

[www.StudyShelf.com](http://www.StudyShelf.com)

*Printed in the United States of America.*

# Acknowledgements

I would like to give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for giving me the inspiration of writing and publishing this work for the great and high praise of His glory.

Special thanks to the Concordant Publishing Concern for their support and permission to use certain charts, illustrations, and to print excerpts from their publications. I am deeply indebted for their literature and for the other resources listed in this e-book.

Through them I have learned to study the scriptures concordantly and rightly divide the word of truth, thus obtaining a deeper realization of God.

I am grateful that God has blessed me with a wonderful wife. Sandy has given me much support and encouragement throughout my studies and writing.



# CONTENTS

Preface.....	9
Introduction.....	11
1. Translations .....	15
2. Eon and Eonian .....	29
3. Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth .....	53
4. The Book of Acts .....	67
5. Was Acts a Beginning? .....	99
6. Acts 28:28 – The Great Dispensational Divide .....	109
7. The Three Callings.....	139
8. Paul’s Epistles.....	163
9. Savior of All.....	215
10. Hell .....	235
11. Death.....	241
Appendix – Salvation.....	271
Resources .....	281

## Illustrations and Charts

Divine Calendar .....	283
Manuscripts, Bible Versions (Figure 1) .....	16
A Page From the Concordant Greek Text .....	22
Pre-Eonian, Eonian, Post-Eonian Times (Figure 2) .....	30
Occurrences of Eonian Times .....	34-36
Greek Scriptures Correctly Cut (Figure 3) .....	54
Occurrences of Sheol, Hades, Gehenna, Tartarus, Lake of Fire.....	236, 237
Resurrection, Vivification (Figure 4) .....	260





# *Preface*

*If any man thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know (1 Corinthians 8:2).*

I have always been a seeker of the truth. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. My love to readjust and build up the church to maturity, is the purpose for writing *God's Truths Recovered*. Along the way I have embraced the need to be adjustable. Some are proud that they have held the exact same doctrinal understandings for decades. This is not true of me. I continue to learn and grow. Upon further study and a deeper realization of our God and Father, my understanding of His Word has continued to change over the years. Some books go through many editions even in a single year. I consider them "living" books, rather than "dead" set-in-stone books. Thus, *God's Truths Recovered* is in its fourth edition. I found it necessary to go into more detail about certain topics.

A few are listed below:

Where do we rightly divide the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15)?

Understanding what happened in the book of Acts.

The rapture theory and the Lord's second coming.

The importance of understanding the feasts of Israel.

What are God's different callings and who are His firstborn.

A more in-depth study of the apostle Paul's letters, especially the mystery (secret) hidden from the ages in God, which Paul makes known (Ephesians 3:8-9).

Who is really going to heaven?

These additional topics, and a deeper study of previous editions of "God's Truths Recovered," will help you achieve maturity and become readjusted to what God is doing now. I want to share the good news with believers – which is the gospel of the dispensation (administration) of the mystery (secret) as proclaimed by Paul the prisoner (Ephesians 3:8-9).

Most people know that God has good news for unbelievers, but very few know that He has good news for believers too. Just as an unbeliever doesn't get the benefits of the gospel without believing it, so too, the believer doesn't get the benefits of the good news directed toward him unless he believes it.

Grace and Peace,

Danny Russino



# *Introduction*

Greetings beloved and praise God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The author is not attached to any particular sect or denomination of believers, and endeavors to be of service to all who worship God in sincerity. It is published solely with the aim of presenting the glory of God through His truth concerning His purpose for the universe. Let me be the first to admit that I am not a bible scholar, an educated theologian, a preacher or hold any degrees.

However, I am,

**a son of God:**

*In love, designating us beforehand for the place of a son (Ephesians 1:5).*

**saved by grace:**

*(We also being dead to the offenses and the lusts), vivifies us together in Christ (in grace are you saved!) (Ephesians 2:5).*

**sealed with the spirit:**

*In Whom you also – on hearing the word of truth, the evangel of your salvation – in Whom on believing also, you are sealed with the holy spirit of promise (Ephesians 1:13).*

**for the day of deliverance:**

*And do not be causing sorrow to the holy spirit of God by which you are sealed for the day of deliverance (Ephesians 4 :30-31).*

**and this is all from God Who granted me to believe:**

*Yet of your salvation, and this from God, for to you it is graciously granted, for Christ's sake, not only to be believing on Him, but to be suffering for His sake also (Philippians 1:28-29).*

The purpose of this e-book is to recover God's truths. These truths go beyond "The Reformation" of being justified by faith. The following chapters comply with the original Scriptures as closely as possible without interjecting man's opinions.

This is accomplished by having a pattern of sound words (2 Timothy 1:13), which allows Scripture to be enjoyed in its purest form. As a slave to the Lord this work is not meant to cause fighting, but rather to come into a realization of the truth and bring the church to maturity.

*Now a slave of the Lord must not be fighting, but be gentle toward all, apt to teach, bearing with evil, with meekness training those who are antagonizing, seeing whether God may be giving them repentance to come into a realization of the truth (2 Timothy 2:24-25).*

*Whom we are announcing, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we should be presenting every man mature in Christ Jesus (Colossians 1:28).*

My only request, dear truth seeker, is for you to have an opened and unbiased mind as we walk through these chapters together in love, studying and comparing Scriptures. Don't be offended or feel swayed to a different teaching. This is not my purpose. I am pursuing righteousness, faith, love and peace, with all who are invoking the Lord out of a clean heart. May we also keep the unity of the spirit with the tie of peace.

*Now youthful desires flee: yet pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, with all who are invoking the Lord out of a clean heart (2 Timothy 2:22).*

*.... endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit with the tie of peace (Ephesians 4:3).*

I don't claim to have all of the answers, nor do I fully understand our Heavenly Father's ways. To me this is impossible when reading the following passage.

*O, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How inscrutable are His judgments, and untraceable His ways! For, who knew the mind of the Lord? or, who became His adviser? or, who gives to Him first, and it will be repaid Him? Seeing that out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen! (Romans 11:33-36).*

Our minds are feeble when pondering this passage. Just looking at His creation and thinking of the galaxies and vast universe boggles my mind; but together by prayer and searching the Scriptures, we can understand His purpose.

One version of the bible that I use for study is the *Concordant Version*. Before I used this version, it was difficult understanding the phrase "forever and ever." Also, there were many definitions for the word "eon."

We will discuss these and other topics such as, rightly dividing the word of truth, born again, new creation, death, hell, evil, eternal torment, immortality and more!

The majority of Bible verses used throughout this e-book are taken from the *Concordant Version* of the sacred Scriptures. These chapters do not contain manmade ideas to suit another denomination. Meanings of words were not changed to accommodate false doctrines. So let us learn of the untraceable (unsearchable) riches of Christ. The apostle Paul tells us,

---

---

*To me, less than the least of all saints, was granted this grace: to bring the evangel of the untraceable riches of Christ to the nations (Ephesians 3:8).*

I turn this work over to Him Who is able to do superexcessively above all that we are requesting according to the power that is operating in us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus.

*Now to Him Who is able to do superexcessively above all that we are requesting or apprehending, according to the power that is operating in us (Ephesians 3:20).*

It is vital to pray the following verses throughout the course of this study, so that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory may be giving us a spirit of wisdom and revelation for us to perceive the expectation of His calling.

*Therefore, I also, on hearing of this faith of yours in the Lord Jesus, and that for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may be giving you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization of Him, the eyes of your heart having been enlightened, for you to perceive what is the expectation of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of the enjoyment of His allotment among the saints, and what the transcendent greatness of His power for us who are believing (Ephesians 1:15-19).*

*Therefore we also, from the day on which we hear, do not cease praying for you and requesting that you may be filled full with the realization of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, you to walk worthily of the Lord for all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and growing in the realization of God; being endued with all power, in accord with the might of His glory, for all endurance and patience with joy (Colossians 1:9-11).*



# *Translations*

**G**od inspired men through the Holy Spirit to write what He wanted revealed. Each promise, word, letter, jot and tittle was pure.

*The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times*  
(Psalm 12:6, RSV).

This section may not be of interest to everyone, but I would like to throw in a bit of history. The three languages spoken at the time when God inspired the sacred Originals were Hebrew, Chaldee and **Greek**. From these languages came the ancient manuscripts. The three most ancient manuscripts of the Greek Scriptures are in existence today. They show us the Scriptures as they were in the first few centuries, and are the Sinaiticus, Vaticanus and Alexandrinus. From these manuscripts came many versions or translations of the Bible (see Figure 1).

You are probably wondering how no human error entered into play down through the centuries, but it has. Let us discuss some of these translations.

## ***The Syriac (Aramaic) Version***

This version came between the end of the first and beginning of the second century. The language is similar to Hebrew. When our Lord walked the earth, people spoke two tongues. During the time of this version, **Greek** was almost a universal language.

## ***The Gothic Version***

Made around 350 A.D., it was translated directly from the Greek based on the *Septuagint*, which is a **Greek** translation of the Old Testament made in the third century B.C.

## ***The Armenian Version***

It came between 354-441 A.D., which was also based on the *Septuagint*. In fact, it kept so close to the **Greek** that it has almost the same significance as the **Greek** text itself.

## ***The Ethiopic Version***

This version was made around the fifth and sixth centuries A.D., translated from the **Greek**.

## Original Autographs Lost

Century	ANCIENT VERSIONS	Century
1		1
2	Syriac	2
3	Egyptian	3
4	Gothic Latin Vulgate	4
5	Armenian	5
6	Ethiopic	6
7		7
8		8
9		9
10		10
11		11
12		12
13		13
14	Wycliffe	14
15		15
16	Tyndale <i>Coverdale, Matthew, Taverner Great Bible, Geneva, Bishops', Douay-Rheims</i>	16
17	King James Version	17
18		18
19	English Revised American <i>Diaglott, Fenton, Darby Rotherham</i>	19
20	20 <sup>th</sup> Century <i>Moffatt – Weymouth – Goodspeed – Revised Standard Version New American Standard – New English Bible – New International Version</i>	20

### Concordant Version

The above diagram graphically illustrates to the reader the way the sacred Word has been preserved down through the centuries until the present, when we enjoy it in the Concordant Version, based on a restored Greek text, conforming as closely as possible to the original autographs.

Figure 1



---

---

## LATIN VERSIONS

Greek was widespread throughout Rome during the days of Paul the apostle. This is probably why he did not write his epistle to the Romans in Latin. About a hundred years after Paul's time, Latin was becoming popular. The first version originated in North Africa. Tertullian, who lived from about 160 to 220 A.D., was the earliest of the Latin Fathers. As a scholar, he initially explained the Scriptures in the Latin tongue and originated the terminology for Christianity. The bulk of manuscripts for these versions were of the African type.

A Canaanite colony known as Carthage, located southwest of Italy (North Africa), spoke a different Latin than did Rome. They were not influenced by the Greek language. Carthage became a Roman colony by warfare in the middle of the second century B.C. This dialect changed so much that a hundred years later, the greatest advised Romans found it hard to comprehend the earlier settlements between Rome and Carthage.

Old Latin Scriptures in North Africa changed very little, if any. When they reached Italy, there was an uproar. The Romans were unclear because words in each country had their own particular meaning. The attempt to correct the African version by using the **Greek** version, presently in Italy, just caused more chaos.

### *The Latin Vulgate*

Pope Damasus of Rome in 383 A.D. gave St. Jerome the responsibility of bringing oneness out of this confusion. His version was known as the *Vulgate*, since this was in the common (vulgar) language of that day.

The *Vulgate* was the model of every other version for more than a thousand years. It dominated and swayed most of Christendom throughout Western Europe. Up to this time, the **Greek Septuagint** kept its domain. The people of that day criticized and disagreed with Jerome's version; however, the church accepted his work and it became the official translation of the Bible.

## ENGLISH VERSIONS

Now we come all the way down to the 12th century. John Wycliffe, in 1380, translated the Bible for English speaking people. He used the Latin Vulgate as his foundation. The first translators of our English Bible used the term hell.

### *Tyndale's Version*

The reason I highlight the word **Greek** is as an emphasis to remind you that it was one of the original languages used by God-inspired men. Remember, we discussed that **Greek** was the universal language. Well, when the Latin church became prestigious, the Greek church and its language were almost unknown in most of Europe for over a thousand years (from the time of the Latin Vulgate in 380 A.D. to the capture of Constantinople in 1453). The scholars, courts and clergy used Latin as the universal language. The Catholic church used this dialect in their masses.

After the capture of Constantinople, **Greek** became alive and started to spread throughout Europe. Around 1484 it was publicly taught in England at Oxford University. Here a Dutch scholar named Erasmus studied Greek. He was Professor of **Greek** at Cambridge, England, where Tyndale studied.

All of the translations we've talked about so far were written by hand. The printing press was invented around 1450. This made it possible for Erasmus to print the first **Greek** New Testament around 1519-1522. In 1526 Tyndale was responsible for the first printed English New Testament. The three works he used for his basis were the **Greek** New Testament of Erasmus, the German New Testament of Martin Luther (1523), and the *Latin Vulgate*.

### OTHER ENGLISH VERSIONS

Though many copies were smuggled into England from Germany, Tyndale's work was greatly suppressed by authorities. Around 1535 Coverdale published an English translation which followed Tyndale's very closely. The Church was less opposed to this popular version, and *Coverdale's Bible* became widely read.

In 1537 John Rogers issued the *Matthew's Bible*, which was copied mostly from Tyndale's version. Soon another reproduction of Tyndale's surfaced, known as the *Taverner's Bible*.

Bibles were named after their sizes. In 1539 the *Great Bible* was headed up by Coverdale, commissioned by the king. This version was compiled from the *Tyndale*, *Matthew* and *Coverdale* versions.

There was even a Bible named after the city of publication, called the *Geneva Bible*, around 1560. Then there was a revision of the *Geneva Bible*, called the *Bishop's Bible*, published in England in 1568.

Between 1582-1610 English speaking Roman Catholics translated the Latin Vulgate into an English version called the *Rheims-Douai Bible*.

#### **Latin Terms**

Because of the Latin scholar Tertullian, terms were used such as, trinity, substance, person, redemption, justification, sanctification, sacrament, perdition, perish, destroy, punish, torment, damnation, dispensation, predestination, revelation, priest, mediator, minister, congregation and propitiation. Some of these may also be from St. Jerome's *Latin Vulgate*. Most of these terms are all different from the **Greek** words used, although some of the meanings compare adequately.

During the Renaissance (14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century) many words crept into the English language. Because of Tyndale, the words eternal, forever, for ever and ever, and for evermore crept in. Though Wycliffe used everlasting, he never used eternal.

#### **King James Authorized Version**

King James I of England called a conference at Hampton Court in 1604 in an effort to reconcile the religious parties of England. He exercised his authority by making a revision from the *Bishop's Bible*. Thus in 1611 came a new revision with his name on it. Now, supposedly, we have a best known Eng-

---

lish Bible of that time, which was only a revision of the *Bishop's Bible*, which was a revision of the *Great Bible*, which was a revision of the *Matthew's Bible*, which was based on the translations of William Tyndale and Miles Coverdale.

During the King James revision, not one of the most valuable manuscripts (*Sinaiticus*, *Vaticanus* and *Alexandrinus*) was available to scholars as they are today. In fact, the *Alexandrinus* came to England in 1628, seventeen years too late. King James also devised fourteen rules as to how the scholars should begin. Some withdrew when the rules were introduced. Words and sentences were changed, verses were added or deleted to enable the writers to impose their own views, ideas and doctrines of that day. When issued, Dr. Broughton, one of the foremost Hebrew scholars of that era, wrote King James, "I would rather suffer my body to be rent in pieces by wild horses than to have such a version forced upon the church."<sup>1</sup>

The *King James Bibles* being printed today are not accurately representing the first edition of 1611, but include changes made in the last two centuries.

### ***Revised Version***

By the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was possible to analyze precisely the Greek Testament in the manuscripts. There arose evidence of numerous weak points in the *Authorized Version*. In almost three hundred years, words and phrases became outdated and altered. Also, Greek and Hebrew education reached a greater magnitude than was imaginable in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The *English Revised Edition* came out in the late 1800's. A revision of this edition by the American Revision Committee, was issued in 1901. This was known as the *American Standard Version*.

## **MODERN VERSIONS**

Numerous Bibles have been printed in these past decades. The major ones were *Diaglott*, *Fenton*, *Darby*, *Rotherman*, *Weymouth*, the *Revised Standard Version*, *Moffatt*, *Phillips*, the *New English Bible*, the *New American Standard*, *Today's English Version*, the *Amplified Bible*, the *New American Bible* the *New International Version* and the *Companion Bible Condensed*.

### ***The Concordant Literal New Testament (CLNT)***

The late Adolph E. Knoch (1874-1965) was the compiler of this work. Most Greek scholars agree that this is the best English translation to date because of its uniformity and consistency, but let us remember that no mortal man can fully comprehend God's message to mankind. Every human task and translation of the Scriptures falls short of perfection. Our limited understanding and poor opinions as to the meaning of words in the ancient languages of inspiration cannot be fully avoided.

Brother Knoch labored for more than fifty years to make a translation that agreed as closely as possible to the original language of the Scriptures, and yet also one that was presented in readable English. Man can pass on the truth into another language only so far as they understand it themselves.

---

1. Adlai Loudy, *God's Eonian Purpose*, Concordant Publishing (1929, 1974), page 36.

Because of this, no translation can be totally acceptable. Brother Knoch and his assistants were aware of their imperfections. They protected their work by using a system called the concordant method.

“All Scripture is inspired by God” (II Timothy 3:16). The *Concordant Version* admits this. It denies all human ability to reproduce God’s deepest or highest thoughts, and upholds the Scriptures as super-human perfection, down to the smallest detail. This attitude of the heart counts with God. An intelligent appreciation of His words requires consideration of every element and listens to every letter. Before a version of the Scriptures can be made, a decision on which Greek text to use had to be made.

### ***Weymouth’s Resultant Greek Text***

The actual Originals have not been preserved, so we had to depend on the scribes for their accuracy when making copies of the older manuscripts by hand. Because of being human, errors were made. Many old manuscripts of the Greek New Testament have survived to this day. Our Lord laid down the law that the words of two or three witnesses are sufficient evidence to decide any matter. The compiler felt the need to have a Greek text in which he could put his trust. Since it would be impossible to check and verify all of the different readings in each of the existing manuscripts, brother Knoch chose the three great witnesses to the text of holy Writ, which are the *Alexandrinus*, *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus*. They agree in the main, yet there are many minor variations. Because these three were not complete within themselves, it was necessary to combine them into one text called the *Weymouth Greek Text*.

Richard Francis Weymouth based his text on the greatest editors of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They were Lachmann, Tregelles, Tischendorf, Lightfoot, Weiss, Alford, Ellicott and Hort. Thus it was decided to base comparisons on the *Weymouth Resultant Greek Testament*.

### ***The Concordant Greek Text***

The latest Greek texts are almost all based on the judgment of those who compiled them. Because of this, A.E. Knoch wanted to present the actual evidence for his readers to judge. Thus the *Concordant Greek Text* (which has been published as a companion volume to the *CLNT*) gives every letter of three of the most ancient manuscripts. Also included is evidence of the three papyrus manuscripts. A brief description of the procedure is as follows.

Photographic copies of each manuscript were cautiously compared to the Weymouth text. Differences between these manuscripts are shown in the superlinear (written above the Greek text), using the abbreviation of that particular manuscript. For example:

A is Codex Alexandrinus

B is Codex Vaticanus

b is Codex Vaticanus 2066 (046), the substitute for B in the Unveiling.

s is Codex Sinaiticus

p stands for the Papyri

A uniform, literal word-for-word translation is given below the Greek text called the (sublinear).

A detailed explanation is given in the introduction of the Concordant Greek Text.

---

---

## THE CONCORDANT METHOD

Paul the apostle demanded for us to have a pattern of sound words.

*Have a pattern of sound words, which you hear from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. The ideal thing committed to you, guard through the Holy Spirit which is making its home in us (2 Timothy 1:13-14).*

Concordant means harmonious, agreeing, correspondent. What better method to follow than one that has harmony and agreement? This, my dear friends, will allow us to have and keep a pattern of sound words. A concordance is an alphabetical index of the Bible, with a reference to the passage in which each word occurs and usually with some part of the text. More Scripture truth and a deeper knowledge of God have become possible. However, using a concordance occasionally to make a current translation more harmonious with the Original requires patient and prolonged study.

Mr. Knoch wanted every truth seeker to have access to a method which assures them of the real revelation which God has given to them. So he devoted his life to the task of making a version which is already concordant! Now we can study the Scriptures using a concordance to discover the meaning of a word, not in any version, but in the original languages.

God revealed Himself by using pure words, and gave them a special meaning. This divine vocabulary was necessary to convey His thoughts. So it is with the concordant method of making an English version. In order to follow the Original closely, a scriptural vocabulary was needed before beginning the translation. They were required to use only the terms which the research had determined would harmonize with the contexts of all of the other occurrences, as well as the one under consideration.

Because of this extensive analysis, it was possible to find the single most exact English equivalent for each Greek word, one which will not only fit each context in which the original word appears, but one which is not needed for any other Greek word. The concordant system attempts to use this single word consistently all of the way through the new testament.

Some disadvantages connected with fixed consistency in translation are offset by means of occasional idiomatic alterations, and signs and choice letters in the text itself.

As a truth seeker, you can become enlightened to the many variations of meaning of each of the original Greek words by plainly seeing its consistent English counterpart in all of the divinely inspired contexts.

The *Concordant Literal New Testament* presents facts, rather than an explanation of them. It labors to produce, in readable English, as much proof from the Greek Original as feasible.

Literal means, in accordance with, conforming to, or upholding the explicit or primary meaning of a word or words of a text, word-for-word.

So here we have a literal translation which is also readable, a consistent translation which is also understandable. It is in line with the linguistic law that the meaning of a word is decided by its usage. As

4001

## PAUL TO TIMOTHY (I.)

CHAPTER 4

ΚΡΙΣΕΙΨΕΥΔΟΛΟΓΩΝΚΕΚΑ 20	ΕΕΥΣΕΒΕΙΑΠΡΟΣΠΑΝΤΑΦ 20
OF-FALSE-sayings HAVING-	devoutness TOWARD ALL benefi-
ΥΣΤΗΡΙΑΣΜΕΝΩΝΤΗΝΙΔΙΑ 40	Ε inserted by Α Ε inserted by Α
been-BURNERISED THE OWN	ΕΙΛΙΜΟΣΕΣΤΙΝΕΠΑΓΓΕΛΙΑ 40
ΝΣΥΝΕΙΔΗΣΙΝΚΩΛΥΟΝΤΩΝ 60	ΝΕΧΟΥΣΑΖΩΗΤΗΣΝΥΝΚΑΙ 60
3 conscience FORBIDDING	HAVING OF-LIFE THE NOW AND
ΓΑΜΕΙΝΑΠΕΧΕΣΘΑΙΒΡΩΜΑ 80	ΤΗΣΜΕΛΛΟΥΣΗΣΠΙΣΤΟΣΟΑ 80
TO-BE-MARRYING TO-BE-FROM-HAVING OF-FOODS	9 OF-THE being-ABOUT BELIEVING THE say-
ΤΩΝΑΘΕΟΣΕΚΤΙΣΕΝΕΙΣΜ 100	ΟΓΟΣΚΑΙΠΑΣΗΣΑΠΟΔΟΧΗΣ 600
WHICH THE God CREATES INTO par-	ing AND OF-EVERY welcome
ΕΤΑΛΗΜΨΙΝΜΕΤΑΕΥΧΑΡΙΣ 20	Δ ΣΙΟΣΕΙΣΤΟΥΤΟΓΑΡΚΟΠΙ 20
taking WITH thanking	10 WORTHY INTO this for WE-ARE-
Ε inserted by Α	ΑΣ WE-ARE-CONTENDING Δ (st o.) ΓΩΝΙΖΟΜΕΘΑ 40
ΤΙΑΣΤΟΙΣΠΙΣΤΟΙΣΚΑΙΕΠ 40	ΦΜΕΝΚΑΙΟΝΕΙΔΙΖΟΜΕΘΑ 40
to-THE ones-BELIEVING AND HAVING-	toiling AND ARE-being-REPROACHED that
ΕΓΝΩΚΟΣΙΝΤΗΝΑΛΗΘΕΙΑΝ 60	ΤΗΝΑΠΙΚΑΜΕΝΕΠΙΘΕΦΩΝ 60
ON-KNOWN THE TRUTH	WE-HAVE-EXPECTED ON God LIVING
ΟΤΙΠΑΝΚΤΙΣΜΑΘΕΟΥΚΑΛΟ 80	ΤΙΟΣΕΣΤΙΝΣΩΤΗΡΠΑΝΤΩΝ 80
4 that EVERY CREATURE OF-God IDEAL	WHO IS SAVIOUR OF-ALL
ΝΚΑΙΟΥΔΕΝΑΠΟΒΛΗΤΟΝΜΕ 100	ΑΝΘΡΩΠΩΝΜΑΛΙΣΤΑΠΙΣΤΩ 700
AND NOT-YET-ONE FROM-CAST WITH	humans RATHERest OF-ones-BELIEVING
ΤΑΕΥΧΑΡΙΣΤΙΑΣΛΑΜΒΑΝΟ 20	ΝΠΑΡΑΓΓΕΛΕΤΑΥΤΑΚΑΙΔ 20
thankng BEING-UP-GOTTEN	11 YOU-BE-charging these AND YOU-
ΜΕΝΟΝΑΓΙΑΖΕΤΑΙΓΑΡΔΙΑ 40	ΙΔΑΣΚΕΜΗΔΕΙΣΣΟΥΤΗΣΝΕ 40
5 it-IS-BEING-HOLYZED for THRU	12 BE-TEACHING NO-YET-ONE OF-YOU THE YOUTH
ΛΟΓΟΥΘΕΟΥΚΑΙΕΝΤΕΥΣΕΦ 60	ΟΤΗΤΟΣΚΑΤΑΦΡΟΝΕΙΤΩΑΛ 60
saying OF-God AND pleading	LET-BE-despising but
ΣΤΑΥΤΑΥΠΟΤΙΘΕΜΕΝΟΣΤΟ 80	ΛΑΤΥΠΟΣΓΙΝΟΥΤΩΝΠΙΣΤΩ 80
6 these BEING-UNDER-PLACED to-	type YOU-BE-BECOMING OF-THE ones-BELIEV-
ΙΣΑΔΕΛΦΟΙΣΚΑΛΟΣΕΣΧΔΙ 300	ΝΕΝΛΟΓΦΕΝΑΝΑΣΤΡΟΦΗΝ 800
THE brothers IDEAL YOU'LL-BE THRU-	ing IN saying IN UP-TURNING (behavior) IN
ΔΚΟΝΟΣΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΙΗΣΟΥΕΝ 20	Ε inserted by Α Ε inserted by Α
SERVITOR OF-ANointed JESUS IN-	ΕΝΤΙΝΕΥΜ (so.) ΔΤΙ ΕΝΑΓΝΙΑ 20
ΤΡΕΦΟΜΕΝΟΣΤΟΙΣΛΟΓΟΙΣ 40	ΕΦΩΣΕΡΧΟΜΑΙΠΡΟΣΕΧΕΤΗΑ 40
NURTURING to-THE sayings	13 TILL I-AM-COMING YOU-BE-heeding to-THE read-
ΤΗΣΠΙΣΤΕΦΣΚΑΙΤΗΣΚΑΛΗ 60	ΝΑΓΝΩΣΕΙΤΗΠΑΡΑΚΛΗΣΕΙ 60
OF-THE BELIEF AND OF-THE IDEAL	ing to-THE BESIDE-calling
Ε inserted by Α Ε inserted by Α	Ε inserted by Α
ΣΔΙΔΑΣΚΑΛΙΑΣΗΠΑΡΗΚΟΑ 80	ΤΗΔΙΔΑΣΚΑΛΙΑΜΗΑΜΕΛΕΙ 80
TEACHING WHICH YOU-HAVE-BESIDE-	14 to-THE TEACHING NO YOU-BE-UN-CARING
ΟΥΘΗΚΑΣΤΟΥΣΔΕΒΕΒΗΛΟΥ 400	ΤΟΥΕΝΣΟΙΧΑΡΙΣΜΑΤΟΣΕ 900
7 followed THE YET profane	OF-THE IN YOU grace-effect WHICH
ΣΚΑΙΓΡΑΦΕΙΣΜΥΘΟΥΣΠΑ 20	ΔΟΘΗΝΣΟΙΔΙΑΠΡΟΦΗΤΕΙΑΣ 20
AND CRONES myths BE-	WAS-GIVEN to-YOU THRU BEFORE-AVERMENT
ΡΑΙΤΟΥΓΥΜΝΑΖΕΔΕΣΕΑΥΤ 40	ΜΕΤΑΕΠΙΘΕΣΕΦΣΤΩΝΧΕΙΡ 40
refusing BE-exercising YET YOURself	WITH ON-PLACING OF-THE HANDS
ΟΝΠΡΟΣΕΥΣΕΒΕΙΑΝΗΓΑΡΣ 60	ΦΝΤΟΥΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΙΟΥΤΑΥ 60
8 TOWARD devoutness THE for BODY-	15 OF-THE SENIORITY these
ΦΜΑΤΙΚΗΓΥΜΝΑΣΙΑΠΡΟΣΟ 80	ΤΑΜΕΛΕΤΑΕΝΤΟΥΤΟΙΣΙΣΘ 80
ic exercise TOWARD FEW	YOU-BE-meditating IN these YOU-BE-
ΑΙΓΟΝΕΣΤΙΝΦΦΕΙΛΙΜΟΣΧΔ 500	ΙΙΝΑΣΟΥΗΠΡΟΚΟΠΗΦΑΝΕΡ 5000
is beneficial THE YET	THAT OF-YOU THE progress apparent

601

---

far as feasible, each expression constantly represents its closest equivalent in the Original, each word of which is given a standard exclusive English rendering.

A detailed explanation is given in the *Concordant Literal New Testament*, following the book of Revelation, and also at the beginning of the Concordant Greek Text.

This translation may not always please us, or use words and phrases which have become endearing to us by long usage or tender association. Let us look at some differences between translations.

### **Philippians 4:6**

*Be careful for nothing (King James Version – KJV)*

*Have no anxiety about anything (Revised Standard Version – RSV)*

*Do not worry about anything (Concordant Literal New Testament – CLNT)*

Using the *King James Version*, if we were to put into practice the instructions from Paul the apostle, he would be telling us not to be careful. In fact when he wrote this letter, the early church faced much opposition and suffering. The apostle was always comforting them.

Now let's look at the *Revised Standard Version*. You can see how much progress was made in the course of three hundred years between the time of *King James Version* and the *Revised Standard Version*. Greek and Hebrew education reached a high level. The Greek ancient manuscripts were recovered. Some of the greatest editors lived during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Remember, the *KJV* was just a revision of other English versions.

The *Concordant Literal New Testament* renders this passage as, “*Do not worry about anything.*” The use of a concordant translation gives this passage a clear flowing message.

### **Genesis 1:1-2**

Here is a verse where the word “the” appears instead of “a”:

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep (RSV).*

*In a BEGINNING created by God [Alueim] were the heavens and the earth. Yet the earth became a chaos and vacant, and darkness was on the surface of the submerged chaos (CLNT).*

The definite article “the” is not found here in the original. Whenever the word “*beginning*” is used in Scriptures, it refers to that particular subject. For instance, Genesis 1:1 refers to the physical creation. John 1:1-18 refers to the revelation of God through the Word (sound), and Christ (sight) the Image of God.

Since God always was, there is no absolute beginning in the Scriptures. Further evidence that Genesis 1:1 was not the beginning, is Christ's pre-existence:

*... Who is the Image of the invisible God, Firstborn of every creature, for in Him is all created, that in the heavens and that on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or sovereignties, or authorities, all is created through Him and for Him, and He is before all, and all has its cohesion in Him (Colossians 1:15-17).*

*And the Word became flesh and tabernacles among us, and we gaze at His glory, a glory as of an only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. John is testifying concerning Him and has cried, saying, "This was He of Whom I said, 'He Who is coming after me, has come to be in front of me,' for He was first, before me" (John 1:14-16).*

The only passages in the Original where the definite article "the" are used are found in Revelation. They are as follows:

*"I am the Alpha and the Omega," is saying the Lord God, Who is and Who was and Who is coming, the Almighty (Revelation 1:8).*

*... I am the First and the Last, and the Living One (Revelation 1:17).*

*... and to the messenger of the ecclesia in Laodicea write: "Now this is saying the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, and God's creative **Original** (Revelation 3:14).*

*And He said to me, "I have become the Alpha and the Omega, the Origin and the Consummation (Revelation 21:6).*

*I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Origin and the Consummation (Revelation 22:13).*

There is another point I would like to make about Genesis 1:1-2. According to the RSV and previous versions, readers get the idea that God created the earth without form and void. No wonder scientists and evolutionists are amused at the Bible. They must think that everything was a chaos. Not so!

*For thus says the Lord, Who created the heavens (He is God), who formed the earth and made it (He established it; He did not create it a chaos, He formed it to be inhabited!): I am the Lord, and there is no other (Isaiah 45:18, RSV).*

The above passage proves that the earth was created to be inhabited, and wasn't waste.

The final point of this verse is that more truth seekers are discovering a time gap between the first and second verse of Genesis. We are not told the length.

*:1: In a beginning created by God [Alueim] were the heavens and the earth.*



---

*:2: Yet the earth became a chaos and vacant, and darkness was on the surface of the submerged chaos.*

Verse one states that creation was brought about in an orderly fashion. It is even safe to say that the heavens and celestial beings were created first, and the earth later.

*Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? (Job 38:4, RSV).*

*... when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? (Job 38:7, RSV).*

Then in verse two, by some cataclysmic judgment, probably due to the entrance of evil, the earth becomes waste, and darkness is on the surface of the abyss. Thus, God did not create the earth in darkness, or out of darkness.

*And this is the message which we have heard from Him and are informing you, that God is light, and darkness in Him there is none (1 John 1:5).*

Darkness is present only when the light is removed. An excellent example is Calvary. God turned away from His Son as He hung on the cross. Darkness immediately fell on the scene, even though it was noonday; yet three hours later the light returned, eliminating the darkness. In Scripture, darkness is connected with the Adversary.

*Put on the panoply [whole armor] of God, to enable you to stand up to the stratagems of the Adversary, for it is not ours to wrestle with blood and flesh, but with the sovereignties, with the authorities, with the world-mights of this **darkness**, with the spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials (Ephesians 6:11-12).*

### **John 3:16**

*For God so loved the world that he gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life (RSV).*

*For thus God loves the world, so that He gives His only-begotten Son, that everyone who is believing in Him should not be perishing, but may have life eonian (CLNT).*

God still loves the world. It is not a thing of the past. The gift of His only-begotten Son is an expression of His timeless love. Also, the word “thus,” instead of “so,” shows us the quality and not the quantity of God’s love. In the next chapter we will discuss the word “eonian.”

### **1 Corinthians 10:13**

*No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it (RSV).*

*No trial has taken you except what is human. Now, faithful is God, Who will not be leaving you*

*to be tried above what you are able, but, together with the trial, will be making the sequel also, to enable you to undergo it (CLNT).*

God gives us trials for our building up. He does not provide a way of escape. If this was true, we would not have the opportunity to undergo the whole trial. Thus, there would be no endurance. He does however, make a sequel, or outcome. This word is also found in Hebrews 13:7. The RSV renders it “*outcome*” here, and “*escape*” in 1 Corinthians 10:13.

All of the great examples of trial were tolerated by thinking about the sequel. Joseph held the scepter in the prison. David wore the crown in Aduliam. Even Job knew that he would see his Redeemer.

We should not try to escape trial, but by grace endure it. We should not engross ourselves with it, but think about the blessed sequel (outcome) which it is intended to produce.

### **John 20:1**

*Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb (RSV).*

*Now, on one of the sabbaths, Miriam Magdalene is coming to the tomb in the morning, there being still darkness, and is observing the stone taken away from the door of the tomb (CLNT).*

“One of the Sabbaths” is found in all three of the ancient manuscripts. The original reads *mia ton sabbaton*. In other translations, the word “*one*” was changed to “*first*.” The word “*day*,” which is not in the Original, was inserted. Then “*sabbaths*” was changed to the singular “*week*.”

### **Romans 3 :22-27**

*... the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction; since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, Whom God put forward as an expiation by His blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in His divine forbearance He had passed over former sins; it was to prove at the present time that He Himself is righteous and that He justifies him **who has faith in Jesus** (RSV).*

*... yet a righteousness of God through Jesus Christ’s faith, for all, and on all who are believing, for there is no distinction, for all sinned and are wanting of the glory of God. Being justified gratuitously in His grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Whom God purposed for a Propitiatory shelter, through faith in His blood, for a display of His righteousness because of the passing over of the penalties of sins which occurred before in the forbearance of God), toward the display of His righteousness in the current era, for Him to be just and a Justifier of the one who is **of the faith of Jesus** (CLNT).*

The faith “*of*” Jesus. What a wonderful Savior and God! The word “*of*” denotes character. It is not our faith that matters, but Christ’s faith. Jesus was obedient even up to His death for our sins. Translators have changed this passage which makes it sound like our faith has something to do with salvation,

---

but it is definitely **His faith**, in the Greek Original. The following are more comparisons.

**Galatians 3:22**

*But the Scripture consigned all things to sin, that what was promised to **faith in Jesus Christ** might be given to those who believe (RSV).*

*But the Scripture locks up all together under sin, that the promise **out of Jesus Christ's faith** may be given to those who are believing (CLNT).*

**Ephesians 3:12**

*... in Whom we have boldness and confidence of access **through our faith in him** (RSV).*

*... in Whom we have boldness and access with confidence, **through His faith** (CLNT).*

Remember, dear beloved, that the righteousness of God is revealed *through Jesus Christ's faith* for all and on all who are believing. Let us not feel as though we have to contribute to our salvation. Christ is the Inaugurator and Perfecter of faith.

*... looking off to the **Inaugurator and Perfecter of faith**, Jesus, Who, for the joy lying before Him, endures a cross, despising the shame, besides is seated at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2).*

### SUMMARY

We have learned by tracing through the centuries how we got the Bible today. The original languages used by God-inspired men were Hebrew, Chaldee and Greek. Latin became popular while Greek declined. This led to the making of the Latin Vulgate, which was only a translation, and was therefore not inspired. It changed inspired words found in the Greek, and gave them a different meaning. Eonian is one of them which we will discuss in the next chapter.

This, coupled with the entrance of many hundreds of words into English during the Renaissance, caused more error. One word in particular is “*eternal*.” Had the old English Bibles been translated directly from Greek instead of the Latin Vulgate, it is very probable that the word “eternal” never would have been found in our Bibles today.

Instead of the Reformation changing the error of the Latin Church, they authenticated it. The Reformation only led to the division of the church by dispute. The Catholics and Protestants began making their own translations. The Latin and early English translations were, on the whole, the most faithful ones. However, in some cases the words they utilized did not quite match the Greek they translated. Thank God for the restored Greek text!

Does it make any difference which version of the Bible you read? Why, then, do so many religious denominations have their own version which they claim to be accurate? The *Concordant Version* of the inspired Word of God has a *consistent* vocabulary.

A keyword concordance is available in order that the reader may check the accuracy of the rendering, and in this way the English reader is put in possession of information which had previously been available only to Greek scholars.

The *Concordant Version*, however, is not perfect, because man is fallible, which is why I use other sources for comparison. So in addition to the *Concordant Version and Greek Text*, I also recommend *Bullinger's Companion Study Bible*, *Rotherham's Literal Translation* and *Young's Literal Translation*.

These and other study materials can be found at:

Pilkington & Sons  
Post Office Box 265  
Windber, PA 15963  
1-800-784-6010  
<http://www.studyshelf.com/bibles.htm>

We need to be like the Bereans and search these translations to see if these things are true. We need the help of the spirit to lead us into all truth.

## Eon and Eonian

The noun “eon” comes from the Hebrew word *olam*, and the Greek word *aiōn*. *Olam* comes from a root meaning “hidden.” The word therefore means a period of time, but a period of unknown or hidden length, the duration of which is determined by the fact or condition or person to which the term is applied. The adjective eonian comes from the Greek word *aiōnios*. These words are more commonly known as “age” and “age-abiding” respectively. “Age-abiding” pertains to the ages, that is, something that occurs within the ages. However, we should discipline ourselves to use these words as found in the original, which are “eon” and “eonian.” The reason is because the word “age” does not have an adjective like “eonian” and also portrays another meaning in the Greek, known as stature, and coming of age. Read the following verses:

*His parents, then, answered and say, “We are aware that this is our son and that he was born blind. Yet how he is now observing, we are not aware, or who opens his eyes, we are not aware. Ask him; **he has come of age**. He will speak concerning himself.” These things his parents said, seeing that they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should ever be avowing Him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents say that **“He has come of age”** (John 9:20-23).*

*By faith Sarah herself also obtained power for the disruption of seed, and brought forth beyond **the period of her prime**, since she deems the Promiser faithful (Hebrews 11:11).*

*And Jesus progressed in wisdom and **stature**, and in favor with God and men (Luke 2:52).*

“Eon” means an indefinite long period of time. Look at the many different meanings that English translators gave to the word “eon” and its adjective “eonian” (the numbers in parentheses represent the number of times these words are thus translated):

### Eon

age (2)	ever (2)	world (32)
eternal (2)	never (7)	forever and ever (21)
for ever (27)	course(1)	beginning of the world (2)
forever more (3)	without end (1)	while the world standeth (1)

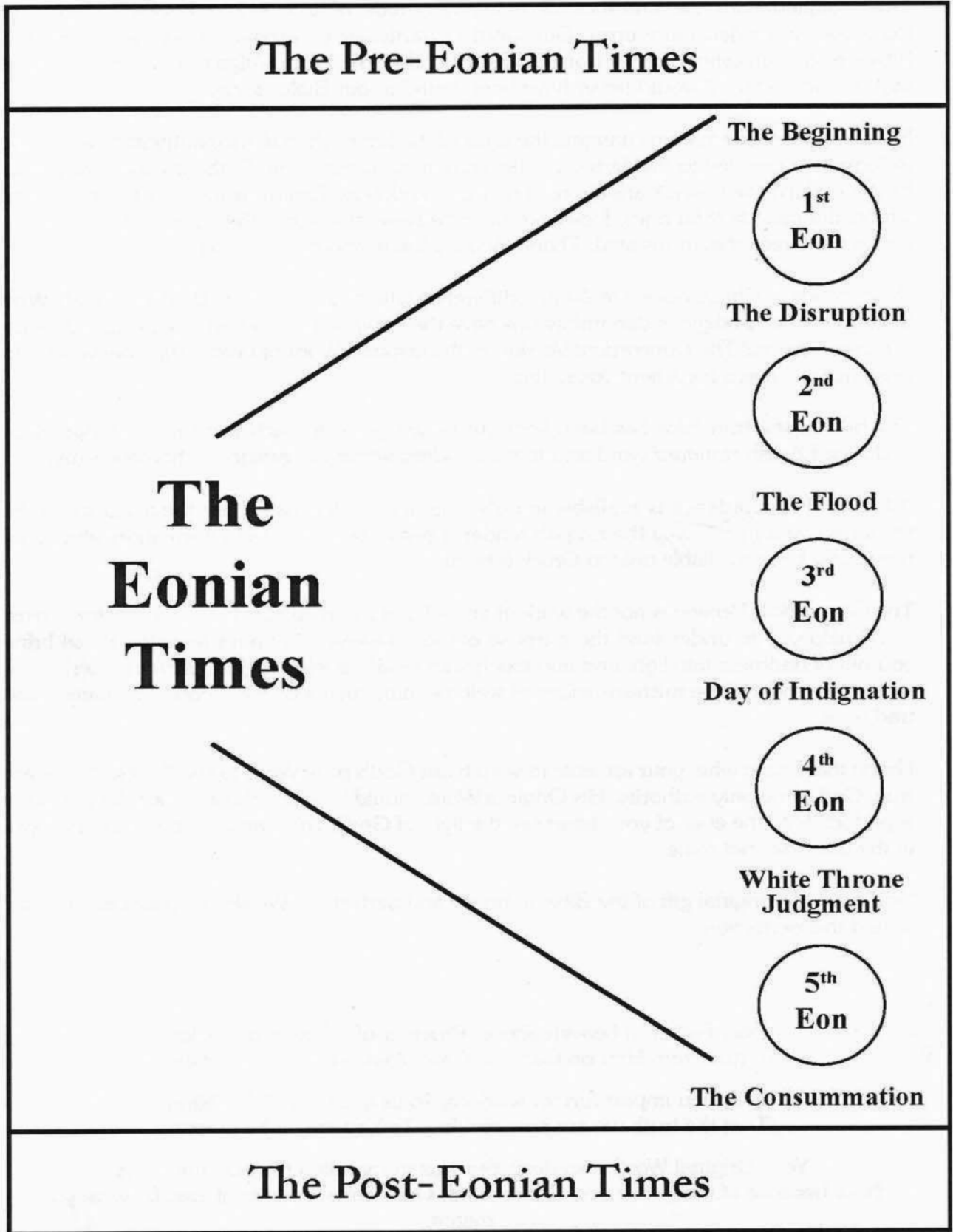


Figure 2

---



---

**Eonian**

eternal (41)	the world began (3)	everlasting (25)	forever (1)
--------------	---------------------	------------------	-------------

How could one word from a pure simple language mean so many things, especially “ever” and “never” at the same time? Faulty translation can, itself, be used to expose its own errors, as is seen by the following contradictory passages:

**“The earth remains for ever”**

*A generation goes, and a generation comes, but **the earth remains for ever*** (Ecclesiastes 1:4, RSV).

**Compared to “a new earth”**

*Heaven and **earth will pass away**, but My words will not pass away* (Matthew 24:35, RSV).

*Then I saw a new heaven and **a new earth**; for the first heaven and the **first earth had passed away*** (Revelation 21:1, RSV).

**“Everlasting covenant”**

*Every sabbath day Aaron shall set it in order before the Lord continually on behalf of the people of Israel as a **covenant for ever*** (Leviticus 24:8, RSV).

**Compared to “a new covenant”**

*“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “when I will make a **new covenant** which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was their husband,” says the Lord* (Jeremiah 31:31-32, RSV).

*For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion for **a second**. For He finds fault with them when He says, “The days will come,” says the Lord, “when I will establish a **new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah”* (Hebrews 8:7-8, RSV).

**“Everlasting priesthood”**

*You shall bring his sons also and put coats on them, and anoint them as you anointed their father, that they may serve Me as priests: and their anointing shall admit them to a **perpetual priesthood** throughout their generations* (Exodus 40:14-15, RSV).

**Compared to “a changed priesthood”**

*Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it people received the law), what further need would there have been for **another priest to arise** after*

*the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron? (Hebrews 7:11-12, RSV).*

### **“Eternal hills and mountains”**

*The blessings of your father are mighty beyond the blessings of the eternal mountains, the bounties of the **everlasting hills** (Genesis 49:26, RSV).*

### **Compared to “their departing, removal and dissolving”**

*For the **mountains may depart** and **the hills be removed**, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you (Isaiah 54:10, RSV).*

*But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and **the elements will be dissolved with fire**, and the **earth and the works upon it will be burned up** (2 Peter 3:10, RSV).*

### **“Jesus reigns for ever and ever”**

*... and He will **reign** over the house of Jacob **for ever**; and of His **kingdom** there will be **no end** (Luke 1:33, RSV).*

*The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall **reign for ever and ever** (Revelation 11:15, RSV).*

*For the Lord God will be their light, and they shall **reign for ever and ever** (Revelation 22:5, RSV).*

### **Compared to “Jesus reigns until death is abolished”**

*For He must reign **UNTIL He has put all His enemies under His feet**. The **last enemy** to be destroyed is death (1 Corinthians 15:25-26, RSV).*

*When all things are subjected to Him [God], then **the Son Himself will also be subjected to Him** (1 Corinthians 15:28, RSV).*

**NOTE:** Our Father’s kingdom is timeless, but Christ’s rule is only until the end of the eons, when all is subjected to the Father.

More comparisons could be made using the *King James Version*, but corrections in various places by the American Revision Committee gave us the accurate understanding of the noun “age.” However, not once is the adjective “eonian” translated correctly.

Once we learn about the different eons, then the above passages will not contradict each other. Time is so important in our daily lives. From the moment of conception, the clock started ticking. Time is recorded at birth and death. Our entire lives are affected by it.



*To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heaven (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8).*

Time is comprehended in seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years, decades and centuries. In the Scriptures, God deals with it as weeks, days and eons. Properly identifying certain Scripture verses with its eon will help us understand God's purpose for man and time. God has a purpose for the eons, which He makes in Christ Jesus.

*To me, less than the least of all saints, was granted this grace: to bring the evangel of the untraceable riches of Christ to the nations, and to enlighten all as to what is the administration of the secret, which has been concealed from the eons in God, Who creates all, that now may be made known to the sovereignties and the authorities among the celestials, through the ecclesia [church], the multifarious wisdom of God, in accord with the purpose of the eons, which He makes in Christ Jesus, our Lord (Ephesians 3:8-11).*

During the eonian times, sin, suffering and death enter God's creation, serve their purpose, and then are abolished by Christ Jesus. They must end because in them is death, and death is abolished.

*For He must be reigning until He should be placing all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy is being abolished: death. For He subjects all under His feet. Now whenever He may be saying that all is subject, it is evident that it is outside of Him Who subjects all to Him. Now, whenever all may be subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also shall be subjected to Him Who subjects all to Him, that God may be All in all (1 Corinthians 15:25-28).*

## ETERNITY

That which is eternal lies beyond the eons. The word "eternal" is one of many false terms that entered into English theology and into our modern Bibles. John Wycliffe, in 1380 A.D., translated Revelation 10:6 as "Tyme schal no more be." Of course, he was influenced by *Jerome's Latin Vulgate* (380 A.D.), which reads, "Time will not be further" (*tempus non erit amplius*). The *King James Version* reads, "there should be time no longer." The *Revised Version* corrected it as, "there should be no more delay." The *Concordant Version* reads, "there will be no longer a time of delay."

Eons cannot be associated with eternity. The Scriptures reveal that the eons will terminate:

*Now all this befalls them typically. Yet it was written for our admonition, to whom the consummations of the eons have attained (1 Corinthians 10:11).*

*... since then He must often be suffering from the disruption of the world, yet now, once, at the conclusion of the eons, for the repudiation of sin through His sacrifice, is He manifest (Hebrews 9:26).*

Another problem that exists when loosely using the term "eternal" as "eon" can be seen in the plural form "eons," as used in these passages:

*... that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:7, RSV).*

*To the King of Ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever*  
(1 Timothy 1:17, RSV).

*... and to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, Who created all things* (Ephesians 3:9, RSV).

How much longer is eternal in the plural than it is in the singular?

### THREE DIVISIONS

In the Scriptures, time is divided into three large segments. The pre-eonian times (before the eons), the eonian times (during the eons) and the post-eonian times (after the eons). Refer to figure two. Below are listed passages of each occurrence.

#### 1. The Pre-Eonian Times

*Yet wisdom are we speaking among the mature, yet a wisdom not of this eon, neither of the chief men of this eon, who are being discarded, but we are speaking God's wisdom in a secret, wisdom which has been concealed, which God designates before – **before the eons**, for our glory* (1 Corinthians 2:6-7).

*Who saves us and calls us with a holy calling, not in accord with our acts, but in accord with His own purpose and the grace which is given to us in Christ Jesus **before times eonian*** (2 Timothy 1:9).

*... in expectation of life eonian, which God, Who does not lie, promises **before times eonian*** (Titus 1:2).

If eon is rendered “eternal” in these passages, it sounds absurd to say “before eternity.” The eons could have no beginning!

#### 2. The Eonian Times

Since there are many passages, we'll list their occurrences only.

EON — Singular noun	EONS — Plural Noun
<p><u>The Beginning</u></p> <p>The world that then was – 2 Peter 3:6</p> <p>Eon of this world – Ephesians 2:2</p>	<p><u>The Eons of the Eons</u></p> <p>2 Timothy 4:18; Hebrews 13:21; 1 Peter 4:11; 5:11; Revelation 1:6, 18; 4:9-10; 5:13; 7:12; 10:6; 11:15; 14:11; 15:7; 19:3; 20:10; 22:5; Romans 16:27; Galatians 1:5; Philippians 4:20; 1 Timothy 1:17</p>

<p><u>The Disruption</u></p> <p>The ancient world – 2 Peter 2:5</p> <p>Eon of this world – Ephesians 2:2</p> <p><u>The Deluge</u></p> <p>Present eon – Galatians 1:4</p> <p>Current eon – 1 Timothy 6:17; 2 Timothy 4:10; Titus 2:12</p> <p>This eon – Matthew 12:32; 13:22; Mark 4:19; Luke 16:8; 20:34; Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 1:20; 2:6-8; 3:18; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 1:21; 2:2 (with world)</p> <p>For the eon – Matthew 21:19; Mark 11:1; Mark 11:14; John 12:34; 13:8; 1 Corinthians 8:13</p> <p>From the eon – Luke 1:70; Acts 3:21; 15:18</p> <p>Out of the eon – John 9:32</p> <p>Conclusion of the eon – Matthew 13:39-40, 49; 24:3</p> <p><u>The Day of Wrath</u></p> <p>Coming eon – Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30</p> <p>Future eon – Hebrews 6:5</p> <p>That eon – Luke 20:35</p> <p>For the eon – Mark 3:29; Luke 1:55; John 4:14; 6:51, 58; 8:35-36, 51-52; 10:28; 11:26; 12:34; 14:16; 2 Corinthians 9:9; Hebrews 5:6; 6:20; 7:17, 21, 24, 28; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 2:17; 1 John 2:17; 2 John:2; Jude 13</p>	<p><u>Eon of the Eons</u></p> <p>Ephesians 3:21</p> <p><u>Eon of the Eon</u></p> <p>Hebrews 1:8</p> <p><u>Conclusion of the Eons</u></p> <p>Hebrews 9:26</p> <p><u>From the Eons</u></p> <p>Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:26</p> <p><u>The On-coming Eon</u></p> <p>Ephesians 2:7</p> <p><u>For the Eons</u></p> <p>Luke 1:33; Romans 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 2 Corinthians 11:31; Hebrews 13:8</p> <p><u>The Eons</u></p> <p>Ephesians 3:11; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 1:2; 11:3; Jude :25</p> <p><u>Allotment</u></p> <p>Hebrews 9:15</p> <p><u>Kingdom</u></p> <p>2 Peter 1:11</p> <p><u>Evangel (gospel)</u></p> <p>Revelation 14:6</p>
---	---

For the day of the eon – 2 Peter 3:18 (Deuteronomy 32:7; Micah 5:2; 7:14; Malachi 3:14)	<u>Glory</u>
<u>The Judgment Times</u>	2 Corinthians 4:17; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 5:10
Romans 16:25; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2	<u>God</u>
<u>Life</u>	Romans 16:26
Matthew 19:16, 29; 25:46; Mark 10:17, 30; Luke 10:25; 18:18,30; John 3:15-16,36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 68; 10:28; 12:25, 50; 17:2-3; Acts 13:46, 48; Romans 2:7; 5:21; 6:22-23; Galatians 6:8; 1 Timothy 1:16; 6:12; Titus 1:2; 3:7; 1 John 1:2; 2:25; 3:15; 5:11, 13,20	<u>Fire. Punishment. Extermination. Judgment</u>
<u>Salvation</u>	Matthew 18:8; 25:41, 46; Mark 3:29; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Hebrews 6:2; Jude 7
Hebrews 5:9	<u>Other Occurrences</u>
<u>Redemption</u>	Luke 16:9; II Corinthians 4:18; 5:1; 1 Timothy 6:16; Philemon 15; Hebrews 9:14
Hebrews 9:12	
<u>Covenant</u>	
Hebrews 13:20	

### 3. The Post-Eonian Times

*Now all this befalls them typically. Yet it was written for our admonition, to whom the consummations of the eons have attained (1 Corinthians 10:11).*

*... thereafter the consummation, whenever He may be giving up the kingdom to His God and Father, whenever He should be nullifying all sovereignty and all authority and power (1 Corinthians 15:24).*

### THE DIVINE CALENDAR

This calendar shows us the five eons: The first eon, the ancient eon, the present wicked eon, **the coming eon, the eon of the eons**. The two in bold type are called the eons of the eons. Each eon ends in judgment and starts with a new promise or beginning. Two of the judgments are cataclysmic.

1. The disruption (“*overflowed with water*”) occurred between the first and second eon.
2. The Great White Throne judgment (fire) occurs in the future between the fourth and fifth eon.

The other two judgments occur on both sides of this current wicked eon. They are the flood (deluge), and the day of indignation or wrath (fiery judgments).

Starting at the left of the Divine Calendar, there are the phrases “All out of God” and “God All in Himself.” God is the Source and Object of all. Christ is the Channel of all.

*... seeing that out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen!* (Romans 11:36).

*... nevertheless for us there is one God, the Father, out of Whom all is, and we for Him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom all is, and we through Him* (1 Corinthians 8:6).

I can recall being taught in religion class that God always was and always will be. This baffles my finite mind; but we do know that there was a beginning – a beginning of the eons which is supported by the phrases “before eonian times” (2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2) and “before the eons” (1 Corinthians 2:7). These verses were listed previously under the heading “Pre-Eonian Times.” It is evident that God was all in Himself and existed before the eons (1 Corinthians 8:6).

### THE FIRST EON

Next on the Divine Calendar is the first eon. Christ is the origin of God’s creation. He is God’s creative Original (Revelation 3:14). He is the First and the Last (Revelation 1:17), the Alpha and the Omega (Revelation 1:8). In fact the eons were purposed in Him (Ephesians 3:11), and without Him nothing would have been created, not one particle in this entire universe. Jesus Christ, the Son of God’s love, is the Firstborn. Since God is an invisible spirit, Christ is His visible revelation.

*Who is the Image of the invisible God, Firstborn of every creature, for in Him is all created, that in the heavens and that on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or sovereignties, or authorities, all is created through Him and for Him, and He is before all, and all has its cohesion in Him* (Colossians 1:15-17).

Do you remember the unknown length of time between the first and second verses of Genesis 1, discussed in chapter one?

*In a beginning created by God [Alueium] were the heavens and the earth* (Genesis 1:1).

Verse one is the perfect creation of the first eon. Verse two brings disorder and chaos. Some scientists believe that the earth is 6000 years old, others, millions of years old. Regardless, it is safe to say that lots of years passed between the first and second eon.

Through Christ, God created the heavens and the earth. This is like saying that God created all of the leaves and needles on every tree, compared to a blade of grass! The heavens are so vast that scientists are always discovering millions of new stars and galaxies. Nehemiah writes of the heavenly hosts,

*And Ezra said: “Thou art the Lord, Thou alone; Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens,*

*with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and Thou preservest all of them; and the host of heaven worships Thee” (Nehemiah 9:6, RSV).*

The universe is full of heavenly beings which existed long before humans. These beings actually gazed on each new outstanding work that God called into existence. Listen to what our Lord tells Job:

*Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements – surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for Joy? (Job 38:4-7, RSV).*

God’s creation is perfect.

*The Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is He (Deuteronomy 32:4, RSV).*

Even the earth was unblemished in Genesis 1:1. God did not create it without form and void. It was not chaotic, but was to be inhabited.

*For thus says the Lord, Who created the heavens (He is God), Who formed the earth and made it (He established it; He did not create it a chaos, He formed it to be inhabited!) (Isaiah 45:18, RSV).*

So, what happened? Genesis 1:2 is the close of the first eon, caused by a disruption.

*The earth came to be a chaos and vacant, and darkness was over the surface of the abyssal expanse [the earth’s submerged surface].*

*I looked on the earth, and lo, it was waste and void; and to the heavens, and they had no light (Jeremiah 4:23, RSV).*

What is disruption? The word disruption is from the Greek word *katabolē*, which means down-casting. It is used ten times in connection with the world. The *Authorized Version (KJV)* wrongly translates it as “*foundation*.” The RSV did not correct it. Below is a comparison between the RSV and CLNT of John 17:24.

*Father, I desire that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, may be with Me where I am, to behold My glory which Thou hast given Me in Thy love for Me before the **foundation** of the world (RSV).*

*Father, those whom Thou hast given Me, I will that, where I am, they also may be with Me, that they may be beholding My glory which Thou hast given Me, for Thou lovest Me before the **disruption** of the world (CLNT).*

This same word *katabolē* occurs in the following verses:

*In everything, being afflicted, but not distressed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but*

*not forsaken; **cast down**, but not perishing – always carrying about in the body the deadening of Jesus (2 Corinthians 4:8-10).*

It is implied that the rain, and also the earthquake which caused the subterranean waters to rush forth on the surface of the earth in Noah's day, and earthquakes throughout history, caused the present disturbance in the earth's layers. True, there must have been deposits of soil from the rain and some displacements from the quakes, but these hardly could have broken and shifted the layers of the entire earth as much as they appear now. In fact, the book of Revelation states that a great earthquake will occur of such great proportions that one like it has not occurred since mankind came to be on earth. This implies that there was an earthquake, much greater than humanity has experienced, before man was on the earth.

*And lightnings and voices and thunders occurred. And a great earthquake occurred, such as did not occur since mankind came to be on the earth; of such proportions was the quake and so great (Revelation 16:18).*

No – a great cataclysmic disruption can be the only cause of the earth's present condition.

Refer to the Divine Calendar for a moment. Centered in God's plan is the death, burial and resurrection of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ. On both sides of the cross there is exact symmetry. The first eon (perfect creation) corresponds with the last eon (new creation). The great cataclysmic disruption (water) corresponds with the great cataclysmic judgment (fire). The ancient eon (restored earth) corresponds to the Millennial kingdom (time of Israel's restoration). On each side of this eon are two judgments (flood and wrath). To say there was no other disruption prior to the flood in Noah's day would bring instability to God's Divine Calendar.

Peter writes of this double deluge. The following verse relates to the flood in Noah's day, in the ancient eon:

*For if God spares not sinning messengers, but thrusting them into the gloomy caverns of Tartarus, gives them up to be kept for chastening judging; and spares not the **ancient world**, but guards Noah, an eighth, a herald of righteousness, bringing a deluge on the world of the irreverent (2 Peter 2:4-6).*

The next verse relates to the "then world," which was also deluged by water. This world perished, but not in the same sense as it will be by fire, prior to the new creation. Peter refers to it as a world, which means all was systematically and orderly arranged, and provision was made to support inhabitants. We could literally and exactly say that the world was restored in six days, though it is quite plain even if we say it was the earth.

*For they want to be oblivious of this, that there were heavens of old, and an earth cohering out of water and through water, by the Word of God; through which the **then world**, being deluged by water, perished. Yet the heavens now, and the earth, by the same word, are stored with fire, being kept for the day of the judging and destruction of irreverent men (2 Peter 3:5-7).*

Peter states that this "then world" perished. Becoming chaos and vacant conveys the same thought in

different words. This is what occurred in Genesis 1:2, just one verse after the perfect creation. Below are listed other verses that point to a disruption.

*For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind (Isaiah 65:17).*

*And I perceived a new heaven and a new earth, for the former heaven and the former earth pass away, and the sea is no more (Revelation 21:1).*

What need would there be for a new heaven and earth if something catastrophic did not happen to the first one?

*I shall be opening My mouth in parables, I shall be emitting what is hid from the disruption (Matthew 13:35).*

*Then shall the King be declaring to those at His right, "Hither, blessed of My Father! Enjoy the allotment of the kingdom made ready for you from the disruption of the world" (Matthew 25:34).*

*Father, those whom Thou hast given Me, I will that, where I am, they also may be with Me, that they may be beholding My glory which Thou hast given Me, for Thou lovest Me before the disruption of the world (John 17:24).*

*Then we who believe are entering into the stopping, according as He has declared, "As I swear in My indignation, If they shall be entering into My stopping!" although the works occur from the disruption of the world (Hebrews 4:3).*

*The wild beast which you perceived was, and is not, and is about to be ascending out of the submerged chaos, and to be going away into destruction. And marvel shall those dwelling on the earth, whose names are not written on the scroll of life from the disruption of the world, when they observe the wild beast, seeing that it was, and is not, and will be present (Revelation 17:8).*

What Caused This Disruption?

Let's answer this with some questions. Would you know what black is without white? Day without night? Rich without poor? Hot without cold? The list could go on and on (which is the opposite of off and off!).

In the first eon, the heavenly beings were overwhelmed with whatever God called into existence. His creatures saw Him as a Creator of endless might and capability, yet one thing was missing: They did not know His Heart. Through Christ, God illustrated His power, but His creatures could not embrace Him as a loving Father. They understood Him in a way that the heathen nations and other unbelievers respect nature.

A contrast between good and evil is necessary for sin, hatred, hostility and rebellion to be revealed. The Scriptures do not offer any full and definite account of the origin of Satan. Orthodox theology teaches that Satan was once perfect, then he rebelled and fell from heaven. I, on the other hand, be-



lieve that our Sovereign God has everything planned and in control, and that He purposely created evil. All is out of God. Evil was the probable cause for the disruption. Look at what Scripture says regarding these two points of view:

— *Was Satan perfect?*

The following passages lead to false ideas of a morning star called Lucifer, a perfect creature fallen from heaven and becoming Satan. Ezekiel 28 is used as proof that he was once perfect, but then fell. The prince of Tyre was definitely a man. If it refers to Satan, then according to :19 he has come to an end. This is not true, for he is alive today and the god of this present wicked eon. The king of Tyre was judged in the sight of those who knew his glory.

*... in whom the **god of this eon** blinds the apprehensions of the unbelieving so that the illumination of the evangel of the glory of Christ, Who is the Image of the invisible God, does not irradiate them (2 Corinthians 4:4).*

Another popular passage to support the theory that Satan fell from a glorified place is Isaiah 14:12. Notice the RSV translation corrected “O Lucifer” to read “O Day Star.” However, this is still incorrect because in the Hebrew text, the word translated “O Lucifer” or “O Day Star” is the same word which is rendered “howl” or “wail” in Zechariah 11:2. In the same chapter of Isaiah it is found in the feminine, beginning with :31. It appears ten other times in Isaiah (13:6; 15:2-3; 16:7 twice; 23:1, 6, 14; 52:5; 65:14). Below is the correct concordant translation of Isaiah 14:9-17. This text does not point to Satan’s past fall, but depicts the future when the “Desolator,” the “Man of Lawlessness” who exalts himself above every deity, is brought down:

*The unseen, beneath, is disturbed for you to meet you at your coming.  
It rouses the Rephaim [healers] for you, all the he-goats of the earth.  
It rouses all the kings of the nations to rise from their thrones,*

*All of them respond and are saying to you:  
“Even you ailed as we! You are a proverb with us!*

*Your pride is brought down to the unseen! The clamor of your zithers!  
Under you berths the worm, and covering you is the maggot.*

***How fall you from heaven! Howl, son of the dawn!***  
*You are hewn down to earth, Over-comer of nations!”*

*For you say in your heart,  
“I will ascend to heaven.  
Above the stars of deity will I exalt my throne,  
and I will sit in the mount of testimony in the lengths of the north.*

*I will ascend on the fane heights of a thick cloud;  
I will be like the Supreme.”*

*Surely you shall descend to the unseen,  
To the lengths of the cistern.*

*Those who see you shall peer at you and understand you.  
“Is this the **man** who disturbed the earth, quaking kingdoms?”*

*Who placed the inhabited earth as a wilderness, and doomed its cities?  
He opened not the house of his bound ones.”*

Contemplating this text exposes how ineffectual the attempts are to uncover evidence for the fall of Satan. Also, the word “Lucifer” is a misnomer by human fabrication and is not found in the original. Still another passage which tries to support the fall of Satan in the past is found in Luke.

*Now the seventy-two return with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Thy name!” Yet He said to them, “I beheld Satan, as lightning, falling out of heaven. Lo! I have given you authority to be treading upon serpents and scorpions and over the entire power of the enemy, and nothing shall be injuring you under any circumstances” (Luke 10:17-19).*

This passage deals with the ministry of the seventy-two whom Jesus sent forth prior to entering a certain place. Satan’s lightning descent from heaven refers to his swiftness in response to the ejected demons in Christ’s name. This is not in reference to his casting out.

It takes celestial beings a very short time to travel from heaven to earth. The messenger Gabriel who stands before God (Luke 1:19), visited Daniel with a message while Daniel was still speaking his brief prayer.

*And as I am still praying and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and causing my supplication to fall before Jehovah, my God, on the holy mountain of my God, and as I am still speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the start, faint with flight, touches me at the time of the evening present. And he is causing me to understand and is speaking with me, And he said, “Daniel, I come forth now to cause you to be intelligent on understanding. At the start of your supplications came forth the word, and I come to tell, for you covet these things. Now understand the word and cause the sight to be understood” (Daniel 9:20-23, RSV).*

Another false misconception about the Adversary is his residence. Traditionally he is known to be in the fiery depths of so-called hell, but Scripture identifies him as the chief of the authority of the air.

*And you, being dead to your offenses and sins, in which once you walked, in accord with the eon of this world, in accord with the chief of the jurisdiction **of the air**, the spirit now operating in the sons of stubbornness (Ephesians 2:1-2).*

*... for it is not ours to wrestle with blood and flesh, but with the sovereignties, with the authorities, with the world-mights of this darkness, with the spiritual forces of wickedness **among the celestials** (Ephesians 6:12).*

In Daniel 10:13 we see the Adversary’s mighty operations through his chiefs by withstanding Gabriel

for twenty-one days. He is not restricted to heaven only, but is going to and fro in the earth and walking in it. Read Job 1:6-11.

There is a time in the future when Satan will fall from heaven. After he and his wicked messengers are defeated in battle, they will be cast out of heaven, down to earth during the middle of the tribulation period.

*And a battle occurred in heaven. Michael and his messengers battle with the dragon, and the dragon battles, and its messengers. And they are not strong enough for him, neither was their place still found in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, the ancient serpent called Adversary and Satan, who is deceiving the whole inhabited earth. It was cast into the earth, and its messengers were cast with it. And I hear a loud voice in heaven saying, "Just now came the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ, for the accuser of our brethren was cast out, who was accusing them before our God day and night. And they conquer him through the blood of the Lambkin, and through the word of their testimony, and they love not their soul, until death. Therefore, make merry, ye heavens, and those tabernacling in them! Woe to the land and the sea, for the Adversary descended to you having great fury, being aware that brief is the season that he has" (Revelation 12:7-12).*

— Was Satan purposely made for evil?

God is omnipotent. He brought creation into existence. Let us not rob Him of His Sovereignty and purpose by making it appear that evil somehow slipped into existence. God knew about sin and evil before the disruption of the world, for He provided Christ as a Sacrifice.

*Men! Israelites! Hear these words: Jesus, the Nazarene, a Man demonstrated to be from God for you by powerful deeds and miracles and signs, which God does through Him in the midst of you, according as you yourselves are aware: This One, given up in the specific counsel and **foreknowledge** of God, you, gibbeting by the hand of the lawless, assassinate (Acts 2:22-23).*

**Known** from the eon to the Lord is His work (Acts 15:18).

*... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a flawless and unspotted lamb, **foreknown**, indeed, before the disruption of the world, yet manifested in the last times because of you, who through Him are believing in God (1 Peter 1:19-20).*

*And all who are dwelling on the earth will be worshipping it, everyone whose name is not written in the scroll of life of the Lambkin **slain from the disruption of the world** (Revelation 13:8).*

*... since then He must often be suffering **from the disruption of the world**, yet now, once, at the conclusion of the eons, for the repudiation of sin through His sacrifice, is He manifest (Hebrews 9:26).*

God chooses whomever He wants, whenever He wants.

*Now we are aware that God is working all together for the good of those who are loving God, who*

*are called according to the purpose that, whom He foreknew, He designates beforehand, also, to be conformed to the image of His Son, for Him to be Firstborn among many brethren. Now whom He designates beforehand, these He calls also, and whom He calls, these He justifies also; now whom He justifies, these He glorifies also (Romans 8:28-30).*

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who blesses us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials, in Christ, according as He chooses us in Him before the disruption of the world, we to be holy and flawless in His sight, in love designating us beforehand for the place of a son for Him through Christ Jesus; in accord with the delight of His will, for the laud of the glory of His grace, which graces us in the Beloved (Ephesians 1:3-6).*

God even subjected creation to vanity.

*For the premonition of the creation is awaiting the unveiling of the sons of God. For to vanity was the creation subjected, not voluntarily, but because of Him Who subjects it, in expectation that the creation itself, also, shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God (Romans 8:19-21).*

God created Satan with the power to sin from the beginning. God uses evil. If the Adversary was not a sinner from the beginning, then he must have been called by some other title if he was once righteous. Such is not revealed. The Adversary sinned from the beginning.

*Yet he who is doing sin is of the Adversary, for from the beginning is the Adversary sinning. For this was the Son of God manifested, that He should be annulling the acts of the Adversary (1 John 3:8).*

*I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe, I am the Lord, Who do all these things (Isaiah 45:7, RSV).*

*Behold, I have created the smith who blows the fire of coals, and produces a weapon for its purpose. I have also created the ravager to destroy (Isaiah 54:16, RSV).*

*By His spirit He makes the heavens, His hand travails with the fugitive serpent (Job 26:13, RSV).*

*Now the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him. And Saul's servants said to him, "Behold now, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you" (1 Samuel 16:14-15, RSV).*

*And on the morrow an evil spirit from God rushed upon Saul, and he raved within his house, while David was playing the lyre, as he did day by day (1 Samuel 18:10, RSV).*

*And Micaiah said, "Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing beside Him on His right hand and on His left; and the Lord said, 'Who will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said one thing, and another said another. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord, saying, 'I will entice him.' And the Lord said to him, 'By what means?' And he said, 'I will go forth, and will be a lying*

*spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’ And He said, ‘You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go forth and do so.’ Now therefore behold, the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; the Lord has spoken evil concerning you” (1 Kings 22:19-23, RSV).*

If you believe that God created all things, then any struggling thoughts about God’s purpose for Satan and the eons will begin to clarify themselves.

*All came into being through it [the Word], and apart from it not even one thing came into being which has come into being (John 1:3).*

## THE SECOND EON

Next on the Divine Calendar, we come to the second eon. This eon starts with a restoration of the heavens and earth of old.

*For they want to be oblivious of this, that there were heavens of old, and an earth cohering out of water and through water, by the Word of God (2 Peter 3:5).*

We are presently living in the “second” of the heavens and earths.

*Yet the heavens now, and the earth, by the same Word, are stored with fire, being kept for the day of the judging and destruction of irreverent men (2 Peter 3:7).*

The second eon – known as the ancient eon, or as referred to by Peter, the ancient world – begins in the latter part of Genesis 1:2. Notice how God starts the restoration process of the disrupted world: His Spirit moves over the waters. Here is further proof of a disruption and deluge before Noah’s day.

God is perfect. He did not make this waste and barren earth which is submerged in water as His primal creation. No, it is the result of a cataclysmic judgment.

What purpose does this tiny earth have in relationship to the vast universe? Remember, the heavens and celestial hosts were created before the earth. Satan maneuvers his power over the earth, which was made to become the scene on which the great struggle between good and evil was to be enacted. Once again, the Adversary is the god of this eon.

*... in whom the **god of this eon** blinds the apprehensions of the unbelieving so that the illumination of the evangel of the glory of Christ, Who is the Image of the invisible God, does not irradiate them (2 Corinthians 4:4).*

So far we have a Sovereign God. He is Spirit, invisible to His creation. Therefore the need for a visible Image was necessary, which is Christ. Through Him was created the universe of suns and stars, along with brilliant heavenly beings. God wanted to reveal His innermost heart. To accomplish this, He needed the Adversary, the opposite of good. Now God’s goal is underway. His love will eventually be recognized by the heavenly hosts and all mankind. The scene is set. Earth is the stage. A fundamental truth found in Corinthians is that we became a theater to the world!

... for we became a theater to the world and to messengers and to men (1 Corinthians 4:9).

Now what role do humans play? Since Christ was foreknown to be a Sacrifice, Satan could not harm Him in the form of God. Christ had to empty Himself of His Glory. Celestials do not die (Luke 20:36), so He took on a form which could feel pain, agony, suffering and, finally, death – a shameful death, at that.

*For let this disposition be in you, which is in Christ Jesus also, Who, being inherently in the form of God, deems it not pillaging to be equal with God, nevertheless empties Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming to be in the likeness of humanity, and, being found in fashion as a human, He humbles Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:5-8).*

Praise God in the name of Christ Jesus for His love of all!

Isn't it outstanding that humanity is an instrument used by God in order that Christ could reveal to the universe Who God is and Who He Himself is? This revelation is love. We can only give praise from our lips.

In order for this human form to be capable of death, sin had to enter the picture. Mankind was not the cause of all evil, because the Adversary was already in the garden. In Genesis 2:15 Adam had to till it and keep (protect) it. In 3:5 the serpent said that they would know good and evil. There is the key to God's purpose for humanity and the earth: the knowledge of good and evil. Because of Adam's one sin, the dying process was passed through to all mankind.

*Therefore, even as through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death, and thus death passed through into all mankind, on which all sinned (Romans 5:12).*

Now it was possible for God to show His deepest love for all: the Sacrifice of His Son. Christ's one just act reverses Adam's one offense. Adam caused condemnation, Christ gives justification. This fundamental truth is found in Romans.

*Consequently, then, as it was through one offense for all mankind for condemnation, thus also it is through one just award for all mankind for life's justifying (Romans 5:18).*

Satan thought he hindered God's plan for humanity, but good was brought out of it. From this will come the Seed which will destroy Satan's works.

*For this was the Son of God manifested, that He should be annulling the acts of the Adversary (1 John 3:8).*

Now there is a need for salvation. Without evil, sin, suffering and death, salvation is unknown and unappreciated.

Satan thought he foiled God again by the death of Jesus, but good came out of this also. Now He has the highest glory and is worthy of all.

*... rousing Him from among the dead and seating Him at His right hand among the celestials, up over every sovereignty and authority and power and lordship, and every name that is named, not only in this eon, but also in that which is impending: and subjects all under His feet, and gives Him, as Head over all, to the ecclesia which is His body, the complement of the One completing the all in all (Ephesians 1:20-23).*

Every celestial and human being can respond to God's love and appreciate what He is. The cross revealed everything that is in His heart. Nothing else could, for He gave His Beloved One for His enemies. Christ did not become the Most High because God appointed Him thus. He earned it through His deeds by being obedient, even to death. Never will His creatures cease to find new marvels in the cross of Christ.

Humanity is used to reveal Christ, God's crowning revelation. It is also the medium through which Satan reveals himself. Tools of Satan and instruments of God. "O, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How inscrutable are His ways!" (Romans 11:33).

Also, in this Second Eon is the start of twelve intervals. They are: Innocence, Conscience, Government, Promise, Law, Incarnation, Pentecostal, Two-Fold, Secret, Indignation, Justice and Love.

Two intervals are found in the second eon: Innocence and Conscience.

**INNOCENCE:** Adam and Eve knew no evil, therefore they were like innocent babes; but to live in such a garden, plucking fruit, eating it and being among harmless animals would not fulfill God's plan. Evil was required.

**CONSCIENCE:** There was no hesitancy when Eve took the fruit and ate of it, giving some to Adam. Then immediately they were conscious of their nakedness.

She would have thought twice about her actions now. This was not possible when they were innocent without a conscience. God left humanity on its own with just a conscience of good and evil to discourage them from wrong. This inner restriction was insufficient because the result was destruction by flood.

### **THE THIRD EON**

Next on the Divine Calendar is the third eon, in which we are now living. This eon begins after God destroys all corrupt flesh of the second eon except Noah's family and some animals. Man needs God's presence for preservation. This third eon begins with government and ends with indignation.

**GOVERNMENT:** To prevent mankind from utter destruction a second time, God introduces "authority." This rule of man over man aided in reducing wickedness by correcting them. This decreased the violent behavior. Humanity has two things working for it up to this point: Conscience (knowing the difference between good and evil), and government (restraint by the authorities). However, these gratuities from God are abused. While on this subject of authority, when we hear the saying "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," this refers to a measure of punishment given, depending on the type of offense. It should not be thought of with respect to vengeance, because the Lord is the Avenger (1 Thessalonians 4:6).

PROMISE: Though government was proven a failure, it continues along with conscience. In Genesis 1-11 God is dealing with all men on one level. There was no distinctive calling. There was not a favored nation. The nations became so corrupt (Genesis 10-11) that God gave them up (Romans 1:18-32).

So in Genesis 12 God chose Abraham to play a mediator role for the nations. He was the father of a nation. The nations had to go through Israel to have access to the true God. God chose Israel, which will be a blessing to other nations. Through Abraham comes the Seed, which is Christ. Praise God for His Masterful plan.

*Now to Abraham the promises were declared, and to his Seed. He is not saying, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of One: And to "your Seed," which is Christ (Galatians 3:16).*

Promises give humans something to anticipate. They encourage us to live uprightly.

LAW: God made a covenant with the nation of Israel. However, they didn't keep it, thus the law was given as a reminder that Israel broke the covenant. Paul wrote that the law was added because of transgression (Galatians 3:19). The law demonstrates how ineffective their attempt was to gain divine righteousness given to Abraham. Before the law, sin was a mere mistake. Now it is a transgression because a divine command is violated. Transgression is sin against a known law which not only includes punishment, but finds displeasure with God. Without law there is no transgression. Law produces indignation.

INCARNATION: The only hope Israel had was a Redeemer and a new covenant. They could never fulfill their mission as a priestly nation until they were under a new covenant. They remained in bondage under the law. Finally, their Redeemer came and sealed the new covenant with His blood. This was the end of the law. *"For the law through Moses was given, but Grace and Truth came through Jesus Christ"* (John 1:17). The law commanded; Christ provided. The law was divine; Christ was warm, kind, merciful and compassionate. Yet even though the Word and Image of God were among His people, they not only rejected their Prince of Peace but crucified Him as well (John 1:11).

PENTECOST: Jesus prayed on the cross to forgive Israel and give them a second chance, so God continued to show mercy to the nation by pouring out His spirit on the few who believed. Yet the nation rejected this spiritual gift and defied those whom God had appointed to herald the good news. Israel did not repent, and Paul closed the door on them (Acts 28:28). Now Israel is set aside and they are on the same level as the nations were before the call of Abraham (Genesis 1-11). They are not God's favored nation today, but He will fulfill their promises in the future. More on this topic in a later chapter.

TWO-FOLD: The apostle Paul had a two-fold ministry during the Acts period. He was proclaiming the millennial kingdom to both Jews and gentiles, the reason being that God wanted to provoke Israel to jealousy so that they would repent and accept their Messiah. Believing gentiles were grafted into the olive tree, and the branches of the unbelieving Jews were cut out to provoke Israel to jealousy (Romans 10:19; 11:11-26). This was foretold by Moses.

*They have stirred Me to jealousy with what is no god; they have provoked Me with their idols. So I will stir them to jealousy with those who are no people; I will provoke them with a foolish nation (Deuteronomy 32:21, RSV).*



SECRET: No other nation was on equal terms with Israel. Only scraps or crumbs were allowed (Mathew 15:22-28). The nations were always guests or debtors and subjected to Israel (Romans 15:27).

Now, God is revealing something completely new. The apostle Paul, while imprisoned, unfolds the exceeding glories through the wisdom of the Ephesians secret. God is calling both Jews and Gentiles into one body, which is the present church. The wall of separation is now broken down (Ephesians 2:14). The church will have the role as mediator in heavenly places. This calling is by grace, not by covenant. This secret of the Ephesians letter was hidden in God (Ephesians 3:8-10; Colossians 1:25-26). More about this interval in a later chapter.

INDIGNATION: This interval is known as the time of Jacob's trouble or the great tribulation, just prior to our Lord's return to set up the Millennial kingdom. The Desolator, or Man of Lawlessness, will cause so much pain, misery and persecution for the Jews that they will call on the Lord. Christ will return to the Mount of Olives and they will look on Him Whom they pierced (Zechariah 12:10, RSV).

### THE EONS OF THE EONS

After our Lord returns to earth, He will set up the Millennial kingdom. This ushers in the fourth and fifth eons, called "*the oncoming eons*" (Ephesians 2:7). The fourth eon is designated as "*the coming eon*" (Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30), which is the Millennial kingdom.

The fifth eon is "*the eon of the eon*" (*oulm u od*, Hebrews 1:8, translated from the Septuagint). It is also called "*the eon of the eons*" (Ephesians 3:21). Please refer to the Divine Calendar. These last two eons together are called "*the eons of the eons*," more commonly known as "forever and ever."

I pray that you are somewhat convinced that the word "eon" is not associated with endlessness. With this in mind, the confusing phrase "forever and ever" can be dealt with. These words "forever and ever" were programmed into our minds through faulty Bible translations, love songs and happy-ending stories.

If the English word "forever" denotes "eternity" and "always," then the addition of "and ever" contradicts all laws of language. No word can be added to "forever" to increase its endless meaning. Many believe it is just a harmless expression of the infinity of eternity. If this is so, let us keep it in the verses of love songs, and the scripts of happy-ending stories. Furthermore, if this expression is acceptable, then would it be correct for a journalist to say, "that was the worst and worst disaster I've ever seen," or for a sports announcer to say, "that was the longest and longest ball hit in this stadium"? Professionals do not use these expressions, neither did men inspired by God.

May we abstain from that which is contrary to our Divine Author by turning to the Original Scriptures for clarification. A comparison of three phrases will aid us.

*ton aiōna tou aiōnos* (Hebrews 1:8)

the eon of the eon

*tou aiōnos ton aiōnōn* (Ephesians 3:21)

of the eon of the eons

*tous aiōnas ton aiōnōn* (Galatians 1:5)

the eons of the eons

If the singular *ton aiōna tou aiōnos* means “forever and ever,” then *tou aiōnos ton aiōnon* must be rendered “forever and evers,” and *tous aiōnas ton aiōnōn* must be rendered “forevers and evers.” These phrases show that the eons are limited in time, and possess different qualities.

### THE FOURTH EON

JUSTICE: This eon begins after the tribulation period. Christ returns as Israel’s Messiah to set up the Millennial kingdom, during which He will rule with a rod of iron. Righteousness will reign. This is why justice is present. Up until now God had left mankind to prove its own weakness and foolishness, but in this eon and the next, He appears on the scene in the person of His Son. There will be divine government and glory. In this fourth eon, Israel is near and the nations are still at a distance. This is due to Israel’s religious rise. There will be sacrifices, oblation, festivals, a restored priesthood and more.

This is Israel’s time of refreshing, restoration and hope (Acts 3:19-21). They will be blessed, and their royal priesthood will share God’s blessings with all the families of the earth. All flesh shall come to worship; but just like all of the other eons, this one also ends in judgment. Satan is loosed after the thousand years to deceive the nations. Fire descends from God out of heaven and devours his armies. Then the Adversary is cast into the lake of fire and sulphur where the wild beast and false prophet are (Revelation 20:7-10).

In the next (last) eon, much is changed; but before it begins, the second great cataclysmic disruption takes place. The present earth and heaven are destroyed with fire. Then the dead, great and small, are resurrected for the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15).

*Yet the heavens now, and the earth, by the same word, are stored with fire, being kept for the day of the judging and destruction of irreverent men* (2 Peter 3:7).

*... the heavens shall be passing by with a booming noise, yet the elements shall be dissolved by combustion, and the earth and the works in it shall be found* (2 Peter 3:10).

### THE FIFTH EON

(New Heaven and Earth)

The present earth and heaven will be consumed with fire after the fourth eon and prior to the Great White Throne Judgment. Then there is a new heaven and earth (Revelation 21:1-3).

LOVE: This interval resembles the first eon; a perfect cosmos. Also it is a restored Paradise of the

---

second eon in which God is once again on intimate terms with humanity as a whole, and tabernacles among them. In the previous (fourth) eon, Christ reigned with an iron rod. Now He is present as the Son of God's love. The Jews and nations will have a close fellowship. What a display of God's reconcilable plan.

Though there will be no more death on the new earth (Revelation 21:4), all will not possess immortality. The tree of life will supply the body with vital properties. Remember that the nations on the new earth will be fleshly and soulish – thus the need for the tree of life (Ezekiel 47:12; Revelation 22:2).

Christ alone has immortality, and also those at His presence. This includes the church which is His body and Abraham's seed according to the flesh and promise up to the first or former resurrection, prior to the millennium (Revelation 20:5). The rest of mankind is resurrected at the Great White Throne.

The new heaven and earth is not the final phase of God's goal for the universe. As long as there are kings reigning (Revelation 21:24), and the second death is still in operation (Revelation 21:8), all is NOT subject under Christ's feet. Death has to be abolished so all can be subject to God. This will become clear when we discuss death, resurrections, vivification and reconciliation.

### THE CONSUMMATION OF THE EONS

Christ is the "beginning and the end".

*I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Origin and the Consummation (Revelation 22:13).*

If the eons began through Christ (Ephesians 3:11), then they must also come to a consummation or end through Him (1 Corinthians 15:24). Endings are sometimes sad, but not in this case. Christ places all of His enemies under His feet. The last enemy is death. The only death existing in the fifth eon is the second death. When Christ finally abolishes it, then all is subject to God. Christ Himself also shall be subject to God (1 Corinthians 15:28).



# Rightly Dividing the Word

*All Scripture is inspired by God, and is beneficial for teaching, for exposure, for correction, for discipline in righteousness, that the man of God may be equipped, fitted out for every good act (2 Timothy 3:16).*

Christ revealed to the apostle Paul many guidelines for today for the church which is His body. The previous passage must be kept within its limits. All Scripture is not for all people and all time intervals

Three rules taught by the apostle Paul are found in 2 Timothy and Philippians.

*Have a pattern of sound words, which you hear from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. The ideal thing committed you, guard through the Holy Spirit which is making its home in us (2 Timothy 1:13-14).*

*Prove things that differ (Philippians 1:10, Companion Bible).*

*Endeavor to present yourself to God qualified, an unashamed worker, correctly cutting [rightly dividing] the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15).*

Having a pattern of sound words will help us understand Scripture. However, the last two rules will aid us in understanding which Scriptures were written for whom. We will not be ashamed workers if we rightly divide the Word of Truth and prove (*i.e.*, test, or differentiate) things that differ.

For example, all of the tools in the world are available to everyone, but if an auto mechanic and a carpenter do not *rightly divide* these *different* tools among themselves, surely they will be ashamed workers. If we fail to divide God's Word and prove things that differ, it is impossible to have truth and we cannot fail to have error.

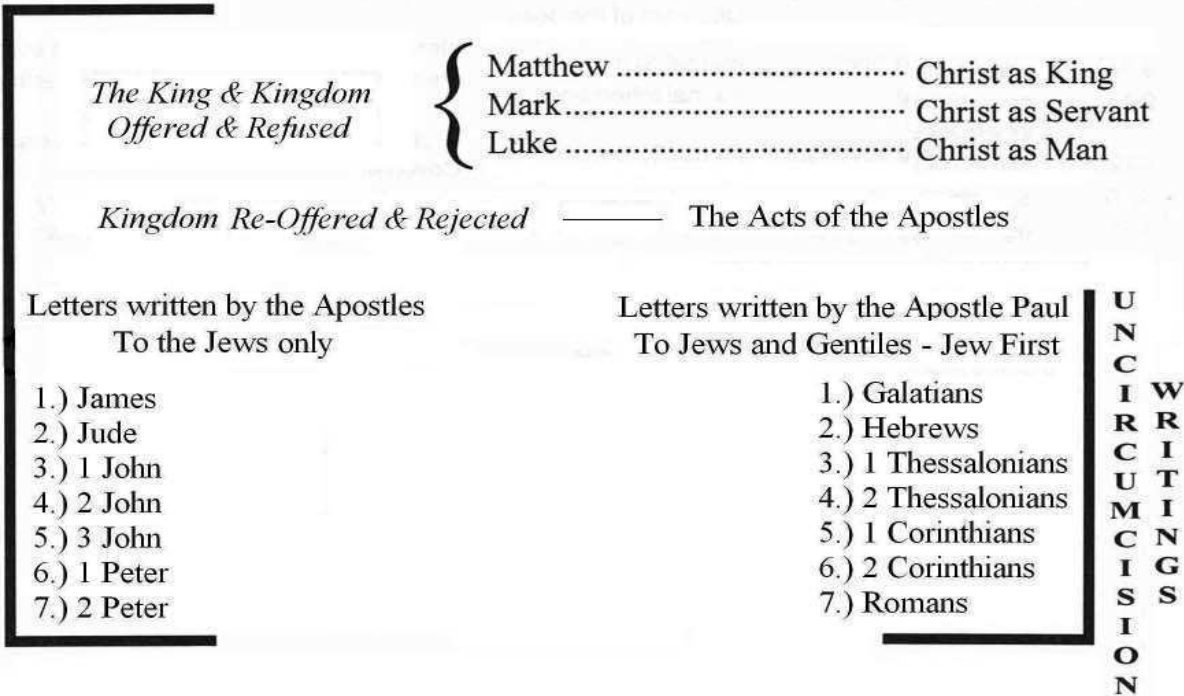
## INTERVAL

Paul, which is *Paulos* in Greek, is the masculine of Paula. It indicates a pause or an interval. If you read from Genesis 12 all the way through the Old Testament, you will learn about a particular people, their land, covenant, promises, priesthood, sacrifices, offerings, tithing, feasts, twelve tribes, prophecy of a Messiah and a kingdom for the nation of Israel on earth.

**THE GREEK SCRIPTURES**

"Correctly Cut"

C  
I  
R  
C  
U  
M  
C  
I  
S  
I  
O  
N  
  
W  
R  
I  
T  
I  
N  
G  
S



U  
N  
C  
I  
R  
C  
U  
M  
C  
I  
S  
I  
O  
N

***The Present Parenthetic Interval***

The Present Dispensation - Kingdom Postponed

*The Gospel of Eonian Life to the World* - John 3:16  
Christ as the Son of God

*The Gospel of the Dispensation of the Secret* - Ephesians 3:9  
Paul's Letters for the Church Today - Which is His Body

- 1.) Ephesians
- 2.) Philippians
- 3.) Philemon
- 4.) Colossians
- 5.) 1 Timothy
- 6.) Titus
- 7.) 2 Timothy

The Day of the Lord - The Kingdom Set Up - New Covenant Fulfilled  
***Christ is King of kings and Lord of Lords* - Revelation 19:16**

*Realized*

C  
I  
R  
C  
U  
M  
C  
I  
S  
I  
O  
N

**Figure 3**

Continuing in the New Testament with the three gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke), you will read about the manifestation of the Messiah as the Son of David and the Son of Abraham. He is the King of Israel and the Owner of the land. He is the model Servant. He is a sympathetic and gracious Man. Also in these three gospels, the King and kingdom were offered to this same nation Israel, and rejected. After the gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke), if you read on through Acts, you will discover that the same kingdom is offered to the same people through the ministry of the twelve apostles. It was rejected twenty times, even knowing of Christ's resurrection.

Refer to figure three. Omitting Paul's epistles for today (Ephesians, Philippians, Philemon, Colossians, 1 Timothy, Titus and 2 Timothy), the book of Hebrews follows the book of Acts. If you read Hebrews right after reading Acts, then right on to and through Jude (again, omitting Paul's epistles for today), you will get the true connection between the proclamation of the kingdom in the book of Acts and the epistles dealing with God's plan for earth's redemption and blessings to the nations through Israel.

The epistle to the Hebrews was written for the Pentecostal believers who were expecting Israel's immediate restoration of their land. When God shut the door on Israel, this faithful remnant needed to be strengthened and encouraged, and their faith needed to be perfected. Hebrews parallels the wilderness journey from Egypt to the promised land. Judaizers tried to lead these believers back into bondage under the law, but the law could not lead to perfection (Hebrews 7:19). Yet they have a greater hope, a greater covenant, a better priesthood of the order of Melchisedec and better promises in Christ, Who transcends Moses, Joshua and Aaron (Chapter 7:15-17). They were striving for a reward (Hebrews 10:35; 11:26). Just like Abraham, they also were looking for that blessed hope of the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem (Hebrews 11:8-16).

The epistles of James and Peter also were addressed to the dispersion to give them encouragement and comfort as they endured trials. Also, both James and Peter gave hope of the Lord's return. (James 5:7; 2 Peter 1:16).

The book of Revelation points to the future when our Lord will return to earth and restore His people and land.

## THE CHURCH

Before continuing with the subject "Rightly Dividing the Word," it is important to understand the meaning of the word "church." "Church" comes from the Greek word *ekklesia*. It is a common noun and consists of two parts: *ek*, meaning "out," and *klesia*, meaning "called." Thus the English meaning is "out-called" or an assembly. Throughout the centuries, translators have turned this simple common noun into a proper name. Because of this, it appears that there is only one church throughout the bible and we today are spiritual Israel – but this is not true.

Regardless of where the word *ekklesia* appears in Scripture, it always refers to a gathering of an "out-called" people or an assembly.

It is used for those of the Jewish synagogue (Matthew 18:17); a group of believers at a specific location (Acts 13:1); the law courts of the time (Acts 19:39); the church of God which is at Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:2); the churches of Christ (Romans 16:16); the churches of God (1 Corinthians 11:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:14).

Here are some different “churches” of God’s redeemed. These are not local assemblies but are named corporations of believers, groups of God’s children formed into companies or churches:

### **The Church Which Is Israel**

*This is the Moses who says to the sons of Israel, “A Prophet will God be raising up to you from among your brethren, as me.” This is he who came to be in the ecclesia [church] in the wilderness with the messenger, who speaks to him in Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, who receives the living oracles to give to you (Acts 7:37-38).*

### **The Church of the Firstborn**

*But you have come to mount Zion, and the city of the living God, celestial Jerusalem, and to ten thousand messengers, to a universal convocation, and to the ecclesia [church] of the firstborn, registered in the heavens, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the just perfected (Matthew 16:18-19).*

### **The Church Which Is His Body**

*... and subjects all under His feet, and gives Him, as Head over all, to the ecclesia [church] which is His body, the complement of the One completing the all in all (Ephesians 1:22).*

Next we will look at an overview of the holy Scriptures which will further help us to understand the topic of “Rightly Dividing The Word of Truth.”

## **AN OVERVIEW OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES**

The Living and the Written Word. We cannot neglect one without despising the other.

*“Thy Word is Truth ... I am the Truth.” — The Lord Jesus Christ.*

### **Part 1. The Law (Torah)**

Genesis  
Exodus  
Leviticus  
Numbers  
Deuteronomy

### **Part 2. The Prophets (Nebi'im)**

#### *A. The Former Prophets (Zechariah 7:7)*

Joshua  
Judges  
Samuel  
Kings



---

*B. The Latter Prophets*

Isaiah  
Jeremiah  
Ezekiel  
Minor Prophets

**Part 3. The Psalms (Kethubim)**

Psalms  
Proverbs  
Job  
Song of Solomon  
Ruth  
Lamentations  
Ecclesiastes  
Esther  
Daniel  
Ezra-Nehemiah  
Chronicles

**Part 4. The Crown Rights Asserted**

Matthew  
Mark  
Luke  
Acts

**Part 5. The Crown Rights Refused**

*A. Paul's Acts Letters – Parousia and Apocalypse*

Galatians  
Hebrews  
1 Thessalonians  
2 Thessalonians  
1 Corinthians  
2 Corinthians  
Romans

*B. Circumcision Letters – Parousia and Apocalypse*

James  
Jude  
1 John  
2 John

3 John  
 1 Peter  
 2 Peter

### **Part 6. The Present Dispensation. Israel Rejected. John 1:11, Acts 28:28**

*A. The Gospel of Eonian Life to the World – No Repentance or Baptism. Believe.*

John

*B. Prison Letters. The Gospel of the Dispensation of the Secret – Epiphaneia*

Ephesians  
 Philippians  
 Philemon  
 Colossians  
 1 Timothy  
 Titus  
 2 Timothy

### **Part 7. The Crown Rights Realized**

Revelation

In Genesis 1-11, God is dealing with all men on one level. There was no distinctive calling and no favored nation. The only hope was the resurrection after the heavens and earth had passed away at the Great White Throne (Job 14:12; Revelation 20:11; 21:1). The nations became so corrupt (Genesis 10-11) that God gave them up (Romans 1:18-32).

From Genesis 12 through Revelation we learned that with the exception of Paul's prison letters, God is dealing with one nation (Israel). Figure 3 shows that Ephesians, Philippians, Philemon, Colossians, 1 Timothy, Titus and 2 Timothy were written for today and exclude the nation of Israel. Galatians, Hebrews, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians and Romans were written during the Acts period and deal with the coming kingdom on earth in the next eon, which was always to the Jew first (Romans 1:16).

So, in Genesis 12 God chose Abraham to play a mediator role for the nations. He was the father of a nation. The nations had to go through Israel to the true God. Israel was a nation of priests (Exodus 19). Israel agreed to the terms of the covenant by the law, however they didn't keep the covenant. The law was given as a reminder that Israel broke the covenant. Paul wrote that the law was added because of transgressions (Galatians 3:19). The only hope which Israel had was for a Redeemer and a new covenant. They could never fulfill their mission as a priestly nation until they were under a new covenant. They remained in bondage under the law.

Finally, their Redeemer came and sealed the new covenant with His blood. This was the end of the law, but Israel rejected their Prince of Peace (John 1:11). Jesus prayed on the cross to give them a sec-

---

ond chance, but Israel as a nation once again rebelled. That is why Jewish believers were still under law during the Acts period. God was still dealing with Israel. The individual couldn't be free from the law until Israel was. This is illustrated in the Old Testament. Joshua and Caleb couldn't enter the promise land. They believed God but the nation did not, so they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years before entering the land. The same is true in the gospels and book of Acts. The millennial kingdom of heaven which had drawn near in the gospels and the book of Acts until the last chapter, was offered for about 40 years.

The number 40 represents probation or testing. After 40 years Moses returned to Egypt to free Israel. Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. Moses was on Mount Sinai for 40 days and nights receiving the law. Jesus was tempted for 40 days and nights. In Acts, the apostles were taught for 40 days.

Those who believed during the Acts period witnessed signs and wonders. They were told about the God of Israel and His Son. They believed in the coming kingdom. They realized the role that Israel had in God's future plans. The branches of the unbelieving Jews were cut out of the olive tree, and believing gentiles were grafted in to provoke Israel to jealousy (Romans 10:19; 11:11-26). Gentiles partook of the fatness of the olive tree. The fatness of the olive tree was the blessings and promises made to the fathers who were the root of the tree (Romans 15:27). One of those blessings and promises was their hope of resurrection. Israel had a priority and the gentiles submitted to it. To the Jew first. There was a wall of separation between believing Jews and gentiles because Israel was still burdened by the law but the gentiles were not, except for four particles (Acts 15:20, 29). Israel did not repent, and Paul closed the door on them (Acts 28:28). Now Israel is set aside and they are on the same level as the nations were before the call of Abraham (Genesis 1-11). They are not God's favored nation today, but He will fulfill their promises in the future.

Today, through Paul's gospel of the dispensation of the secret, exceeding glories are unfolded through the wisdom of the letters written to the Ephesians. Out of Jews and gentiles God is calling them into the church which is His body. The wall of separation is now broken down (Ephesians 2:14). This church will have the role as mediator in heavenly places. This calling is by grace, not by covenant. This secret of the Ephesians letter was hidden in God (Ephesians 3:8-10; Colossians 1:25-26).

Set forth below is the chronological order of the books written during the Acts period. The time period is fairly accurate, although some believe that the book of Hebrews was written sometime in the 60's A.D. Regardless, each book needs to be read in light of the time they were written. Failure to do so creates confusion and contradiction. These should be read realizing that Israel stood before God as a nation. His purposes were centered in and around the nation of Israel. All of the attendant blessings that were to accompany the national revival were in view. The epistles of Paul during this time should be read recognizing the fact that what he wrote was *nothing outside of what both the prophets and Moses spoke regarding impending occurrences* (Acts 26:22).

<b>Book</b>	<b>Date of Writing</b>
Mathew	41 A.D.
Mark and Revelation	43 A.D.
James	45 A.D.
Jude	46 A.D.
Hebrews	52 A.D.
1 and 2 Thessalonians	53 A.D.
1, 2, and 3 John	55 A.D.
Galatians, 1 & 2 Corinthians	57 A.D.
Luke and Romans	58 A.D.
1 and 2 Peter	60 A.D.
Acts 28:28	63 A.D.
John	90 A.D.

### **THE LETTERS OF PAUL**

Let us consider the letters of Paul, which most likely include the book of Hebrews, making a total of fourteen. There is much controversy as to who wrote the book of Hebrews. First of all, if you look at Figure 3 you will find twenty one letters or epistles written by the apostles. Seven to the Jews only, seven to Jews and gentiles and seven for the church which is His body today. Three sets of seven, with seven being God's number associated with divine completion and perfection.

The book of Hebrews was written before Paul wrote the prison epistles. The church which is His Body, mentioned in the perfection epistles, was not yet revealed, so it wouldn't appear in the book of Hebrews.

The author of the letter to the Hebrews has not added his name to the text. This has led many to believe that the apostle Paul was not the writer, since Paul includes his name in all of his other letters. The work may have been offered anonymously by Paul due to the fact that he was held in suspicion and contempt by the unsaved Jews and legalistic Christians. These people automatically would have rejected any letter written by Paul. Paul could have given this as a sermon, which then was penned by someone else.

The letter to the Hebrews does hold certain clues to the identity of the author, as well as there being a "feel" about it that reminds us of the apostle Paul. The writing of Hebrews has Paul's style.

- A. Being a "*Hebrew of the Hebrews; in relation to law, a Pharisee*" (Philippians 3:5), Paul was well qualified to write this letter.
- B. There are various statements in the letter that correspond to the life of Paul and these are:
  1. Peter was ordained to take the gospel to the Jews while Paul went to the gentiles:

*But, on the contrary, perceiving that I have been entrusted with the evangel of the Un-*

*circumcision, according as Peter of the Circumcision, for He Who operates in Peter for the apostleship of the Circumcision operates in me also for the nations (Galatians 2:7-8).*

There is no evidence that Paul wrote any other letter to the Jews. Peter says, “*according as our beloved brother **Paul also writes to you**, according to the wisdom given to him*” (2 Peter 3:15). It is highly likely that Hebrews is that letter.

2. There is no other person in the New Testament qualified enough to write about the various laws and practices of Judaism. Hebrews was written from the point of view of someone who “has been there” and has a practical knowledge of the Jewish religion.
3. The person who wrote the book of Hebrews is someone who did not know Jesus Christ personally when He was on earth:

*How shall we be escaping when neglecting a salvation of such proportions which, obtaining a beginning through the speaking of the Lord, was confirmed to us **by those who hear Him**.* (Hebrews 2:3).

No one wrote more about faith than the apostle Paul. The letter to the Hebrews was written especially for Jewish believers who were being persecuted by legalists for their faith in Christ. It was Paul’s desire to encourage the faith and commitment of these believers. It appears that doubts were setting in regarding the gospel, and some were returning to Judaism. He challenges the believers not to compromise, to hold fast their confession of faith, to go on to maturity, and not to even think about returning to the old way (read Hebrews 11).

A trademark of the apostle Paul, found only in his writings, is his use of metaphors associated with sporting events. Having visited Corinth on more than one occasion, the apostle undoubtedly had witnessed firsthand some of the Isthmian games from which have come our modern day Olympics. He effectively used these various events as a springboard to show us how the believer’s life, like the training of an athlete, takes time, discipline, endurance and patience. For example:

*Are you not aware that those racing in a stadium are, indeed, all racing, yet one is obtaining the prize? Thus be racing that you may be grasping it (1 Corinthians 9:24).*

*... thus am I racing, not as dubious, thus am I boxing, not as punching the air (1 Corinthians 9:26).*

*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers (Ephesians 6:12).*

Paul also challenges the Hebrews, like the gentiles, not to allow sin to weigh them down, but like the athlete who has brought his body into subjection, it is important to finish the race that is set before them.

*Surely, in consequence, then, we also, having so vast a cloud of witnesses encompassing us, putting off every impediment and the popular sin, may be **racing with endurance the contest lying before us** (Hebrews 12:1).*

**Paul, the prisoner:**

*So that my bonds in Christ become apparent in the whole Pretorium and to all the rest (Philippians 1:13).*

*Now more exceedingly am I entreating you to do this, that I may be restored to you more quickly (Hebrews 13:19).*

Perhaps the most convincing evidence of the Pauline authorship of the book of Hebrews is how the apostle closes the letter. Even critics admit these words of benediction sound all too Pauline. The reason for this, of course, is because they are! There is no question that the writer of Hebrews was a prisoner in Rome at the time of the writing (Hebrews 13:23-24). We should point out that there is a striking resemblance to Paul's instruction to the church at Philippi and his closing words here to the Hebrews. As a matter of fact, they seem to be a sequel to one another with the Hebrew letter answering to the apostle's words in Philippians.

In Philippians Paul and Timothy are both prisoners in Rome, and we should carefully note that the apostle expects that Timothy will soon be released (Philippians 1:1; 2:19). Whoever wrote Hebrews identifies himself with Timothy. We learn from Hebrews 13:23 that Timothy was indeed set at liberty at which time he apparently traveled to Philippi. The writer of the Hebrew letter is well known by at least some of his readers, because he requests their prayers on his and Timothy's behalf (Hebrews 13:18). Paul himself expected to be released; although, at that point in time when he wrote to the saints at Philippi, he did not have the final confirmation on this matter (Philippians 2:23-24). However, in Hebrews 13:23 we discover that Timothy was set at liberty, and Paul expected to follow up his letters with personal visits.

Finally, after the problem encountered at Thessalonica with his signature being forged, he determined to alleviate the situation by closing all of his epistles in the same manner:

*The salutation is by my hand [Paul's] which is a sign in every epistle: thus am I writing. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all! Amen! (2 Thessalonians 3:17-18).*

The book of Hebrews follows suit, closing in the same manner with personal words of salutation to the saints followed by his unique closing, "*Grace be with you all. Amen!*" (Hebrews 13:25).

Let us now continue with the subject, "Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

Once again, the apostle Paul wrote fourteen letters. Seven during the Acts period, and seven after.

**A. Paul's Acts Letters – Parousia and Apocalypse**

Galatians

Hebrews

1 Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians

1 Corinthians

2 Corinthians

Romans

---

---

*B. Paul's Post Acts Letters. The Gospel of the Dispensation of the Secret – Epiphaneia*

Ephesians	62 A.D.
Philippians	62 A.D.
Philemon	62 A.D.
Colossians	62 A.D.
1 Timothy	67 A.D.
Titus	67 A.D.
2 Timothy	68 A.D.

Fundamental truths can be found in Paul's Acts letters, but dispensational truths found in his post Acts letters are for the church today, which is His body. By correctly cutting (rightly dividing) Paul's letters, other controversial subjects can be dealt with. For example: When did the ecclesia (church) which is His body begin and when does the snatching away or gathering (commonly called the rapture) occur? Was Paul's ministry during the Acts period transitional or a continuation of something? Was justification by faith introduced by Paul? Was Israel replaced by the church today (replacement theology)?

There are teachings from our apostle which do not change and can be found in all of his writings such as, Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and we should all strive to run the race with patience (1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Galatians 1:3-4; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 10:4,12; Acts 13:39 and Titus 3:7). Yet there are some differences in our apostle's letters and these we should note very carefully.

During the period covered by the book of Acts, Paul was proclaiming our Lord Jesus Christ as the One in Whom forgiveness of sins and righteousness could be found, but at the same time he was presenting the Lord as Israel's coming Messiah. The *soon*-coming kingdom on the earth was the expectation for believers at that time. Let us consider the book of Romans as an example.

If Romans was written at about the time of Acts 20, then let us carefully note Paul's words spoken after the writing of that book in Acts 26:

*Now I say, "Who art Thou, Lord?" Now the Lord said, "I am Jesus, Whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand on your feet, for I was seen by you for this, to fix upon you before for a deputy and a witness both of what you have perceived and that in which I will be seen by you, extricating you from the people and from the nations, to whom I am commissioning you, to open their eyes, to turn them about from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, for them to get a pardon of sins and an allotment among those who have been hallowed by faith that is in Me." Whence, king Agrippa, I did not become stubborn as to the heavenly apparition ... (Acts 26:15-19).*

*Happening, then, on assistance from God, until this day I stand attesting both to small and to great, saying nothing outside of what both the prophets and Moses speak of impending occurrences – if it be the suffering Christ – if He, the first out of a resurrection of the dead, is about to be announcing light both to the people and to the nations (Act 26:22-23).*

In the preceding passages Paul gives clear testimony about his ministry during the Acts period, and Paul clearly says that Israel was not put aside at the cross, on Pentecost or during the Acts period, as is popularly believed (Romans 11:1-2).

Paul's testimony in the Acts period was not offensive to the nation of Israel. Paul worshipped the God of his fathers, believing all things written in the law and prophets. Paul declares that the twelve tribes were waiting for the hope of the promise made to their fathers, which is the kingdom on earth. Paul tells us that his preaching only included that which the law and prophets said was going to happen. The following letters are perfectly in harmony with these claims and are full of the Acts period teachings of Paul. They were written before Israel was set aside at Acts 28:28.

Galatians  
 1 & 2 Corinthians  
 1 & 2 Thessalonians  
 Hebrews  
 Romans.

Paul's seven letters written during Acts describe the *imminent return of the Lord, expected in the lifetime of the Acts period believers*. Please consider these passages: Acts 14:22; Romans 13:11-12; 1 Corinthians 1:7-8; 7:29-31; 15:51; 1 Thessalonians 4:15; Hebrews 10:38.

In this group Paul quotes the old testament over 300 times, and in Romans alone he uses the phrase "*as it is written*" 14 times. Romans also contains around 70 Old Testament quotes, leaving us in no doubt that Paul's Acts period ministry was precisely as he said, which was to proclaim the purposes and doctrines found in the Old Testament Scriptures. Note the following New and Old Testament comparison:

Romans 1:17 & Habakkuk 2:4  
 Romans 2:6 & Psalms 62:12  
 Romans 2:24 & Isaiah 52:5  
 Romans 3:4 & Psalms 51:4  
 Romans 3:10 & Psalms 14:1  
 Romans 3:11 & Psalms 14:2  
 Romans 3:12 & Psalms 14:3  
 Romans 3:13 & Psalms 5:9  
 Romans 3:14 & Psalms 10:7; 140:3  
 Romans 3:17 & Isaiah 59:8  
 Romans 3:18 & Psalms 36:1  
 Romans 4:3 & Genesis 15:6  
 Romans 4:17 & Genesis 17:5  
 Romans 4:18 & Genesis 15:5  
 Romans 7:7 & Exodus 20:17  
 Romans 8:36 & Psalms 44:22  
 Romans 9:7 & Genesis 21:12  
 Romans 9:12 & Genesis 25:23  
 Romans 9:15 & Exodus 33:19  
 Romans 9:25 & Hosea 2:23



---

Romans 9:29 & Isaiah 1:9  
Romans 10:5 & Leviticus 18:5  
Romans 10:6 & Deuteronomy 30:12  
Romans 10:7 & Deuteronomy 30:13  
Romans 10:8 & Deuteronomy 30:14  
Romans 10:11 & Isaiah 28:16  
Romans 10:13 & Joel 2:32  
Romans 10:15 & Isaiah 52:7  
Romans 10:16 & Isaiah 53:1  
Romans 10:18 & Psalms 19:4  
Romans 10:19 & Deuteronomy 32:21  
Romans 10:20 & Isaiah 65:1  
Romans 10:21 & Isaiah 65:2  
Romans 11:3 & 1 Kings 19:10, 14  
Romans 11:4 & 1 Kings 19:18  
Romans 11:8 & Isaiah 29:10  
Romans 11:10 & Psalms 69:23  
Romans 11:27 & Jeremiah 31:33-34  
Romans 11:34 & Isaiah 40:13  
Romans 12:19 & Deuteronomy 32:35  
Romans 12:20 & Proverbs 25:21  
Romans 13:9 & Exodus 20:13-15, 17; Leviticus 19:18  
Romans 14:11 & Isaiah 45:23  
Romans 15:3 & Psalms 69:9  
Romans 15:9 & Psalms 18:49  
Romans 15:10 & Deuteronomy 32:43  
Romans 15:11 & Psalms 117:1  
Romans 15:12 & Isaiah 11:10  
Romans 15:21 & Isaiah 52:15

On arriving at Rome, Paul calls the chief of the (dispersed) Jews and proclaims the Lord Jesus as their Messiah out of *“both the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening”* (Acts 28:23). The Messianic Kingdom is the subject here.

Instead of responding to this wonderful message, these Jews in Rome were like the majority of their countrymen. Some indeed believed the things that were said, others did not, and they argued among themselves. Disagreeing with one another, they were dismissed (let go) (Acts 28:25). The word “dismiss” is also used in Mathew 1:19 when Joseph wanted to dissolve his relationship with Mary.

After Israel was thrust aside at Acts 28:28, the Lord revealed to Paul the present set of conditions, or economy, which has continued to this day. However, instead of an earthly kingdom in view, the second group of letters of Paul points our hearts and minds to the heavenly places where Christ is seated at God’s right hand.

This present dispensation given to us through Paul was never part of Old Testament revelation as clearly declared by Paul in these passages:

*To me, less than the least of all saints, was granted this grace: to bring the evangel of the untraceable riches of Christ to the nations, and to enlighten all as to what is the administration of the secret, which has been concealed from the eons in God, Who creates all, that now may be made known to the sovereignties and the authorities among the celestials, through the ecclesia, the multifarious wisdom of God (Ephesians 3:8-10).*

*... of which I became a dispenser, in accord with the administration of God, which is granted to me for you, to complete the word of God – the secret which has been concealed from the eons and from the generations, yet now was made manifest to His saints (Colossians 1:25-26).*

These later seven letters of Paul fall naturally into a group manifesting the elements of this wonderful new dispensation coupled with a scarcity of Old Testament references:

Ephesians  
 Philippians  
 Philemon  
 Colossians  
 1 Timothy  
 Titus  
 2 Timothy

These letters proclaim the wonderful inheritance for the newly revealed calling for His church which is His Body, and are significantly different than the Acts period group in that they are limited to about eight Old Testament quotes. If, in fact, our present economy was hidden in God, then Paul cannot use the Old Testament as a means of affirming the ministry given to him.

The first group of Paul's letters was written during the Acts period when Israel remained as God's people and the gentiles were blessed with faithful Abraham.

The second group of Paul's letters was written after Israel was set aside, and presents the present dispensation of the grace of God in which all believers are blessed in Christ alone in heavenly places where Christ is seated at God's right hand. These epistles are for us today. Once again they are in this order:

Ephesians  
 Philippians  
 Philemon  
 Colossians  
 1 Timothy  
 Titus  
 2 Timothy

## – Chapter 4 –

# *The Book of Acts*

### The Structure

#### **PETER**

- |   |                     |   |
|---|---------------------|---|
| A | Chapter 1:15 - 2:13 | JERUSALEM – Holy Spirit<br>TWELVE apostles endued by the holy spirit                        |
| B | Chapter 2:14 - 8:1  | Ministry of PETER and others to the nation of ISRAEL<br>In JERUSALEM and the land           |
| C | Chapter 8:1 - 11:30 | Ministry of PETER and others in the land<br>PETER ministers once to the Gentiles: Cornelius |
| D | Chapter 12:1-23.    | JERUSALEM<br>PETER's imprisonment<br>Close of ministry                                      |

#### **PAUL**

- |   |                       |   |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| A | Chapter 12:24 - 13:3  | ANTIOCH -- Holy Spirit<br>PAUL and BARNABAS endued by the holy spirit   |
| B | Chapter 13:4 - 15:39  | Ministry of PAUL and others to the dispersed of Israel<br>Independent of Jerusalem and the twelve   |
| C | Chapter 16:1 - 19:20  | PAUL's ministry in association with the twelve<br>His seven epistles to the believers<br>PAUL ministers once to the Circumcision: Hebrews                 |
| D | Chapter 19:21 - 28:31 | Ephesus to Rome<br>PAUL's imprisonment<br>Close of one ministry. Commencement of the prison ministry<br>The “administration (dispensation) of the secret” |

The whole theme of the book of Acts is based on one question:

*Lord, art Thou at this time restoring the kingdom to Israel? (Acts 1:6).*

Remember, God's chosen nation Israel is always in reference to a land on earth. This land will be restored one day when Christ returns. It will be a kingdom heavenly in character. Also there will be a holy city, the New Jerusalem, which is not in heaven but descends out of it to the earth (Revelation 3:12; 21:2).

Dating all the way back to Genesis 15 and 17, God gave land to Abraham and his seed. This land extends from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates (Genesis 15:18). Associated with this land will be a throne, a king and kingdom. Jesus came only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 15:24). The twelve disciples were commissioned to herald that the kingdom of heaven was near and they were not permitted to go into the nations (Matthew 10:5-7). It is important to understand that, at this point in time, there are no nations or the church of today in view here, though eventually the nations will be blessed through Israel.

While on earth, Jesus was baptized to manifest Himself to Israel (John 1:31). John the baptist was the forerunner to prepare Israel for their King. When John baptized the Israelites, this baptism was an outward sign of their inward repentance and a change of heart toward God. Those who repented submitted to John's baptism, admitting their condition of being a sinful people. In God's sight, Israel had gone "away backward." Isaiah spoke of her condition in his day, and that condition persisted until John the baptist (Isaiah 1:4-5).

John's baptism identified the repentant part of Israel, and as such they made up a separate company within Israel. They were identified with Israel by birth. They were identified with Israel's covenants by circumcision. Then with John's baptism, they became identified with the repentant ones in Israel. The repentant ones formed the company that was to be the new nation through whom Christ would govern when the kingdom was established. Their repentance would usher in the prophetic kingdom, with the promised Messiah on the throne of David. In turn, they would become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation in order to make known to the world the salvation of God.

The King was on the earth, the kingdom was at hand. All that was needed was for Israel to turn to their Messiah. With their repentance, the long awaited millennial reign would be ushered in on the earth and Israel would finally be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exodus 19). However, the majority of Israel did not accept Christ as their King or Savior.

In the gospel of Matthew there is mentioned another baptism, a baptism of holy spirit and fire (Matthew 3:11). This baptism is associated with "power from on high" when the Lord gave spiritual gifts as outward evidential signs that the kingdom was at hand. I would like to make a comparison between the Old and New Testament, to establish that we are dealing strictly with Israel, their land and kingdom. Spiritual gifts were also administered to God's chosen people back in the days of Moses to perform works. In Exodus 28:3, God gave the gift of the spirit of *wisdom* to those who were to make priestly garments. In Exodus 31:1-7; 35:34, God filled those with the gifts of the holy spirit to make the tabernacle, mercy seat and furniture, and also to *instruct* (knowledge). In Numbers 11:17, 25, when Moses needed help dealing with the burden of the sons of Israel, the Lord withdrew the gifts of the holy spirit

---

from Moses and put it on seventy elders to help Moses bear the burden. The spirit rested on them and they *prophesied* (Numbers 11:25).

Gifts of wisdom, knowledge and prophecy. Does this sound familiar? These, and more, abounded during the Acts period. So the gospels deal with what Jesus *began* to do and teach concerning this kingdom (Acts 1:1), and are followed by what He *continued* to do and teach during the Acts period through the work of the holy spirit and the instrumentality of Peter and Paul and those associated with them.

The Acts of the apostles is one of the key books of the new testament. Without it we would be at a loss to place Paul's epistles written during that time (Galatians, 1 & 2 Corinthians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Hebrews and Romans), and to trace the purpose of God, Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:11). Therefore, an exposition of each chapter is required. It is easy to miss the main object of this important book and to get side-tracked; but we have tried to avoid this and keep close to Luke's history which deals with the beginning of the believers in Christ and the development of the purpose of God which can be traced throughout the Bible, and is centered on Christ and His kingdom. The gospels deal with what Jesus began to do and to teach concerning this kingdom (Acts 1:1) and are followed by what He continued to do and teach in the Acts through the work of the holy spirit and the instrumentality of Peter and Paul and those associated with them.

The story is not really the Acts of the apostles, for only three of the original twelve apostles appear in the narrative, namely Peter, James and John, which latter two are only mentioned. The book of the Acts actually records the Acts of the holy spirit through Peter and Paul, who continued to do all that Jesus began both to do and to teach (Acts 1:1). Peter is practically dropped from the story after the conversion of Cornelius.

It should be noticed that Luke's gospel stresses the importance of the gentile, who is seen in a favorable light, while the Acts gives us a careful account of the spread of God's truth to the nations with Israel's opposition to it all. It is a summing up of some forty years after the crucifixion, showing how Israel failed again in the purpose of God, how the nations responded and finally the laying aside of the chosen nation in blindness and unbelief, who had dominated the scene by God's appointment since the time of Jacob.

This ended the possibility of the setting up at that time of the Messianic kingdom foreshadowed in the Old Testament. To miss this is to miss one of the main reasons for the writing of Acts. The gospels inform us of what the Lord Jesus said and did in His ministry to Israel. His Own words assure us that He was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 15:24), and that He confined the ministry of the apostles to Israel, the chosen nation, avoiding any contact with the nations (Matthew 10:5-8). This is inexplicable unless the earthly kingdom of the Old Testament is in view. Not that the nations were to be permanently excluded, for that kingdom finally embraces the whole earth when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11:9), and the Lord Jesus will become more than the King of Israel, namely the King over all of the earth (Zechariah 14:9), and then will the plan of God revealed to Abraham come to pass, that his seed should be a blessing to all families of the earth (Genesis 12:1-3). If the gospels record the acts and sayings of the Lord Jesus, then Acts continues the theme by the power and guidance of the holy spirit, so much so that many feel a more fitting title for Luke's book would be the "Acts of the holy spirit."

The commentary on each chapter below was taken from the book entitled *The Acts of the Apostles and Afterward*, by Stuart Allen, published by The Berean Publishing Trust.

## Chapter 1

Luke, who wrote the book of Acts, begins chapter one by referring to his former book, namely the third gospel (Luke). The last verses of the gospel of Luke (Luke 24:36-53) overlap with the opening verses of Acts (Acts 1:1-14). Acts is a continuation of what Luke wrote about in his gospel. In Luke 24:51 our Lord was carried up into heaven. In Acts 1:9-10, Luke writes about this again. In Luke 24:54, the disciples returned to Jerusalem. In Acts 1:12 Luke mentions this again.

Surely the most wonderful experience the apostles ever enjoyed was to have the privilege of hearing the Lord Jesus interpret the written Word. The greatest and absolutely infallible Teacher expounds the Word of God for over a month. It could be said that, although this was true, the apostles, being human and fallible, might have failed to understand what He taught. Luke, at the close of his gospel, shows that this was not so. He quotes the Lord Jesus as saying,

*Now He said to them, "These are My words, which I speak to you, still being with you, for all must be fulfilled that is written in the law of Moses and the prophets [the **old testament/covenant**], and Psalms concerning Me." Then He opens up their mind to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:44-45).*

So, not only did they hear the greatest Teacher interpret the Old Testament, but they clearly understood what He said, because He gave them that understanding. As a result of this wonderful teaching, they asked Him a question, and this was not likely to be a foolish one, when their minds had been enlightened.

*Lord, art Thou at this time restoring the kingdom to Israel? (Acts 1:6).*

The kingdom that the apostles mentioned and the one which the Lord explained to them was the *Messianic kingdom of the Old Testament*.

Let us read what God said to Moses:

*As for you, you will become Mine, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the sons of Israel (Exodus 19:6).*

This was the *basis for His earthly kingdom*, and God intended that this holy nation should be priests who would manifest the holy character of God and spread the knowledge of His redemptive love to the ends of the earth. In this way the knowledge of God would cover the earth "*as the waters cover the sea*," but both the Old and New Testament tell of Israel's failure. At the same time we must not forget that God never left Himself without a witness. There was always a faithful remnant who remained true to His will.

So it was to this faithful remnant that our Lord said,

---

*You shall be obtaining power at the coming of the holy spirit on you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in entire Judea and Samaria, and as far as the limits of the earth (Acts 1:8).*

Just as the Lord Jesus was anointed with the holy spirit and power at His baptism, so His apostles were now to have the same experience, enabling them to be true witnesses to carry on the work. The Lord said to them that they should be His witnesses. They doubtless remembered that their nation Israel was called to be a witness for God and this is what they should have been to the whole earth.

In the same way, the apostles in Acts 1 were commissioned by the Lord and empowered by the holy spirit to witness at Jerusalem, God's city, destined to be the earthly center of God's kingdom which will extend to Judea, Samaria and finally to the whole of mankind. This kingdom will extend over the whole earth, giving a knowledge of salvation and going on to experience the righteous and wonderful rule of Christ, Who will then be King over the whole earth.

## Chapter 2

The apostles return to Jerusalem. Peter takes the leading place among the apostles and the faithful followers of Christ. In Acts chapter 2 we now come to Pentecost. It is important to remember that Pentecost in type was not new, for it took its place in the feasts of Jehovah given in Leviticus chapter 23. These feasts are rich in prophetic truth pointing to the fundamental basis and the millennial teaching of the Messianic kingdom which dominates the old testament. They consist of Sabbath, Passover, Unleavened Bread, First-fruits, Pentecost, Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles. The feast of Pentecost was designated in this way because it was kept on the fiftieth (*pentekostos*) day after the presentation of the first sheaf of the barley harvest. This would be the fiftieth day from the first day of the week after Passover. It was also known as the "Feast of Weeks" among Hebrew-speaking people.

Those who were present at the day of Pentecost were filled with the holy spirit to perform special gifts. One miracle was the speaking in different languages. There were pious Jews from every nation under heaven gathered in Jerusalem that day (Acts 2:5). The countries from which they came are mentioned in Acts 2:9-11, and there are exactly twelve. The majority were no doubt of the Jewish dispersion, descendants of those scattered abroad in the past by the judgment of God. Their number ran into the millions. The faithful among them did their best to be present at the feasts of Jehovah in Jerusalem.

We may well ask what the purpose was in connection with the gift of languages (tongues). The range of the languages in which these (the mighty works of God) were proclaimed suggests that Luke understood the coming of the spirit was a preparation for the world-wide proclamation of the gospel. Some who were present made fun of the situation, saying they were drunk with wine. Peter goes on to quote a prophecy from the book of Joel, saying that in the last days there will be scoffers. Keep in mind that when Peter quoted this prophecy of Joel, he was referring to the last days in which they were living. The kingdom was at hand, and the Lord would have returned at that time had Israel repented. The second part of Joel's prophecy, dealing with miraculous signs in the heavens, did not take place. These miraculous signs are described in the book of Revelation. The kingdom is now in abeyance, but all of these things will occur whenever our Lord returns in the last days of this current eon. Peter proclaims the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus and says to them, "*Repent and be baptized.*" Thousands believed and were baptized (Acts 2:14-47).

### Chapter 3

Pentecost anticipates the Millennium. Its gifts are called the powers (miracles) of the coming eon. One miracle was the healing of the lame man on the steps that led up to the Beautiful Gate of the sanctuary (Acts 3:7-8). Peter asks the Israelites, “Why are you looking so intently at us? It was not by my power, but by God glorifying His Boy Jesus, whom you have killed. God roused Him from among the dead Whom heaven must indeed receive until the times of restoration of all which God speaks through the mouth of His holy prophets who are from the eon” (Acts 3:21). Peter’s act was more than a miracle. It was one of the many miraculous signs that God had given to the work and witness of His beloved Son in confirmation of His Messiah-ship and now His faithful followers were continuing the same witness and receiving the same confirmation from God.

Peter ends his speech by telling the Jews who were listening that they were the heirs of the prophets, and that means all that the prophets stood for as well. Not only this, they were heirs of the unconditional covenant that God gave to Abraham when He told him, “through your offspring all peoples on the earth will be blessed” (Acts 3:25). This is nothing less than God’s earthly kingdom. It was the kingdom with all of its peace and rich blessings that the old testament prophets had so clearly made known.

### Chapter 4

The priests, officer of the sanctuary and the Sadducees took Peter and John into custody because they were announcing Jesus’ the resurrection from among the dead. The Sadducees were especially offended because they denied the doctrine of the resurrection, which was the principal point in the proclamation of the apostles. Apart from the resurrection, Messiah was dead and all hope of His kingdom was crucified with Him. The next day there was a gathering of the Sanhedrin demanding to know on what authority they had been acting in such a way. Peter proclaimed that in the name of Jesus, there is no other name under heaven for salvation.

Marveling at such plain men, the leaders in the Sanhedrin realized that they could do little against them, as the lame man stood before them healed, proving the truth of what Peter had said. They sent Peter and John outside and conferred among themselves. It was useless to deny what had happened with the healed man there, especially as the healing had made them popular with the people and therefore it would be unwise to punish them. In their weakness they decided to dismiss them, at the same time threatening them that there would be serious trouble if they kept on speaking of Christ and teaching in His Name.

Peter’s answer to this was to say that if they were faced with obeying God or obeying men, then there was no doubt which they would choose. They would most certainly put God first and they said, “we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:19-20). The Sanhedrin decided to do no more than threaten them once again, and then let them go free.

The feast of Pentecost with its emphasis on the word “fifty” was a recurring annual reminder of the day of Jubilee, so the final prophetic fulfillment of all that Pentecost stood for would be the real great jubilee toward which all prophecy pointed. Therefore, believing the apostles’ doctrine, these believers put their faith into practice. If the jubilee was near, all would receive their own inheritance, all



---

forfeitures would be cancelled, all buying and selling of land and possessions would come to naught. Consequently, although no one could sell or buy his inheritance, he could sell whatever else he had purchased and use the proceeds for the common good while awaiting the Lord from heaven.

Barnabas, who was a Levite, is specially mentioned by Luke as an example of this. As Jeremiah bought land (Jeremiah 32:9) to demonstrate his faith in the Lord's promised restoration, Barnabas had land, sold it, brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet to demonstrate the same conviction. The law that governed the sale of land is found in Leviticus 25.

## Chapter 5

Ananias, together with Sapphira his wife, sells an acquisition and embezzles from the price (his wife also having been conscious of it), and bringing a certain part he places it at the feet of the apostles. They both died on the spot for lying. To some this will be reckoned as too severe for just telling a lie, but we must remember that the summary judgment of the Lord was in operation during Acts, for the miracles were, as declared, the powers (miracles) of the eon to come, that is the millennium, and in that eon there will be not only miracles of blessing but miracles of judgment as well.

*He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within My house: He that speaketh falsehood shall not be established before Mine eyes. Morning by morning will I destroy all the wicked of the land; to cut off all the workers of iniquity from the city of the LORD (Psalm 101:7-8, RV).*

These were the words of David, but they relate to his greater Son, the true David and His coming rule over all of the earth in His kingdom. His will be a righteous rule and a reign of peace. This was quite beyond anything the son of Jesse could accomplish, although he kept his own household as pure as possible. Sin will not be allowed to increase and spread when the Lord rules, for every day there will be judgment for sin and evildoers will be cut off.

Sin will be nipped in the bud. The Lord will have to "rule with a rod of iron" to see that righteousness is established and maintained. Pentecost and what followed anticipated the millennium. We have seen in Acts these two kinds of judgment. A miracle of blessing (healing of the lame man), a picture of what the Lord wanted to do with sick and sinning Israel, and in the case of Ananias, a warning to the chosen nation that punishment was bound to follow if they persisted in their unbelief and opposition.

Luke records the many miracles which the apostles performed. They were not just showmanship, but were called "signs," for they signified something. They had a meaning. They were signs of the earthly kingdom. Just as the Savior healed people from deformity and disease, the apostles were granted the same power, for they were making known the same kingdom that the Old Testament had described. God had promised Israel that one of His blessings would be good health. He would love them, bless them and multiply them in the land that He had sworn to their fathers to give them.

*Thou shalt be blessed above all people ... and the LORD will take away from thee all sickness (Deuteronomy 7:14-15).*

No wonder they could enjoy a long life in this promised land. God knew that if His blessings are to be enjoyed to the full, good health must accompany them. We then can understand why healing

takes such a prominent part in the kingdom ministry of the Lord Jesus and that of the apostles which followed after His resurrection. Looking forward to that kingdom to come with all of its joy, Isaiah predicts,

*I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in My people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. "Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed (Isaiah 65:19-20).*

So not only is good health to be generally experienced, but what we should expect from this, namely longer life as well. These healing miracles take an important place in the Messianic kingdom when these facts are remembered. They are not just miracles at random. When they are kept in their scriptural setting they confirm the great plan that God was accomplishing. Pulling them out of this setting, as some do, only causes misunderstanding and confusion. No wonder, then, that many more people who saw these healing signs believed and joined the number of the saved. Even the shadow of Peter was effective in healing, just as later on a handkerchief from Paul did the same thing.

## **Chapter 6**

The opening verses of this chapter deal with one of the first problems that the ecclesia (church) had to face. There were two origins for the Jewish believers. Some lived in Palestine, and others were of the dispersion. The former were Hebraic Jews, and the latter were Grecian Jews or Hellenists. The Hellenists are not gentiles but Jews from outside of Palestine. They spoke Greek. A problem had arisen between these two groups. The Grecian Jews complained that their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. The apostles decided to deal with this at once. They felt that the Lord had called and equipped them for the ministry of the Word, and that this matter should be given first place. This meant that others must be appointed to deal with such matters. So they told the disciples to choose seven men under the control of the holy spirit to undertake this work. They were all pre-sented to the apostles who appointed them to this work.

They prayed and laid their hands on the chosen ones. The "laying on of hands" is referred to a number of times in the new testament. It was used in the old testament in more than one way: at the bestowal of a blessing, and also to express identification when the one who performed a sacrifice laid his hand on the sacrificial victim. It also occurred in the appointment of a successor. In the present case, the laying on of hands identified the seven with the twelve as their deputies. In no way did it impart the gift of the holy spirit, for the seven were already "full of the spirit" (Acts 6:3). In spite of all of the opposition of the enemy, God's truth was spreading and His purpose was being fulfilled.

Luke mentions Stephen. Stephen's ministry was accompanied by the same miraculous kingdom signs as the apostles. In the synagogue a number of Jews opposed Stephen and argued with him. Among them was a young man, Saul of Tarsus, a native of Cilicia, who doubtless took part in these disputes. They brought about false evidence against Stephen, who was therefore arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin. He was accused of being against the Temple and the law of Moses. This was the worst charge ever, for the Temple was the center of Judaism. Any charge against the Temple also affected their livelihood as well as their religious ideas. Yet as the enemies watched Stephen, they saw one whose face glowed like an angel's. It was like the face of Moses when he came down from Sinai, re-

---

flecting the glory of the Lord which had surrounded him on the top of the mountain. One person at least was never able to forget this, and that was Saul of Tarsus. From this moment he had no rest in his mind until he had experienced what Stephen had come to know: the glory and wonder of the true Savior and Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 6:8-15).

## Chapter 7

Stephen explains his position by the historical method and gives a rapid survey of God's dealing with the people of Israel and the gentiles. In this speech, Stephen shows that the appearances and worship of God were not confined to Jerusalem or the Jewish Temple. His dealings with Abraham and others before Israel's time proves this.

Stephen goes back to the beginning of Israel's history and starts with the "God of glory" appearing to Abraham. After the call of Abraham, there were two great types of Christ: Joseph and Moses. One important point is that both Joseph and Moses were rejected, but when Christ returns at His second coming, Israel will accept Him as their true Messiah. Not one word of Stephen's speech could be shown to be wrong, and its application to the Jewish leaders was devastating and stirred up all of their bitterness and hatred. Stephen was really proclaiming the same message that the Lord Jesus gave, and he read the old testament in the light of the life and death of Christ. He shows that God the Most High is not confined in any building, however splendid it may be. Solomon himself saw this and acknowledged it in his prayer:

*"Heaven is My throne, yet the earth is a footstool for My feet. What kind of house shall be built for Me?" the Lord is saying, or "What is the place of My stopping?" (Acts 7:49).*

Stephen shows clearly that he understood all of this. Additionally, he points out that the attitude of Israel in rejecting and crucifying Christ was exactly the same as they had displayed in their treatment of the prophets sent by God. They persecuted and killed them. Their whole history was marked by their rejection of God's word. Even when rescued and delivered from the cruel bondage of Egypt, in their journey to the promised land they longed to go back there again, and would have if this had been possible. He chides them for their continual idolatry, from the worship of the golden calf right up to David and Solomon's day. The references to Moloch and the god Rephan deal with the worship of the planets, like the heathen nations. Moloch and Rephan were linked with Saturn. Stephen also deals with the origin of the Temple. God allowed Solomon to build Him a house, yet the purpose of this house was not to confine it to Israel. Its main function was for it to be a house of prayer for all nations.

*Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people (Isaiah 56:7).*

The Lord Jesus refers to this and confirms it in Mark 11:17,

*And as He taught them He said, "Is it not written: My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations?"*

It is noteworthy, too, that in Solomon's dedicatory prayer there is no mention of sacrifices.

Stephen the accused, now becomes the accuser. The words he used to the Jewish leaders cut like a

knife. For them, of all people to be called “*uncircumcised in heart*” was absolutely galling. “*You always resist the holy spirit,*” he said (:51). They gloried in possessing the law of God, yet openly violated it and were nothing more than murderers (:52). They were cut to the heart. The Sadducees were absolutely furious. They began to gnash their teeth at him, like a pack of hungry snarling wolves. Stephen must have known that this meant death for him. He gazed to heaven and saw God’s glory and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God (:54-56). In their hatred the members of the Sanhedrin rushed at him and mob violence followed such as we sometimes see today. No vote was taken by the Sanhedrin. They had no right to put anyone to death without Rome’s permission. In their madness they ignored both of these points. If they thought about it at all, they might have reasoned that Pilate would not be interested in an incident that did not concern Rome. They dragged Stephen out of the city and began to stone him to death. Stephen prayed, “*Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.*” Then, like his Savior, he prayed for his enemies,

*“Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep [died]” (:60).*

## **Chapter 8**

While Stephen was being murdered, a young man stood there, holding the clothes of his slayers, watching the terrible scene and giving his approval to it. It was Saul of Tarsus, who apparently never forgot the brave and faithful witness of Stephen. Little did he realize that later on he, too, would be executed for his faithful service for the Christ whom Stephen worshipped and gave his life. The first section of Acts closes with the martyrdom of Stephen.

Christ had said that His followers were to be witnesses for Him “in Jerusalem, in all Judaea, in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Now the faithful ones were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria. Even the wrath of man can be made to serve the Lord’s purposes.

With the ministry of Philip that follows in Samaria, prejudice was broken down, for it is written, “Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.” This indicates a further movement away from the exclusive Jewish center at Jerusalem and begins to prepare the way for the ministry later on of the chosen vessel Paul to the gentiles.

At this time Saul was the prime mover in the persecution that was taking place. He felt that the new witness was a danger to the religion of Judaism which meant so much to him, so he resolved to stamp it out. He began to destroy the ecclesia. Saul of Tarsus dragged off men and woman who were believers and threw them into prison; but the witness went on, for the scattered ones preached the Word wherever they went, and so God’s purpose was being fulfilled. Philip was one of the Hellenistic leaders and also one of the seven who had been chosen to tend to the needs of the widows of Hebraic Jews. His kingdom ministry was confirmed by God’s miraculous signs in the same way as the witness of the apostles (:12).

In Samaria Simon was a dealer in magic, and had quite a hold on the people who watched with amazement the things that he did. He noticed the miracles performed by Philip and wanted this power to add to his own pretensions. He even went so far as being baptized, perhaps to keep in touch with Philip. His belief obviously was very flimsy, judging by the way he tried to buy Peter with money. The witness was now reaching Samaria as the Lord had predicted, and was a major event for the apostles.

They were evidently concerned to give supervision to the progress of the kingdom gospel here, so they sent Peter and John to do this.

This chapter ends with Philip proclaiming the gospel – the good news about the Lord Jesus – to the eunuch. The man was certainly persuaded that this was true, and evidently Philip had remarked about baptism, for the eunuch asked for this in :36. Then suddenly and miraculously Philip was caught away by God, and the eunuch was left alone rejoicing in his tremendous new experience. Later on he possibly introduced the gospel to Ethiopia.

## Chapter 9

Luke now goes back to Saul of Tarsus and records his raging fury against the believers. In Genesis, Jacob had prophesied concerning Benjamin. *“Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; in the morning he devours the prey; in the evening he divides the plunder”* (Genesis 49:27). He, the greatest son of Benjamin, was fulfilling this prophecy.

Suddenly, as Saul journeyed, a light brighter than the sun surrounded him and he was completely overwhelmed. What a shock it must have been for Saul to hear that divine voice saying, *“Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?”* Even if he did not fully recognize the risen Christ at this stage, he knew it was no human being who spoke in the midst of that overwhelming glory. What a testimony the Lord gave to His oneness with His people. Whatever touched them, touched Him. Both Saul and those traveling with him fell to the ground. The men were able to get up but Paul evidently was the last. The Voice had said to him, *“get up and go into the city [Damascus] and you will be told what you must do.”* Yet the glory of Christ had blinded him and he had to be led by the hand into Damascus by his fellow travelers, and for three days he had no sight or food. It is not hard to believe that this tremendous experience left his eyes permanently weakened.

Ananias received a vision from God to restore Saul’s sight. What Ananias did not know was that Christ had chosen Saul to play a great part in the furtherance of His kingdom, the goal of it being to touch the whole earth, the gentile nations, their rulers and the people of Israel. It is significant that the Lord puts the despised gentile first and the chosen people of Israel last. Saul was yet to become an apostle to the gentiles in a special way. The time had now come for God’s great kingdom to widen and embrace the gentile, for this rule of God was to extend to the whole earth. At the same time this would be a lesson to Israel, and a stimulus to them, when they saw God’s purposes of grace enlarging to take in the nations whom they despised, thus making them envious and waking them from their spiritual blindness and opposition.

After Saul’s sight was restored, he preached in the synagogues that Christ was the Son of God. Luke does not go into detail, but in :23 he says *“after many days had gone by.”* It was probably at this point that the apostle went into Arabia for several years (Galatians 1:17-18). These verses in Galatians make it clear that Saul did not remain in Damascus, but went into Arabia and then returned there before going back to Jerusalem. We can supplement the narrative in the Acts with items from Paul’s epistles, and therefore can assume that at this juncture Saul returned from Arabia (between :22-23) and then resumed his preaching in the Jewish synagogues. The disciples feared Saul, but Barnabas testified about Saul’s conversion and his testimony for Christ in Damascus. Chapter 9 ends with miracles, which were sign gifts to Israel of the nearness of the kingdom. It is therefore quite evident that the

ministry of the apostles in Acts was the carrying on of the witness that the Lord Jesus had given to Israel in His earthly ministry when, as their King-Priest, He had made known the nearness of that kingdom which had been revealed by all of the old testament prophets.

## **Chapter 10**

This chapter is of great importance in the working out of God's plan for His kingdom on earth. He had called the people of Israel and separated them to Himself, but not to restrict His kingdom purposes to them. They were to be a holy nation, a priestly kingdom, a channel through which He would reach the other nations of the earth. Paul reminded the Jews who were opposing God at Pisidian Antioch, quoting Isaiah 49:6, saying, *"I have appointed Thee for a light of the nations; for Thee to be for salvation as far as the limits of the earth"* (Acts 13:47).

Peter was not prejudiced. The separation between Jew and gentile was because of God's regulations. These regulations were important, for they involved the holiness of God. It was faithfulness to the law of God that made Peter hesitate (Leviticus 11:3-8), but he now had to learn that God's kingdom purpose was broadening with world-wide blessing in view. So by understanding what the vision meant by God cleansing what was once contaminated, Peter opened the door to the nations with the gospel of Jesus Christ, Who is the Lord of all, both Jews and gentiles.

## **Chapter 11**

The news from Caesarea spread throughout Judea like wildfire. The fact that a leader like Peter had eaten meals with pagan gentiles, making himself ceremonially unclean, was incomprehensible. So Peter had to give an account of himself to the Jewish believers at Jerusalem when he arrived there. They said to him, *"You entered to men having uncircumcision, and you ate with them!"* (:3). They did not object to him preaching to gentiles, but were upset that Peter violated his obligations as a Jew in that some of the meat at a gentile table could have been offered as an idol sacrifice and thus be polluted.

The situation was serious, so Peter had to start from the beginning and give the full story of God's dealings with him at Joppa and Caesarea. When Peter had finished the story, he asked a rhetorical question: *"If, then, God gives them the equal gratuity as to us also, when believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I – able to forbid God?"* ("17). On hearing Peter's defense, the Jerusalem Hebrew believers said nothing. How could they, when God had given His blessing on gentile believers, and in doing this had clearly shown His will?

Now we move onto Antioch in Syria. The evangel was restricted to the Jewish community. They knew that God's program was to the Jew first (:19) even though it was widening to take in the gentiles. The time had come to present the gospel to the gentiles, so they proclaimed to them Christ as Savior and Lord. This met with immediate response, for the Lord was with them and blessed their efforts.

The news of this reached Jerusalem and, just as Peter and John earlier had gone to Samaria to investigate Philip's missionary activity, so the leaders at Jerusalem sent someone to look into these events at Antioch. This person was Barnabas, who originated from Cyprus and gave continuous encouragement to the new believers to hold fast to their new beliefs.

---

The witness increased and evidently Barnabas realized that it was getting too much for him to handle alone. So he found Saul of Tarsus and brought him to Antioch, and for a whole year they worked together and many were brought to a knowledge of true salvation. God always has a man prepared for any emergency in His kingdom purpose.

The word “Christian” originated here. As the people of Antioch were constantly hearing the name *Christos* on the lips of those who followed Christ, they decided that a suitable name for them was **CHRIST**ians (:26). We have put the first syllable of this new name in capitals. Unfortunately we are universally wrong pronouncing the name with a short “i,” and as a result the word is used thousands of times without the user realizing that **CHRIST** is in this name and without Him the origin and meaning of the Name is completely lost. All real **CHRIST**ians are related to **CHRIST**, and how absolutely vital it is to recognize this today!

Certain prophets came to Antioch from Jerusalem, and we should remember that prophecy was one of the gifts of the holy spirit in the Pentecostal period. Once again we should remember that the prophet of the Word of God was more than a foreteller of the future. Primarily he was a spokesman for God, a “forth-teller.” John was a prophet in this sense, and prophets were superior to speakers gifted with tongues (languages). One of the prophets from Jerusalem named Agabus, who actually looked into the future by the aid of the holy spirit, forecasted a famine. News of an impending famine stirred up the Christians at Antioch to collect a sum of money to help relieve the resulting difficulties in Palestine. Each apparently set aside a fixed sum of money from their income or property. When the total was completed they deputed Barnabas and Saul to take it to the elders in Judea. This is the first use of the word “elder” in connection with the Pentecostal church (ecclesia). It will be seen that elders and supervisors are used interchangeably in Acts and also Titus and 1 Timothy. At this time in the new testament they were simply overseers who were leading the various assemblies of believers.

## Chapter 12

This chapter begins with the opposition of King Herod. This was Herod Agrippa 1, a grandson of Herod the Great. First of all he executed James the son of Zebedee, who was the first of the apostles to meet a martyr’s death. In addition to the execution of James, Herod Agrippa proceeded to arrest Peter as he saw that this pleased the Jewish opponents of the faith. He did this during the days of unleavened bread (:3) which was the Passover, and this tells us the time of the year that it happened. There would be extra crowds of Jews from abroad, and this was a fine occasion for Agrippa to increase his favor among them by his extra zeal against the Christians. He took care against any attempt to free the prisoner. This is the third imprisonment of Peter.

It was a crisis for the Jerusalem church (ecclesia). James had been slain and Peter was to be the next victim. However, Peter had been delivered from prison and believed that this was through the work of an angel (messenger of the Lord). Herod ordered that a thorough search for Peter should be made, but he was nowhere to be found, and no one knows to this day where he went.

Herod left Jerusalem and went down to his other capital, Caesarea. He arranged a festival in honor of the Emperor Claudius. At this festival Herod put on royal apparel and made a speech. The crowd shouted, “*it is the voice of a god, not of a man*” (:22). Because Herod did not give praise to God, a messenger of the Lord struck him down and he was eaten by worms and died. He accepted flattery

instead of giving God the glory. In :24 Luke comments about the progress of the Christian witness and writes, “*Yet the word of God grows and was multiplied.*” These progress reports occur throughout Acts in spite of all of the opposition. God’s purpose was being carried out.

### Chapter 13

Paul and Barnabas were separated for the work to which they had been called. Paul wrote this in his Roman epistle (Romans 1:1). When they arrived at Salamis, Paul first went to the Jewish synagogue as was his custom all through Acts. This was not because he had an inclination that way, but rather because this was essential to the kingdom message, just as Christ had stressed in His earthly ministry. Jesus was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel only (Matthew 15:24), and He commanded His disciples to do the same (Matthew 10:6). It is most important that we understand this if we wish to grasp the plan of God relating to that kingdom, which the Lord declared in His model prayer when He said that this kingdom will come in the future and then God’s purpose will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

From Salamis, Paul and Barnabas went to the other end of the island and reached Paphos. Right away they met opposition from a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. This title means “son of Jesus” (Aramaic), but he showed himself to be a son of the Adversary and Paul severely rebuked him (:9-11). Divine judgment came on him and he was blinded for a time. The proconsul, Sergius Paul, on the other hand, was greatly impressed and believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord (:12). These two characters were typical of what was about to happen. Israel was getting further and further away from the Lord in unbelief and opposition. They were becoming blind to God’s truth, yet that blindness was not to last forever, just as Elymas (“Wise” in Arabic) experienced. On the other hand, a gentile with the name of Paul believes, and he is typical of the gentile reception of the gospel and knowledge of the kingdom.

Paul and Barnabas now went on to Pisidian Antioch. This Antioch was really in Phrygia, towards Pisidia, and this distinguished it from the other Antioch in Syria. On the Sabbath day they visited the synagogue and took their seats as visiting Jews. They were given the opportunity to speak as visitors, which was customary. Here the apostle teaches the great doctrine of his early ministry, “*justification by faith without the deeds of the law,*” and this doctrine finds its full exposition in the epistles to the Galatians and Romans. Yet this wonderful doctrine proved to be a stumbling block to the Jews with their ceremonial works and foolishness to the Greeks with their abstract philosophical ideas.

The apostle’s message aroused deep interest from his hearers, so they asked Paul to speak again on these things on the next Sabbath. They evidently talked about this to other people so that almost the whole city gathered to hear Paul explain the Scriptures. After his first address, Paul talked with many of the Jews and proselytes and urged them to continue in the grace of God. After the second address, the rabbis were filled with jealousy, for they were not able to draw the crowds as Paul and Barnabas had done. They stirred up opposition to the apostles, contradicting all Paul and Barnabas had said, and saying injurious things themselves. The apostles accepted the challenge. What Paul says to them now is of great importance, for it stresses the reason that Israel had been the nation chosen by God. It was certainly not to show favoritism or to limit the kingdom truth to them, but rather that Israel was to be a light of the nations and salvation to the whole earth. This is why Paul and Barnabas constantly put the Jews first. Yet Israel constantly turned out to be a disobedient servant, and what was happen-



ing at Pisidian Antioch was typical of what was going to happen throughout Paul's great missionary journeys. Having been rejected and persecuted by the Jewish leaders, Paul and Barnabas "*shook the dust from their feet.*" This was according to the command of the Lord Jesus (Mathew 10:14: Luke 9:5, 10:11), and applied here to the Jewish community rather than the city as a whole.

## Chapter 14

The opposition which they had experienced at Antioch was repeated at Iconium (1-7). Paul heals a crippled man who had been lame from birth and had never walked. The crowd was so impressed that they shouted in their own language (which was Lycaonian), "*The gods, made like men, descended to us!*" Paul was evidently speaking in Greek, with which only some of them were familiar, but the two apostles did not understand the native tongue and it was not until preparations for offering sacrifice to them had begun that Paul realized the new role in which he and Barnabas were held. The crowd thought that they were being favored with a divine visitation. The story of Baucis and Philemon (from *Ovid's Metamorphoses*) tells how Jupiter (Zeus) and Mercury (Hermes) visited the neighboring region of Phrygia in human form, and Jupiter (Zeus) had a temple in Lystra. This explains why the people likened the apostles to their gods. Perhaps they called Barnabas, Jupiter, because he was the elder and imposing in appearance. Mercury (Hermes) was the messenger of the gods and the spokesman of Zeus, so Paul was likened to him because he was the chief speaker.

The people of Lystra evidently felt that the visitors should receive suitable honors, so they prepared to sacrifice to them. When Paul and Barnabas realized this, they were filled with horror at what would have been idolatrous worship, so they rushed out and shouted to them to stop, telling them that they were just ordinary men. They "tore their garments," and among the Jews this was a gesture of horror at the sin of blasphemy. Paul used the occasion to put the facts of God's truth before them. As he was speaking to pagans who knew little about the old testament, he does not refer to the Scriptures but takes the same line of argument which features God as Creator. He exhorts them to turn away from vain idolatry which was completely empty of truth, and points to a living God who is the Creator of the universe and Provider of the good things of life such as food and rainfall. God let the gentile nations go their own way, for they rejected the limited light which was available to them. It was not God's indifference but patient waiting until the right time had come to speak. So Paul restrained these men of Lystra, although it was with difficulty (:18).

The hostile Jews from Antioch, after driving Paul and Barnabas from that city and also from Iconium, now appear at Lystra in order to upset the witness further. They spoke to the crowd and won a considerable number of them over to their view. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside of the city, leaving him for dead. Paul and Barnabas then went on to the frontier city of Derbe, where they preached the gospel and had a large response and so founded another assembly (ecclesia) of believers there. After this they felt it necessary to re-visit the groups at Lystra, Iconium and Antioch to strengthen and encourage them, for sooner or later they would experience persecution and trial. In doing this they showed great courage returning so soon to these places where they had been so shamefully treated and expelled. As well as strengthening the new believers, they put them on a firm basis by appointing suitable members as leaders or elders. They needed some form of organization. With prayer and fasting, they committed them to the Lord Whom they now believed. They had warned them that suffering and hardship were the usual experience of the converted, and that they must be prepared for this

(:22). Leaving Pisidian Antioch, the apostles crossed into Pisidia, which was the furthest south of the province of Galatia, and then entered the province of Pamphylia.

They then proclaimed the word of God at Perga. After this they went down to the port of Attalia, where they took a ship to Antioch in Syria. They had been gone some eighteen months making this eventful circular tour. The Lord had been with them all the while and, in spite of all of the difficulties arising from opposition, they had fulfilled the work for which they had been set apart to do. They now had a wonderful story to tell the believers in Antioch. They evidently recounted what the Lord had done in widening His great kingdom purpose to include the gentile and so the “door of faith” had been opened to them through which many had passed. The apostles remained here at Antioch for a long time. It must have been a happy time of fellowship and rejoicing after all of the lack of necessities they had endured.

## Chapter 15

We now come to a point of utmost importance, as it deals with the very fundamentals of our faith and belief. During his travels, Paul had made known God’s gospel of grace and justification by faith which he would later elaborate in his epistle to the Romans. This gospel was apart from meritorious or legal works of any kind. Some of the Pharisees heard about the spread of the gospel among the gentiles. They agreed, but did not support the case of Cornelius when Peter was shown that this was entirely of the Lord’s doing. Paul describes these Judaizers as false brethren having no concept of salvation and justification by faith in Christ alone. Their first concern was to maintain Judaism, so they insisted that gentiles could only be saved on terms similar to proselytes to Judaism, that they must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses.

So Peter takes his stand boldly with Paul and Barnabas for gentile freedom. *“But through the grace of the Lord Jesus we are believing, to be saved in a manner even as they”* (:11). This exactly describes the gospel that Paul preached, and he never deviated from it. If the enemies were hoping that Peter would side with them, they were disappointed. The apostle had spoken clearly against salvation by ceremony and ritualism. Lastly the Jerusalem leader, James, added his verdict. He was greatly respected as chief of the elders, and was called James the Just. Doubtlessly the Judaizers counted on him being a champion of their view, but they must have been bitterly disappointed after James had finished speaking.

It should be noted that James does not say this fulfills what is written by the prophet. He simply says that this agrees with the words of the prophet who looks to the future restoration of the torn down tent of David, which is a poetic figure of the throne of David, the rule of which includes gentiles as well as Jews. James’ point is that the blessing of the gentiles under the ministry of Paul and Barnabas was not the first occasion in which gentile blessing had been in the mind and purpose of God, for this had been so since the promise to Abraham in (Genesis 17:5). God’s earthly kingdom must take in the gentiles if Christ is ever to rule over the whole world as prophecy so clearly predicts.

The assembled church with the apostles and elders agreed with one accord to the appeals of Peter and James. They decided to write an epistle and send it to the various churches or groups of believers. The words “it seems good” occur three times and it is important to note that the third time reads, “it seems good to the holy spirit,” so that this letter with its advice had God’s approval and therefore was according to truth (:28). The four things from which the gentiles were to abstain are indicated in :29.

---

They are idolatry, eating unclean or forbidden food, blood left in the carcass and fornication which was an unclean heathen ritual of worship. A Christian gathering and unity would not be possible between Jew and gentile if these were not avoided.

However, the request that these “four necessary things” be observed would lead in time to a line of demarcation between gentile and Jewish believers in individual churches. It is not possible to have two standards of Christian conduct in a gathering of believers. This gradually grew to become a “*middle wall of partition*” which could not exist in the church of the one body (Ephesians 2:14). This letter is not laid down as a law, but is the sound judgment of the Jerusalem believers for the guidance of gentiles, though it had no effect on the Judaizers who sought to unsettle the great witness of Paul in Antioch, Corinth, Galatia, Jerusalem and Rome.

Two leaders, Judas (Barsabbas) and Silas, were dispatched with the letter to the church at Antioch. When this was read to the believers, they rejoiced which showed it was a victory for gentile liberty. While they were at Antioch, these two brethren did much to encourage the Christians there and then they returned to Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas continued with their ministry at Antioch (:35).

The beginning of Paul’s second missionary journey is recorded in :36. Paul and Barnabas had a disagreement over taking John Mark with them, which they had done before. Paul felt that he had a quitter on his hands and he described Mark as one who “withdrew” (literally, apostatized from) them and did not continue with them in the work (:38). He felt he could not experiment again with Mark. Both men had made up their minds and would not yield. There was a sharp disagreement between them and they parted company.

## Chapter 16

In Lystra, Paul was introduced to Timothy. Timothy was also a child of mixed parentage, and this was another qualification. He could sympathize with the gentile (the Greek) and could understand the Jew, for his mother was a Jewess and his father a Greek. Some have a difficulty in Paul’s circumcising him after his stand against circumcision. To Paul, circumcision and un-circumcision were nothing, but the glory and the purpose of God was all. As Timothy could better serve the Lord when circumcised, for this enabled him to witness in the synagogue as well as outside, Paul performed the act.

Upbringing, spiritual gifts, prophecies, laying on of hands and a Jewish rite, all combined to fit this young man for his high office. Paul, Silas and Timothy went through the cities, giving to them the decrees to maintain which had been decided by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. As problems had been removed by the decrees, the churches continued to be established in the faith and they increased in number daily. Going northward, the three servants of the Lord traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia. In this context we find that the guidance of the holy spirit twice prevented them from taking the wrong course, and we do well to remember that the “locked door” is just as much a part of divine guidance as the door that opens before us. “*Who is opening and no one shall be locking, and locking and no one shall be opening*” (Revelation 3:7). Locked doors may not be so pleasant as open doors, but they are absolutely vital to the guidance of the Lord. It is dangerous, indeed, to open what God has locked. Sometimes we have to wait a long while before the reason for the locked door is given. Here, in Acts, God prevented Paul and his friends from preaching in Asia, and when they came to the border of Mysia and tried to enter Bithynia, again the Lord locked the door.

The Lord now willed that the gospel of the grace of God should come over to Europe, and this was made absolutely clear by the night vision given to Paul concerning the call of the man of Macedonia for the apostle and his friends to come over and help them (:9).

The apostle and his companions set foot for the first time on European soil. They traveled to Philippi where Paul and his friends began to speak. A woman named Lydia was listening, and the Lord opened her heart to respond and she in turn opened her home to them. The men of Macedonia turned out to be a group of women! Certainly a new era had dawned for Europe, and for women in the conversion of Lydia. It would seem that Paul hesitated to accept her invitation to her home, but she persuaded them and responded fully to all she had heard.

A slave girl claimed to tell fortunes and earned her owners a large sum of money by doing so. She seemed to be telling the truth, for she kept on declaring: *“These men are slaves of God most high, who are announcing to you a way of salvation!”* Paul recognized that she was demon-possessed, even though she stated the truth. He wanted no testimony from a source like this, and in the name of Jesus Christ Paul commanded the evil spirit to come out of her, which it did instantly (:18). The employers of the slave girl, seeing that their money was gone from her soothsaying, attacked Paul and Silas, taking them to the rulers and charging them with upsetting the whole city and advocating customs that Romans could not accept or practice. The crowd joined with and supported them. As a consequence, the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and flogged and then thrown into prison, with their feet fastened in the stocks.

After this cruel treatment one would not be surprised to find Paul and Silas moaning because of the extreme pain and discomfort, but instead of this they spent the time praying and praising God by singing hymns to Him (probably the Psalms). The other prisoners were listening to them and they must have been amazed. Then suddenly God intervened, as He had done when Peter was imprisoned, and an earthquake shook the foundations of the prison, opening the prison doors and releasing the chains on the prisoners. The jailor was suddenly awakened, and seeing what had happened drew his sword to commit suicide, for he knew he was responsible for the prisoners with his life. Paul stopped him in time by shouting that no one had escaped and that they were all there. The man, being terrified, then fell down before Paul and Silas and asked what he should do to be saved (:30). The answer from both was the same as that which Peter gave Cornelius:

*Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household (:31).*

The result was that he and his family did this and were saved. The jailor did his best to atone for what he had done to the prisoners by washing their wounds. After this they were baptized. The next day the jailor was ordered to release Paul and Silas; but when told this, Paul said, “We are Roman citizens. We were beaten without trial and thrown into prison. Let the officers come and lead us out.” The constable reported this to the officers, who immediately became alarmed, for they realized they had seriously transgressed Roman law. So they had to eat humble pie and do this very thing which they must have hated. It must have been a bitter pill for them. They kept on begging Paul and Silas to leave for fear of future trouble.

The two leaders went to Lydia’s house where they met other believers whom they consoled. One would have thought that it would have been the other way around, that Paul and Silas needed to be consoled

---

after all that they had suffered! This was a terrible beginning for the apostles' testimony in Europe, but the gospel standard was firmly planted in Europe. Two households were saved before Paul departed.

## Chapter 17

Paul and Silas now went to Thessalonica to the Jewish synagogue. This was his custom in his Acts ministry, for Israel was still the covenant people and human center of God's earthly kingdom purpose, even though they were falling more and more into unbelief and opposition to God's will. This was a repetition of their attitude to the Lord Jesus, their Messiah, King and Savior. Luke says nothing about the physical condition of Paul and Silas after their torture, but in 1 Thessalonians 2:1-2 Paul wrote,

*For you yourselves are aware, brethren, that our entrance to you has not come to be for naught but though suffering before and being outraged in Philippi, according as you are aware, we are bold in our God to speak the evangel of God to you with a vast struggle.*

The Christian church began in the Jewish synagogue and was not separated from it until this second missionary journey was over. The people of Israel were the custodians of the Word of God – the old testament. So Paul wisely, for three successive Sabbaths, opened and explained these Scriptures, pointing out that they foretold that Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead and that this Jesus was the Messiah (Christ) who had fulfilled these prophecies (:2-3). He therefore reminds the Thessalonians in his first epistle, “*For, if we are believing that Jesus died and rose ...*” (1 Thessalonians 4:14).

We should always remember that we have only two sources of information regarding the subject matter of Paul's ministry. They are the record of Acts where the churches are first founded, and the subsequent epistles where they are given added teaching. It would be good for us all when we read of the churches described in Acts to read also the epistles sent to these churches and compare the teaching of both, for one explains the other. The apostle followed this method elsewhere, as 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 makes clear:

*For I give over to you among the first what also I accepted, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was entombed, and that He has been roused the third day according to the Scriptures.*

As a result of Paul's faithful proclamation and explanation of the Word of God at Thessalonica, there was a big response, for some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women (:3-4). These God-fearing gentiles were less under the control of the rabbis and so responded more readily to the apostle's appeal. It was not to be for long, however, that the work was free from opposition. As Paul could not be found, Jason, in whose house he had stayed, was dragged before the city magistrates. The mob made charges against the believers which were twisted from the truth that had been given. The kingdom of God had been proclaimed, but it was a very different kingdom from those obtaining in the world at that time. Doubtless they referred to the Lord Jesus as King, which was a title given to Caesar. Rome tolerated religions as long as they did not compromise Caesar's position as Emperor and Ruler. When this happened, they suppressed them ruthlessly. The city was thrown into turmoil, and as a result they put Jason and the others on bail and let them go (:9).

Not wanting to cause more trouble, the brethren at Thessalonica felt that it would be safer for Paul and Silas to go on to Berea by night. It was at Berea that Timothy rejoined them. In spite of all of the opposition from the Jews, Paul went straight away to the synagogue there as usual. Now the Bereans were more noble than those in Thessalonica, who received the Word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures day by day to see if what these apostles were saying was true (:11). This was commendation indeed, for Paul stated in his first letter to the Thessalonian church that they had become “*a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia*” (1 Thessalonian 1:7). The wise Berean believers did more. They brought the teaching given by Paul to the touchstone of the holy Scriptures to test whether it was God’s truth or not. They did it with great eagerness which was essential in studying and comparing what God had written and preserved in His Word. It turned them into sound Bible students.

As a result many Jews believed as well as a number of prominent women and also Greek men. As before, the Jews of Thessalonica, hearing that the apostles had arrived at Berea, sent a number there to stir up further trouble (:13), just as the Jews from Antioch in Pisidia had pursued Paul to Iconium and Lystra. Acting swiftly, Paul left and went all the way to Athens. Silas and Timothy remained behind in Berea where they would keep the witness going. They would join Paul in Athens as soon as possible. Athens was the metropolis of the world’s wisdom, the city of philosophy, culture and art, yet in spite of this it is safe to say that this situation was one of the most difficult Paul had to face. He seized the opportunity to preach Christ to this strange audience. He does not speak like a man on trial, but as one who is endeavoring to get a hearing for the gospel of Christ, and he uses great wisdom in doing so. There was mixed reaction to all that they had heard. Nevertheless it was not without result, for some men, being joined to him, believe, among whom were Dionysius, the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

## **Chapter 18**

From Athens, Paul moved on to Corinth. In :9 the Lord assured him not to be afraid, so Paul stayed there for a year and a half. Corinth, with its massive population and thousands of prostitutes, had very low morals based on the two epistles he wrote to believers while staying there. Paul was rejoined by Silas and Timothy. Once more Paul took the opportunity of giving his witness first to the Jews in the synagogue, for he reasoned with them every Sabbath; but the seemingly inevitable happened. Once more the Jews became hostile and they opposed and blasphemed. On two occasions Paul announced in a synagogue that, because of their opposition and blasphemy, he would turn to the local gentiles. This happened at Antioch and here at Corinth. He faithfully had made known the gospel of grace, so his responsibility was finished regarding the Jew. However, he didn’t go too far before finding someone’s response. Adjoining the synagogue was the house of Titius Justus, a God-fearer who had listened to Paul and believed his message.

The Jews who opposed Paul said his teaching was against Roman law, but Gallio showed no concern whatever. Gallio’s verdict was really a great help to Paul. He was free to deliver his message in the provinces of the empire without fear of coming into conflict with Roman law. The apostle stayed on at Corinth for some time, taking full advantage of the liberty he had won. He then sailed for Syria. Paul and his friends reached Ephesus where Aquila and Priscilla stayed for some years. At Ephesus he again entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.

---

Between Paul's departure from Ephesus and his return, we learn of a Jew named Apollos who believed that the Lord Jesus was the true Messiah. Aquila and Priscilla explained to him the way of God more accurately (:26). This strengthened his testimony and he went to Corinth with a letter of introduction from his Ephesian friends and greatly helped believers there, preaching also to the Jews outside, refuting their arguments and proving from the Scriptures that the Lord Jesus Christ was the Messiah (Christ).

## Chapter 19

In this chapter Paul met about twelve men whose spiritual knowledge was as defective as Apollos' knowledge had been. They had received the baptism of John the Baptist and no more. John had spoken of a coming baptism of the holy spirit together with the coming of Christ, but now this had actually happened and apparently they had not heard that this was so. Paul explained it to them. As they had now come into the deeper knowledge of the witness of Christ and His resurrection, they were baptized afresh, and when Paul laid his hands on them they received the holy spirit and the Pentecostal gifts as others had done. Asia was fully evangelized (:10) and became one of the leading centers of Christianity for centuries afterwards.

Paul, on returning to Ephesus, started his synagogue witness again as he had promised. For three months he made known the kingdom of God and the gospel which gave the entrance to it. Yet again Paul experienced the violent opposition of the Jews. They slandered "The Way" and the situation was so grave that he abandoned the synagogue and used the lecture hall of a teacher named Tyrannus as his headquarters. God mightily supported Paul's witness by granting special or extraordinary miracles to be performed. Even a piece of cloth which Paul had used healed the sick. This reminds us of those who touched the fringe of Christ's clothing and were likewise healed.

Demon possession was one of many attempts to ruin the kingdom purpose of God, hence the Lord's constant exorcising them and delivering people from their power. This same line of attack continued through the Acts together with other methods as we have seen. Paul not only healed the sick but like the Lord, he exorcised these evil spirits (:13-16). Some Jews, evidently watching how Paul exorcised evil spirits by using the name of Christ, tried to do the same. There were seven sons of a Jewish chief priest named Sceva who attempted to drive out an evil spirit in this way, but the evil spirit challenged them and finally caused the man who was possessed to jump on them and overpower them. They managed to escape but they ran away naked and wounded. When this became known among the Jews and Greeks, they were greatly sobered by what they heard. Ephesus had the reputation of being a center of magical practice, but the gospel prospered among them with the result that many came to Paul and confessed what they had done and they brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. They had a value of fifty thousand pieces of silver, which was a considerable sum of money. Thus mightily the Word of the Lord grew and was strong (:20). The remainder of the chapter deals with the riot at Ephesus, yet another attempt to hinder and spoil the gospel.

## Chapter 20

Soon after this upset, Paul set out for Macedonia, traveled through that area speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece where he stayed three months. Paul went back through Macedonia instead of Syria because of a Jewish plot against him. They sailed from

Philippi to Troas after the feast of unleavened bread. Paul and his fellow-travelers met with the believers at Troas for worship and fellowship. On one of the Sabbaths they gathered to break bread. Paul argued with them and prolonged the word into midnight, and a young man named Eutychus, who was sitting in a window, became drowsy and sank into a deep sleep. He then fell from the window which was three stories high, and was picked up dead. Now Paul, coming downstairs, fell on him and embraced him, bringing the boy back to life. There are many similarities between Peter and Paul as they both proclaimed the kingdom of heaven on earth, one of which was raising the dead. Peter raised Dorcas, and Paul raised Eutychus.

While the ship stayed at Miletus, Paul sent a message to the elders of the church at Ephesus, asking them to come and see him. The apostle wanted to strengthen and encourage them and tell them how much he cared for them. There seemed to be a special bond between Paul and the Ephesian church, for he had been with them for three years and had so many varied experiences and persecutions there. He would not see them again (:25, 38), and their outlook and attitude is like the farewell discourse of the Lord Jesus to the disciples in the upper room. He warns them of perils just as the Lord had done, and was taking stock of his ministry at the close of the third missionary tour. The apostle speaks first of his own personal integrity. In spite of all of his suffering and difficulties, he had fully served the Lord with lowliness of mind and done all he could to help them. He tells them that prison and hardships are facing him. He warns them that there would be enemies to the truth he was proclaiming, both outside and inside the Ephesian church. Paul then knelt down and prayed with them. Those who valued the wonderful truth he had taught them wept as they embraced and kissed him. What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see him again.

## **Chapter 21**

We have now reached the last stages of the fateful journey to Jerusalem. Some who had the gift of prophecy foresaw the danger that awaited Paul at Jerusalem, so they tried to get him to change his plans and not go there. The apostle, however, knew the leading of the Lord and interpreted the words of the spirit rather as a forecast, not a prohibition, such as he received later on through Agabus (:10-11). It was natural that his friends should try to save him from suffering, but the apostle, like his Master, steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. At the end of the week all of the disciples at Tyre, with their families, accompanied Paul to the ship where they knelt and prayed and said goodbye to each other, and then the ship continued the journey. Paul, who was moved by the weeping and concern of believers around him, told them once more that he must follow the path of obedience to the Lord, whatever the cost. When they saw that his mind was firmly made up, they gave in, praying that the Lord's will might be done (:12-14).

When Paul arrived at Jerusalem, he received a warm welcome from the believers. The next day they visited James and all of the elders were present. James was now obviously in charge of the witness at Jerusalem. To him and all of the others, Paul gave a detailed report of the wonderful work which God had done among the nations through his dispensation. Now those who heard this glorified God. Paul was told that tens of thousands among the Jews who have believed are all inherently zealous for the law. They accused Paul of teaching all of the Jews among the nations apostasy from Moses, telling them not to be circumcising their children, nor yet to be walking in the customs. So here was trouble again and as always it was from his own nation.



When some of Paul's enemies, Jews from Asia, saw him in the Temple precincts, they realized that their opportunity had come to seize him and murder him if possible. Note that they were not the Judaizers who had caused trouble, but the violent Jews who had hounded the apostle from place to place as we have seen previously. Having seen Paul with Trophimus (a gentile) in Jerusalem and knowing also that Paul had been in the Temple court of Israel, they assumed that Paul had taken Trophimus with him into the Temple, which was reserved for Jews only. Yet this was not so, for Trophimus was not with Paul in the Temple. Any gentile found there was liable for execution. For a Jew, this was one of the most serious offences that would certainly stir up the whole city against Paul. The Jews who opposed Paul knew this to be true and so they kept shouting that this had happened and that Paul had profaned their Temple.

Right away there was a commotion and the crowd seized the apostle and dragged him from the inner precincts down the steps to the outer court. The Temple police, seeing the danger, closed the doors between the two courts to prevent the mob coming in any further. Paul, in the outer court, was being fiercely assaulted and beaten by the crowd, and his life was saved only by the timely arrival of Roman soldiers. Running down the steps, they rescued Paul just in time from his Jewish enemies. They arrested him and the commander ordered him to be handcuffed to two soldiers. Evidently he was thought to be a criminal but they could not allow him to be lynched by the rioters. He must be dealt with legally. The commander could not find out what he was charged with, because the crowd were all shouting different things and the uproar was too great to get any reliable details. So he ordered the soldiers to bring Paul into the fortress. The violence of the mob was so great that they had to carry him. Meanwhile they kept shouting and screaming, "*away with him!*"

The military commander, guessing who Paul was, asked him if he was an Egyptian rebel who had started a previous revolt which involved 4,000 terrorists, and was very surprised when Paul addressed him in educated Greek and asked for permission to speak to the rioting crowd. The apostle assured him that he was not an Egyptian, but a citizen of the great university city of Tarsus and born of Jewish stock. The commander gave him permission to speak, and so Paul, at one of the most dangerous times of his life, bravely stood up, and relying solely on the Lord began to speak to his enemies in Aramaic, which was not only the vernacular of the Jews of Palestine but the common speech of non-Greek speakers of western Asia and in the east beyond the Euphrates.

## Chapter 22

The fact that Paul addressed the rebellious crowd in their own language, Aramaic, had a quieting effect on them and they listened to what he had to say. He began by describing his upbringing as an orthodox Jew, his conversion at Damascus and his commission to evangelize the gentile world. This is the second time we have an account of the apostle's conversion, the first having occurred in chapter 9. He points out that he was born and bred at Tarsus, and then under Gamaliel he was thoroughly trained in the law of Moses. He declares that he was just as zealous for God as any who were listening to him, so much so that he persecuted the followers of "the Way" because he thought the new Christian ideas set God's teaching aside. He stopped at nothing, arresting men and women and throwing them into prison, with death to follow. He was going to Damascus to seize these followers of the Christian creed and bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment, when suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around him and he heard a heavenly voice say to him, "*Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? I am Jesus of Nazareth, Whom you are persecuting,*" and in reply, the apostle could

only say, “*who are you, Lord?*” and “*what shall I do, Lord?*” The Lord answered by telling him to go into Damascus and there he would learn what to do. He had to be led there because the brilliance of the light had blinded him. Paul then describes his meeting with Ananias, whom he describes as a “*devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there.*” From him his sight was restored, and he was told that he had seen the risen Christ and heard His words appointing him to be a witness of all that he had seen and heard and instructing him to be baptized.

Paul adds words that are not given in chapter nine, to the effect that later on he was praying in the Temple, and the Lord appeared to him again, warning him to leave Jerusalem at once, because his testimony about Christ would be rejected. Paul started to argue strongly and say that everyone knew his former opposition to Christ and the part he had played in the stoning of Stephen and this would convince them that his change of attitude was based on the strongest grounds; but the Lord insisted that the apostle should leave at once, for now his sphere of witness would be the gentile world far away. Up to this point the crowd listened to the apostle but directly he spoke of his mission to the gentiles. All of their opposition blazed up again, which only shows how much they hated the gentiles. Yet we remember that Paul had reminded the opposing Jews at Corinth that they had been chosen by God “*to be a light of the gentiles*” and they should be “*for salvation unto the ends of the earth!*” This nation was slipping farther and farther into the darkness of unbelief such that finally it would end in their rejection by God (Acts 28).

Those who opposed Paul got more and more excited, throwing dust about and waving their clothes. The Roman military officer evidently despaired of getting to the bottom of the trouble, so he ordered Paul to be taken into the barracks and to be scourged in order to get the truth from him. This was a shocking experience which often led to the death of the victim. Paul states that he had been beaten with rods three times by the Romans and five times he had received the lash inflicted by Jewish authority. It is quite amazing how the apostle’s body survived such treatment, but he had an almighty Savior and Lord, Who preserved him until his work for God was finished.

As they were tying him up to receive the terrible scourging, Paul asked the centurion in command, “*Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn’t even been found guilty?*” (:25). The centurion heard this and reported it directly to the commander. “What are you going to do?” He said: “This man is a Roman citizen.” The commander went straight away to Paul and asked, “Are you a Roman citizen?” Paul replied, “Yes, I am.” The officer, evidently trying to impress the apostle, said, “I had to pay a big price for my citizenship.” The sale of Roman citizenship was a fact, but Paul replied with simple and calm dignity, “I was born a citizen.” This statement filled the commander with alarm, for it was illegal to treat any Roman citizen in this way, and he knew he could be severely punished by his superiors for doing so. He was now forced to ascertain from a legal standpoint what had caused this dangerous disturbance, so the next day he ordered the Jewish Sanhedrin to hold a meeting and he brought Paul before them. If the charge against Paul was a breach of Jewish law, then the Sanhedrin must try him.

## **Chapter 23**

Having been brought before the Jewish court, the apostle took the initiative of addressing that body in his defense. He could say truly that in the past he had lived in all good conscience in the sight of God, just as he wrote later on to the Philippians that he was blameless. He did not say sinless but he walked in conformity to God’s commands. A little later on he assured governor Felix that it was his

constant desire to maintain a clear conscience before God and man. Yet he could not pursue this line any further, because the high priest Ananias, who was intensely annoyed with Paul's claim, told those standing by to strike him across the mouth. This was illegal and particularly offensive to a Jew at the hands of another Jew. He was one of the worst high priests who profaned the sacred office. Josephus tells us that he robbed the ordinary priests by stealing their tithes. The Talmud describes him as rapacious, gluttonous and greedy. To be judged by a hypocrite like this must have been exceedingly trying to Paul, and we can understand how his patience gave way when he replied, "*God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit there to judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck!*" (:3). The word "*whitewashed*" is the same that the Lord Jesus used in describing the hypocritical Pharisees of his day as "*whitewashed sepulchers*" (Mathew 23:27).

Actually, what Paul said of Ananias was prophetic, for he died an ignominious death at the hands of assassins. Certainly, what Paul said about the high priest was true of his lack of character, yet the apostle admitted that he had been guilty of irreverence against the office of high priest (:5). The Lord Jesus, when smitten on the cheek, did not threaten, but He did protest against the act. Paul had not yet been properly charged, let alone tried and found guilty. Not only was the apostle criticized of his attitude toward the high priest but they also criticized his defense of his hope in the resurrection of the dead (:6), knowing that Pharisees and Sadducees were completely divided on this fundamental issue. The Sadducees rejected resurrection and the reality of angels (messengers) and spirits, whereas the Pharisees firmly believed both of these doctrines – this was the chief difference between the two groups.

Resurrection was the very center of Paul's doctrine and the gospel. Without it there is no foundation for the Christian faith, and salvation is a mockery. The Messianic hope was absolutely bound up with the doctrine of resurrection. This shows that it was not a mere trick of Paul's to divide the Sanhedrin, as some maintain, but it certainly did this very thing (:9-10). Again there was an uproar, and the dispute became so violent that the commander, in order to save Paul's life, ordered the troops to go down and take Paul away by force and bring him into the barracks. Paul must have felt that his previous fears of what might happen if he went to Jerusalem were real and were being fulfilled. This must have been a time when he needed encouragement and strength, and this he received by another appearance of the Lord to him just as he had done at critical times before. For the Lord then said to him, "*Take courage! As you have testified about Me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome*" (:11).

This must have greatly cheered him, for it showed without doubt that he had done the right thing in coming to Jerusalem, although that would be accompanied by severe trial and persecution. Furthermore, he would finally reach Rome, which he had planned to do on his way to Spain, though it was to be in a way that he never contemplated. Luke goes on to record the extreme fanaticism of Paul's enemies. Their one aim was to kill Paul and get rid of him. Until now their plans had failed. More than 40 of them plotted together, having taken an oath not to eat anything until they had murdered the apostle. They made known their plan to the chief priests and elders, which was for them to ask the Roman authorities to bring Paul before them once more as an excuse of wanting more accurate information about him. The assassins were then ready to kill him before the enquiry began (:12-15), but God's almighty power was working to protect His servant.

We are not told how Paul's nephew got to know of the plot, but he told Paul about it right away. Paul immediately called a centurion and told him to take the young fellow to the commander, and when

the officer heard of the planned assassination, he took instant steps to prevent it, for it was obvious that Paul was not safe in Jerusalem. It would be better to send him under a strong guard to Caesarea and there he would be under the responsibility of the procurator of Judea. Additionally, the Roman commander sent a letter to Felix the governor (:25-30) explaining the situation. It was cleverly written to put himself in a good light with Felix, his superior officer. He reversed the order of events by saying that, on learning that he was a Roman citizen, he rescued him. Actually the facts were the other way around, and of course he said nothing about his order to scourge Paul, for this would have immediately put him in the wrong, but he actually posed as a protector of a fellow Roman citizen. However, to his credit, he inferred that Paul should have been freed, for there was no charge against him that deserved death or imprisonment.

Each magistrate before whom Paul appeared declared him innocent – Gallio, Lysias the commander, Felix and Festus. What happened to the 40 conspirators we do not know. No more is heard of them during the long five years of Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea and Rome. The letter sent to Felix was "*after this manner.*" The soldiers, carrying out their orders, took Paul with them during the night as far as Antipatris. The next day the cavalry took him on to Caesarea, delivered the letter to Felix and handed Paul over to him. Felix asked Paul from which province he came. On hearing he was from Cilicia, a Roman province, he decided he could deal with the case himself and told Paul he would hold a full hearing when his accusers arrived. Antonius Felix was procurator of Judea from A.D. 52-59. He ordered that Paul be kept under guard in Herod's palace.

## **Chapter 24**

Five days later, a number from the Sanhedrin led by the high priest came to Caesarea to state their case against Paul. They brought a Roman lawyer with them named Tertullus, which was necessary since the Jews were not familiar with Roman legal procedure and it was the custom to do so in the provinces. The lawyer began with an attempt at flattery in order to come into the good grace of the governor, Felix. What he said was far from truth but it sounded well to praise Felix for keeping peace in the province, especially as Tertullus was going to accuse Paul of being a disturber of the peace. Three charges were brought against Paul:

1. He was a public pest, and a promoter of rebellion against all of the Jews throughout the empire.
2. He was a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.
3. He had attempted to profane the Temple.

This implied that the apostle had offended against both Roman and Jewish law. The word translated "pest" means a plague. Paul, who proclaimed the gospel of God, was branded as a pest by a contemporary hired lawyer. Needless to say, these charges were complete misrepresentations and the third one a lie. Paul is now invited to state his case. He begins with a complimentary statement, which in this case was true, and then says that no more than twelve days ago he went up to Jerusalem to worship. The apostle went on to show that he had done nothing to draw a crowd or cause a riotous assembly because he had been in no argument with anyone in the city, Temple or synagogues, and therefore there was not one charge they could substantiate. Furthermore, he stated that he did worship the God of Israel and he believed whole-heartedly in the old testament Scriptures, whether the law or the prophets, and he held to the hope of resurrection.

He makes clear that there would be a resurrection of two classes: the just (those justified by faith as his letter to the Romans declared), and the unjust (the unrighteous who knew nothing of such justification). Paul finished by pointing out that the Asian Jews who had accused him were not present, and if there had been any truth in their accusations they should have been there as his prosecutors. The only disagreement they could have pointed out was concerning the resurrection and that was certainly not a crime.

Evidently Felix could see that Paul was innocent of the charges made against him, but the attitude of Felix was that he had so much trouble with the Jews that he did not want to offend them further. Felix had some knowledge of Christianity at this time (probably helped by his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess), so that as Paul spoke about faith in Christ Jesus and touched on righteousness, self-control and judgment to come, he trembled with fear and quickly ended the conversation. However, he hoped that Paul would give him a bribe, so he later sent for him on several occasions. This went on for two years, after which he was succeeded by Porcius Festus, but he left Paul in prison because he wanted to please the Jews (:24-27).

## Chapter 25

Three days after his arrival in Caesarea, Festus went to Jerusalem to meet the Sanhedrin and other leading Jews, which was a normal thing for a new procurator to do. The Jewish enemies of Paul in Jerusalem must have been delighted to learn that Felix had left Paul imprisoned at Caesarea. They now hoped that Festus would favor them by sending orders to Caesarea to bring Paul up to Jerusalem, and on the way they would make another attempt to assassinate him. Festus, however, saw no need for this, and the Lord undoubtedly was over-ruling. He decided that, as he was shortly going back to Caesarea, a responsible deputation from the Jewish rulers could accompany him and they could accuse Paul before him there.

This meant that the case against the apostle would be opened yet again, which could never have happened if Felix had done his duty in acquitting and discharging him. After a week in Jerusalem, Festus returned to Caesarea with the deputation from the Sanhedrin. The next day he ordered Paul to be brought into court, and taking his seat as judge he gave the Jews the opportunity of restating their charges against him. This they did, and although there were many charges, not one of them could be proved. Paul replied that he had done nothing wrong against the Jews, the Temple or Caesar; but Festus, taking the same attitude as Felix, wanted to please the Jews, so he asked Paul if he was prepared to go to Jerusalem and stand trial before him there.

However reasonable this appeared on the surface, Paul would have none of it. Why should he place himself in jeopardy once again? If Festus began his rule by trying to pacify these Jews, he might make further concessions to them which could be even more dangerous. There was one way open to Paul as a Roman citizen to free himself from this difficult situation. Let Roman justice decide. As a Roman citizen he could appeal against the verdict of a lower court and exercise his right of appeal to Caesar and the sovereign court at Rome. Doubtless Festus heard Paul's decision with some relief, for he was in a difficult position also. He would be relieved of this problem if Paul went to Rome, so he answered Paul and said "To Caesar you will go!"

Fortunately for Festus, another turn of events helped him. Herod Agrippa II was at this time in Pal-

estine paying his respects to the new imperial representative Festus, whose jurisdiction was over the province adjoining his kingdom. This Agrippa the younger had the reputation of being an authority on Judaism, so Festus decided that Agrippa could help him make the report on Paul which would have to accompany Paul's appeal to the emperor. Accordingly he took the opportunity of acquainting Agrippa with what had happened regarding Paul, whom Felix had left in prison. The priests and elders of the Jews had brought charges against him and wanted Festus to condemn him. Festus had told them that according to Roman custom the person who was being charged must have the opportunity to defend himself.

The next day, when Paul was brought in, they disputed with him about their religion and about a man named Jesus, Whom Paul claimed was alive. Festus had asked him to agree to being tried at Jerusalem; but Paul had refused and made his appeal to the Emperor, so he was held until he could be sent to Caesar. Agrippa answered Festus and said, "I would like to hear this man myself." Festus told him that he could do so the next day. The next day Agrippa and his sister came together with the procurator's staff and the leading citizens of Caesarea. Paul was then brought in, and Festus told them he could find no substance in the capital charges his enemies had brought against him, but that he would appreciate the co-operation of Agrippa in the matter of the report he must send to Rome. He therefore handed over Paul's case to the king. This was not a trial, but an examination to help Festus out of a difficulty.

## Chapter 26

Paul's defense before Agrippa is the fullest of any which we have record. He no longer was on trial, and he availed himself of this opportunity of witnessing for Christ and giving a complete account of what had happened. The Lord told Ananias that Paul would bear His Name before nations, kings and the people of Israel. So now Paul gives his testimony before king Agrippa. It was a masterpiece of witness concerning his Lord and the part he had played up to this point. He told Agrippa that he was glad to make his defense before him, because he was an authority on Jewish customs and controversies, which was an undoubted fact.

The apostle begins by going over the ground already covered by Acts 9 and Acts 22: his early life, his persecuting zeal and the vision of the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus. However, in :16 he breaks new ground. As yet unrecorded truth is now revealed, and this is of vital importance to us to have an understanding of the purpose of God that was about to unfold. We are told here for the first time what the Lord Himself said to Paul on the road to Damascus. This may be questioned, but if we turn to Acts 9:1-2 we find there a record of the journey to Damascus. Verses 3-4 record of the vision and the voice; :5 reveals that it is the Lord Who speaks; :6 tells Paul to go into the city and wait for instruction; :15-16 record what the Lord said to Ananias about Paul – but that is all.

It is clear that all that Christ said to Paul is not recorded in Acts 9, and this is true of Acts 22 also. This chapter records the words of Ananias (Acts 22:13-15), and we learn that Paul was to be a witness of all that he had seen and heard. Yet in Acts 26 we discover for the first time what the Lord Jesus actually said to Paul at his conversion and commission which is found in the following verses:

*Now I say, "Who art Thou, Lord?" Now the Lord said, "I am Jesus, Whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand on your feet, for I was seen by you for this, to fix upon you before for a deputy*

*and a witness both of what you have perceived and that in which I will be seen by you, extricating you from the people and from the nations, to whom I am commissioning you, to open their eyes, to turn them about from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, for them to get a pardon of sins and an allotment among those who have been hallowed by faith that is in Me” (Acts 26:15-18).*

Paul surely speaks of two things: his present ministry, to which he refers again in :19-23; and a future appearing of the Lord in which Paul would be sent to the nations to turn them from darkness to light and deliver them from the blinding power of Satan, so that they might receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among the sanctified ones. Christ had already revealed that imprisonment awaited him, and this is exactly what happened. It was during this prison ministry that Paul wrote the epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon.

Paul followed his previous statements by declaring his obedient response to the heavenly vision (:19) by preaching the good news given to him by the Lord. Because of this and his reference to the despised nations, the Jews seized him in the Temple courts and attempted to murder him, yet the apostle insisted that he had revealed nothing further than what prophets and Moses had declared and made known (:22). This is extremely helpful, for it gives us the extent of Paul’s ministry and limits it to the Messianic kingdom of the old testament, which was the dominating theme of all of the prophets and also the kingdom good news of the Lord’s earthly ministry and that of the period covered by the Acts of the Apostles. To introduce here any of Paul’s writings that were written later when he was a prisoner for the nations, after the laying aside of Israel in unbelief at the end of the Acts, only causes confusion and should be avoided. It contradicts what Paul has just said.

In :24-32 Festus accused Paul of being insane. Paul answered, “What I am saying is true and reasonable,” and then he challenged the king. He asked king Agrippa, “Do you believe the prophets? I know you do.” This made the situation very awkward for Agrippa. He could not say that he disbelieved the prophets of the old testament. King Agrippa said that Paul could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar. So again the innocence of the apostle was stated; but he appealed to Caesar only after Festus had attempted to shift him back to Jerusalem. This would not have been necessary had Festus acted honorably and released him after declaring his innocence in the eyes of Roman law. So now Paul must be sent to Rome.

## Chapter 27

This chapter tells the story of the voyage and subsequent shipwreck of Paul. The severe conditions they experienced had caused them to go a long time without food and they were all weakened, so Paul encouraged them by saying that he had been given a vision by God which assured him that all would escape the peril they were in and they would stand finally before Caesar. The apostle assured them that God would do just what He said and that he fully believed God. What a fine testimony to real faith! The ship ran aground on a narrow strip of submerged land separating two stretches of deeper water. The bow of the ship stuck fast in this shoal, but the force of the water was breaking apart the ship. The soldiers guarding the prisoners wished to follow the traditional Roman discipline to kill them rather than risk their escape, but Julius the centurion had become favorably disposed towards Paul and did not wish to see his death. So he ordered all to make their way to the shore either by swimming or by floating on planks and pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached the land in

safety. So God's promise to Paul was fulfilled. This is a wonderful example of God's wisdom, guidance and care.

## Chapter 28

After making it ashore they appreciated the friendly reception they received from the Maltese people and their practical concern by lighting a fire to warm and dry them. Paul, being helpful, gathered some brushwood to keep the fire burning. A snake crept from the fire and fastened on to his hand, but Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. At first the Maltese thought Paul to be a criminal whom Divine Justice had punished, but seeing he was not hurt they changed their minds and said he must be a god.

Other miraculous healings took place. Publius' father was seriously ill with fever and dysentery. Paul went to see him, and after praying for him he was healed. When this became known in the island, those who were ill came to Paul and were cured of whatever illness they had. Miraculous healing was one of the sign-gifts relating to the earthly kingdom that occurred throughout the gospels and to the end of Acts. Later on, after the Acts period, we may be surprised to find that Paul cannot heal. Valued fellow-workers Epaphroditus and Trophimus are seriously ill, but Paul does not heal them, whereas once even a cloth from his body would have healed at a distance. There is only one satisfactory answer. After the end of the Acts a new dispensation sets in with new conditions. This we will consider later on.

After three months they set sail for Rome. When arriving, Paul was allowed to live by himself with a soldier to guard him. Being bound to a Roman soldier, Paul could not go to the synagogue as his custom was, so he invited the Jews to come to his lodging. He wanted one more opportunity of making known God's long-suffering with the nation of Israel and the wonders of the kingdom of God and the gospel message. He was sure that false reports had come to Rome regarding the things that had happened to him, and he was concerned that these Jewish leaders in Rome should know the truth. This explains his opening words to them (:17-19), but his desire and purpose did not stop here, for he said in :20, *"For this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain."*

What does the hope of Israel mean? The apostle had referred to this hope before Agrippa. He said, "It is because of my hope in what God has promised our fathers that I am on trial today. This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night." The hope mentioned by Paul, which he calls the hope of Israel in Acts 28:20, is related to what God promised the fathers (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), and it was something that had not yet been fulfilled for Israel. This shows that Israel was not cut off at the cross, for the twelve tribes were still waiting for that promise to be fulfilled. God made three unconditional covenants with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, respectively, which involved the seed, their descendants and the land. God said to Abraham in Genesis 12:3, *"all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*

The Jewish leaders at Rome arranged to meet Paul on another day, and the apostle spent that whole day expounding to them the kingdom, from Moses and the prophets, showing how their Messiah and King had the central place in this rule of God. Yet their answer was the same: some were convinced, but others refused to believe, just as they had been doing all along. Paul was then guided to



---

pronounce the terrible words which described Israel of Isaiah's day. Their blindness and deafness was through their own doing and sprang from minds so hard that even God's gracious promises made no impression on them. This was an absolute negation of the new covenant – and their descendants at the time Paul spoke these words were no better. They resisted the holy spirit. He told them (:28) that the nations heard the gospel and they believed and would continue to do so – but not his fellow countrymen: they rejected it, and for them there was only the darkness of unbelief. In this condition God laid them aside, where they have been for nearly two thousand years, for even today the orthodox Jew still rejects the Lord Jesus Christ as Messiah. The closing verses of Acts tell us that Paul stayed in his own rented house for two years and gladly received all who came to him. Here he had no hindrance and was able to boldly expound the kingdom of God.

This concludes the commentary by Stuart Allen on the Book of Acts.



## *Was Acts a Beginning?*

Paul's fourteen epistles fall into two distinct dispensational groups. Today, there are those who believe that Pentecost of Acts 2 was the beginning of the church which exists today, and that the book of Acts was the account of the early history or beginnings of the "church age." Also, some believe that the church began at Acts 9 or 13.

The keyword to the question, "Was Acts a Beginning?" is found in Acts 1:6. The word is "Restore."

*Lord, art Thou at this time **restoring** the kingdom to Israel?*

Restoration does not mean bringing in anything new, but rather the bringing back of something old. The kingdom that Jesus and the apostles proclaimed never happened in their day, but in the future it will be established. The occurrences of Israel's feasts, which we will discuss later, will further help us in "*Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*" (2 Timothy 2:15). The restoration of Israel is actually a feast. After their sins are abolished by the feast of "Passover," then the feast of "Atonement" will take place. This is like reconciliation, and Israel then can come into their Messiah's presence and have harmony. This anticipates Israel's future restoration. Restoration is referring to the land (earth) and Paradise (Restored Eden). Paradise is not heaven.

So Acts was merely a continuation of the kingdom of heaven on earth, offered in the gospels. In Acts 2 there was an out called assembly (church) of about 120 Jewish believers (Abraham's physical seed), present to receive the spiritual gifts at Pentecost. The promised spirit came on the day of Pentecost. The church of God (120 assembled believers), were endowed with power from on high (Luke 24:49). They formed the remnant that would preach the gospel of repentance and baptism. From that day in Acts 2, many miracles abounded. The gifts of the spirit prevailed. The believers were granted a foretaste of the powers of the eon to come (Hebrews 6:5). They felt their Lord would return soon. In Paul's later epistle to the Corinthians, he even discouraged marriage, saying that "the time was short," thinking that the Lord's return was imminent in their day (1 Corinthians 7:29).

We are still in the same eon as Paul and the Corinthians were. They had died with the expectation of the Lord's soon return. Something happened to change the status of "this eon's conclusion" and the expected return of the Lord. What was it that happened from those days all the way up to our time?

The answer is simple: The hope and conclusion of this eon was postponed at the end of the Acts period, when the nation of Israel was put aside for a time (Acts 28:28). Had the Jews repented, the Lord would have returned to earth and the end of this current age (eon) would have concluded, ushering in the next eon (the 1000 year kingdom on earth).

Later in the book of Acts the Lord descended and revealed to Paul alone the present dispensation of the grace of God, which is a parenthesis. In the future the divine purposes for Israel will be resumed, and the “end of this eon” will come to pass.

The apostle Paul is the only one in Scripture referred to as the apostle of and teacher for the gentiles (nations, see Romans 11:13, Ephesians 3:1 and 2 Timothy 1:11). Because of this, many assume that “the church” started when Paul came on the scene at either Acts 9 or 13. Drawing the conclusion that the church started with Paul, they find comfort in an idea that Paul was the first in the church assumed from a misunderstanding of this passage:

*Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all welcome, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, foremost [first] of whom am I. But therefore was I shown mercy, that in me, the foremost [first], Jesus Christ should be displaying all His patience, for a pattern of those who are about to be believing on Him for life eonian. (1 Timothy 1:15-16).*

In the verses above, the word “foremost” is sometimes translated “first.” This passage is referring to the degree of Paul’s depravity, not the rank of his position. Besides, Paul tells us that God chose the church which is His Body before the disruption of the world as adopted sons for an inheritance in the heavens (Ephesians 1:4-5). Ephesians was written after the book of Acts. After Israel was put aside at the end of Acts, Paul received revelation regarding it; but not once does the humble apostle suggest he was first in the church which is His body. Paul in Acts certainly could not have been the first in the church which is His body, because it had not been revealed at that time. It was a secret hidden from the eons (ages) in God (Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:26). In Acts 13:1 you will find the word *ecclesia* (church). This could *not* be where it began according to the previous Scriptures.

The called-out company during the Acts period was revealed through the prophets. These faithful ones would partake of all the blessings of Abraham, including the kingdom on earth and the wonderful heavenly city (New Jerusalem) that God prepared for Abraham and those of like faith (Romans 4:12). This called out company was not destined to be blessed in the above heavens, and we can read about it in Hosea 1 and 2, and Isaiah 1 and 10.

The members of this church had the same overcoming faith as Abraham, and during the Acts period it included Jew and gentile believers. Let us see this in the writings of our apostle Paul. Here is the gospel of their salvation as found in Paul’s letter to the Corinthians:

*Now I am making known to you, brethren, the evangel which I bring to you, which also you accepted, in which also you stand, through which also you are saved, if you are retaining what I said in bringing the evangel to you, outside and except you believe feignedly. For I give over to you among the first what also I accepted, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was entombed, and that He has been roused the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).*

Today we believe this same good news, but back then during the Acts period, because people believed this same gospel at that time, it does not necessarily make them the same church which is His body today as Paul says in Ephesians. The church which is His body was not revealed at that time. So what was their church? What was their calling and their hope? We have already referred to the prophets and here are the following Scriptures through Paul which supply the answers.

*... it is that He should also be making known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He makes ready before for glory -- us, whom He calls also, not only out of the Jews, but out of the nations also. As He is saying in Hosea also, "I shall be calling those who are not My people 'My people,' and she who is not beloved 'Beloved,' and it shall be, in the place where it was declared to them, 'Not My people are you,' there they shall be called 'sons of the living God'" (Romans 9:23-26).*

Can you see that Paul plainly says that the believing Jews and gentiles of the Acts period were CALLED according to prophecy? Their "church" was the remnant that the prophets spoke about. Peter refers to Hosea:

*Yet you are a chosen race, a "royal priesthood," a "holy nation," a procured people, so that you should be recounting the virtues of Him Who calls you out of darkness into His marvelous light, who once were "not a people" yet now are the people of God, who "have not enjoyed mercy," yet now are "being shown mercy" (1 Peter 2:9-10).*

In 1 Peter 2:6 Peter refers also to Isaiah 28:16, which is the very prophecy Paul uses in Romans 9:32-33 and 10:11. Peter and Paul are on the same prophetic page regarding the faithful of the Acts period. Paul, the apostle of the nations, says that the believing Jews and gentiles were the called of prophecy. Peter, an apostle to the Jews, says the believing Jews were of the same company. These faithful believers of the Acts period were the called out company of prophecy and they were to be blessed with faithful Abraham.

*Is the law, then, against the promises of God? May it not be coming to that! ... Now if you are Christ's, consequently you are of Abraham's seed, enjoyers of the allotment according to the promise (Galatians 3:21, 29).*

Check out the following references for their hope at that time: Acts 13:32; 14:22; 17:30-31 (the world is in view, not heaven); 26:6-7, 18, 22 (note, the inheritance is that about which the prophets spoke); 28:20; Romans 9:25-26; 11:25-26; 15:4-13; Galatians 3:6-9, 18, 29; 4:26; Hebrews 12:22-26.

During the Acts period we read Paul's own statements regarding his worship and center of faith during that time. Defending himself before the governor Felix, Paul says,

*Yet I am avowing this to you, that, according to the way which they are terming a sect, thus am I offering divine service to the hereditary God, believing all that is written, according to the law and in the prophets (Act 24:14).*

Paul worshipped the God of his (and Israel's) fathers and believed all things written in the old testament. This could not include Paul's post-Acts gospel of the secret of Ephesians 3, because the old testament knew nothing about it.

It is very important to notice that Paul was called and commissioned by the God of Israel's fathers:

*Now he said, "The God of our fathers fixes upon you beforehand to know His will, and to be acquainted with the Just One, and to hear the voice of His mouth" (Act 22:14).*

Notice that Paul was called by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the same God who called Moses (Acts 7:32) and who had glorified His Son Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 3:13; 5:30). During Acts Paul worshipped the God who called Moses. Moses was sent to Israel, as was Paul in the Acts period, despite the fact that he was the apostle of the nations at that time. However, Paul's Acts period commission from the God of Israel was to the Jew first, see Acts 9:15; 26:19-20; Romans 1:16 ; 2:9-10. From Acts 9 to 28, Paul went to the Jew first.

After Acts 28 Paul did not speak of God as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Israel had been put aside at Acts 28, and God is now called the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; the God of all (Ephesians 1:3, 17, 46). After Acts 28 Paul was sent to all nations with the glorious message that Christ was now among them, independent of Israel (Ephesians 3:1; Colossians 1:24-27). It was no longer the Jew first, it was no longer God in His relationship with Israel's fathers. Looking back to Paul's Acts period ministry we find another statement which is in harmony with his worship of the God of Israel and his belief in all things in the law and the prophets:

*Paul defending that "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the sanctuary, nor against Caesar did I sin" (Act 25:8).*

*Now it occurred three days after, that he calls together those who are foremost of the Jews. Now, at their coming together, he said to them "I, men, brethren, doing nothing contrary to the people or to the hereditary customs, was given up a prisoner out of Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans" (Act 28:17).*

Notice that, all the way to Acts 28, Paul declared that he had not offended in any way against the law of the Jews, the temple or the customs of his and Israel's fathers. Now consider these passages written after Acts 28:

*Yet now, in Christ Jesus, you, who once are far off, are become near by the blood of Christ (Ephesians 2:13).*

*For He is our Peace, Who makes both one, and razes [destroys] the central wall of the barrier (Ephesians 2:14).*

*(the enmity in His flesh), nullifying the law of precepts in decrees, that He should be creating the two, in Himself, into one new humanity, making peace (Ephesians 2:15).*

*and should be reconciling both in one body to God through the cross, killing the enmity in it (Ephesians 2:16).*

This present secret dispensation (administration) of the grace of God (Ephesians 3:9), in which we the church are living today, was given to Paul alone. It was unknown by Moses, by the prophets and by

---

the apostle Paul himself during the Acts period. During the Acts period, Paul believed all things in the old testament. After the Acts period, he spoke about things not found in it.

In this present dispensation, Paul refers to God as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of all, whereas previously He was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of Israel's fathers. It was Israel's God Who called Paul in the Acts period. It was the God of all in the post-Acts dispensation.

So the church which is His body mentioned in Ephesians did not begin during the Acts period. It was not mentioned until Paul wrote Ephesians. We are a new humanity, a new body, and Christ is the Head (Ephesians 2:15).

We're not looking for the New Jerusalem, but are destined for the celestials where we are currently seated.

*... and subjects all under His feet, and gives Him, as Head over all, to the ecclesia which is His body, the complement of the One completing the All in all (Ephesians 1:22-23).*

*... and rouses us together and seats us together among the celestials, in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6)*

### **THE BODY OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH WHICH IS HIS BODY**

While on the subject of the church, the term "*body of Christ*" needs consideration. The majority of believers today think that the body of Christ which existed during the Acts period is the same body that Paul reveals in his letters to the Ephesians and Colossians. The references made to Christ's Body (Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13, 27), are mistakenly used as proof that the church which is His body today, (Ephesians 1:22; 3:6), is the same church which existed during the Acts period.

In 1 Corinthians 12 a reference is being made to the spiritual gifts received on the day of Pentecost. These gifts are mentioned in :4-11, :28. Paul is simply illustrating that the diversity of these gifts should be kept in unity as illustrated by the human body, with its many members all are working harmoniously together. The reference to "The Christ" here, is a title of the church which had received this "anointing" (2 Corinthians 1:21). Romans 12:5 is also in reference to many members making up one body.

In Ephesians 3:6 Paul is talking about a joint body made up of Jews and gentiles. This is the new man (humanity), equally reconciled to God. Paul makes reference to this body (Ephesians 1:22; 2:11-17). In Ephesians 3:3 Paul by revelation says that the mystery (secret) was made known to him. He also says that he wrote about this before, briefly. Paul is speaking about what he wrote back in Ephesians 1 and 2, not in the Acts period.

Just because Paul is writing to these same believers in Christ as in the Acts period, and tells them in Ephesians that they are of the same body now, he is not telling them they were in the same body back then and in that body now. Previously they had a hope in Christ which was the hope of Israel. Paul is writing to these believers who crossed the Acts 28:28 boundary, and is giving them a new hope

and calling. The body in Ephesians 3:6 was unsearchable (:8), and hidden prior to this point (:9). The opening of the letter to the Ephesians is about a new dispensation (administration), a new hope and a new calling.

Most all fundamentalists agree with “right dividers” in believing the “body of Christ” is the mystical church over which Christ Jesus is the Head. They may not agree as to when the “body of Christ” began, but they will agree with the term that the apostle Paul uses for the church, which is the “body of Christ.”

The term “*body of Christ*,” is specifically mentioned twice in the Scriptures. The first occurrence appears in the epistle written during the Pentecostal era.

*Now you are the body of Christ, and members of a part ...* (1 Corinthians 12:27).

The second occurrence appears in the epistle which makes known and explains the secret.

*And the same One gives these, indeed, as apostles, yet these as prophets, yet these as evangelists, yet these as pastors and teachers toward the adjusting of the saints for the work of dispensing, for the up-building of the body of Christ* (Ephesians 4:11-12).

### **GIFTS GIVEN BY THE ASCENDED CHRIST**

Let us call attention to Ephesians 4:11-12. Christ gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers toward the adjusting of the saints for the work of dispensing, for the up-building of the body of Christ. The standard misleading interpretation is that our ascended Lord Jesus Christ gave some apostles and prophets to the church as His initial gift. That is to say, after the apostle Paul received the revelation of the secret, Christ ordained a set of apostles and prophets whom he used after 63 A.D. These were men who traveled between Paul’s prison and the previously established assemblies. This set of apostles and prophets were not the twelve, but rather another set – men like Timothy, Epaphroditus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Marcus, Jesus named Justice, Epaphras, Luke and possibly Demas. These men were the apostles and prophets mentioned in Ephesians 2:20 and Ephesians 3:5. The nations who were no more strangers and foreigners were built on the foundation of these apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:19-20).

It is said that these initial men were the apostles and prophets. After they completed their ministry, the ascended Christ did not give the church any more apostles and prophets. They performed the foundational work for the church of the secret. It is agreed by most that all of the apostles and prophets died out. After the foundational work of the apostles and prophets, there was no longer a need for them. Therefore, the only gifts to the church which remained after the initial foundation work were the evangelists, pastors and teachers.

When I first interpreted Ephesians 2:20, 3:5 and 4:11, I thought that Christ gave the church apostles and prophets, then later He gave to the church evangelists, pastors and teachers. I couldn’t understand why two of the gifts (apostles and prophets), were phased out and the other three remained. We have heard many Bible teachers and pastors use Ephesians 4:11 as the justification for their ministry. They felt they were a gift to the church, called and ordained by Christ to be an evangelist, pastor or



---

teacher of the Word. However, the key to understanding this verse is found in the verb “gave.” Gave is the preterit of the verb give. The preterit is past, applied to the tense in grammar which expresses an action or being perfectly past or finished, often that which is just past or completed. Some Bible versions render the verb in its present tense, “gives.” Using the verb in its present tense would mean that all of the gifts that Christ gave back then would still be given today. I don’t know of any apostles or prophets in existence today other than those fabricated by mankind. Therefore we note that Christ,

**GAVE** gifts unto men ... (Ephesians 4:8);

**GAVE** apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Ephesians 4:11).

The Lord Jesus Christ ordained these men sometime between Acts 28:28 and Paul’s writing of the Ephesian epistle. He did *not* continue to give the church of the secret (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers). These men were carefully chosen by Christ to minister to the saints who lived through the dispensational (administrational) change of Acts 28:28.

When viewed from this perspective, the problem concerning these gifts today vanishes. Simply stated, these gifts to the church have not been given since the initial ones were ordained with the ushering in of the present dispensation. The reason that Christ gave these men to the church was for the express purpose stated in Ephesians 4:12.

*For the adjusting of the saints for the work of dispensing, for the up-building of the body of Christ.*

Therefore, it is noted Christ gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers

1. for the adjusting of the saints;
2. for the work of the ministry (dispensing);
3. for the edifying (up-building) of the body of Christ.

The word “saints” refers to those who were saved under the Pentecostal program and lived through the dispensational change at Acts 28:28. The saints were those who believed the revelation of the secret. There was need of adjusting them. Immediately after Israel’s blindness was pronounced (Acts 28:25-28), there was a need for readjustment. The saints who believed the testimony of Paul the Lord’s prisoner were going through a period of readjustment, from that which was Pentecostal with a Jewish priority, to that which was all grace with the gentile ascendancy. This period of adjustment called for special men who were raised up and ordained by the ascended Christ to perform the work of adjusting the saints.

The adjusting of the saints had in view the work of the ministry. In this dispensation there is no laity or ecclesiastical system. The saints are to perform the work of the ministry. As someone has said, in the theocracy of grace there is in fact no laity. The saints were to perform the work of the ministry, and thus they required the adjusting. The ministry of adjusting the saints was the work and service of the gifts that Christ gave the one body. This ministry was also to edify the body of believers coming out of the Acts economy. The body of believers which came out of the Acts period was referred to as the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27). The body of Christ was to be built up in the truth of the secret administration. The secret was truth which replaced Pentecostal truth. The body of Christ

had been established previously in Pentecostal truth. Pentecostal truth related to the kingdom and was in affect throughout the period covered by Acts. Thus, there was a need for them to be built up and established in truth which superseded Pentecostal truth. The Lord used the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to edify the body of Christ.

The work of edifying the body of Christ did not meet with great success. We learn in 2 Timothy,

*Of this you are aware, that all those in the province of Asia were turned from me, of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes (2 Timothy 1:15).*

Paul also indicates that members of the body of Christ coming out of the Acts period were ashamed of him.

*You may not be ashamed, then, of the testimony of our Lord, nor yet of me, His prisoner, but suffer evil with the evangel in accord with the power of God (2 Timothy 1:8).*

Paul's post-Acts ministry was associated with prison, bonds and a chain. In fact, it has been said his credential as the prisoner of the Lord was his chain. Paul's chain was his badge of authority. He states in Ephesians 6:19-20 that he was conducting an embassy in a chain to make known the secret. When the apostle writes his last letter to Timothy, he implies that many were ashamed of his chain. However, he says that Onesiphorus was not.

*May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshes me and was not ashamed of my chain (2 Timothy 1:16).*

His use of the word "chain" is a *metonymy*. A *metonymy* is a figure of speech by which one name or noun is used instead of another. For example, "brass" stands for "military officers." Hence, the "chain" stands in close relationship to why he was in bonds. He was in bonds for the express purpose of receiving the revelation of the secret (Ephesians 6:19-20; Colossians 4:3). So, when Paul said Onesiphorus was not ashamed of "my chain," he is saying in plainer words that Onesiphorus was not ashamed of the secret.

We read that "all they which are in Asia" turned away from Paul when he announced the good news from glory. We learn that many were ashamed of the testimony of Paul the Lord's prisoner and that many members of the body of Christ were ashamed of his chain. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the edifying of the body of Christ did not meet with great success, and that most of the body of Christ did not accept the truth of the secret administration. When he said that they turned away from him, that was the same as saying that they turned away from the doctrine he was preaching. In plainer words, to turn from Paul was to turn away from what he taught. The goal towards which the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers were pointing was for all of the saints to come into the unity of the faith:

*... that we should all attain to the unity of the faith (Ephesians 4:13).*

The reference to "we ... all" refers to members of the body of Christ coming out of the Pentecostal era. During the Pentecostal era there was not unity. "Unity" means the state of being one. Certainly dur-

ing the Acts economy there was no unity. There was a distinct difference between the Jewish believer and the gentile believer. The division within the body of Christ was real as far as privilege and priority was concerned. Historically, the Jew had been first; the Jewish believer had the advantage. With the ushering in of the new administration, the Lord Jesus Christ raised up and appointed men to fill the special offices which are enumerated in Ephesians 4:11. These men were to be used “*till we all come in the unity of the faith.*” This goal was never reached, as we pointed out previously. The Acts period saints never reached the goal of accepting the unity which exists within the church of the secret. Instead, they turned from this doctrine.

All of this has been said to point out that the term “*the body of Christ*” needs to be re-examined. Our conclusion is that the term refers to those believers, both Jews and gentiles, who made up the church of God during the Acts period. The apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers were given specifically to direct the body of Christ into the unity which is inherent in the secret.

### THE CHURCH WHICH IS HIS BODY

It should be carefully noted that Paul the apostle never says that the church of the secret is the body of Christ. If the holy spirit was careful not to refer to the church of the secret as the body of Christ, so should the student. Notice the references to the church in Ephesians and Colossians.

*... and subjects all under His feet, and gives Him, as Head over all, to the ecclesia [church] which is His body, the complement [fullness] of the One completing the all in all (Ephesians 1:22).*

Paul says that the church is “*His body,*” but he avoids saying the church is “the body of Christ.” Here Paul asserts that the church is “*the fullness of Him.*”

*And should be reconciling both in one body to God through the cross (Ephesians 2:16).*

*The nations are to be joint enjoyers of an allotment, and a joint body (Ephesians 3:6).*

*One body and one spirit, according as you were called (Ephesians 4:4).*

*Out of Whom the entire body, being articulated together and united through every assimilation of the supply, in accord with the operation in measure of each one’s part, is making for the growth of the body, for the up-building of itself in love (Ephesians 4:16).*

*Even as Christ is Head of the church, and He is the Savior of the body (Ephesians 5:23).*

*For we are members of His body (Ephesians 5:30).*

Only in Ephesians 4:12 does Paul use the exact term “*the body of Christ*” and, as it has been pointed out, it refers to the body of believers coming out of the Acts period. Reference to the “*church which is His body*” is also prominent in the Colossian epistle. Set forth below are the verses in which reference is made to the body which is the church (*ecclesia*).

*And He is the Head of the body, the Church (Colossians 1:18).*

*I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for you, and am filling up in my flesh, in His stead, the deficiencies of the afflictions of Christ, for His body, which is the church (Colossians 1:24).*

*And not holding the Head, out of Whom the entire body, being supplied and united through the assimilation and ligaments, is growing in the growth of God (Colossians 2:19).*

*And let the peace of Christ be arbitrating in your hearts, for which you were called also in one body (Colossians 3:15).*

In the Colossian epistle no mention is made to “*the body of Christ.*” The fact that mention is made in both epistles to “*His body*” does not give us the liberty to refer to the present church as the body of Christ. The church which is His body, the fullness of Him (Ephesians 1:22), is not the body of Christ. It is “His body” over which He is the Head. It is not said that He is the Head of the body of Christ.

In Colossians 1, let us look at the following verses:

*I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for you, and am filling up in my flesh, in His stead, the deficiencies of the afflictions of **Christ**, for His **body**, which is the **church** (:24).*

*of which I became a dispenser, in accord with the administration of God, which is granted to me for you, to **complete** the Word of God (:25).*

*the **secret** which has been **concealed** [hidden] from the eons and from the generations, yet now was made manifest to His saints (:26).*

In :24 you will find the words “*Christ,*” “*body*” and “*church.*” In :25 you will find an administration in which Paul completes the Word of God. In :26 this secret, which was once hidden, is now made known. Neither Romans nor 1 Corinthians, which mention “*the body of Christ,*” is found in a dispensation that “*completes the Word of God.*”

The conclusion we have reached is that the body of Christ was the body of believers, both Jew and gentile, who were united to Christ by being baptized by one spirit into one body (1 Corinthians 12:13). The body of Christ in (1 Corinthians) resembles a human body, and is used simply as an illustration of the corporate life of believers during the Acts period, many of whom lived through the change of dispensations at Acts 28:28. The church, over which Christ Jesus is the Head, is the calling of believers after Acts 28:28. In these later epistles of Ephesians and Colossians, emphasis is laid on the relation which the church, as the body, bears to Christ as the Head. In them there is no possibility for an ordinary member of the church being compared to the Head or to part of the Head, as is done in 1Corinthians. The body of Christ needs to be rightly divided from the church which is His Body.

# *Acts 28:28 - The Great Dispensational Divide*

<u>Before Acts 28:28</u>	<u>After Acts 28:28</u>
Repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38). Salvation required works.	Buried with Him in baptism. His baptism unto death. (Colossians 2:12). No works (Ephesians 2:8-9).
A land, a kingdom on earth and the holy city. New Jerusalem (Genesis 15:7; Acts 1:3; 7:2-8).	Our citizenship belongs in the heavens (Philippians 3:20).
Nations once were strangers to Israel (Ephesians 2:12).	Nations no longer strangers to Israel (Ephesians 2:19).
Believing gentiles in the hope of Israel (Romans 15:4), had to abide by four ordinances which put a wall between Jew and gentile (Acts 15:20).	Christ Jesus tore down the middle wall of partition between Jews and gentiles (Ephesians 2:14).
The word “mystery” (or secret) was never used concerning the believers during Acts. The land and kingdom was prophesied (Genesis 15:7; Mathew 25:34).	The secret is made known, which previously had been hidden in God (Ephesians 3:9; 5:32; Colossians 1:26).
This company is linked with the Old Testament (Galatians 3:8; Hebrews 11).	No connection with Old Testament. Hidden from the eons and generations (Colossians 1:26).
The time period connected with believers is from the disruption of the world (Matt. 13:35; 25:34).	This church was chosen (before) the disruption of the world (Ephesians 1:4).
Their allotment: New Jerusalem which comes down out of heaven (Revelation 21:2, 10).	Our allotment: The right hand of God, among the heavens, “far above all” (Ephesians 1:19-21; 4:10).
Gender = (Female). The Bride; the Lamb’s wife; pure virgin (Revelation 21:2, 9; 2 Corinthians 11:2)	Gender = (Male). The New Man “Humanity” (Ephesians 2:15).

As saved sinners, believers are one in Christ, but dispensationally are not equal. The Jew is first. Gentile believers are wild olives grafted into the true Israel (Romans 11:17-18; 15:27). They are warned that they may be “cut off” (Rom. 11:21-22). Doctrinally they are in Christ. Dispensationally they are blessed with faithful Abraham (Galatians 3:9).	Jewish and Gentile believers are one in Christ and on a perfect equality doctrinally and dispensationally. We are joint-heirs, joint-partakers, and a joint-body (Ephesians 3:6). Doctrinally we are in Christ. Dispensationally we are blessed with Christ in His ascended glory (Ephesians 1:3; 2:6).
Believers are identified with Christ in His burial and resurrection (Romans 6:4 ).	Believers not only identified with Him in burial and resurrection, but have the added blessing of being raised and seated with Him (Ephesians 2:5-6).
A walk that was worthy was also accompanied by evidential gifts of miracles(Mark 16:17- 20).	The practice of this assembly is on as high a level, but without these evidential gifts of miracles (Philippians 2:25-30; 2 Timothy 4:20).
Two baptisms: water and spirit (Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 8:14-17; 10:44-48).	One baptism (Ephesians 4:5).
The New Covenant promised to Israel in (Jeremiah 31:31-33) is in operation (2 Corinthians 3:6).	Israel is now <i>lo ammi</i> (not My people), and the covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-40; 32:37-44) connected with Israel as a nation and with their land is not mentioned in this dispensation. It is held in abeyance until the nation of Israel is taken up again by God. (Romans 11:26-27).
Believers looked to meet the Lord in the air on His way back to the earth. This is connected with the Archangel Michael (1 Thessalonians 4:16; Daniel 12:1) and the last trumpet (1Corinthians 15:52), and the reigning of Christ over the nations, <i>i.e.</i> , the millennium on the earth (Romans 15:12-13).	Believers look to be manifested in the glory of heaven’s holiest of all, where Christ Jesus is now seated and where we are seated with Him by faith, our hope being the realization of this glorious position. Our inheritance is there “in the light” (Colossians 1:12) and we are exhorted to keep our minds and affections fixed there (Colossians 3:1-4).
The words used in relation to this hope are “revelation” ( <i>apokalupsis</i> ) and “coming” ( <i>parousia</i> ). These are dated as being after the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:29).	The words used for our hope are never <i>apokalupsis</i> or <i>parousia</i> , but <i>epiphaneia</i> (epiphany, appearing,) (2 Timothy 4:1, 8). No connection with prophetic times or seasons.
Concerning these things, the believers “knew perfectly.” They were accurately aware (1 Thessalonians 4:16; 5:2).	Prayer for enlightenment is necessary that this new hope may be understood (Ephesians 1:18-23).
Israel must be “born again,” regenerated. (John3:3)	We are a new creation. God will create a new man, (humanity) out of the Jew and Gentile (Ephesians 2:15).

They have access to the temple courts (Revelation 7:15; 20:6).	We have access with confidence to the Father Himself through the faith of Christ Jesus our Lord, without the mediation of priests (Ephesians 3:11-13).
They will have an allotment of the earth as a Kingdom of priests, ruling and ministering to the nations (Revelation 2:26-28; Isaiah 49:22; 61:5,6).	We, the church which is His body, have our allotment among the heavenly spheres (Ephesians 2:6).
They looked for Christ to come and reign over the earth on the throne of His father David (2 Samuel 7:12-17; Daniel 7:14, 27).	We the church which is His body, will sit with Him on the throne of the universe, up above every sovereignty, authority, power, dominion and every name that is named, not only in this eon but the coming one also (Ephesians 1:21).
Israel, one nation privileged (Acts 13:46).	No nation privileged (Ephesians 3:6; Colossians 3:11).
Blessings through Abraham on earth (Galatians 3:8, 9, 14).	Blessings in Christ, in heavenly places (Ephesians 1:3; 2:6; Colossians 3:2).

**THE FEASTS GIVEN TO ISRAEL**

**Leviticus 23**

- :1-2 Moses to Israel. MY FEASTS Proclaim
- :3 The Sabbath (of Rest). (The weekly reminder)  
7<sup>th</sup> day. Holy assembly. In your dwellings. No work.
- :4 FEASTS of JEHOVAH. In Their Season
  
- 1. :5 **PASSOVER** (10<sup>th</sup>) 14<sup>th</sup> day. 1<sup>st</sup> month
  
- 2. :6-8 **UNLEAVENED BREAD** 7 days. No work.  
[First-fruit] 16<sup>th</sup> day, 1<sup>st</sup> month, when in the land.
  
- 3. :15-21 **WEEKS**. (Pentecost) (:21) 7x7 Sabbaths + 1day = 50. No work.  
[First-fruits] 2 loaves with Leaven
- :22 Harvest sharing for the poor and the stranger (alien =gentile) Stranger.  
Numbers 1:51, 3:10, 38. Nations blessed of Israel, (Galatians 3; Romans 15:27)
  
- 4. :23-25 **TRUMPETS**. 1<sup>st</sup> day, 7<sup>th</sup> month. Sabbath, trumpet blasts. No work.  
[harvests the first-fruit anticipated]
  
- 5. :26-32 **ATONEMENT**. 10th day 7th month. No work (or destroyed).  
Afflict/deny (humility, repentance) or cut off. Isaiah 53. Leviticus 16.  
High Priest; Holiest of all; Scapegoat; National cleansing.  
Joseph’s brethren know Him.  
Leviticus 25 Jubilee trumpet. 7x7 yrs + 1 year = 50. Liberty, Restoration.

6. :33-38 **TABERNACLES.** 15th day, 7th month. No Work.  
 [harvests the first-fruit anticipates]  
 :39-:43 **BOOTHS.** 15<sup>th</sup> day, 7<sup>th</sup> month.  
 Celebrate, celebrate. Israelites build booths to remember.  
 :44 Moses declared (to Israel) the FEASTS of the LORD.

Knowing the feasts given to Israel and when they occur will further help us to rightly divide the Word of Truth and understand the dispensational divide. The feasts are about Israel's deliverance. While the feasts show redemption through our Lord's blood, they do not show our calling or hope today. Their purpose is earthly, and ours in Christ is heavenly. The feasts are about Israel and redemption for all families of the earth. They are not about the church His Body and God's purposes in the heavenly places.

The Bible is a book of redemption. It unveils God's plans to remove sin and death and to reconcile Himself back to His creation (Colossians 1:20); but it also reveals different purposes for different called out companies of God's redeemed, and these differences we must seek and keep separate. Just because the Bible is full of salvation through the shed blood does not mean that all of the Bible is about us today.

On the very day that Adam disobeyed, the first elements of God's redemptive plan were displayed. Our Lord's substitution death was anticipated when Adam and Eve were covered with coats of skin from the animal sacrificed. Even Cain was provided a sin offering:

*If you do well, shall you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin [offering] crouches at the door; and its desire is for you, and you shall rule over it (Genesis 4:7).*

The Savior who would die and pay the penalty for sin was promised as the Seed of the woman in Genesis 3:15. The redemptive plan unfolding from Genesis was an earthly one. Sin entered the world, the remedy and restoration is on the earth for this purpose of God. When Abraham offered Isaac, the son he loved, our knowledge of the redemptive plan increases and we see the seed of the woman, Christ the son of man and the seed of Abraham as the redemptive thread. Hebrews brings out this genealogy.

*Since, then, the little children have participated in blood and flesh, He also was very nigh by partaking of the same, that, through death, He should be discarding him who has the might of death, that is, the Adversary, and should be clearing those whoever, in fear of death, were through their entire life liable to slavery. For assuredly it is not taking hold of messengers, but it is taking hold of the seed of Abraham (Hebrews 2:14-16).*

So, from the opening pages of the Bible the Lord revealed how sinners would be saved, but from the opening pages the purpose was focused on the earth and the restoration of Paradise. Paradise does not mean heaven (Revelation 21-22). One redeemer shines through the pages but God's different purposes must not be confused together.

This shed blood redemption purpose for the earth was further unveiled through Abraham's seed, namely Israel. In Genesis 15:13-14, Israel's bondage, suffering and their "great substance" deliverance



is seen. The feasts are steps that the Lord took to deliver Israel in the past. In those steps, blood was shed linking Israel's past and future greater deliverance with Christ the Seed of Abraham, the Lamb of God. The Savior is identified with His people Israel. He took and will take the same steps of suffering to glory. The believers before Acts 28 hoped in the feasts and the glory anticipated. Paradise and the New Jerusalem are not our destination, but we are saved by the same Savior. We should not replace the words "Promised Land" with the word "heaven," nor the word "Israel" with "church." The feasts have nothing to do with us in this dispensation but we are saved by the same Savior.

The feasts show redemption through the blood. Israel is a nation of sinners needing salvation. Those who are destined for the glorified Promised Land and the New Jerusalem will also be saved by the One Savior. Abram was called into a land and promised that he would become a great and mighty nation, and that through him all families of the earth would be blessed. These blessings, including redemption, are on the earth, but ours are in the heavenly places.

The feasts present our Lord's shed blood, but this does not mean that we are part of the purpose and inheritance which they anticipate. The redemption for people on the earth, which started back in Genesis and continued through Exodus and the Prophets, was the plan in view when the wise men traveled from the east to worship the Savior. Gabriel told Mary that her child would reign over the house of Jacob for the eons (Luke 1:32-33). Joseph was told that Mary's son would save His people from their sins. This did not mean that our calling had begun. Please read Luke 1:67-75; 2:25-32, where nations were included in the blessings of salvation. The inclusion of the nations was anticipated in Leviticus 23:22, and does not mean that the earthly purpose had changed to a heavenly one. As the Lord said, "*Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth,*" and "*many shall come from the east and the west and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.*" The kingdom of heaven which our Lord referenced is not a kingdom in heaven, but one originating from there (Psalms 72, 89).

This festive calendar earthly salvation plan was postponed at Acts 28, and while we are saved by the same Savior, we belong to a different purpose. We have been raised and seated in the heavenly places which God did not reveal by the feasts given to Israel. You and I are not spiritual Israel. We are not destined for Paradise or the New Jerusalem. One great theme of the Bible is redemption through our Lord's shed blood and how sinful people can dwell with a Holy God. The feasts show this blood bought redemption and they show how God will dwell on the earth again between cherubim in Israel's temple. They do not show our calling and inheritance in the heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6).

This wonderful festive theme is for us, but not about us. God made promises to different families of His children. To some He promised the earth, and to others the heavenly places. We must not mix these different callings. All families of God are saved by the One, but not all of His redeemed children will dwell in the same place. In Egypt, God's promise that Abraham's seed would become a great and mighty nation was realized, and Israel was delivered to be God's inheritance in the Promised Land. Israel will dwell there, and the Lord will dwell on the earth with them.

*You shall bring them and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance, the place, O Jehovah, You have made for You to dwell in; the Sanctuary, O Jehovah, which Your hands have established. Jehovah shall reign for the eons of the eons (Exodus 15:17-18; 34:9).*

Yet, this did not mean that salvation was for Israel alone, for all families of the earth were to be blessed in Abraham. Christ came through Abraham and took away the sin of the world, and Israel was to be a channel for God's glory to the world. The Lord dwelt among Israel teaching them about His holiness. Israel needed to know and understand about the sin bearer and His shed blood and every other aspect of redemption. Once taught these things, then they could be the kingdom of priests and tell the world about the Savior. The Lord declared this education program as follows:

*And He humbled you and allowed you to hunger, and then He fed you with manna, which you did not know, neither did your fathers know it, so that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes out of the mouth of Jehovah man shall live (Deuteronomy 8:3).*

*And Jehovah said to Moses, "Come up to Me in the mountain, and be there. And I will give you tablets of stone, and the Law, and commandments which I have written, so that you may teach them" (Exodus 24:12).*

The law was a trainer or schoolmaster for Israel. While observance of the law did not make them right before God, it provided many lessons for them (and us). We read about this in Romans 3:19-22 and Galatians 3:22-25. In the Old Testament Israel was delivered to show forth the Lord's glory to the world, and in the New Testament this remains the purpose up until Acts 28. Please follow this great earthly redemptive plan in the following Scriptures.

### **Abram**

*And I will bless those that bless you and curse the one who curses you. And in you shall all families of the earth be blessed (Genesis 12:3).*

### **Moses**

*When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the sons of Israel. For Jehovah's portion is His people. Jacob is the lot of His inheritance (Deuteronomy 32:8-9).*

### **David**

*His name shall endure for the eons; His name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed (Psalm 72:17).*

### **The Prophets**

*And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those who escape from them to the nations ... the far away coasts that have not heard My fame, nor have seen My glory. And they will declare My glory among the nations (Isaiah 66:19).*

---

## The Gospels

*Now art Thou dismissing Thy slave, O Owner, according to Thy declaration, in peace, for my eyes perceived Thy Salvation, which Thou dost make ready suiting the face of all the peoples, a Light for the revelation of nations, and the Glory of Thy people Israel (Luke 2:29-32).*

When John the baptist exclaimed, “Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29), this did not mean that our calling in the heavenly places had started. The gospels record His crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection, but the earthly purposes are unchanged.

The Lord came to provide the redemption that Israel and the world needed. Israel had seen this redemption in type and shadow. Israel was taught by God about sin and how access into His presence was through the shed blood; but this did not mean that the earthly calling was now heavenly. He came to Israel, who needed to repent and believe. We know the nation rejected Him, but the witness during the gospels and Acts was to Israel first and foremost. It is Israel who will be a light to lighten the nations, and in those opening chapters of Acts, Israel was called on to repent and believe. Then the world would be blessed as God had promised.

*And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed (Genesis12:3).*

*You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God covenanted with your fathers, saying to Abraham, “And in your seed all the kindreds of the earth shall be blessed.” To you first, God, raising His Boy, commissions Him to bless you by turning away each of you from your wickedness (Acts 3:25-26).*

These purposes for the earth through Israel remained until Acts 28. In the gospels and Acts period the believers looked for the fulfillment of the feast of Trumpets and the Lord’s return to the earth. The feasts were being fulfilled and the earthly plan they foreshadowed was coming to pass. The Scriptures up to Acts 28 looked to the Trumpet return of the Lord to Zion, the New Jerusalem.

After Acts 28 a change in purpose was revealed to us through Paul. This was a previously hidden purpose for the heavenly places, and a new company is seen, the church which is His body. Yet there was no change in redemption through our Lord’s blood and justification by faith.

From Acts 2, the message concerning Jesus of Nazareth as Israel’s Savior, Messiah and coming King was proclaimed to the Jews inside, and then outside of the land. In Acts 13:32-35 Paul’s gospel mentioned the promises made to the fathers, and he then uses three prophecies which speak of Messiah’s glory on the earth (Psalm 2; 16; Isaiah 55). In Acts 28:1-10 the very supernatural gifts, which had been the blessing of Israel from the Exodus, were still evident, and when Paul addressed the dispersed Jews in Rome he declared that he was bound for the hope of Israel (Acts 28:20). The hope of Israel is not heaven. After a day of proclaiming the Lord out of the Old Testament Scriptures (Acts 28:23), the Jews disagreed among themselves and they were “let go.” We are aware that the Lord was a husband to Israel (Isaiah 54:5). The judgment of Isaiah 6 is in Acts 28:25-27, and the earthly program was put aside with Israel who have been *lo ammi* (not My people) since. In AD 70, Titus destroyed the Temple and Israel was scattered to the winds, as God had warned them would happen.

**Feasts – with Acts 28 Parenthesis**

- Our calling was revealed after Acts 28; not from Genesis through the Feasts.
- Their calling is from Egypt to the Promised Land.
- SABBATH (weekly) – Genesis 1- 4, 12, 15, 17, 22.
- The Sabbath is Saturday, never changed to Sunday. The “first of the week” refers to the count to Pentecost.

**The First Three Feasts Have Been Fulfilled**

1. **PASSOVER** – The Lamb; Satan judged
2. **UNLEAVENED BREAD** – First-Fruit; Land; Christ’s Resurrection (1Corinthians 15:20, 23)
3. **WEEKS** (Pentecost) – First-Fruit; Land; (Exodus 28, 31, 35; Numbers 11; Acts 2)

The Acts period was when the feast of Trumpets was expected.

- Letters written by Paul during Acts that contained wonderful truths like redemption and justification (Galatians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Hebrews, Romans).
- BUT, their hope is earthly and the New Jerusalem.

**Acts 28: Israel Put Aside – A New Dispensation to Paul Alone**

- WE ARE HERE TODAY: ACTS 28 PARENTHESIS – FEASTS PENDING
- Letters written by Paul after Acts 28; about a secret dispensation with new hope and heavenly blessings (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians 1 & 2 Timothy, Philemon, Titus).

After this dispensation is over:

**God’s Earthly Purpose Will Be Resumed – the Next Three Feasts Will Be Fulfilled**

4. **TRUMPETS** (7)
  - Israel gathered into Kingdom; harvests; land; resurrection; delivered by armies
  - Joshua 6; Exodus 19; Matthew 24-25; 1 Thessalonians 4; 1 Cor. 15:54-55 is resurrection to land
  - Gentiles blessed with Israel’s harvest (Galatians 3)
5. **ATONEMENT** (Day of) Israel Unleavened. Leviticus 16, Romans 11:26-32

---

## 6. TABERNACLES / BOOTHS

- Harvests; Land;
- Messiah's throne between cherubim - Genesis 3:24; Kingdom of Priests - Rev.5:10.
- The "Israel of God" - Galatians 6:16. Restored Promised Land "Eden" - Isaiah 51;
- Death removed - Revelation 21:4

### The Feasts Anticipate Revelation Chapters 21 & 22

- The Second Coming

Once you understand the purpose of the feasts and who they are for, then other subjects will be easier to understand.

We previously learned that the letters written to the Thessalonians occurred during the Acts period when the kingdom was re-offered to Israel. If they would have repented, our Lord would have returned. Remember, Paul made reference to the Old Testament many times.

Much of the coming of the Lord is anticipated in Israel's typical, or "picture" deliverance from gentile dominion in Egypt. The Passover's blood stopped the hand of the destroyer and Israel's firstborn were preserved. The remnant is preserved during the tribulation and wrath and the Lord returns to the earth to rescue Israel once again from gentile dominion (Zechariah 12:9). Every Israeli eye will see the Lord at the right hand of God just prior to His descent to the earth, and then they will then look closely on the One Whom they have pierced and mourn for Him (Matthew 24:29-30; 26:64).

Israel's history guides us in our understanding of New Testament end time events for Israel. Israel was brought to Mt. Sinai where those who had received the "gifts of the spirit" constructed the Tabernacle and its vessels of service. Israel was made ready to enter the kingdom. The "supernatural gifts" of the Acts period were also a foretaste of the coming antitype (Hebrews 6:4-5). At Mt Sinai, the Lord descended to further equip His people with the Law. In the future, at the last trumpet, the Lord will descend in like manner and plant the New Covenant in Israel's heart as Jeremiah prophesied (Jeremiah 31:33). Understanding the feasts will prevent us from taking the things of Israel and forcing them into this present secret dispensation of the grace of God (Ephesians 3:1-2, 7-9)

When the Lord descended to Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19), it was the beginning of Israel's typical kingdom. This beginning is a picture of Israel's future kingdom glory. Just as the Lord descended to them, so in 1 Thessalonians 4 He descends to Israel at the beginning of their future kingdom. We have identical elements and characters in both Exodus 19 and 1 Thessalonians 4.

Here are some wonderful features of the Lord's descent "out of heaven" way back then, which guides us in our understanding of this hope in the Acts period. Let us begin by reminding ourselves of the setting of the type and shadow:

*You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. And now if you will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure to Me above all the nations; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the sons of Israel (Exodus 19:4-6).*

In Exodus, these verses are dealing with Israel, the nations and all of the earth in the fulfillment passages of Matthew, 1 Thessalonians 4 and the book of Revelation. It was the earth and Israel in Exodus 19, and it is the earth and Israel in these new testament passages, not to the church today which is His body.

In Exodus 19 the Lord descended out of heaven to the earth in clouds. He descended to the earth with a trumpet blast, and there was thunder, lightning and earthquakes. He was accompanied by angels (Psalm 68:17), and all of Israel saw Him and were gathered together in one place. The Lord spoke with a voice and Moses went up to meet the Lord. Does this sound familiar?

Here are the Exodus 19 verses which are practically point by point repeated in 1 Thessalonians 4 and other new testament passages which deal with Israel's future glory. If the setting in Exodus 19 is Israel's typical deliverance, then it is safe to say that 1 Thessalonians 4 is not the deliverance of the church today. The setting in Exodus is a guide to 1 Thessalonians 4.

— The Lord's coming in the clouds:

*And Jehovah said to Moses, "Lo, I come to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you for the eon." And Moses told the words of the people to Jehovah (Exodus 19:9).*

For other references about clouds see Exodus 19:16; Deuteronomy 33:26; Daniel 7:13; Matthew 24:30; 26:64; 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and Revelation 1:7. In that day Israel will certainly believe the Lord after centuries of rejecting Him.

— The trumpet blast heralds his descent:

*There shall not be a hand to touch it, but that he shall surely be stoned or shot through; whether beast or man, it shall not live. When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come up to the mountain (Exodus 19:13).*

For other Scriptures describing the trumpet blast as the Lord descends to the earth and Israel being gathered see Exodus 19:16, 19; 20:18; Joshua 6:5 (note the commander of the Lord's hosts was in the land – Joshua 5:14). See also Psalm 47:5; Isaiah 27:13; Joel 2:15-16, 18; Matthew 24:31; 1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and Revelation 11:15.

— Signs in heaven above and the earth beneath and again clouds and trumpet mentioned:

*And it happened on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a*

---

*thick cloud upon the mountain. And the voice of the trumpet was exceedingly loud, so that all the people in the camp trembled (Exodus 19:16).*

For other Scriptures which speak of thunder and lightning associated with Israel's deliverance and the Lord's descent to the earth see Exodus 9:23 and Revelation 11:19.

— The Lord came down to the mountain and a voice was heard and smoke was seen and the earth shook:

*And Mount Sinai was smoking, all of it, because Jehovah came down upon it in fire. And the smoke of it went up (Exodus 19:18).*

— Like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly:

*And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and became very strong, Moses spoke, and God answered him by a voice (Exodus 19:19).*

Please note that the Lord came down to earth in Exodus 19 and the Lord's return to the earth was the expectation of the gospel and Acts period. The Scriptures overwhelmingly support this. The Lord did return to heaven after Exodus 19, but this will not be the case when the picture becomes a reality. See Matthew 24 and 25, noting the judgment of servants and nations on the earth. See also specifically Matthew 24:7; 27:51; Hebrews 12:26-29, Revelation 6:14-17; 11:16-19.

— The Lord came down to the earth and Moses goes up to meet Him. Moses represents that elect company who are privileged to "meet" the Lord in the future when He descends to the earth.

*And Jehovah came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And Jehovah called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up (Exodus 19:20).*

The people of Israel were gathered to meet the Lord (Exodus 19:17). Israel will be re-gathered when the Lord returns. See Jeremiah 31:10; Ezekiel 11:17; 34:12-14; Matthew 3:12; 24:31; Luke 13:34; John 11:52; 2 Thessalonians 2:1.

The people of Israel gathered when the Lord descended from heaven, but Moses was privileged to go up and meet the Lord as He descended. Again we note that in this historic type, foreshadowing, the Lord did return to heaven; but Moses did not go into heaven with Him, since Moses and the people of Israel are the vehicles for God's purposes on the earth. In the glorious future for Israel, the Lord will not return to heaven. He will descend to the Mount of Olives (Joel 2:27, Zech.14:4; Matthew 24:3; Acts 1:11; Romans 11:26).

The remnant of the Acts period, called the "Israel of God" in Galatians 6:16, will be privileged to meet the Lord as He descends to the earth, as we shall see in our examination of 1 Thessalonians 4. For remnant verses see Genesis 45:7 (where the rejected Joseph was recognized by his brethren the second time); Isaiah 1:9; 10:20-23; Romans 9:24-29; 11:5; Joel 2:32; Acts 2:39.

Before any further discussion, may I say that Christ is the only One Who is immortal. Dead believers

are not in heaven. Christ does not bring immortal bodies from heaven with Him. They are asleep in Christ. More on this subject later.

*Now we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are reposing, lest you may sorrow according as the rest, also, who have no expectation. For, if we are believing that Jesus died and rose, thus also, those who are put to repose, will God, through Jesus, lead forth together with Him.*

*For this we are saying to you by the word of the Lord, that we, the living, who are surviving to the presence of the Lord, should by no means outstrip those who are put to repose, for the Lord Himself will be descending from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the Chief Messenger, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall be rising first, Thereupon we, the living who are surviving, shall at the same time be snatched away together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And thus shall we always be together with the Lord. So that, console one another with these words (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).*

Paul comforts those whose loved ones had died. He said that the dead will be rising first, and that those who were living at that time would be snatched away. This occurs at the last trump, in the twinkle of an eye, when this mortal body puts on immortality (1 Corinthians 15:51-57).

The word “meet” (*apantesis*) found in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 may add to the theory that we will go into heaven. “Meet” only occurs four times in the New Testament. We should look carefully at it and understand fully what it means. It occurs twice in Matthew 25 which, of course, deals with the kingdom on the earth. Let us examine this first usage of the word “meet.”

*Then likened shall be the kingdom of the heavens to ten virgins, who getting their torches, came out to meet the bridegroom (Matthew 25:1).*

Before we read too quickly, when is the “then” of this first verse? It is in the time when the Lord returns to the earth as He had been describing in the previous chapter. In Matthew 24:29-31 we read of the Lord descending out of heaven in the clouds and with the trumpet blast, just as we do in 1 Thessalonians 4. At that time, when He returns to the earth, “THEN” the wise virgins will go to “meet” Him.

*Now in the middle of the night a clamor occurs: “Lo! the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!” (Matthew 25:6).*

These virgins are not going away with the bridegroom. In eastern marriage the bridegroom comes to the bride’s home. There the marriage supper is enjoyed. The wise virgins represent those who “watched” (Matthew 25:13), and were thus rewarded with a meeting with the Bridegroom as He came to the marriage.

This “meeting” has nothing to do with the Lord “appearing” in the heavenly places. This is the Lord coming back to the earth. We know this from the very context of these first occurrences of this word “meet.”

*Now, whenever the Son of Mankind may be coming in His glory, and all the holy messengers with*



---

*Him, then shall He be seated on the throne of His glory, and in front of Him shall be gathered all the nations. And He shall be severing them from one another even as a shepherd is severing the sheep from the kids (Matthew 25:31-32).*

The throne of His Glory is on the earth, and the nations are on the earth (Joel 3). The Lord will come with all of His holy messengers, and these are the “saints” or “holy ones” of Jude 14 and 1 Thessalonians 3:13.

The next occurrence of this word “meet” is in Acts.

*And thence the brethren, hearing about us, come to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Taverns, perceiving whom, Paul, thanking God, took courage (Act 28:15).*

The brothers from Rome came to “meet” Paul. The brothers from Rome did not jump in a ship and turn around and go back to Jerusalem with Paul. Paul continued on to Rome. Those believers who are “snatched away” go to a meeting in the clouds in the air, then they return to the earth with the Lord.

In every case this word “meet” does not mean continuing on into the place from where the one being met came. On the contrary, it means to go out and meet the one coming to the place from which those meeting came. In other words, 1 Thessalonians 4 is about that company of that time going up from the earth to meet the Lord in the air as He descends to the earth out of heaven.

Let us also note that those caught up to meet the Lord were only caught up to the air. The air being the place of the clouds:

*Thereupon we, the living who are surviving, shall at the same time be snatched away together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And thus shall we always be together with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:17).*

*For who is our expectation, or joy, or wreath of glorying? Or is it not even you, in front of our Lord Jesus, in His presence? (1 Thessalonians 2:19).*

In the verse above, the word “presence” is from the Greek word *parousia*. It is translated “beside-being,” “being near” or “arrival of.” The believers were only going to meet Him when He arrived. Please see the Acts period references where *parousia* means “arrival,” not “departure” (1 Corinthians 16:17; 2 Corinthians 7:6; 10:10).

*Parousia* was used in ancient manuscripts to denote the arrival of a dignitary, not the departure of anyone to go and be where the dignitary originated. *Parousia* is used by Paul seven times in both letters to the Thessalonians. Here are a few more occurrences:

*Now may the Lord cause you to increase and superabound in love for one another and for all, even as we also for you, to establish your hearts unblamable in holiness in front of our God and Father, in the presence of our Lord Jesus with all His saints (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13).*

*Now may the God of peace Himself be hallowing you wholly; and may your unimpaired spirit and soul and body be kept blameless in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ! (1 Thessalonians 5:23).*

The hope of the Acts period was the Lord's *parousia*, that is, His personal presence on the earth. This is what they expected in their lifetime, and Paul wanted the Thessalonians to be blameless right up until that day of glory. The second letter to the Thessalonians also will prove that the hope was all earthbound. In 2 Thessalonians Paul wrote of prophetic things regarding Israel and her final days. In chapter 2 Paul repeats that the Lord Jesus was coming back to the earth, and they would be gathered to meet Him in the clouds as He descended.

*Now we are asking you, brethren, for the sake of the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling to Him (2 Thessalonians 2:1).*

Then Paul goes on to set this return of the Lord in exact frames of reference so that his friends would not be deceived. These terms of reference are the very things which show that the hope of the Thessalonians is not ours today.

*... that you be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be alarmed, either through spirit, or through word, or through an epistle as through us, as that the day of the Lord is present. No one should be deluding you by any method, for, should not the apostasy be coming first and the man of lawlessness be unveiled, the son of destruction, who is opposing and lifting himself up over everyone termed a god or an object of veneration, so that he is seated in the temple of God, demonstrating that he himself is God? Do you not remember that, still being with you, I told you these things? And now you are aware what is detaining, for him to be unveiled in his own era. For the secret of lawlessness is already operating. Only when the present detainer may be coming to be out of the midst, then will be unveiled the lawless one (whom the Lord Jesus will despatch with the spirit of His mouth and will discard by the advent of His presence, whose presence is in accord with the operation of Satan, with all power and signs and false miracles and with every seduction of injustice among those who are perishing, because they do not receive the love of the truth for their salvation (2 Thessalonians 2:2-10).*

Paul clearly says in this passage that the "Day" they were looking for did not come until after apostasy and deception, and the "abomination of desolation" was set up in Israel's Temple in Jerusalem. What has Israel's Temple to do with any heavenly purpose? Thessalonians is a context of Israel's prophecy and prophecy of Israel is not prophecy about us today.

The Day of the Lord is one great subject of prophecy, and the reader is encouraged to search through the prophets regarding this great day and read the elements in those Old Testament passages. The book of the Revelation is all about this "day of the Lord" (Revelation 1:10), and so are the epistles to the Thessalonians. Remember, prophecy is not about the church which is His body. It was hidden (concealed) from the eons in God (Ephesians 3:8-9; Colossians 1:26).

The setting of Thessalonians is all prophetic and easily identified with Israel and the last years of the current eon. Please consider these words and phrases which link 2 Thessalonians with Daniel, Isaiah, Matthew, Corinthians and Revelation as well as other Acts period epistles:

... *the day of the Lord ... shall not come unless (2:2).*

... *apostasy be coming first ... the man of lawlessness ... the son of destruction (2:3).*

... *lifting himself up ... seated in the temple of God, demonstrating that he himself is God (2:4).*

... *the secret of lawlessness is already operating, Only when the present detainer may be coming to be out of the midst (2:7).*

... *then will be unveiled the lawless one (2:8).*

... *whose presence is with all power and signs and false miracles (2:9).*

Notice that nothing is “taken out of the way” in 2:7, but rather something comes “*out of the midst.*”

Let us see how Thessalonians fits in the purposes of God for the earth by comparing Scripture with Scripture. In the book of the Revelation we have the terrible trinity: Satan and the two beasts.

Satan is identified as the “*old serpent*” (Revelation 12:9) who, having been cast out of heaven, attempts to destroy the faithful remnant, and then makes war on Israel (Revelation 12:12-17). Eventually Satan is bound for 1000 years (Revelation 20:2-3), then released and eventually cast into the lake of fire with the wild beast and false prophet and will be tormented for the eons of the eons (Revelation 20:7-10). Satan’s purposes against God and Israel are facilitated by the two beasts.

We read about the first beast (the antichrist) in Revelation 13:1-8. We notice that this individual is a great military power, as :4 says, “*who is able to battle with it?*” We notice that this beast has a pseudo resurrection (:3), and it made war with “*the saints.*” This is not the church which is Christ’s body, but Israel. This military engagement lasts 3-½, years and the antichrist is empowered by Satan, the dragon.

The setting of 2 Thessalonians is exactly the same setting of Matthew 24, the prophecies previously listed and the book of Revelation. The “second coming” of our Lord is after the final 3-½ years of Israel’s history, which years are called the “*day of Jacob’s trouble*” (Jeremiah 30:7). During that time the remnant wandering in the wilderness will be praying, “*lead us not into tribulation but deliver us from the evil one.*” If these things of prophecy, Revelation and Matthew have nothing to do with our Lord as Head of the church which is His body in the heavenly places, then how can the same things in Thessalonians be about us and our hope today?

After those horrific final 3-½ years our Lord descends to the earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and He saves Israel by destroying the armies set against them. These events were in view during the Acts period, and the believers of that time were waiting for the Lord’s return. They were waiting for His return, because they would go and meet Him as He descended, after which they would rule and reign with Him on the earth. However, Israel and the hope associated with her was put aside and postponed at the end of Acts. These things will all take place in the future. The “rapture” is a false concept of a past and postponed hope dragged into the present. The “rapture” theory is a human endeavor which mixes the hope before us today with the earthly purposes of God for Israel. The “rap-

ture” takes the hope of Paul’s epistles for today, which have nothing to do with the earth, and forces it into an earthly context, thus blinding nearly all of Christendom to their hope for today.

When Paul wrote his Acts-period epistles (Galatians, Hebrews, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians and Romans), Israel remained God’s people (Romans 11:1-2). Israel was not cast aside at the cross or Acts 2, 9 or 13. God’s purposes for the earth were in operation during that time. When Israel was finally put aside at Acts 28, the hope of the Thessalonians was postponed and a new hope revealed.

We, the church which is His body, do not have any inheritance in the air or the clouds. The meeting is in the air, which word is not used for “heaven” (see Acts 22:23; 1 Corinthians 9:26; 14:9; Ephesians 2:2; Revelation 9:2; 16:17). In the oncoming eons, we will not be with the Lord in the air. These believers of the Acts period were expecting to go to a *meeting* in the air as the Lord descended to the earth where the kingdom of heaven would be enjoyed and they would judge the world and messengers (1 Corinthians 6:2-3). The church of 1 Thessalonians 4 that goes to meet the Lord in the air is not our company, nor is the meeting in the air our hope today.

The feasts of Israel will further help us to understand that the *parousia* is Israel’s earthly kingdom hope. There are six feasts: Passover, Unleavened Bread, Pentecost (Weeks), Trumpets, Day of Atonement and Tabernacles/Booths.

The first three were fulfilled. Christ died on Passover and resurrected during Unleavened Bread. Pentecost exhibited the powers of the coming eon (millennial kingdom). Now Israel’s hope is the feast of Trumpets. This feast anticipates Christ’s glorious entrance into the kingdom, Israel’s deliverance, resurrection hope and a new heart (second circumcision). The Day of Atonement is like reconciliation when Israel is in His presence and will have harmony. Then Tabernacles/Booths is about rejoicing, dancing and gathering harvest. This is God’s abundant provision for His people. This is not our calling or hope.

We want the hope given to us by the Lord through our apostle Paul after Israel was put aside at Acts 28. The hope before us today is Ephesians 2:4-7 which is realized when Colossians 3:1-4 takes place. Colossians 3:1-4 takes place before 1 Thessalonians 4. We are waiting for the “*appearing*” of our Lord. The appearing takes place in heavenly places where Christ is seated at the right hand of God, which is certainly not in the air. The “*appearing*” takes place before the trumpet and before the Lord descends out of heaven to the earth.

Our hope is celestial:

*Yet God, being rich in mercy, because of His vast love with which He loves us (we also being dead to the offenses and the lusts), vivifies us together in Christ (in grace are you saved!) and rouses us together and seats us together among the celestials, in Christ Jesus, that, in the oncoming eons, He should be displaying the transcendent riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:4-7).*

We noticed that Paul’s opening prayer in Ephesians was not that these believers would become believers. They were already “*saints*,” so Paul had no need to pray that they would know life through faith into Christ’s finished work. This was Paul’s prayer for them and for all saints today.

---

*Therefore, I also, on hearing of this faith of yours in the Lord Jesus, and that for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may be giving you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization of Him, the eyes of your heart having been enlightened, for you to perceive what is the expectation of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of the enjoyment of His allotment among the saints, and what the transcendent greatness of His power for us who are believing, in accord with the operation of the might of His strength (Ephesians 1:15-19).*

Here are the three things that Paul wanted these believers to know by God giving a wise and revealing spirit in the knowledge of Christ:

1. The Expectation (Hope)
2. The Inheritance (Allotment)
3. The power

The Ephesians did not need to know about righteousness by faith, reckoned by grace or that the Lord Jesus died for our sins or was buried and rose again the third day all according to the Scriptures. After Israel had been cast aside at Acts 28, the Lord descended and revealed to Paul a completely new dispensation, a new administration which had been hidden away from previous generations. Such fundamental things as Christ dying for our sins were as much part of this new dispensation as the previous one. The new dispensation contained new dispensational things which are specific things for this specific time in which we live. The previous dispensational things had been put aside with Israel. Believers today are not going to be blessed with faithful Abraham on the earth and in the New Jerusalem. Paul wanted believers to know these dispensational changes, and it is important that we also know them.

*To me, less than the least of all saints, was granted this grace: to bring the evangel of the untraceable riches of Christ to the nations, and to enlighten all as to what is the administration of the secret, which has been concealed from the eons in God (Ephesians 3:8-9).*

We will not read about this new dispensation in the gospels or any other New Testament writings, nor in Paul's Acts-period letters. We will read about this new dispensation only in his letters written *after* Acts (Ephesians, Philippians, Philemon, Colossians, 1 Timothy, Titus, 2 Timothy).

Let us refresh our memories about the new hope revealed in Ephesians. Remember, hope is an earnest expectation that God will fulfill His promise:

*and what the transcendent greatness of His power for us who are believing, in accord with the operation of the might of His strength, which is operative in the Christ, rousing Him from among the dead and seating Him at His right hand among the celestials (Ephesians 1:19-20).*

In us also is this ascension power seen:

*And you, being dead to your offenses and sins, in which once you walked, in accord with the eon of this world, in accord with the chief of the jurisdiction of the air, the spirit now operating in the*

sons of stubbornness (among whom we also all behaved ourselves once in the lusts of our flesh, doing the will of the flesh and of the comprehension, and were, in our nature, children of indignation, even as the rest), yet God, being rich in mercy, because of His vast love with which He loves us (we also being dead to the offenses and the lusts), vivifies us together in Christ (in grace are you saved!) and rouses us together and seats us together among the celestials, in Christ Jesus, that, in the oncoming eons, He should be displaying the transcendent riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:1-7).

God has declared that we have been vivified (made alive) in Christ. We have been roused together and seated together among the celestials in Christ, exactly the same place where Christ has been roused and seated at the Father's right hand. The word for "sit" in (Ephesians 2:6) is the same word for "seated" in Ephesians 1:20. Our Lord Christ Jesus and the church are seated together among the celestials, though only Christ is presently at the Father's right hand. This new position, this new sphere, was made known only at the revealing of the new dispensation given to them and us through Paul. Ephesians and its sister epistle Colossians are full of unique words and phrases not found in Paul's earlier Acts period letters (Galatians, 1, 2 Corinthians, 1, 2 Thessalonians, Romans, Hebrews).

Look at the opening verse of Ephesians:

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who blesses us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials, in Christ (Ephesians 1:3).*

We search in vain to find "every spiritual blessing" "among the celestials" in any of Paul's Acts period letters. Notice that our blessings are located where Christ is seated among the celestials, and we have been seated among the celestials as well. What a brilliant Father we have. Our blessings and position are in the same place. Our blessings are not here on the earth to be experienced in this present life. We have been seated among the celestials. Our blessings are among the celestials, and that is where our inheritance is located.

The second objective of Paul's prayer for the Ephesians and us today is that all should know "the riches of the glory of the enjoyment of His allotment among the saints." What is our inheritance, or, better still, where is it located? It will not surprise us that our Heavenly Father has told us all about this in the following verses:

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who blesses us with every spiritual blessing **among the celestials**, in Christ, according as He chooses us in Him before the disruption of the world, we to be holy and flawless **in His sight**, in love designating us beforehand for the place of a son **for Him** through Christ Jesus; in accord with the delight of His will (Ephesians 1:3-5).*

*... in Him in Whom our lot was cast also, being designated beforehand according to the purpose of the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:10-11).*

I have bolded the small phrases which identify the location and consequently the "riches of the glory" of His inheritance for us today. Our inheritance is "in His sight." We have been marked off as the heirs "for Him" and coupled with our blessings "among the celestials." We are left in no doubt that our inheritance is exactly where our blessings are, that is, among the celestials where Christ is seated. Think

---

about this. We have been roused and seated together among the celestials. Our blessings are among the celestials, and that is the exact location of the inheritance which is ours in Christ. No wonder Paul writes in such a spirit of praise in these opening passages of Ephesians.

*... for the laud of the glory of His grace, which graces us in the Beloved (Ephesians 1:6).*

We are highly favored, just as Mary, the mother of our Lord Jesus was (Luke 1:28).

Ephesians 1:5 says very clearly that we have been designated beforehand (predestined), that is “marked off beforehand” as *sons*. This does not mean that God determined who would be saved. It means that God determined (through foreknowledge, Romans 8:29-30) who would be His heirs. You and I have been “marked off” as heirs among the celestials. This is a great honor, and it is not according to any works of righteousness we have done, but as Paul writes,

*in love designating us beforehand for the place of a son for Him through Christ Jesus; in accord with the delight of His will ... in Him in Whom our lot was cast also, being designated beforehand according to the purpose of the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:5, 11).*

Let us briefly look at the following layout of Ephesians 1:

### **Ephesians 1:3-14 – The charter of the church which is His body.**

Let us break it into three groups.

- Ephesians 1:3-6 – (Father) The Father’s will choosing heirs and inheritance.
- Ephesians 1:7-12 – (Son) The work of His Son in redemption.
- Ephesians 1:13-14 – (holy spirit) The sealing with the spirit guarantees inheritance.

Remember, though, that the work of a Redeemer is the basic theme of all callings and Scripture.

There is no mention of sin and redemption in :3-6. Our Father’s choice was not influenced by sin, since we were chosen before the disruption of the world, before sin entered the scene. However, :7-14 remind us that we were born sinners, so we need redemption because Adam sinned, thus we all are sinners (Romans 3:23).

The word *redemption* (deliverance) is mentioned twice:

- Ephesians 1:7 – It is past (forgiveness of sins).
- Ephesians 1:14 – It is future (for a purchased possession).

The word *forgiveness* is also mentioned twice:

- Ephesians 4:32 – Translated “*dealing graciously*” (to forgive).
- Ephesians 1:7 – Means to set free. Refers to Passover, the blood of the Lamb (Luke 4:18).

Look at (Luke 4:18):

*The Spirit of the Lord [is] upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach **deliverance** to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, **to set at liberty** them that are bruised ... (KJV).*

The Greek word rendered “*deliverance*” and the phrase “*to set at liberty*” is the same word rendered “*deliverance*” in Ephesians 1:7. So this tells us that “*forgiveness*” in Ephesians 1:7 is much like the great Passover for Israel in the Old Testament. Israel was in bondage in Egypt, which was a picture of the bondage of sin; but through the blood of the Passover Lamb they were delivered – they were set free. So we, too, as members of the church are set free from sin.

It is not for us to reason why we are His heirs, but to accept the wonderful fact that God did this “*according to the good pleasure of His will,*” “*according to the purpose of Him Who works all things according to the counsel of His own will.*” Faith accepts the truth of God’s Word. Our heavenly Father has a purpose for you and me. We are not a random number. We are not here because of some “big bang.” We were known “*before the disruption of the world*” and appointed as the heirs among the celestials where our inheritance and blessings are located. What a God of grace!!

The hope is that we will be seated in our inheritance among the celestials in all wonderful and glorious reality. Our Heavenly Father will bring to pass these things for us in the times or the seasons which He has put in His own authority. Paul writes of these future days:

*to have an administration of the complement of the eras [of the fullness of times], to head up all in the Christ -- both that in the heavens and that on the earth -- (Ephesians 1:10).*

We can begin to identify the times when we shall be literally seated together among the celestials. Today we are seated there so far as God is concerned. We are there in spirit, “in Christ,” but in the future we will be in our inheritance in reality. We are left in no doubt as to when we take our seats among the celestials, and as a foretaste we turn to this passage of glory:

*If, then, you were roused together with Christ, be seeking that which is above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Be disposed to that which is above, not to that on the earth, for you died, and your life is hid together with Christ in God. Whenever Christ, our Life, should be manifested, then you also shall be manifested together with Him in glory (Colossians 3:1-4).*

The words “*manifested,*” “*appear*” and “*revealed*” are used in different Bible versions but are translated from the Greek word *phaneroo*. This word comes from another word which is *phaneros*, which means “shining” and itself comes from a word which means “light, to give light.”

This “*appearing*” of our Lord and Head is far above the clouds, trumpets and air of 1 Thessalonians 4. This is before He begins His descent to the earth. In that day when our Lord is manifested on the right



---

hand of power, we shall be there in our seats manifested with Him. Let each one of us set our affection “where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God,” for there, in front of God’s face, we have been raised and seated to “appear with Him.” That moment of His appearing is when our hope will be realized.

### **The Rapture Theory**

There was an incredible change of conditions brought about by God at the end of the book of Acts. The dispensation of the kingdom on the earth was postponed and the secret of Ephesians 3 was introduced. It is difficult for us today to appreciate the dramatic changes that had overtaken the believing community back then. The believers to whom Paul wrote in Ephesians and Colossians had been previously living in the powerful Acts period which was a foretaste of the coming millennium. There were prevalent and widespread mighty signs and wonders. Every sick person was healed, the dead were raised and those believers who sinned were judged, made sick and even died. The expectation that the Lord was going to descend out of heaven to the earth in the foreseeable future meant they were to avoid marriage and distribute their possessions to the poor as they saw the day approaching.

Among this widespread teaching by all of the apostles of that time came word that Paul had received a new dispensation. God, Who never changes as to virtue and character, changed the dispensation after providing Israel with nearly forty years of opportunity to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus as their Messiah. They were “let go” at Acts 28, and the foretastes of the millennial kingdom on the earth ceased and the imminent return of the Lord was postponed.

As Paul wrote and unfolded the new set of conditions, the believers saw differences. Paul now wrote that the young widows were to marry (1 Timothy 5:14), he left behind friends who were sick (2 Timothy 4:20) and advised Timothy to take a little wine for his illnesses (1 Timothy 5:23). Healing doesn’t happen today like it did during Pentecost. No reference to the imminent return of the Lord can be found in Paul’s seven post Acts letters, and, in fact, he wrote about a new hope where believers were raised and seated together in the heavenly places in Christ. This hope was completely different from what Paul wrote about in his Acts-period epistles.

Such a dramatic change of dispensation certainly gave opportunity for Paul’s opponents to ridicule further the man and his God-given ministry. Instead of embracing the changes that God had introduced through Paul, believers were confused into retaining elements of the previous dispensation of the Acts period.

We don’t need to turn to history to prove that the majority of believers had been moved away from Paul not long after the change of dispensation:

*Of this you are aware, that all those in the province of Asia were turned from me, of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes (2 Timothy 1:15).*

These believers were not casting aside their faith in Christ. Many were to die at the hands of the Romans for their faith. They were turned away from Paul and the message for today. When Paul wrote his last letter to Timothy he was very concerned that the younger man would hold fast to the truth for today in the face of this widespread apostasy.

*You may not be ashamed, then, of the testimony of our Lord, nor yet of me, His prisoner, but suffer evil with the evangel in accord with the power of God, Who saves us and calls us with a holy calling, not in accord with our acts, but in accord with His own purpose and the grace which is given to us in Christ Jesus before times eonian (2 Timothy 1:8-9).*

*Have a pattern of sound words, which you hear from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. The ideal thing committed to you, guard through the holy spirit which is making its home in us (2 Timothy 1:13-14).*

Those believers turning away from Paul were not faithless, but they were not faithful to the changes that God had made. Indeed, Paul instructed Timothy to seek out these faithful believers and commit the “good deposit” to them so they could pass it along.

*You, then, child of mine, be invigorated by the grace which is in Christ Jesus. And what things you hear from me through many witnesses, these commit to faithful men, who shall be competent to teach others also. Suffer evil with me, as an ideal soldier of Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 2:1-3).*

When the believing community began to realize that there would be a literal return of Christ to the earth they embraced the hope of the Acts period (1Thessalonians 4), because they had inherited the legacy of confusion left by the majority who had turned away from Paul centuries before. Not noticing the differences in Paul’s letters, and to accommodate the Acts period hope with heavenly places instead of the earth, they developed “the rapture” theory. The rapture is misinformation and a subtle misdirection to the wrong hope. Sadly, the rapture theory holds a powerful place in the Christian community today. Returning to the letter of Colossians we read a significant appeal of Paul regarding the new hope. They had heard of this new hope and he wanted them to hold fast to it and be not turned away from it.

*since surely you are persisting in the faith, grounded and settled and are not being removed from the expectation [hope] of the evangel which you hear which is being heralded in the entire creation which is under heaven of which I, Paul, became the dispenser (Colossians 1:23).*

### **Pre-Tribulation**

Those who adhere to the previous section, entitled “The Rapture Theory,” also expect it to occur before (pre) the Tribulation period; but the Word of Truth has clearly told us that we are to look for His appearing. Our traditions have clouded the issue. The fascination with the “rapture” has obscured the timing of His appearing. Once again, our life is hidden with Christ in God, and on that glorious day when the Head (Christ) appears, then we, the church which is His body, will appear with Him in that place. In other words, we will be revealed with our Lord and Head at the same time and in the same place. The appearing is in the heavenly places far above the air and clouds of (1 Thessalonians 4).

### **The Appearing**

First of all, there are different opinions about how we will physically be with Christ before He makes His descent to earth. Right now, Christ is seated in heavenly places, far above every principality, authority, power and dominion (Ephesians 1:20). Some believe that Christ will first appear to these

principalities, authorities, powers and dominions before He is manifested to those on earth. So we would have to be there when He makes this appearance. Is there a time gap between His appearing to these sovereignties and His descent? If so, we would have to be taken out of this earth sometime prior to the trumpet blast. Or does it all happen in a twinkle of an eye at the trumpet blast, where we will appear with Him at the same time He starts His descent to meet the kingdom saints in the air? There are no Scriptures to support either scenario. I am leaning towards the first, because crowns (wreaths) will be given (Philippians 4:1), and also we will need to know who endured to be reigning with Christ (2 Timothy 2:12).

*If, then, you were roused together with Christ, be seeking that which is above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Be disposed to that which is above, not to that on the earth, for you died, and your life is hid together with Christ in God. Whenever Christ, our Life, should be manifested, then you also shall be manifested together with Him in glory (Colossians 3:1-4).*

When our Lord appears, it is a moment of revelation involving great light, a shining forth. In some of the following verses we find similar word meanings as found in (Colossians 3:1-4). Notice that our life is “*hidden with Christ in God,*” and while these things are hidden now, there is a time coming when they will be manifested or revealed. This moment will be a very bright one. It will be a glorious moment when our Lord and Head is manifested. You, I and the rest of the church which is His body will be manifested there in the heavenly places with Him. Consider the following passages as to when this appearing can occur.

*For even as the lightning is coming out from the east and is appearing as far as the west, thus shall be the presence of the Son of Mankind (Matthew 24:27).*

*Now immediately after the affliction [tribulation] of those days the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not be giving her beams, and the stars shall be falling from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken (Matthew 24:29).*

*And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Mankind [phaino, the same family of words giving phaneroo of Colossians chapter 3] in heaven (Matthew 24:30).*

*Saying to him is Jesus, “You say it! Moreover, I am saying to you, Henceforth you shall be seeing the Son of Mankind sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven” (Matthew 26:64).*

*The sun shall be converted into darkness, and the moon into blood, ere the coming of the day of the Lord, the great and advent day [epiphanies, the same family of words giving phaneroo of Colossians chapter 3] (Acts 2:20).*

*and said, “Lo! I [Stephen], am beholding the heavens opened up, and the Son of Mankind standing at the right hand of God” (Acts 7:56).*

*And I perceived, when It opens the sixth seal, and a great cataclysm occurred, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood, and the stars of heaven fall on the earth as a fig tree is casting its shriveled figs, quaking under a great wind. And heaven recoils*

*as a scroll rolling up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, and the magnates, and the captains, and the rich, and the strong, and every slave and freeman, hide themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains. And they are saying to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him Who is sitting on the throne, and from the indignation of the Lambkin" (Revelation 6:12-16).*

When the Lord is manifested in the heavenly places, the world will be morally, spiritually and physically dark, and in that darkened day a light will blaze forth. Our Lord shall be visible and "every eye shall see Him." The heavens will be peeled back and they will see Him sitting at the right hand of God.

When our Lord is revealed or manifested (*phaneroo*), He is seated at God's right hand among the celestials. He is not descending in the clouds with angels. His descent in the clouds of 1 Thessalonians 4 is His *parousia*, which is not the same as the *phaneroo* of Colossians 3.

When the Lord is revealed He will not be moving at all. He will remain seated at the Father's right hand among the celestials when the light bursts forth and reveals Him throughout His entire kingdom. Our Lord's kingdom stretches from the heavenly places (or, the celestials) to the earth beneath.

When we are manifested with Him we will not be meeting Him as He descends "out of heaven," but we will be taken to heavenly places, seated and then manifested with Him there. This takes place before He descends to the earth, before 1 Thessalonians 4. I hope we are beginning to see the wonder of the differences between 1 Thessalonians 4 and Ephesians and Colossians.

We are also led to believe that the tribulation period is for us and worldwide. This is incorrect on both counts. The great tribulation is specifically identified as belonging to Israel and is called "the time of Jacob's Trouble."

*Ask now, and see whether a man is giving birth? Why do I see every man with his hands on his loins, like a woman in labor, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall be in that day, says Jehovah of Hosts, I will break his yoke from your neck and will burst your bonds. And strangers shall no longer enslave him ... (Jeremiah 30:6-8).*

This specific tribulation will begin once the Antichrist sets up the "abomination of desolation" in Israel's temple.

*Now immediately after the affliction of those days the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not be giving her beams, and the stars shall be falling from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall **appear** the sign of the Son of Mankind in heaven, and then all the tribes of the land shall grieve, and they shall see the Son of Mankind **coming on the clouds** of heaven with power and much glory (Mathew 24:29-30).*

I bolded "appear" and "coming on the clouds." It seems that He appears first, then comes on the clouds.

The Lord clearly says that only AFTER the tribulation of those days in that location, THEN the Son of

Man will appear in the heavens and descend in the clouds. Matthew 24 is not an unfolding of world-wide events, but events in and around Jerusalem in those last days prior to the Lord's return to Israel.

How plain can the Lord be? After the Temple is desecrated after the tribulation, then He returns. The Scriptures are clear. There is no "coming of the Lord" prior to the abomination of desolation and the full days of the great tribulation. Some see Matthew 24 as being about Israel and Thessalonians as being about the church today. The trumpet of Matthew 24:31 is the same Feast of Trumpets as 1 Corinthians 15:52, 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and Revelation 11:15.

Are the trumpets of Matthew, 1 Corinthians, 1 Thessalonians and Revelation all different? It is highly unlikely. If the trumpet of Matthew 24 is for Israel, then how can we change the trumpet of 1 Thessalonians 4 to occur at an earlier time and rapture away today's church? The Feasts clearly outline the steps in Israel's history. Passover, Unleavened Bread and Pentecost (Weeks) all have been fulfilled. The next event for Israel is the Lord's coming at the Feast of Trumpets.

Is Paul speaking of something totally new and previously hidden in God in Thessalonians? Not at all. He is talking about the same second coming of the Lord as embedded in the Feasts and written in Daniel, Matthew 24, Luke 21 and the book of Revelation, along with other prophecies. Note the exact same details in the following passage regarding the Lord's "coming" and "their" (not our) gathering together to that glorious meeting in the air as He descends to the earth:

*Now we are asking you, brethren, for the sake of the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling to Him, that you be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be alarmed, either through spirit, or through word, or through an epistle as through us, as that the day of the Lord is present. No one should be deluding you by any method, for, should not the apostasy be coming first and the man of lawlessness be unveiled, the son of destruction, who is opposing and lifting himself up over everyone termed a god or an object of veneration, so that he is seated in the temple of God, demonstrating that he himself is God? (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4).*

Notice, that "day" shall not come until after the apostasy and deception (2 Thessalonians 2:9-11). This deception is not in Christianity, but for Israel. After this, then the Antichrist and his desecration of Israel's temple are seen, and after that the Lord descends to the earth in the clouds with a trumpet blast.

Scripture tells us that Israel will suffer greatly during the tribulation which follows the Antichrist's desecration of their temple, but they will be saved despite the horror of that time period. The church which is His body has never been told that they will suffer the great tribulation. The great tribulation takes place in Israel; however, Paul warns us of "perilous times" (2 Timothy 3), and we should accept that we could see these perilous times. Are we beginning to see that we cannot mix the things which belong to Israel with the things which belong to us? Right division is essential.

*For the secret of lawlessness is already operating. Only when the present detainer may be coming to be out of the midst (2 Thessalonians 2:7).*

Nothing is to be taken out of the midst. These passages in Thessalonians were written in the Acts period when the present truth for today had not been revealed. How can Paul be writing to the Thessalonians about the one body in Ephesians when he knew nothing about it at the time that he wrote

this letter? Where is the church of today found in the letters to the Thessalonians? Paul is writing about Israel and her final days of suffering. The Antichrist and his desecration comes out of the midst of deception and apostasy of Israel. Again note the consistency of Matthew 24, Revelation and Thessalonians in these details.

Two other verses are used as supportive material for the “rapture” theory:

*for they are reporting concerning us, what kind of an entrance we have had to you, and how you turn back to God from idols, to be slaving for the living and true God, and to be waiting for His Son out of the heavens, Whom He rouses from among the dead, Jesus, our Rescuer out of the coming indignation (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10).*

*for God did not appoint us to indignation, but to the procuring of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:9).*

It is a twisting of Scripture to expound that these verses mean a “rapture” prior to the tribulation and wrath. Israel was in Egypt when God’s judgment fell on Pharaoh and his land. Israel was not delivered out of Egypt until after those judgments, yet they were preserved from them.

In 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 Paul tells the Acts-period believers of the time when their salvation would materialize, which is when the Lord returns out of the heavens, not before. To be preserved from God’s wrath does not automatically mean being snatched away out of it, but rather preserved among it.

The Lord’s return to the earth takes place *after* the final week of Israel’s history. Israel’s final week is broken into two distinct halves of 3-½ years of false peace and 3-½ years of great tribulation. The dividing point is when the Antichrist, who Israel thought was a good guy, exposes his real self and sets up an image to his own glory inside Israel’s temple. At this point Israel will realize they have made a horrible mistake, and the Antichrist will turn on them with intent to destroy them thoroughly – shades of Adolf Hitler. The Lord returns to save Israel after those last three and a half years of tribulation.

In Daniel 7:7-14, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12 and Revelation 19:20 we read that the Antichrist is captured by the Lord when He comes to the earth with a trumpet blast in power and glory and saves Israel. There is no surprise rapture. The last trumpet heralds the return of the Lord in power and glory. His return is with great light when the sun and moon are darkened.

The Lord’s return to the earth after the tribulation is in three stages as we have already shown:

*Now immediately after the affliction of those days the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not be giving her beams, and the stars shall be falling from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken (Mathew 24:29).*

*And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Mankind in heaven, and then all the tribes of the land shall grieve, and they shall see the Son of Mankind coming on the clouds of heaven with power and much glory (Matthew 24:30).*

---

*And He shall be dispatching His messengers with a loud sounding trumpet, and they shall be assembling His chosen from the four winds, from the extremities of the heavens to their extremities (Matthew 24:31).*

*Saying to him is Jesus, “You say it! Moreover, I am saying to you, Henceforth you shall be seeing the Son of Mankind sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven” (Matthew 26:64).*

This present dispensation had not been revealed when the Lord spoke these words, and consequently He made no mention of anyone appearing with Him where He is now seated at the Father’s right hand. Yet this doesn’t negate the fact that the appearing is the first stage of the Lord’s return to the earth. The appearing is the first stage of the Lord’s return to the earth, but we do not return to the earth with Him.

There is reserved the crown (wreath) of righteousness for those who love His “*appearing*” (2 Timothy 4:8), which is not the “rapture.” The hope before us today is the *phaneroo*, which is the appearing of the Lord. This is not the *parousia*, which is the coming of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians 4. The Lord’s “second coming” is a threefold event. It unfolds in three stages.

**Stage one.** *The phaneroo or appearing.*

Prior to this stage, I believe that we will already be physically seated with Christ, as He will be manifested first to the authorities, powers and dominions. Then in that future day of gloominess when the sun and moon do not give light, He appears to those on earth. The light blazes forth and everyone on earth see Him up there. This is our hope (Colossians 3:1-4). We will appear with Him there.

**Stage two.** *The parousia. His descent out of heaven or coming to the earth.*

The Lord leaves the celestials and descends to the earth through the clouds of the air with a trumpet blast, shout and voice. This is not our hope. It belongs to another called-out company – the elect remnant, the seed of Abraham.

**Stage three.** *His personal presence on the earth. This is included in the term “parousia.”*

The Lord will arrive back on the earth exactly where He previously left it, the Mount of Olives. There He will re-gather Israel back into their land. This is the hope of Israel.

Even though these things take place at the same time, they are different. Even though these three aspects are His “second coming,” they need to be kept apart, not in time, but in our understanding. These three aspects represent three hopes for three groups of companies and we must not mix them.

Tradition and some modern theories divide these three stages into wide time gaps, so we are taught that the Lord “comes” in the clouds, raptures away “the church” and then comes back to the earth much later for Israel. This concept is not supported in Scripture. The appearing and the *parousia* are not separated by time. Previously, we looked at these three stages of the Lord’s “Second Coming” in Matthew.

**Stage 1**

*And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Mankind in heaven (Matthew 24:30).*

This is the appearing or first visible aspect of His “second coming.” (Greek students note: the word for “appear” is *phaino*, the base word for *phaneroo* and *epiphaneia*.)

**Stage 2**

*and then all the tribes of the land shall grieve, and they shall see the Son of Mankind coming on the clouds of heaven with power and much glory (Matthew 24:30).*

This is the “descent” aspect of His “second coming.”

**Stage 3**

*Now, whenever the Son of Mankind may be coming in His glory, and all the holy messengers with Him, then shall He be seated on the throne of His glory, and in front of Him shall be gathered all the nations. And He shall be severing them from one another even as a shepherd is severing the sheep from the kids (Matthew 24:31; 25:31-32).*

Here are the first two stages again in Matthew:

*Saying to him is Jesus, “You say it! Moreover, I am saying to you, Henceforth you shall be seeing the Son of Mankind sitting at the right hand of power (Matthew 26:64).*

This is the “first” stage, the appearing aspect of his “second coming.”

*and coming on the clouds of heaven (Matthew 26:64).*

This is the “descent” aspect of His “second coming.”

At the “appearing” the Lord does not move; He is seated at the Father’s right hand above the air and clouds and we are with Him there also. At His “coming” He moves out of heavenly places through the clouds and air, back to and stands upon the earth. These three stages constitute His “second coming.”

In Acts 7, when the Lord’s return to the earth was expected, Stephen saw heaven opened and the Lord standing at the Father’s right hand. Stephen saw a vision of the first stage of the Lord’s coming, but he was not expecting to go to that appearing. Revelation speaks about the heavens departing like a scroll, and then the world will see into heaven and the Son of Man sitting on the throne (Revelation 6). The Lord gave Stephen an encouraging vision about His soon return to the earth, at which point Stephen will be resurrected. Regarding Stephen, some teach that Israel was judged and put away at Stephen’s death, since they assume that the Lord stood in judgment. Then they erroneously go on to assume that from Acts 9 and on Paul started to teach about “the church.” This is an impossible theory since Stephen, like his Lord before Him (Luke 23:34), begged on Israel’s behalf, “*lay not this sin to their*



charge.” The very next chapter begins with the widening of the ministry in and to Israel according to the commission to the twelve apostles (Acts 1:8). This is not some new commission given to Paul.

When we read the letters in the New Testament we find many authors referring to the first and second stages of the Lord’s “coming” as synchronous events. In other words, they interplay “*appearing*” and “*coming*” to describe the Lord’s return as occurring at the same time. Here are some examples where “*appearing*” and “*coming*” are so used. Please note that there is no suggestion, not one hint, that the appearing and coming are years apart.

John is an apostle to Israel and Israel will not be “*appearing*” with Christ in the heavenly places, yet John tells us plainly that these two stages occur at the same time. In the second passage John says “*we shall see Him*” (from the earth) when He “*appears*” in the heavenly places. Every eye will see Him, and this is consistent with the Lord’s words in Matthew.

*And now, little children, remain in Him, that, if He should be manifested [phaneroo = 1<sup>st</sup> stage of His coming], we should be having boldness and not be put to shame by Him in His presence [parousia =, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> stages of His coming] (1 John 2:28).*

*We are aware that, if He should be manifested (phaneroo = 1<sup>st</sup> stage of His coming), we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is (1 John 3:2).*

Peter is also an apostle to Israel, and he writes about the first two stages as occurring at the same time. Peter uses both “*appear*” and “*coming*” interchangeably regarding the Old Testament day of the Lord. The day of the Lord is the subject of Revelation and God’s purposes for the earth. Peter, like John, did not write about anyone going to the “*appearing*.” Peter uses the word “*appear*” with the Lord’s earthly title of Shepherd, not His above heavenly title of Head. While Peter knew that the “*appearing*” took place in the heavenly places, he knew it only as the first stage of the Lord’s coming back to the earth. He did not embrace it as his hope. This is why he links it with the Lord’s ministry on the earth. The earth is where the Good Shepherd operates. Peter refers to the transfiguration which anticipates the Lord’s glory on earth.

*And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested [phaneroo = 1<sup>st</sup> stage of His coming], you shall be requited with an unfading wreath of glory (1 Peter 5:4).*

*For not by following wisely made myths do we make known to you the power and presence of our Lord, Jesus Christ, but by becoming spectators of His magnificence [parousia = 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> stages of His coming] (2 Peter 1:16).*

*And saying, “Where is the promise of His presence? [parousia = 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> stages of His coming]. For since the fathers were put to repose, all is continuing thus from the beginning of creation” (2 Peter 3:4).*

The “*appearing*” is the first stage of the Lord’s “second coming” and all New Testament writers knew about this, but not all held it as their hope. In Paul’s Acts-period ministry, he also interplays the first- and second-stage words to speak of the Lord’s “second coming,” and like John and Peter at that time, he did not know that anyone would “*appear*” with the Lord in the heavenly places. It was only after

Acts that Paul wrote about the “*appearing*” as a new hope. After Acts, and only after Acts, does Paul write about a company which will appear with Christ in heavenly places. Praise our loving heavenly Father, for this company is the company to which you and I belong, the church which is His body, and our hope is realized before the so-called rapture.

Let us conclude this by looking back at the way our Lord Jesus ascended to heaven. It was all in one sequence with no time gaps. He will return in the same manner (Acts 1:9-11).

Our Lord left the mount of Olivet (stage 3), went into a cloud (stage 2), and into heaven (stage 1). Shortly after that, Stephen saw the heavens open up with the Son of Mankind standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:56).

Israel's final week is seven years. Half of that is the tribulation. If the rapture occurs before these events, it goes against how long it took Jesus to enter heaven.

When the Son of Mankind returns, it will also be one sequence with no time gaps. In the prison epistles (for the church today), Paul never mentions meeting the Lord in the air. He only refers to us appearing or being manifested with the Lord. He only makes reference to the celestials or heavens, where we are presently seated (Philippians 3:20; Ephesians 2:6).

So the sequence for the Lord's return will be:

1. Christ will be manifested and since we are seated with Him, we will be manifested also (Colossians 3:1-4). This will require the heavens to be opened, just as Stephen saw the Son of Mankind.
2. The Lord then descends in the clouds to meet the saints in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). These saints are those Jews (and gentiles – grafted into the olive tree), who believed before Acts 28:28. I believe the “First Resurrection” of Revelation 20:5 occurs here also.
3. The Lord then returns to the mount of Olivet with His saints to set up His earthly kingdom. We are not included, for our realm is inherent in the heavens (Philippians 3:20).

# *The Three Callings*

## **3 Callings, 3 Adoptions, 3 Spheres**

### **1. EARTH – LAND**

Fleshly calling. Abraham's Seed according to the flesh.  
(Exodus 4:22) (Romans 9:1-5).

**Jerusalem – Israel after the flesh on earth. *Christ is King and Priest.***

In Genesis 10 we read about all of the nations; but God chose Abram (Genesis 12), and through him came Israel. In Genesis 46:2 God spoke to Jacob, saying, “*Do not be afraid to go to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation.*” The formation of this great nation was going to take place in Egypt. In Exodus 4:22 and Romans 9:4 God says that Israel is His *firstborn* adopted sons, heirs of the earth. In Genesis 13:15-17 God promised land to Abram and his seed. God told Abram to arise and walk through the land, in the LENGTH of it and in the BREADTH of it. They inherited a land from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates, by making a covenant with Abram (Genesis 15:18). In Exodus 19:6 God says that these descendants of Abraham will be a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a kingdom of priests. Christ will come from the seed of king David and there will be a temple (Zechariah 6:12).

So we have Israel, the seed of Abraham, a great nation coming, formed in Egypt, redeemed by the blood (typifies Passover), brought into the land from the Egypt to Euphrates river. A king is promised and they are to be priests. All families on earth are to be blessed through them. Christ is the King Priest on His throne. In the future there is going to be a literal kingdom on earth. Christ will physically return to the Mount of Olives. There will be mortal human beings in the world. Israel will be a redeemed nation. Abraham and his fleshly seed will recline there (Matthew 8:11). Christ will shepherd all of the nations with an iron club (Revelation 12:5). The sheep and goats will be separated (Matthew 25:32). Sheep refer to the gentile nations who treated Israel well, and goats are the gentile nations who treated Israel poorly. Israel is the brethren of the Lord. This portion of Mathew is referring to the nations who exist when Christ returns to redeem Israel. This is not about individuals who are lost. The fire of Gehenna (mistakenly called hell) will be functioning (Matthew 5:22-30). Nations will literally go up to Zion (Isaiah 2:3-5; Micah 4:2; Zechariah 14:16). The Israelites always looked for their promised land, the land of Palestine. This is where the sermon on the mount (Mathew 5) comes into play, especially :5, when the meek shall inherit the earth.

Once again Paul tells us that the Israelites are from their fathers according to the flesh from which Christ came (Romans 9:1-5). Paul also tells us that out of this lump there is a remnant. God always uses a remnant (2 Kings 19:31; Joel 2:32; Isaiah 10:20; Romans 9:27; 11:5). With this in mind let us take a look at the next calling.

## **2. HEAVENLY CITY – IN CHARACTER**

Abraham's Seed according to promise and spirit.

(Galatians 3:7-9, 19, 26-29; 4:4-7, 28-29) (Hebrews 11:9-10; 12:22-23)

**Meet the Lord in the air. Body suited for the celestial city. New Jerusalem. Christ is The Bridegroom.**

In Hebrews 12:23 we have the ecclesia of the firstborn, registered in heaven. This group of believers is called the church of God, the called-out assembly between Acts 2 and Acts 28:28. They walked in the steps of faithful Abraham (Romans 4:11-14). This includes the Jews (Abraham's physical seed) and the grafted-in gentiles of the olive tree (Abraham's spiritual seed), who believed the gospel during the Acts period.

The hope of this calling is based on promises that God made to the fathers of Israel. Note the New Testament reference of hope, where Paul says to Agrippa,

*And now, in expectation of the promise which came by God to our fathers, I stand being judged, to which our twelve-tribed people, earnestly offering divine service night and day, is expecting to attain. Concerning which expectation I am being indicted by Jews, O King! (Acts 26:6-7).*

This group was called according to prophecy. Paul, who wrote the Roman letter during Acts, says,

*... it is that He should also be making known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He makes ready before for glory – us, whom He calls also, not only out of the Jews, but out of the nations also. As He is saying in Hosea also: "I shall be calling those who are not My people 'My people,' and she who is not beloved 'Beloved,' And it shall be, in the place where it was declared to them, 'Not My people are you,' There they shall be called 'sons of the living God'" (Romans 9:23-26).*

Not only do they inherit the earth, they have something extra. It is the New Jerusalem from above. They looked for a city which is heavenly in character (not in heaven) which fits their calling. This New Jerusalem will replace the old Jerusalem. The city descends out of heaven (Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 11:8-10, 16; 12:22; 13:14-15; Revelation 21:10). The "over-comers" out of the Old Testament, the Acts period and the tribulation will enjoy the holy city Jerusalem. I believe those of like faith, found in Hebrews 11, will also be included. The holy city is prepared as a bride, a pure virgin (2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 21:2). Christ completes this church as the Bridegroom (Revelation 19:7-9).

Here are the dimensions of the holy city Jerusalem.

*And the city is lying four square: and its length is as much as the breadth. And he measures the city with the reed to twelve thousand stadia [1400 miles]. Its length and breadth and height are equal (Revelation 21:16).*

The LENGTH and the BREADTH and the HEIGHT are equal. Some Bible translations use the word furlong instead of stadia. Twelve thousand furlongs is 1500 miles. This was their resurrection hope. They will meet the Lord in the air, and then return with Him to earth. They will judge messengers and the world (1 Corinthians 6:2, 3; 15:50-55; 1 Thessalonians 4; Acts 23:6; 24:15; 26:6-8; 28:20). There are no members of the church today (Ephesians) in this calling.

Notice Paul was called by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the same God Who called Moses (Acts 7:32) and Who had glorified His Son Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 3:13; 5:30). During Acts Paul worshipped the God Who called Moses. Paul was sent to Israel in the Acts period, as was Moses, despite the fact that he was the apostle of the gentiles at that time. However, Paul's Acts period commission from the God of Israel was to the Jew first (Acts 9:15, 26:19-20; Romans 1:16; 2:9-10). From Acts 9 to Acts 28 Paul went to the Jew first (Acts 26:20).

After Acts 28, Paul did not speak of God as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Israel was set aside at Acts 28 and it is now the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; the God of all (Ephesians 1:3, 17; 4:6). After Acts 28 Paul was sent to all of the nations with the glorious message that Christ was now among them, independent of Israel (Ephesians 3:1; Colossians 1:24-27). It was no longer to the Jew first and no longer any reference to the God of Israel's father's. After Acts 28:28, when Paul is in prison, he reveals the calling for the church, which is His body.

### 3. AMONG THE CELESTIALS

Designated for the place of a son.

(Ephesians 1:5)

**Heavenly places. We are manifested when Christ appears in the heavens** (Colossians 3:1-4; Philipians 3:20-21; Titus 2:13). **One New Humanity – Christ is Head of this body** (Ephesians 2:15; 5:23).

In Ephesians 1:3-6 God blesses us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials. These blessings are not on earth or in the holy city, New Jerusalem. We were chosen in Christ before the disruption of the world (Ephesians 1:4). In Ephesians 1:5 God designated us beforehand (predestined) for a place of a son (adoption). This was according to the good pleasure of His will (Ephesians 1:11). He highly favored us in the Beloved, just as He favored Mary the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:28). We are seated with Christ up over every sovereignty, authority, power and lordship among the celestials (Ephesians 2:6). A new creation of Jew and gentiles is built for God's habitation (Ephesians 2:15, 22).

We are the church which is His body (Ephesians 1:22). We will be on display to the sovereignties and the authorities among the celestials (Ephesians 2:7). They will be learning of God's manifold (diversified) wisdom through us (Ephesians 3:10). These beings are not angels (messengers), but are heaven's aristocracy, which is a form of government ruled by an elite superior group.

Our blessed hope is His appearance (Titus 2:13). At some point in time, we go up to be seated with Him (Ephesians 2:6). He doesn't come down to meet us. Whenever Christ is manifested among the celestials, then we also shall be manifested with Him in glory (Colossians 3:1-4), for our realm is inherent in the heavens, out of which we are awaiting a Savior (Philippians 3:20-21). Let us applaud and praise God for His love. God's love in Christ is boundless, endless, exhaustless and measureless, according to the words that Paul uses: "*BREADTH and LENGTH and DEPTH and HEIGHT*" (Ephesians 3:18).

## THE DIMENSIONS

I wanted to mention something here that I think is interesting. In calling #1, which is Abraham's seed according to the flesh, where their inheritance is the land, you find the words "LENGTH" and "BREADTH" describing it. In calling #2, which is Abraham's seed according to promise and spirit, where their inheritance is the holy city new Jerusalem, you find the words "LENGTH," "BREADTH" and "HEIGHT" describing it. In calling #3, you have the church which is His body, where our inheritance is among the celestials. Here you have love described with the words "BREADTH," "LENGTH," "DEPTH" and "HEIGHT."

Calling 1 – 2 Dimensional

Calling 2 – 3 Dimensional

Calling 3 – 4 Dimensional

The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> dimensions are physical reality. No one can see beyond the 3<sup>rd</sup> dimension. So to have 4 dimensions listed in the epistle that relates to our future calling and inheritance is awesome.

## MATURITY

*Unto the end that we should all attain to the unity of the faith and of the realization of the Son of God, to a **mature** man, to the measure of the stature of the complement of the Christ, that we may by no means still be minors, surging hither and thither and being carried about by every wind of teaching, by human caprice, by craftiness with a view to the systematizing of the deception (Ephesians 4:13-14).*

*Whoever, then, are **mature**, may be disposed to this, and if in anything you are differently disposed, this also shall God reveal to you (Philippians 3:15).*

*Whom we are announcing, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we should be presenting every man **mature** in Christ Jesus (Colossians 1:28).*

*Now over all these put on love, which is the tie of **maturity** (Colossians 3:14).*

*Greeting you is Epaphras, who is one of you, a slave of Christ Jesus, always struggling for you in prayers, that you may stand **mature** and fully assured in all the will of God (Colossians 4:12).*

Christ revealed to us through Paul the importance of reaching maturity. No longer should we be minors. Notice that all Scripture above is taken from Paul's epistles to the church today, which is His body. There are certain topics that must be dealt with which are preventing the church from reaching maturity.

## HUMAN TRADITIONS

It is sad to take religious rituals and ceremonies which were divinely given to God's chosen nation of Israel and those during the Acts period and apply them to the church today. This has caused such an obstruction in the realization of our position in Christ Jesus. Baptism, circumcision, abstinence from

foods and observance of days are all human activities to obtain righteousness with God. Righteousness is from God through Jesus Christ's faith. Christ's death, burial and resurrection put an end to religion today. According to the passage below, we are complete in Christ. We have our fullness in Him.

*As, then, you accepted Christ Jesus, the Lord, be walking in Him, having been rooted and being built up in Him, and being confirmed in the faith according as you were taught, super-abounding in it with thanksgiving. Beware that no one shall be despoiling you through philosophy and empty seduction, in accord with human tradition, in accord with the elements of the world, and not in accord with Christ, for in Him the entire complement of the Deity is dwelling bodily. And you are complete in Him, Who is the Head of every sovereignty and authority (Colossians 2:6-10).*

The death, burial and resurrection of Christ Jesus is so dear to believers and vital for sinners, for it is God's power to salvation. Let us see how two rituals for Israel (circumcision and baptism), fit into the gospel for today.

### **Circumcision**

*And you are complete in Him, Who is the Head of every sovereignty and authority, in Whom you were circumcised also with a circumcision not made by hands, in the stripping off of the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ (Colossians 2:10-11).*

*for we are the circumcision who are offering divine service in the spirit of God, and are glorying in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in flesh (Philippians 3:3).*

The apostle Paul tells us to no longer have confidence in the flesh. We died together with Christ. If circumcision is the cutting or stripping off of the flesh which dies, then in spirit the death of Christ typifies our true circumcision. This is, in fact, a circumcision not made by hands. This should convince us to cut off all physical blessings and rites intended for Israel.

### **Baptism**

First and foremost, baptism is not exclusively a New Testament doctrine. It has its roots in the Old Testament. The washings of the priests and of the parts of the sacrifices are actually called "baptisms." The first occurrence of the word "*baptism*" in the Bible is found in the book of Job, and it occurs there in chapter 9:31 and is translated "plunge." It is also found in the book of Kings, when Naaman dipped (baptized) himself in Jordan. We read in Exodus 12 of the hyssop which was dipped (baptized) in blood, and also in Numbers where the same hyssop was dipped (baptized) in water. In the blessings of Moses recorded in Deuteronomy chapter 33, there is a rather strange reference concerning Asher: "*let him dip his foot in oil*;" "*Dip*" is the word "baptize" – literally, "let him baptize his foot in oil." So the washings of the Old Testament were baptisms, and the epistle to the Hebrews (Chapters 6, 9) urges us that these things must be left by the believer who wants to go on to maturity. Now let us look in the New Testament. We begin with John the baptist.

*The voice of one imploring: "In the wilderness make ready the road of the Lord! Straight ... be making the highways of Him!" John the baptist came to be in the wilderness and is heralding a baptism of repentance for the pardon of sins (Mark 1:3-4).*

Pardon or forgiveness was linked with John's baptism for repentance. It was an external action to prove a real work inside. When Israel failed, they were called to repent and turn back to God. There had to be that change of heart and turning back to the Lord. So baptism of repentance was an outward sign for an inward change of heart and mind for the forgiveness of sins. Do we preach today that God forgives our sins by our being immersed in water? We do not, if we are instructed in the Word of Truth rightly divided. John's baptism linked together the believing remnant of the people of Israel.

In the first chapter of John's gospel another reason is given, and a very important one, that is usually ignored or passed over. In John 1:24-31 the Pharisees came to him and asked him, "*Why, then, are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, neither Elijah, nor the Prophet?*" (:25). Then John points to the Lord and says, "*And I was not aware of Him. But that He may be manifested to Israel, therefore came I, baptizing in water*" (:29-31). How many baptists tell us that the Lord Jesus was baptized in water to **make Him manifest to His chosen people Israel?** That was the Divine reason given for the Lord's baptism. So first of all we have the baptism of John the baptist connected with repentance and identification with the believing remnant of those who were saved, and also the public manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ as their Messiah.

In Matthew's gospel there is another baptism mentioned.

*For I, indeed, am baptizing you in water for repentance, yet He Who is coming after me is stronger than I, Whose sandals I am not competent to bear. He will be baptizing you in Holy Spirit and fire* (Matthew 3:11).

This verse is linked to Acts 1:4 and Luke 24:49. Jesus charges them not to be departing from Jerusalem, but to be remaining about for the promise of the Father to be putting on power from on high. So power from on high is connected with this fiery holy spirit. What was this? It was the powerful equipment of the twelve for the proclamation of the gospel and the earthly kingdom ministry accompanied with the miraculous gifts. In Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth he refers to the holy spirit giving these gifts and baptizing them (uniting them) together. So 1 Corinthians 12:13 refers to being baptized in one spirit and sharing these gifts together as the holy spirit chose to distribute them. Thus we have a baptism that was yet to come after John the baptist's ministry. It was linked with power, being endued to the twelve for this earthly kingdom testimony by the holy spirit, and we find it going all through the Acts of the apostles accompanied by evidential miracles.

Signs and miracles were necessary to usher in Israel's kingdom, for they were a nation of signs. Yet the kingdom proclamation was rejected, and our Lord's command to disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit (Matthew 28:19), to this day was never carried out. This command cannot be carried out until Jesus returns. He is going to set up a literal kingdom on earth and the nations will be blessed. It is wrong for the church today to claim this commission along with the gifts such as healing, prophecy, casting out demons, etc.

There is also Peter's baptism. As Peter was divinely appointed and sent to the Jew, to the circumcision, we shall expect this to be in keeping, and so it is. Acts chapter two describes the day of Pentecost and here is this man energized and guided by the holy spirit, so he is not making any mistakes. We read in Acts 2:38, "*Then Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins.*" So his ministry was similar to John the baptist's. John preached bap-



tism for the forgiveness of sins, and so did the apostle Peter. This is in harmony with the Lord's great statement in Mark 16:16, "*He who believes and is baptized shall be saved.*" We have no right to read this as, "he who believes shall be saved and should be baptized."

We come now to a different aspect of baptism. In Luke 12:49 we read,

*I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straightened [narrowed, held in, literally] till it be accomplished.*

What was this baptism? Obviously it was nothing to do with water. This was the death baptism of Calvary. This was a baptism of suffering and death. Peter, Paul and the twelve apostles, with one exception (namely John), followed the Lord in martyrdom.

Let's sum up again. We have the washings (the baptisms of the Old Testament), contained in the ceremonial law of Moses. We have the water baptism of Israel unto repentance linked with John the baptizer. We have the spirit baptism of power and miraculous gifts (Pentecost and onwards), and the death baptism of Calvary of the Savior with its suffering and shame.

There is yet another aspect of this subject:

*For I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, that our fathers all were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all are baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea (1 Corinthians 10:1).*

Carefully notice that this is a most unique baptism, because although they went through the water, they were not touched by it. They went through on dry land, and there are at least four Scriptures which emphasize this (Exodus 14:22; 15:19; Psalm 66:6 and Hebrews 11:29). Each context tells us that Israel went through dry land. Here is a dry baptism. The only ones who were immersed in water then were Pharaoh and his hosts. That was Divine judgment, for they were drowned. For Israel it was a dry baptism. All were baptized to Moses. So one can have, as we have seen, quite a number of aspects of baptism that have nothing to do with water at all. What did this baptism do? It united them with all that Moses stood for in Divine law and ceremony. The first occurrence of the word baptism is in the book of Job; but the first baptism was Israel coming through the Red Sea miraculously, and they had a similar experience of passing through Jordan on dry ground as they entered the promised land at the end of the wilderness wanderings (Joshua 3:13-17; 4:22).

Now what about the ministry of the apostle Paul on the subject of water baptism? He made a very definite statement when he wrote to the church of Corinth and said, "*For Christ does not commission me to be baptizing, but to be bringing the evangel*" (1 Corinthians 1:17). Paul insisted that Christ sent him not to baptize, so water baptism is not an essential part of the apostle Paul's ministry. Some would tell us that what they call "the great commission" of Matthew 28, to disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and holy spirit, is what we ought to be doing now. Yet the apostle Paul could not have come under this ministry, otherwise he could never have said, "*Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel.*" There are three great portions in his epistles which deal with this subject. One is in Galatians, which states that baptism has united them all together in Christ so that

there is no more Jew or Greek. They are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:27-28). This is the unity which we have seen before that baptism symbolizes.

Then there is a very important one in the epistle to the Romans.

*Or are you ignorant that whoever are baptized into Christ Jesus, are baptized into His death? We, then, were entombed together with Him through baptism into death, that, even as Christ was roused from among the dead through the glory of the Father, thus we also should be walking in newness of life. For if we have become planted together in the likeness of His death, nevertheless we shall be of the resurrection also, knowing this, that our old humanity was crucified together with Him (Romans 6:3-6).*

Does immersing anybody in water automatically baptize them into Christ? Would an unbeliever who was being baptized in water be baptized into Christ? Certainly not; but these believers were baptized into His death. There is a great stress in this context of being linked with the Lord's death. Read :4, "we were entombed [buried] together with Him through baptism into death." The figure changes in :5, "For if we have become planted together in the likeness of His death, nevertheless we shall be of the resurrection also." Then it changes again in :6, "our old humanity was crucified." Our old man was (not is) crucified with Him. That is to say, when the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, our old nature, the old man, was crucified *then* in God's plan and purpose. Now there is not the slightest doubt that this verse is taking us back to Calvary. Nobody could possibly teach with truth that when someone is immersed in water that at that moment their old nature was crucified with Christ. Yet when we take the whole of the context, we see the link of the believer with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Here you have something that God has done, and not what men choose to do.

Now turn to the epistle to the Ephesians.

*... one body and (one spirit), according as you were called also with one expectation of your calling; one Lord, one faith, (one baptism), one God and Father of all, Who is over all and through all and in all (Ephesians 4:4-5).*

There is one body and one spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is above all and Who is over all and through all and in all. You see "one" is the important word stressed all the way through. There is one baptism. Now, is this God's baptism or man's baptism? If you accept what God has said you cannot make it two baptisms. We have one God and Father, one Savior, one spirit and we have only one baptism. Now then, which is it going to be of all that we have already considered? Is it the reality of the spirit linking us with the Savior, or the external type of water? Is it going to be the shadow, or will it be the substance? Ephesians stresses one baptism. This cannot be made into two, so we must choose which it is going to be out of all that we have seen in this study. Will it be the reality which God Himself accomplishes with each of His redeemed children, or is it going to be the external type of water immersion?

Let us now turn to Colossians:

*... for in Him the entire complement of the Deity is dwelling bodily. And you are complete in Him, Who is the Head of every sovereignty and authority, in Whom you were circumcised also with*

---

*a circumcision not made by hands, in the stripping off of the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ. Being entombed together with Him in baptism, in Whom you were roused together also through faith in the operation of God (Colossians 2:9-12).*

We are entombed (buried) with Him in baptism. This verse is often quoted by those who are trying to prove that a believer should be immersed in water. But consider the context. First of all, please note the tremendous statement which ought to be the joy and rejoicing of every believer who belongs to the body. It is the fullness of Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Deity (Godhead) bodily and we are complete in Him. How many of God's children apprehend this for themselves? How many know that in Christ they are complete? They are, as the Greek says, "filled full," not partially filled so that something else can or should be added! One cannot have degrees of completeness. We are either complete in Christ, or we are not. Now, if we are complete in Him, nothing can be added to that completeness without spoiling it. If one rite or one type or shadow, or even all of them are added, then the glorious fact is being ignored that we are all sufficient in everything in Him. That is point number one. The next fact is that in :11 we have a circumcision made without hands. So it is not literal circumcision that is meant, but the spiritual equivalent. When the apostle wrote to the church at Philippi, he said, "we are the circumcision who offer divine service in the spirit of God and have no confidence in the flesh" (Philippians 3:3). Literal circumcision today can add nothing to a member of the church. We now have the reality of what immersion represented. If we belong to this company redeemed by His grace, water baptism, or any other type or shadow, adds nothing to the church which is His Body.

Baptism and circumcision were physical, fleshly rites for Israel; but now we have a spiritual relationship with Christ and are complete in Him. God has provided everything for us through His Son. He is the end of religion. The only ceremony needed today is the realization of the death (typifies circumcision), burial and resurrection (typifies baptism) of Christ.

### **Food, Drink, Days**

*Let no one, then, be judging you in food or in drink or in the particulars of a festival, or of a new moon, or of sabbaths, which are a shadow of those things which are impending – yet the body is the Christ's (Colossians 2:16-17).*

*How are you turning back again to the infirm and poor elements ... Days are you scrutinizing, and months and seasons and years (Galatians 4:9-10).*

Some religions put much emphasis on abstaining from certain foods and drinks, and observing days. We are not under the bondage of law. Paul had this same problem with the Galatians. For minors, the law was an escort to Christ. It makes us understand the need for a Savior. Once we are mature and realize that justification is by faith, then no longer is there a need for an escort, the law.

*Now before the coming of faith we were garrisoned under law, being locked up together for the faith about to be revealed. So that the law has become our escort to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. Now, at the coming of faith, we are no longer under an escort, for you are all sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:23-26).*

While on the subject of days, it is because of a man made law and faulty translations that the errone-

ous idea of Sunday being the sabbath and first day of the week came about. In the fourth century A.D. Constantine declared Sunday to be a day of rest. This widely accepted law by the church and state, coupled with inaccurate translations, caused an improper observance.

One Scripture which was incorrectly translated from the Original was John 20:1. The first passage below is correctly translated from the *Concordant Literal New Testament*. The second is found in the *Revised Standard Version* as a comparison.

*Now, on **one of the sabbaths**, Miriam Magdalene is coming to the tomb in the morning, there being still darkness, and is observing the stone taken away from the door of the tomb.*

*Now on the **first day of the week** Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.*

The phrase “*one of the sabbaths*” is found in all three of the ancient manuscripts (*Sinaiticus*, *Vaticanus* and *Alexandrinus*). The Original reads, *mia ton sabbaton*; but translators throughout the centuries changed the word “in,” to the word “first.” The word “day,” which is not in the Original, was inserted.

Then “sabbaths” was changed to the singular, “week.” Other passages in which this error appears are Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:2, Luke 24:1, John 20:19, Acts 20:7 and I Corinthians 16:2. It is a wonder that Saturday (the Jewish sabbath) is not observed as our sabbath. After all, the church today claims everything else that is meant for Israel.

Another misconception is referring to our sabbath as the “Lord’s Day.” In Isaiah 13:6-15 and Revelation 1:10, this day starts with awful judgments coming on the earth prior to the setting up of Israel’s kingdom. There is no problem assigning Sunday as a day for the Lord. However, keep in mind that this was not authorized by God, but is man-made. It is my opinion not to put Sunday above any other day. Worship, praise, prayer and thanksgiving should go forth every day to our Lord.

So circumcision, water baptism, foods, drinks and observing days are types and shadows of the ceremonial law that God gave to Israel which were very important at the time the law was given. All of these things are only shadows of things to come. That is exactly what God’s ceremonial law was and what all of the types are. They are only something that is shadowing forth a great reality, and when the reality is come and enjoyed the shadow can be put away, and if this is not done, the reality will never mean in experience what God intends it to mean. The point is that, in our heavenly calling, according to Ephesians and Colossians, we have all of the reality in Christ – it is all spiritual, and the believer who is rejoicing in this glorious position does not come under God’s picture book. The glory of the calling of the church which is His body is that it has no types or shadows. This is its glory, not its loss. It has all of the reality of every type, because it is complete or filled full in Christ. If anyone says that completeness can be added to or improved by going through any rite or ceremony, they have never realized what this completeness means. That would be a denial of this complete filling that we have in our Lord and Savior.

What is this one baptism of the spirit connected with the church which is His body? It is the uniting by the holy spirit of the whole of this church with Christ Himself, the glorious Head, in death, burial, resurrection and being seated in the heavenly places in Him. This is a union that can never be broken,

---

and it unites every single member together. This is why we are asked to keep it and guard it as we would a treasure (Ephesians 4:3). Unity is the great thought behind this baptism. Every member of the body has been crucified with Christ. When He was crucified, we were crucified. We are dead with Christ. We are buried with Christ. We are made alive with Christ, raised with Christ and the glory of all glories, we are seated where He is seated (Ephesians 2:6) in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus and are looking forward to being manifested with Christ. All of this precious truth is what the one baptism of the spirit accomplishes.

If we have this, we have the reality. If we have only immersion in water, we have the shadow without the substance. If the believer has not this one baptism of Ephesians four, he is without the one that really matters; but if we have this, we are complete in Christ and have everything, and are baptized believers in the truest sense, just as we are the true circumcision, though we know nothing of the external rite. You will see that this subject has many and varied aspects, and that water baptism has its place in the Word of God, but it is linked with Israel, the sign people, while they were still in covenant relationship with Him.

While Israel is still in covenant relationship with God, types and shadows remain. When Israel is divorced and laid aside by God, as they are now, the divine picture book stops and we have the reality which is spiritual. We realize that we are creatures of sense and feeling. If there is something we can see, touch or taste, that is the thing that appears to be real to us. Yet we must learn that this is not necessarily the thing that is real. It is only the shadow. If we have the spiritual reality that the word speaks about this glorious unity with the Son of God, this is the thing that is real and lasting and is what you and I, if we are members of His body, ought to be rejoicing in and living in the strength of it here and now.

One baptism is ours by the operation of God Himself (Colossians 2:12). The word "*operation*" is the word "working." It was done by God's working, not man's. It was not done at the time any minister or anybody else chose to immerse a believer in water. It was God's working when He chose us in His Son. Let us rejoice in it. Let us live in the joy of it and look forward to being manifested with Him in glory at His great Epiphany. At present, this glory is hidden. Then it will be revealed to all of the heavenly hosts, the glory of the Head and His body, His fullness. Each member will be there in the glory with Him, far above all. Let us thank God for such a wondrous calling and this mighty operation of His, baptizing us and linking us with His Son in a bond that can never be broken.

### **Born Again**

*Verily, verily, I am saying to you, If anyone should not be begotten anew [born again], he can not perceive the kingdom of God (John 3:3).*

Jesus came to the lost sheep of Israel proclaiming the kingdom of God. His mission agrees with the Hebrew prophecies telling of God's holy nation on earth. This must be kept in the context in which He gave it. In John 3:7, our Lord talking to Nicodemus said, "*you must be born anew,*" or as we know it, "*born again.*" The correct rendering found in the *Concordant Version* is, "*you must be begotten anew.*" This new birth was vague to Nicodemus. This is proven when he makes reference to re-entering a mother's womb. He could not understand the necessity for it in entering the kingdom of God. A physical relation with Israel is all that Nicodemus thought was required. He did not know that a

spiritual renewal or regeneration was essential. Jesus was amazed that he did not know this (John 3:10). Yet the Scriptures, of which he was a teacher, clearly states this in Ezekiel.

*A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes and be careful to observe My ordinances (Ezekiel 36:26-27, RSV).*

This indeed refers to Israel being born anew or, correctly put, begotten anew. The establishing of Israel's kingdom was the foundation of Jesus' ministry. The word "birth" is concerned with Israel, the chosen nation. In the following passage, the word "renascence" is found in the Original translated from the Greek word *polygenesis*, meaning "again-becoming." The meaning for renascence in the *New Book of Knowledge* dictionary is "a new birth or rebirth."

*Yet Jesus said to them, "Verily, I am saying to you, that you who follow Me, in the renascence whenever the Son of Mankind should be seated on the throne of His glory, you also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19:28).*

Entrance into the kingdom is by the new birth. Peter, an apostle to the Jewish dispersion, also refers to this spiritual regeneration in his letter to the believers in Israel (1 Peter 1:22-23). This teaching was stressed to Nicodemus and applies to Israel only. When our Lord spoke to Nicodemus about this new birth, He was referring to the whole land, not just him. The word "you" in John 3:7 is plural, not singular. An example of this is found in Matthew 5:14, "*You are the light of the world,*" and refers to Israel as a nation. The prophet Isaiah speaks of a nation born at one time.

*Before she was in labor she gave birth; before her pain came upon her she was delivered of a son (Isaiah 66:7-8, RSV).*

So the words "born," "birth" and "begotten anew" deal with the nation of Israel. Without this new spirit, new heart or new birth, no one of Israel shall see or enter the kingdom of God on earth.

In the previous Scriptures, the words "her," "she," "birth" and "born" are feminine because of their relationship to Israel. We, the church today, which is His body, are referred to as masculine. Both Jews and gentiles are reconciled into one body, through the blood of Christ. We are not born anew into this body. Christ does not command us to be born again. What He does is create both Jew and gentile into one new man (humanity).

*Wherefore, remember that once you, the nations in flesh – who are termed "Uncircumcision" by those termed "Circumcision," in flesh, made by hands – that you were, in that era, apart from Christ, being alienated from the citizenship of Israel, and guests of the promise covenants, having no expectation, and without God in the world. Yet now, in Christ Jesus, you, who once are far off, are become near by the blood of Christ. For He is our Peace, Who makes both one, and razes the central wall of the barrier (the enmity in His flesh), nullifying the law of precepts in decrees, that He should be creating the two, in Himself, into one new humanity, making peace; and should be reconciling both in one body to God through the cross, killing the enmity in it (Ephesians 2:11-16).*

## Body and Bride

Remember that the word “church” (*ecclesia*) simply means an “out-called” people, regardless of the era. There are different callings for different churches. Many today believe that the church which is His body of the Ephesians calling, is the same as the bride of the Lamb (Lambkin). Far be it from the truth. The bride is an “out-called” remnant from the time of faithful Abraham down through the years. These will form one company at the end and are spoken of as “holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, who died in faith, not having received the promise.” (Some remnant passages are Isaiah 1:9; 10:21; 11:11, 16; Ezekiel 9:4-6; 14:22; Joel 2:32; Micah 2:12; Romans 9:27; 11:5). Also, the overcomers of the apocalypse, the 144,000 sealed of the tribes of Israel, the various companies mentioned in Revelation (12:17; 14:1-5; 15:1-3; 20:4), all seem to be part of this great company denominated by our Lord.

The relationship of our Lord Jesus to Israel is the “Bridegroom, Lamb and Lambkin.” The relationship of Christ Jesus to the church today, is the “Head.”

Israel is referred to as “she,” “her,” “bride” and “wife.” Israel was once the wife of Jehovah, but was attracted to other lovers and called a harlot; so the Lord divorced her because of adultery. Yet the Lord says that she will not have another man because she is for Him. Below are passages to aid our understanding.

*Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her* (Isaiah 66:10, RSV).

*What then? What Israel is seeking for, this she did not encounter, yet the chosen encountered it. Now the rest were calloused* (Romans 11:7).

*I was their husband* (Jeremiah 31:32, RSV).

*You have played the harlot with many lovers* (Jeremiah 3:1, RSV).

*By the waysides you have sat awaiting lovers* (Jeremiah 3:2, RSV).

*for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce* (Jeremiah 3:8, RSV).

*You shall not have a husband, moreover I also am for you* (Hosea 3:3).

Even Jesus called them an adulterous generation (Matthew 12:39); but God keeps His promises, and one day there will be a wedding under the new covenant. This time Israel will not be the wife of Jehovah, but the bride of the Lambkin. Sheep, Lamb or Lambkin are familiar expressions of Jesus the Messiah. The lamb was used most often for sacrifices and offerings, thus it characterizes the sacrificial work of Jesus. John introduces Jesus as the Lamb of God. The coming of the bride is a future event found in Revelation. Though it has heavenly qualities, it will be an earthly jubilation. The millennium takes place on earth. The same is true for the coming of the bride, New Jerusalem. She descends out of heaven to the new earth (Revelation 21:1-2). This pertains to the bride, because the nations are outside (Revelation 21:24). Notice the words “Lamb,” “Lambkin,” “Bride,” “Bridegroom” and “Wedding” in the Scriptures below. They are not found anywhere in Paul’s epistles for the church today.

*On the morrow he is observing Jesus coming toward him, and is saying, "Lo! the Lamb of God Which is taking away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).*

*And, looking at Jesus walking, he is saying, "Lo! the Lamb of God!" (John 1:36).*

*You yourselves are testifying to me that I said, "Not I am the Christ," but that "Dispatched am I in front of Him." He Who has the bride is the Bridegroom. Yet the friend of the Bridegroom, who stands and is hearing Him, is rejoicing with joy because of the Bridegroom's voice. This, my joy, then, has been fulfilled. He must be growing, yet mine it is to be inferior (John 3:28-30).*

*We may be rejoicing and exulting and will be giving glory to Him, for the wedding of the Lambkin came, and Its bride makes herself ready. And to her it was granted that she may be clothed in clean, resplendent cambric, for the cambric is the just awards of the saints. And he is saying to me, "Write: 'Happy are those invited to the wedding dinner of the Lambkin.'" And he is saying to me, "These are the true sayings of God" (Revelation 19:7-9).*

*And one of the seven messengers who have the seven bowls brimming with the last seven calamities came, and he speaks with me, saying, "Hither! I shall be showing you the bride, the wife of the Lambkin" (Revelation 21:9).*

In the epistles of Paul, the word "body" is used in relationship to the "church" (*ecclesia*), of which Christ is the Head. By the way, when making reference to Christ as the Head, this denotes His headship, not His membership. Christ is not a member of the body, but Head over the church. The reference Scriptures below are found in Paul's epistles for the church today. These writings are for the current secret administration in which we are now living. They tell of our present spiritual blessings and our future destiny and mission.

*and subjects all under His feet, and gives Him, as Head over all, to the ecclesia which is His body, the complement of the One completing the all in all (Ephesians 1:22, 23)*

*that now may be made known to the sovereignties and the authorities among the celestials, through the ecclesia, the multifarious wisdom of God (Ephesians 3:10).*

*Now to Him Who is able to do super-excessively above all that we are requesting or apprehending, according to the power that is operating in us, to Him be the glory in the ecclesia and in Christ Jesus for all the generations of the eon of the eons! Amen! (Ephesians 3:20-21).*

*for the husband is head of the wife even as Christ is Head of the ecclesia, and He is the Savior of the body (Ephesians 5:23).*

*This secret is great: yet I am saying this as to Christ and as to the ecclesia (Ephesians 5:32).*

*And He is the Head of the body, the ecclesia, Who is Sovereign, Firstborn from among the dead, that in all He may be becoming first (Colossians 1:18).*

*I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for you, and am filling up in my flesh, in His stead, the de-*



*iciencies of the afflictions of Christ, for His body, which is the ecclesia of which I became a dispenser, in accord with the administration of God, which is granted to me for you, to complete the word of God (Colossians 1:24-25).*

*and should be reconciling both in one body to God through the cross, killing the enmity in it (Ephesians 2:16).*

*the nations are to be joint enjoyers of an allotment, and a joint body, and joint partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus, through the evangel (Ephesians 3:6).*

*one body and one spirit, according as you were called also with one expectation of your calling (Ephesians 4:4).*

*for we are members of His body (Ephesians 5:30).*

*And let the peace of Christ be arbitrating in your hearts, for which you were called also in one body; and become thankful (Colossians 3:15).*

### **Bride of Christ**

Nowhere in the Scriptures can the phrase “bride of Christ” be found. It is merely a fabrication of man. False statements will occur when we fail to rightly divide the Word of Truth. Some may ask, “What about Ephesians 5:22-33? Doesn’t this refer to marriage?” Yes, it does; but only to the behavior of husbands and wives.

*Let the wives be subject to their own husbands, as to the Lord, for the husband is head of the wife even as Christ is Head of the ecclesia, and He is the Savior of the body. Nevertheless, as the ecclesia is subject to Christ, thus are the wives also to their husbands in everything. Husbands, be loving your wives according as Christ also loves the ecclesia, and gives Himself up for its sake, that He should be hallowing it, cleansing it in the bath of the water (with His declaration), that He should be presenting to Himself a glorious ecclesia, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that it may be holy and flawless. Thus, the husbands also ought to be loving their own wives as their own bodies. He who is loving his own wife is loving himself. For no one at any time hates his own flesh, but is nurturing and cherishing it, according as Christ also the ecclesia, for we are members of His body. For this “a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh.” This secret is great: yet I am saying this as to Christ and as to the ecclesia. Moreover, you also individually, each be loving his own wife thus, as himself, yet that the wife may be fearing the husband (Ephesians 5:22-33).*

The above Scripture teaches us about love, oneness, headship and subjection in marriage. There is no mention of a bride or bridegroom. Husbands and wives are told to have the same kind of relationship as Christ has with His church. Man is head of the wife as Christ is Head of the church. Husbands should love their wives, as Christ loves the church.

In :31 Paul quotes the definition of marriage from Genesis 2:24. He does this to show the analogy of “husband and wife” to “Christ and the church.” Just as “Adam and Eve” were one flesh, “Christ and

the church” are one body. Adam never had a bride. Eve came from within Adam and the two became one flesh. We were chosen in Christ (Ephesians 1:4) and called in one body (Colossians 3:15).

In closing, may we keep the phrase “Bride of the Lambkin” for the remnant to enjoy in New Jerusalem. Christ will come again in power and glory to this earth. His feet will touch the Mount of Olivet in Israel, not Mount Rushmore in the United States. There will be a future marriage of the “Bridegroom” and the “bride of the Lambkin.” The bride is looking for the holy city, New Jerusalem, to descend out of heaven to the earth.

Our citizenship is in the heavens where we are eagerly awaiting for our Savior. We are to be seeking that which is above, where Christ is sitting, at the right hand of God. We are to be mindful to that which is above and not the things on earth. Whenever Christ is manifested, we will be manifested with Him.

*For our realm is inherent in the heavens, out of which we are awaiting a Savior also, the Lord, Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:20).*

*If, then, you were roused together with Christ, be seeking that which is above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Be disposed to that which is above, not to that on the earth, for you died, and your life is hid together with Christ in God. Whenever Christ, our Life, should be manifested, then you also shall be manifested together with Him in glory (Colossians 3:1-4).*

## **Saint**

Being raised in a denomination in which many statues were displayed and whose members prayed to particular “saints,” a question came into mind. How does one become a “saint”? Also, during conversations one would say that he or she is always doing good and will one day become a “saint.” However, this contradicts the true meaning of the word. *Hagios* is the Greek word for “saint.” It means “that which is set apart,” “holy ones.” By God’s grace and calling, we are separated from sin and separated to the Lord. God picked us up and made us members of His family. Believers are saints by position not by personal merit. We are not made holy because of what we have accomplished but by what God has accomplished. It is nothing we do to separate ourselves to God, but what the Father does.

*Now may the God of peace Himself be hallowing [sanctifying] you wholly; and may your unimpaired spirit and soul and body be kept blameless in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ! (1Thesolonians 5:23).*

A good example of what demonstrates this principle is the following verse:

*To the ecclesia of God which is in Corinth, hallowed in Christ Jesus, (called saints), together with all in every place who are invoking the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours (1 Corinthians 1:2).*

The church of Corinth was not known as a moral church. They were permissive in their moral conduct, and characterized as shallow with many divisions and contentions. Even with all of these shortcomings, Paul still called these believers “*saints*.”

*Question:* How could these poor examples of believers be considered saints when they were living such amoral lives?

*Answer:* They were sanctified in Christ Jesus. Therefore, these Corinthians were saints because they were in Christ. They had been “*accepted in the beloved.*” It is a term that designates ownership. As believers, they belong to God. They are called saints because they belong to God, not because of their actions. Many words lose their power or true meaning because we use them differently in the present than the way the word was originally used. Going back to the Greek root word can help us better understand the true meaning. The word “*saint*” is a good example of this, because in modern day terms we think of a saint as a person characterized by good and moral deeds, such as Mother Teresa or someone who has done a deed worth remembering and therefore classified a “*saint*” by a church.

If you make a study of the Pauline epistles, you will see that he refers to the saints almost everywhere he goes. It becomes quite clear: this is not a small group of elite believers, but *ALL* believers.

*To all who are in Rome, beloved by God, called saints: Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 1:7).*

*Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, together with the supervisors and servants (Philippians 1:1).*

*For God is not for turbulence, but peace, as in all the churches of the saints (1Corinthians 14:33).*

Good works will be rewarded to us one day. Even the apostle Paul was pursuing for the prize.

*Toward the goal am I pursuing for the prize of God’s calling above in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:14).*

*The just judgment of God, Who will be paying each one in accord with his acts (Romans 2:6).*

*For God’s fellow workers are we. God’s farm, God’s building, are you. According to the grace of God which is being granted to me, as a wise foreman I lay a foundation, yet another is building on it. Yet let each one beware how he is building on it. For other foundation can no one lay beside that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone is building on this foundation gold and silver, precious stones, wood, grass, straw, each one’s work will become apparent, for the day will make it evident, for it is being revealed by fire. And the fire, it will be testing each one’s work -- what kind it is. If anyone’s work will be remaining which he builds on it, he will get wages. If anyone’s work shall be burned up, he will forfeit it, yet he shall be saved, yet thus, as through fire (1 Corinthians 3:9-15).*

## Hallelujah

Hallelujah, the transliteration of the Greek *allēlouia*, is translated from the Hebrew word *allēlou ia*, meaning “praise-ye-Jah.” The current popular phrase is “Praise the Lord.” However, not once is it found in Paul’s epistles. It occurs in the Hallelujah Psalms as praise for the rendering of divine judgments. It is also used in Revelation 19 for the rejoicing of destroyed Babylon. May we refrain from such praise for judgments in this secret administration (Ephesians 3:9). God is currently a happy God (1 Timothy 1:11).

## Christian

The name “Christian” is Latin in its derivation. It was first used in Antioch. As the people of Antioch were constantly hearing the name *Christos* on the lips of those who followed Christ, they decided that a suitable name for them was Christian. The name probably arose from the fact that gentiles, Romans, left the worship of the synagogues for the faith of Christ, and so they were dubbed Christians, in a derogatory way. It is mentioned only three times in the Bible (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16). It was a term of contempt. It is never used by the saints of themselves, though there are hundreds of passages where we would use the term today. Paul never uses this term. Unfortunately, we are universally wrong pronouncing the name with a short “i” and as a result the word is used thousands of times without the user realizing that *Christ* is in this name, and without Him the origin and meaning of the Name is completely lost. So, for those who are in Christ and refer to themselves as **CHRIST**-ians, it is absolutely vital to recognize the correct pronunciation. The same is true for the word **CHRISTMAS**. It gets tossed around with the true meaning being lost.

## The Cross

(This article was taken from the Bible Student Notebook, Volume 12, #280.  
www.Biblestudentsnotebook.com)

The “Christian Cross” is the preeminent symbol of Christendom. However, most are unaware that the Greek word *stauros*, traditionally translated “cross,” actually indicates a simple upright pole or stake. Here are definitions for the Greek word *stauros*:

A stake or post. — James A. Strong, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, #4716

An upright pale or stake. — E.W. Bullinger, *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament*

An upright stake or pale, without any crosspiece. — A.E. Knoch, *Concordant Keyword Concordance*, page 63

An upright stake. — Joseph Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*

A mere stake of one single piece without transom [crossbar]. — *The Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*

Staurós, designated a pointed, vertical wooden stake firmly fixed in the ground. They were set up as instruments of torture on which serious offenders of the law were publicly suspended to die. — *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, p. 825

There is nothing in the Greek New Testament to imply two pieces of timber. — E.W. Bullinger, *The Companion Bible*, Appendix 162: The Cross and the Crucifixion

Stauros denotes, primarily, an upright pale or stake. On such, malefactors were nailed for execution. Both the noun and the verb *stauroo*, to fasten to a stake or pale, are originally to be distinguished from the ecclesiastical form of the two-beamed cross. The shape of the latter had its

origin in ancient Chaldea, and was used as a symbol of the god Tammuz (being in the shape of the mystic Tau, the initial of his name) in that country and in adjacent lands, including Egypt. By the middle of the third century A.D. the churches had either departed from, or had travestied, certain doctrines of the Christian faith. In order to increase the prestige of the apostate ecclesiastical system, pagans were received into the churches apart from regeneration by faith, and were permitted largely to retain their pagan signs and symbols. Hence the Tau or T, in its most frequent form, with the cross-piece lowered [t], was adopted to stand for the cross of Christ. — W.E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, Vol. 1, p. 256

We can see from these Greek language sources that the word “cross” is just another place where religion has “changed the truth of God into a lie.” Our Lord Jesus Christ did not give His life for us on a fabricated pagan symbol (t cross).

He died on “a stake or post,” or what is elsewhere referred to in the Scriptures as a “tree.”

*Who Himself carries up our sins in His body on to the pole [tree], that, coming away from sins, we should be living for righteousness; by Whose welt you were healed (1 Peter 2:24).*

*Christ reclaims us from the curse of the law, becoming a curse for our sakes, for it is written, accursed is everyone hanging on a pole [tree] (Galatians 3:13).*

The “cross” is not just something that religion has corrupted for its own purposes, but it is something it injected as a replacement for our Savior’s “tree.” There is NOTHING Christian about the pagan “cross.”

The garden in Genesis starts with a “Tree” of Life. Revelation ends with a “Tree” of Life. In between our Savior provided Life for us on a “tree.”

### References:

In the Egyptian churches, the cross was a pagan symbol of life borrowed by the Christians and interpreted in the pagan manner. — *Encyclopaedia Britannica 11th edition*, Vol. 14, page 273

It never means two pieces of timber placed across one another at any angle, but always of one piece alone. Crosses were used as symbols of the Babylonian sun-god. It should be stated that Constantine was a sun-god worshipper. The evidence is thus complete, that the Lord was put to death upon an upright stake, and not on two pieces of timber placed at any angle. — E.W. Bullinger, *The Companion Bible*, Appendix 162

This Pagan symbol, the Tau, the sign of the cross, the indisputable sign of Tammuz, the false Messiah, the mystic Tau of the Chaldeans (Babylonians) and Egyptians – the true original form of the letter T, the initial of the name of Tammuz, the Babylonian cross was the recognized emblem of Tammuz. — Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, pages 197-205

The coins of Constantine show an even-armed cross symbol for the sun-god. — Johannes Gefcken, *The Last Days of Greco-Roman Paganism*, page 319

It was not until Christianity began to be paganized that the cross came to be thought of as a Christian symbol. It was in 431 A.D. that crosses in churches and chambers were introduced, while the use of crosses on steeples did not come until about 586 A.D. In the 6th Century, the crucifix image was introduced and its worship sanctioned by the church of Rome. — Ralph Woodrow, *Babylon Mystery Religion*, page 50

A tradition of the church which our fathers have inherited, was the adoption of the words “cross” and “crucify.” The pagan meaning of the word “cross” is nowhere to be found in the Greek of the New Testament. Why then was the “cross” brought into the faith? Again, historical evidence points to Constantine as the one who had the major share in uniting sun-worship and the Messianic faith. Constantine’s famous vision of “the cross superimposed on the sun,” in the year 312, is usually cited. Writers, ignorant of the fact that the cross was not to be found in the new testament Scriptures, put much emphasis on this vision as the onset of the so-called “conversion” of Constantine.

But, unless Constantine had been misguided by the Gnostic Manichean half-christians, who indeed used the cross in their hybrid religion, this vision of the cross superimposed on the sun could only be the same old cosmic religion, the astrological religion of Babylon. The fact remains; that which Constantine saw, is nowhere to be found in Scripture. As stated above, the indisputable sign of Tammuz, the mystic Tau of the Babylonians and Egyptians, was brought into the church chiefly because of Constantine, and has since been adored with all the homage due only to the Most High. The Protestants have for many years refrained from undue adoration of, or homage to the cross, especially in England at the time of the Puritans in the 16th-17th centuries. But lately this unscriptural symbol has been increasingly accepted in Protestantism.

The evidence for its pagan origin is so convincing that the catholic encyclopedia admits that “the sign of the cross, represented in its simplest form by a crossing of two lines at right angles, greatly antedates, in both east and the west, the introduction of christianity. It goes back to a very remote period of human civilization.” It then continues and refers to the Tau cross of the pagan Egyptians. “In later times the Egyptian christians (Copts), attracted by its form, and perhaps by its symbolism, adopted it as the emblem of the cross.” Further proof of its pagan origin is the recorded evidence of the Vestal Virgins of pagan

Rome having the cross hanging on a necklace, and the Egyptians doing it too, as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. The Buddhists, and numerous other sects of India, also used the sign of the cross as a mark on their followers’ heads. — *The Final Reformation*, Institute for Scripture Research

The “Cross” itself, long revered as the symbol of Christ’s crucifixion, actually originated in the pagan cultures. The Aztecs who had never heard of Christ, had used the symbol of the cross centuries earlier. The translators of the new testament mistranslated the Greek term which meant “stake” into the word “cross.” It would be more correct to say that Jesus was crucified on a big tree-like stake. It is reported, scholars and the Anglican clergy were aware of this in the eighteenth century. The cross was not adopted until about three hundred years after the crucifixion, and it wasn’t portrayed in christian art until the middle of the fifth century. The cross was another pagan symbol adopted and claimed by the church. — Robert W. Stace, *Why Weren’t We Told?* (2001), page 83

---

**Trinity**

To our senses, Christ is God, but only in a relative sense. The trinity makes it absolute. In the dictionary, the word “trinity” means the union of three divine figures, the Father, Son and holy ghost, in one Godhead. This meaning is not supported by Scripture. Through theology and creeds, man fabricated the doctrine of Trinitarianism. Faulty translations also support man’s creeds. Look at John 1:1.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (Revised Standard Version).*

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was toward God, and God was the Word (Concordant Version).*

It is difficult to understand how the Word can be “with” God and also be God. The correct rendering is “toward.” Also, the phrase “God was the Word,” was changed to “the Word was God,” so man could make this verse literal. However in Greek, “was” and “is” are generally omitted unless they are used in a figurative sense. Take for example the words, “This is my body.” For those who practice communion in memory of Christ’s body, the bread is not His real body, but a representation. Thus in John 1:1, the Word took the place of God.

Those who believe in Trinitarianism say that three persons are co-equal. First of all, God and Christ are not two persons. In John 17:22, Jesus says; “We are One.” This of course refers to their unity and relationship. Secondly, they are not co-equal. In real life, no son is equal to his father. Today Christ Jesus is thought of in two extremes. Trinitarianism makes Him equal to God, and Unitarianism has Him as just a man. Both are a sad misconception. The purpose of Christ is to reveal God during these eons. God’s love was truly revealed when His Son died for all. Christ is neither equal to God, nor a plain man, but is the bridge between them – our Mediator. Scripture does not teach an equality between God and Christ, but a relationship between God and His Christ and between God and man through Christ. There is only one God, and one Mediator, a Man, Christ Jesus.

*For there is one God, and one Mediator of God and mankind, a Man, Christ Jesus, Who is giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for all [the testimony in its own eras] (1 Timothy 2:5-6).*

*Hear, O Israel; The Name, our God is one Name and you love the Name, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your vehemence (Deuteronomy 6:4-5).*

*Yet God is One (Galatians 3:20).*

*And there is no other God except One (I Corinthians 8:6).*

*One God and Father of all, Who is over all and through all and in all (Ephesians 4:6).*

*Yet now He has happened upon a more excellent ministry, in as much as He is the Mediator, also, of a better covenant, which has been instituted on better promises (Hebrews 8:6).*

*... and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the just perfected, and to Jesus, the Mediator of a fresh covenant (Hebrews 12:23-24).*

If there is belief in the trinity, then Christ would have to be absolute Deity, which would make Him the Supreme God. If He is identical to God, then why do we need Christ? Deity comes from the Greek word *theotês*, meaning “that which pertains to God.” In the original Scriptures the word “Deity” appears once. God put it there to make clear that He alone is the Deity. The complement or fullness of the Deity, dwells bodily in Christ (Colossians 2:9). It would be absurd to say that the Deity dwells within the Deity. Deity is not subject to anyone; but it is written that Christ is subject to the Father. Christ never did His Own will, but the will of His Father. Let us look at some supporting passages which show that Christ is not the absolute Deity, because the Deity dwells in Him and also because of His subjection and obedience to His Father’s will.

*Beware that no one shall be despoiling you through philosophy and empty seduction, in accord with human tradition, in accord with the elements of the world, and not in accord with **Christ, for in Him the entire complement of the Deity is dwelling** bodily (Colossians 2:8-9).*

*Now, whenever all may be subjected to Him, then **the Son Himself also shall be subjected to Him** Who subjects all to Him, that God may be All in all (1 Corinthians 15:28).*

*Father, if it is Thy intention, carry aside this cup from Me. However, **not My will, but Thine, be done!** (Luke 22:42).*

God is spirit. Not a spirit, but spirit. There is no way we can hear or see Him! Thus, there is the necessity for Christ, the only-begotten from the Father. Through Christ, the Word became flesh and we “hear” God. Through Christ, the visible Image, we “see” the invisible God. Christ is the Effulgence of God, which is His resplendent radiance. He is also the Emblem of God, which is a representation. The more we get to know Christ, the better we will know God.

*God is spirit (John 4:24).*

*He who has seen Me has seen the Father (John 14:9).*

*God no one has ever seen. The only-begotten God, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He unfolds Him (John 1:18).*

*Who [Christ], being the **Effulgence** of His glory and **Emblem** of His assumption (Hebrews 1:3).*

*in whom the god of this eon blinds the apprehensions of the unbelieving so that the illumination of the evangel of the glory of **Christ, Who is the Image of the Invisible God**, does not irradiate them (2 Corinthians 4:4).*

*And putting on the young, which is being renewed into recognition, to accord with the **Image** of the One Who creates it, wherein there is no Greek and Jew, Circumcision and Un-circumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, freeman, but all and in all is Christ (Colossians 3:10-11).*

*Christ Jesus also, Who, being inherently **in the form of God** (Philippians 2:6).*

*The Son of His love ... Who is the **Image** of the invisible God (Colossians 1:13-15).*



---

*Now to the King of the eons, the incorruptible, **invisible**, only, and wise God, be honor and glory for the eons of the eons! Amen (1 Timothy 1:17)*

There is one God Who is the Source of all, “out of Whom” are all things. Christ Jesus is God’s creative Original “through Whom” are all things. He is the Alpha, the beginning. All things (the universe) were created through Him and for Him. Nothing would exist without Him. Paul writes in I Corinthians 8:6-7 that not everyone knows this.

*nevertheless for us there is one God, the Father, out of Whom all is, and we for Him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom all is, and we through Him. But not in all is there this knowledge (1 Corinthians 8:6-7).*

*seeing that out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen (Romans 11:36).*

*Jesus then said ... “For out of God I came forth” (John 8:42).*

*I am the Alpha and the Omega (Revelation 1:8).*

*Now this is saying the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, and God’s **Creative Original** (Revelation 3:14).*

*the Son of His love ... Who is the Image of the invisible God, **Firstborn** of every creature, for in Him is all created, that in the heavens and that on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or sovereignties, or authorities, all is created through Him and for Him, and He is before all, and all has its cohesion in Him (Colossians 1:13-17).*

Though Jesus was the visible Image of the invisible God while He walked this earth, He never claimed equality. However, Jesus is entitled to all of the honor due to the Father, for this was the only way the Father could receive praise from His creation. Even after His resurrection and ascension, in which the writings of Paul are based, Christ made known that He emptied Himself to take on a human form and was obedient to death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:8). He never gave God a hard time, so to speak. Today, believers are making Christ the Deity because of knowing Him only as Lord and Savior. Once the eyes of our hearts are opened, we will see the relationship between Him and His God and Father. Then we won’t be robbing God our Father of His Deity.

When I picture the visible Image of God nailed to the pole it brings tears of sadness, but those tears turn to joy when I realize how big a heart of love that God has. He never could have shown this love by remaining invisible. Paul knew the relationship between God and Christ. God is the Deity, and Christ will be subjected at the end of the eons. If you read the opening verses in every letter that Paul wrote (Romans through Philemon), the proper order of recognition is made known. It is God first and then the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul says, “*Grace and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*” The following passages show that Jesus never professed equality, and when He could have, He humbled Himself and became obedient, even to death.

*Now I want you to be aware that the Head of every man is Christ, yet the head of the woman is*

*the man, yet the Head of Christ is God (I Corinthians 11:3).*

*You hear that I said to you, "I am going, and I am coming to you." If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I (John 14:28).*

*My Father, Who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to be snatching them out of My Father's hand (John 10:29).*

*Now, concerning that day and hour no one is aware, neither the messengers of the heavens, nor the Son; except the Father only (Matthew 24:36).*

*And lo! you shall be conceiving and be pregnant and be bringing forth a Son, and you shall be calling His name Jesus. He shall be great, and Son of the Most High shall He be called (Luke 1:31-32).*

*Jesus, then, answers and said to them, "Verily, verily, I am saying to you, The Son can not be doing anything of Himself if it is not what He should be observing the Father doing, for whatever He may be doing, this the Son also is doing likewise. For the Father is fond of the Son and is showing Him all that He is doing. And greater works than these shall He be showing Him, that you may be marveling" (John 5:19-20).*

*For even as the Father has life in Himself, thus to the Son also He gives to have life in Himself. And He gives Him authority to do judging, seeing that He is a son of mankind (John 5:26-27).*

*For let this disposition be in you, which is in Christ Jesus also, Who, being inherently in the form of God, deems it not pillaging to be equal with God, nevertheless empties Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming to be in the likeness of humanity, and, being found in fashion as a human, He humbles Himself becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:5-8).*

The so-called third person of the so-called trinity is the holy spirit. God and the holy spirit are not two distinct persons or spirits. As just mentioned, Scriptures do not teach a dual Deity between God and His Son. The same holds true between God and His spirit. To prove this let us look at when our Lord Jesus Christ was conceived. All believers know that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God. He is the Only Begotten Son of the Father. God is His Father (John 5:18). When Jesus was conceived, this was done by the holy spirit (Matthew 1:18-20).

Also in (Luke 1:35) it says the holy spirit will be coming on Mary and the power of the Most High will overshadow her, wherefore the Holy One, Who is being generated shall be called the Son of God. Is it not clear in this verse that God is the Most High, and the holy spirit is the power of the Most High? The holy spirit is the Most High. Is it not clear that if being conceived by the holy spirit made Him the Son of God, then God and this holy spirit must be One, not two? When we apply the doctrine of the trinity to the above verses, then Jesus has two Fathers! Yet the divine deduction is different. Jesus is called the Son of God, not the Son of Gods. The relation between God and His spirit is not that of two distinct personalities, but that of power to the one whose it is. Christ was begotten by power. That power was the Holy Spirit of the Most High.

## *Paul's Epistles*

**B**efore discussing Paul's letters, let us remember why Christ came to this earth. He came to save the world (refer to Figure 3). You will find that the gospel of John is placed within the parenthetical interval. The popular verse (John 3:16) is that God so loves the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him, shall not perish (for the eon) but have eonian life. John's gospel was not about repentance. He gives only a historical account of water baptism. It was not about the kingdom on earth (millennium). He proclaims God's Son as the Savior of the world. Many who receive the Lord do not become children of the kingdom (like in Mathew, Mark and Luke), but they become children of God who receive eonian life. Since John's name is to be written in the foundation of new Jerusalem, he cannot proclaim the gospel of the secret dispensation. John's gospel was for eonian life. On the foundation of the gospel of eonian life was built Paul's letters of a higher calling for the church which is His body, found in Ephesians. Only a few ever know and receive this message of the secret dispensation which was hidden from the eons (ages) in God. (Ephesians 3:8-10).

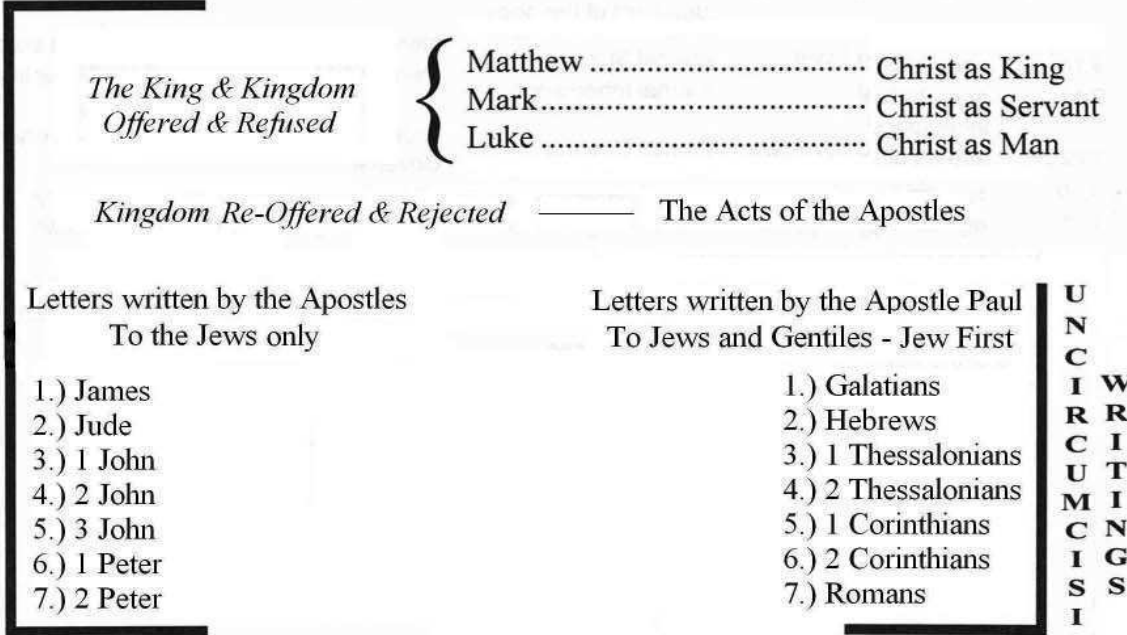
Those who believe in John 3:16 and don't have faith in Paul's message, will have neither eonian life in the millennial kingdom nor a heavenly destiny according to Paul's letter to the Ephesians. However, they will have an earthly destiny on the new earth (Paradise), whose resurrection will be at the great white throne. This is the same destiny of Job and the criminal hanging next to our Lord on the tree. In other words, you can love and believe in the Lord yet not be a member of the church which is His body. That is why the gospel of John is placed in the parenthetical interval. You will see John 3:16 more publicly than any other verse in the Bible, especially from Paul's epistles. Thus is the reason for putting John's gospel in the parenthetical interval, along with Paul's epistles for today.

Back in Paul's day, when he was near the end of his life, he wrote to Timothy saying that those in Asia except a few had turned away from him (2 Timothy 1:15). They were turning away from truth taught by him throughout all of his letters. He mentions this in 2 Timothy 2:18; 3:8; 4:4.

They turned from the teaching of the one body in Ephesians and ended up with divisions and schisms. They lost their hope in the resurrection, and the realization of being justified gratuitously in His grace through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus. Then, throughout history, truth was gradually recovered, such as justification by faith and the return of our Lord out of heaven. There has been a slight recovery of the secret dispensation hidden from the ages in God. It was the first to go and the last to be recovered. Hopefully and prayerfully, "God's Truths Recovered" can help believers today to perceive what is the expectation of His calling for us. There is a long road ahead, because the mes-

**THE GREEK SCRIPTURES**  
 "Correctly Cut"

C  
I  
R  
C  
U  
M  
C  
I  
S  
I  
O  
N  
  
W  
R  
I  
T  
I  
N  
G  
S



U  
N  
C  
I  
R  
C  
U  
M  
C  
I  
S  
I  
O  
N

***The Present Parenthetic Interval***

The Present Dispensation - Kingdom Postponed

*The Gospel of Eonian Life to the World* - John 3:16  
 Christ as the Son of God

*The Gospel of the Dispensation of the Secret* - Ephesians 3:9  
 Paul's Letters for the Church Today - Which is His Body

- 1.) Ephesians
- 2.) Philippians
- 3.) Philemon
- 4.) Colossians
- 5.) 1 Timothy
- 6.) Titus
- 7.) 2 Timothy

C  
I  
R  
C  
U  
M  
C  
I  
S  
I  
O  
N

The Day of the Lord - The Kingdom Set Up - New Covenant Fulfilled  
*Christ is King of kings and Lord of Lords* - Revelation 19:16

*Realized*

Figure 3

sages you hear today from the pulpits, televisions, radios and internet are based mainly on the Old Testament, the gospels and the book of Acts. You'll hear about the ten commandments, repentance and water baptism, the Lord's prayer, the Sermon on the Mount, claimings of healings; speaking in tongues, the millennial kingdom, the pearl gates, and so forth.

In the Bible, Paul's church epistles are not placed in chronological order. Below is a comparison.

<u>Chronological Order</u>	<u>Canonical Order</u>
1 Thessalonians	Romans
2 Thessalonians	1 Corinthians
1 Corinthians	2 Corinthians
2 Corinthians	Galatians
Galatians	Ephesians
Romans	Philippians
Philippians	Colossians
Ephesians	1 Thessalonians
Colossians	2 Thessalonians

God placed the epistles in that order for a reason. He wanted to make sure that we first understood who we are in Christ. He wanted us to know about being justified freely. We need to know how to walk worthily of our calling and what the expectation of our calling is. All these things are important before learning about His return from heaven. Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians were all written during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome around A.D.63, so I am not sure about the chronological order of those three. Let us now look at the book of Romans, the ABC's of the believers' education.

### ROMANS OUTLINES

Chapter 1-4	Justification
Chapter 5-8	Sanctification (Holiness)
Chapter 9-11	Dispensation
Chapter 12-16	Vocation
Chapter 1:1-6	The gospel (revealed before, never hushed)
Chapter 1:7-15	Salutation
Chapter 1:16-8:39	Doctrinal
Chapter 9-11	Dispensational
Chapter 12:1-15:7	Practical
Chapter 15:8-13	Dispensational
Chapter 15:14-16:24	Salutations
Chapter 16:25-27	The secret (hushed before, now revealed)

### Chapter 1

Paul was separated to the evangel (gospel) of God, which He promised before through His prophets in the holy Scriptures (death, burial and resurrection). The gospel is God's power for salvation, for in it God's righteousness is being revealed, out of faith for faith, according as it is written, "Now the just

*one by faith shall be living*” (Habakkuk 2:4). Here we have the bases for justification. Paul, in quoting this verse, confirms his teaching, “*as it is written.*”

God gives up the gentile nations. This goes back to Genesis 10 and 11. They knew the truth, but were ignorant of it. God’s creation showed His attributes and Himself. They had the knowledge of the true and living God, yet rejected it. They neither glorified nor thanked Him. God can restrain any sin (Genesis 20:6). When man turns from God, He stops restraining them. He gives them over to dishonorable and unnatural passions. This is all part of God’s purpose to show sinfulness, so that He can show grace. He shows the depravity of mankind so that He can magnify His grace.

## Chapter 2

Paul is referring to the Jews. When they judged another, they were condemning themselves, for they committed the same things that the gentiles committed (Romans 1:19, 32). Before the ten commandments they worshipped the calf (Psalm 106:13-29). Being a Jew does not exempt them from God’s indignation (wrath). Paul shows that God will be repaying each man in accord with his acts. There is no condemnation for believers. We will be rewarded for our works. Jews are judged by their works because they were under the law. Gentile judgment is not based on the law, but they had a conscience, excusing or accusing themselves. The Jews were angry at the gentiles, but were the ones doing wrong. They heralded not to be stealing, but they were stealing. They said not to commit adultery, but they committed adultery. They were abominating idols and despoiling the sanctuary. Because of them, the name of God was being blasphemed among the nations. The Jews had the law, but it did no good unless they obeyed it. The Jew can’t boast in God and not keep the law. If a gentile would keep the law, he would be more Jewish than the Jew and he would judge the Jew. So chapter one (Gentiles) and chapter two (Jews), basically tell us that all who descended from Adam are under sin.

## Chapter 3

Jews asked Paul what the benefit of being a Jew was. They benefited by being entrusted with the oracles of God, but thought that they were better than the nations and that God’s wrath would not come down on them. The Jews and gentiles became useless. The nations in Genesis 10 and 11 were shown to be useless. The Jews from Genesis 12 to Acts 12 were shown to be useless. God gave Israel the law, but He knew they couldn’t keep it. He gave it to them to prove the recognition of sin. All sinned and are wanting of the glory of God. All goes back to Adam. Paul is showing that man is a sickly creature from head to toe. This is the background of those for whom Christ died. Romans 1:18 to 3:20 is the background of sin. Romans 3:21 is justification.

- Law means to aim;
- sin means to miss the mark or target;
- using the law means you will aim but miss the target.

God chose Israel as a test, but Israel failed; and so we *all* fail. Why? Because we were made useless by being descendants of Adam. Works will not justify you. Law makes you recognize sin. Law was given to show that you are descendants of Adam. In :21, the gospel of the grace of God is manifested. This righteousness of God is through Jesus Christ’s faith – not through faith *in* Jesus Christ, but through the faith **OF** Jesus Christ. We don’t deserve it, but we are justified freely. God is putting His righ-

---

teousness on display in this era. Our Lord Jesus was a perfect animal sacrifice. The law was broken and Jesus Christ is the Propitiatory shelter. God justifies both Jew and gentiles. Boasting is excluded because it is the faith of Jesus Christ.

#### Chapter 4

Abraham was a great example. He believed God and walked with Him. He was reckoned (imputed) righteous. David knew about grace, but not as much as it was proclaimed by Paul. We should be happier than David. He didn't know about the Messiah except for a few prophecies. Abraham was justified before he was circumcised. He was justified as a gentile to become the father of all who believe (Jews and gentiles). The promise to Abraham and his Seed is not based on the law, for the law leads to wrath; but the promise is based on God's righteousness. Transgression is different than sin. Transgression means stepping over boundaries.

Law sets up boundaries. Adam and Israel were examples of stepping over boundaries. From Adam to Moses people did not sin, because they did not have the law. From Adam to Israel sin was recognized because of the law. To introduce law to the promise is to nullify faith and the promise. Under law man cannot be justified, as God promised Abraham. Abraham could not perform sexually, and Sarah's womb was dead; but God said that he would be a father of many nations. Abraham looked forward to what God was going to do, and we look back to what God has done. Christ was delivered for our offenses, a crime He never committed. Sin is an offense against God.

#### Chapter 5

It has been determined that man is justified by faith. We don't make peace with God. Rather, God makes peace with us through Christ's blood. We should rejoice in our afflictions. They are not permanent. God is not angry, but is preparing us for the future. We are compared to a bad neighbor, yet Christ died for us. We will be saved from wrath through Him. We sin because we are mortal. Sin is the root, sins are the fruit. Babies never sinned. The venomous sting of death is sin. You can't stop sinning because of mortality. Adam's sin brought death. Death brings sin to us. We sin because we are subject to death. Adam sinned, Adam was a dying man. Since we are dying, we sin. (Sin - Death - Sinners).

- Adam's Act affects all (Condemnation);
- Christ's Act affects all (Justification).

Where sin increases, grace super-exceeds. You can't out-sin grace. Sin reigns in death. Grace reigns in righteousness. This reign of grace is for life eonian. It is for those believers under Paul's ministry. We will be shown the exceeding abundant riches of God's grace in the oncoming eons, because of what Christ accomplished.

#### Chapter 6

Should we purposely sin so that grace may be increasing? Paul answers, "*God forbid! May it not be coming to that!*" Grace does not give us the license to sin. We died to sin, so we cannot persist in it. God sees us in Christ. Our relation to sin is His relation to sin. We are dead to it, dead in our mem-

bers. Mortality produces sin. We are entombed (buried) with Christ. Believers walk around in newness of life even while they sin. A slave of sin is one who is occupied with it and does not realize that he is dead to sin. He is someone who is always trying to please God. We are justified from sin. Sin has no claim to us. Through divine baptism we are identified with Christ. Grace is king today. Persisting in sin does not mean to practice sin (steal, lie, cheat, etc.), but it is the condition. It is a condition of being a descendant of Adam.

Deaden, then, your members that are on the earth: prostitution, uncleanness, passion, evil desire and greed, which is idolatry (Colossians 3:5). Stop doing these. You can still practice them (mortal bodies), but you are dead to them. Mortality produces sin. Grace will subdue your heart. It will make you not want to sin. If you become weak, grace will super-exceed. We have a dry baptism with Christ. We are identified with Him on the stake. God does not improve the human body; He crucifies it, thus you are reckoned (counted as true) dead to sin and living to God in Christ Jesus.

We don't have to listen to sin any longer. Our members are implements of righteousness, not condemnation. Law gave life to sin. Mortality causes lust. Don't dwell on what not to do. At one time sin was dormant. When the law came, sin was revived and we died. Present yourselves as if alive from among the dead. Reckon yourselves dead, buried and resurrected with Christ. What do we do and how? These are listed in Romans 12:1-15:14, Ephesians 4-6. God, here I am – righteous. Sin shall not be lording it over you. We are not under law. Law will give sin a place in your life.

The commentary on the chapters 7 thru 16 was taken from the Berean Publishing Trust (Volumes 52 & 53), entitled "The Epistles to the Romans" (by Stuart Allen):

## Chapter 7

The apostle is concerned to show that legal obligation is discharged only by death. Paul asserts that death breaks man's relation to the law, and to illustrate this he brings forward an analogy from marriage. It is important to bear in mind that the Apostle in no way belittles the law. It was "holy, just and good," but as a means of acquiring merit before God, law-keeping was impossible and, therefore, completely deceptive. Death is the answer to the dominion of sin (chapter 6) and likewise it is the answer to the dominion of law (chapter 7). Applying the analogy to the believer, Paul reminds him again of his identification with Christ in His physical death, "*So, my brother, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to Another, to Him Who was roused from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.*" This "fruit" is the life that is dominated by the risen Christ and brings glory to Him. It is the "*fruit of the spirit,*" the new nature, described in Galatians 5:22-23.

Paul now asks the question, "*Is the law sin?*" If the believer has been delivered from the law as a task master, is there something wrong with it? The answer is, "certainly not." The wrong is in the sinner, not in the law of God. He declares that the law is "holy, righteous and good." Paul's real enemy was not the law, but SIN which forced him, against his better judgment, to do things the law had shown him to be wrong. Paul is now speaking of himself. He leaves the past tense and uses the present. There is no doubt that he is giving his own experience. One may ask, is it the experience of the believer? Is it the experience of the unsaved wrestling with their consciences? Is it limited to the Jew under the law of Moses? We do not hesitate to say it refers to the believer for 4 reasons:



- (1) The person here described “hates sin” (verse 15). This is not a characteristic of the unsaved.
- (2) He “delights” in the law of God (verse 22). This is a characteristic of the children of God as Psalm 1:2 clearly testifies.
- (3) He looks for deliverance to Christ alone through grace (verses 24 and 25).
- (4) There is a passage in Galatians that covers the experience of Romans 7 & 8, and the persons addressed are believers, not unbelievers:

*Now I am saying, Walk in spirit, and you should under no circumstances be consummating the lust of the flesh. For the flesh is lusting against the spirit, yet the spirit against the flesh. Now these are opposing one another, lest you should be doing whatever you may want (Galatians 5:16-17).*

The truth of the previous Scripture has been the experience of countless believers down through this eon. After salvation, the situation has completely altered. Why? Because God has introduced something that is entirely opposite to the human mind which has come under the influence of sin. Sin is personified as a mighty enemy that resides in human nature and controls the person. As long as Paul struggled against it in his own strength, he is constantly defeated. Who can rescue him from this terrible dilemma, he cries? But then he turns to the Lord Jesus Christ, realizing what He had done in becoming the Victor over the consequences of sin and death and in the glorious fact that he is now united to Him in death and resurrection.

## Chapter 8

When we come to chapter eight it is like coming out of a dark tunnel into the sunlight, for we pass from the slavery of sin into the glorious liberty of the children of God. We should remember that Romans 8:1 really follows the teaching of Romans 5:16-18 with its statement as to how condemnation came. Through the sin of one man, Adam, condemnation came on all men. However, *now* we have the great reversal through the redemptive work of Christ:

*Nothing, consequently, is now condemnation to those in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1).*

The glorious teaching of the previous chapters is that a person who is declared to be righteous or just by God is one who is innocent of wrongdoing. God’s verdict is “not guilty,” and as such he cannot come under condemnation. This has been made absolutely clear in chapter three, where it is asserted that God’s righteousness comes on all who are of the faith of Jesus Christ and not through any works of merit. Thus it is through abounding grace on God’s part. Grace and works never blend together, as Romans 11:6 testifies. It is only in this way that He can be just and at the same time be the Justifier of him who is of the faith of Jesus (Romans 3:26). He is then the God Who justifies the ungodly. The Lord in His earthly ministry dealt with the question of condemnation:

*He that believeth is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John 3:18).*

Of course there are those who say that this teaching is dangerous and will result in laxness of our walk. In fact, much of Paul’s teaching was considered dangerous in his day, and has been many times since. The all-wise God and Father knows how to deal with His children in discipline if they walk after the flesh, but He will never deny Himself or His truth in doing this. The glorious fact of “no con-

demnation” does not await the day of glory. It is true of the believer here and now. “*There is therefore now no condemnation*” are the words of Romans 8:1, from which follows the result of the work of the “*spirit of life*”:

*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made us free from the law of sin and death* (Romans 8:2).

In 2 Corinthians 3:17, we are reminded that “*the Lord is the spirit; yet where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.*” We were called for freedom (Galatians 5:13). This freedom is from the domination of “*the law of sin*” which is in our members (Romans 7:23). It is good to realize what we have *now* through the redemptive work of Christ.

*Yet now, apart from law, a righteousness of God is manifest* (Romans 3:21).

*Much rather, then, being now justified in His blood, we shall be saved from indignation, through Him* (Romans 5:9).

*Through our Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom we now obtained the conciliation* (Romans 5:11).

*Yet, now, being freed from Sin, yet enslaved to God, you have your fruit for holiness* (Romans 6:22).

These present assurances are for the believer to enjoy *now* through faith. We are acquitted *now*, we are free from condemnation *now*. Nothing we can do of ourselves can ever set us free from condemnation. It has all been done by our Savior and Lord, and because we are united with Him condemnation is gone. This does not mean that we are free to please ourselves, but rather we are free to please and serve Him faithfully. In other words, it leads to experimental sanctification; but let us not confuse sanctification and justification. It is our acquittal (justification) which ensures our freedom from condemnation, and Romans 8:3 goes on to teach us that this is wholly dependent on the work of Christ, not on the walk of the believer.

This epistle has made it abundantly clear that sinful man cannot rise to the standard of God’s law. Law was therefore powerless to produce a life of holiness. However, what the law could not do has been done by God in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who came in the “*likeness of sinful flesh,*” giving His life as a sin-offering on behalf of His people. The words are carefully chosen here. Christ did not come in sinful flesh, for had He done so He would have had the taint of sin, and so would have needed a Savior himself and never could have been the Savior of others. The apostle Paul and the New Testament absolutely insists on the sinlessness of Christ, “the One not knowing sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

“*No condemnation*” is true of believers, because “*condemnation*” was true of Him. The righteous sentence of the law has been fulfilled in the redeemed in the Person of their Savior. The sphere of emancipation is the “*spirit*” and unites us with Christ, risen and ascended. We can now “*walk in newness of life*” and serve the Lord in “*newness of spirit.*” “*The body is dead*” in the sense that it is subject to death resulting from sin. The believer now has the spirit of the risen Christ indwelling in him, and that is itself a foretaste of the sure and certain hope that will be realized when in actual resurrection he will have a body “*fashioned like the body of His glory*” (Philippians 3:20-21).

"Mortify" or "put to death" is the equivalent of Romans 6:11 where the believer is urged to reckon themselves as "dead," and as "alive to God." Colossians 3:5 is teaching the same thing. He is not asked to work his crucifixion out in his own strength, but to count on what God has already done to the old nature. When this is obeyed he can have the joy of divine leading in his daily life, because "those who are led by the spirit of God are sons of God."

*For you did not get slavery's spirit to fear again, but you got the spirit of sonship, in which we are crying, "Abba, Father!" (Romans 8:15).*

*God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind (2Timothy 1:7).*

Adoption (Greek, *huiiothesia*), means our placing as sons. We must not read our western ideas of adoption into the New Testament. Adoption was a legal term at that time, appointing the inheritance which could be to a person outside the family if the parent chose. It is essential to understand this, especially when dealing with Galatians 4:1-7. With our western ideas, an adopted child can never be in such a close relationship as a child by birth. Not so in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. We should therefore realize that believers are not outsiders who cannot have a claim on God as Father, but that they are really "sons of God" by redemption and as such have a glorious inheritance in view. The idea of the universal fatherhood of God is a popular misconception. God is not the Father of every human being but has a relationship as Creator. Only those who are in Christ are brought into God's family.

Some imagine foreknowledge to be equivalent to predestination, in which case Paul has written "Whom he did predestinate, he also did predestinate," which makes no sense. The Greek word *proorizō* literally means to mark off beforehand for some specific purpose. Surely, the Creator has a right to do this. If a man invents something, has he not the right to use this for the purpose he had in mind? What we have here in Romans is not a hard determinist philosophy, but the loving plan of One Who purposes to bless human beings beyond their dreams or comprehension. These foreknown ones are to be "conformed to the likeness of His Son" (Romans 8:29). He Himself is the image of God Who as spirit is invisible (Colossians 1:15), and these are conformed to that image, so in one sense they are replicas of God. Yet one very important fact is stressed here. The Lord Jesus is first among them all, for this is the meaning of the Greek word rendered "firstborn." It is fatal to base doctrine on the English word. Colossians 1:15-16 insists that Christ is the firstborn of all creation – not because He was the first creature born, but because "by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth" (Colossians 1:16). In other words, as Creator He is and must be first with the object stated in :18, "that in all things He might have the first place [pre-eminence]."

In the chain of God's purpose predestination is followed by "calling," and this calling leads to justification or acquittal, as Romans makes perfectly clear. Eonian life and future glory are impossible apart from the righteousness conferred by justification, for God plans a universe where sin and death and all of the consequences are entirely absent, and therefore no sinner as such can have a part in it. The final link in the chain of God's plan is glorification. "Those He justifies He also glorifies" (Romans 8:30), and this is the wonderful climax. The apostle then lists those who are our enemies and asks, "Can these separate us from Christ?" The answer again is, "Certainly not." The chapter starts with "no condemnation" and ends with "no separation." What a triumph for the believer!

**Chapters 9 -11**

The closing words of Romans 8 end the inner section of this epistle, which deals with man in general, whether Jew or gentile, in relation to Adam. Abraham and Israel as a nation were passed by; but that does not mean that the position of Israel with its close covenant relationship to God had ceased. This favored nation had been in the forefront of God's purposes for His kingdom on earth since the time of Abraham, and that relationship had not yet been altered. The apostle's answer to the question as to whether Israel had been cast off by God is perfectly clear: "*God does not thrust away His people whom He foreknew*" (Romans 11:2). Paul loved his brethren, and longed for their salvation.

Israel's attitude to the gospel, their place in God's scheme, God's elective purpose and the position of the believing remnant must be considered. The key thought of justification is not forgotten. One might think that, with the glorious conclusion to chapter eight, the theme of the epistle had been brought to an end; but this is not so. The problem of Israel's unbelief and their attitude to the gospel is now addressed. This new section of Romans is a divine commentary on what was happening in the period covered by the Acts of the apostles.

Romans 9 begins with sorrow, but the section ending with chapter eleven ends with song (11:33-36). The apostle was racked with pain as he considered Israel's unbelief and rejection of the gospel, and was willing to sacrifice himself for their good, as Moses of old was.

*Yet, now if Thou wilt forgive their sin, and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written* (Exodus 32:32).

There were many nations before Israel existed; but the Lord passed them by and chose Israel as His firstborn, and this was linked with an inheritance and secured by eonian promises relating to the seed and to the land.

*Israel is My Son, even My firstborn* (Exodus 4:22).

As such they were "*above all the nations that are upon the earth*" (Deuteronomy 14:2). To them therefore pertained the promises first made by God to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Theirs also were the promises, especially the Messianic promises, "*the sure mercies of David*" (Isaiah 55:3; Acts 13:23, 32-34) and the climax is reached in the apostle's last statement, "*out of whom is the Christ according to the flesh*" (:5).

Paul now proceeds to deal with the failure of Israel, and he brings in the truth of election not to decide who would be saved or who would be lost, but to show what individuals and nations God has chosen to work out His purpose for a kingdom on this earth. Who constitutes Israel? Some say the descendants of Abraham. That would be incorrect.

*Now it is not such as that the Word of God has lapsed, for not all those out of Israel, these are Israel; neither that Abraham's seed are all children, but "In Isaac shall your seed be called." That is, that the children of the flesh, not these are the children of God, but the children of the promise is He reckoning for the seed* (Romans 9:6-8).

Abraham had eight sons by Hagar, Keturah and Sarah. If physical descent constituted a claim, then seven other nations might have disputed Israel's rights; but the deciding factor was, without doubt, the Sovereignty of God. Even sons born to Isaac do not share equal privileges. Esau and Jacob were both children of the same mother, yet Esau is rejected and Jacob chosen.

*For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him that calleth; it was said unto her, "The elder shall serve the younger," according as it is written, "Jacob I love, yet Esau I hate" (9:11-12).*

Paul asks a question about God's election of Israel. Is God unjust? May it not be coming to that! The Lord conceives the plan and chooses what human agents He will use for carrying it out to completion. No one is in a position to say this is unreasonable or unjust. The example of Pharaoh is brought in. God Himself states the purpose of His dealings with Pharaoh:

*For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display My power in you and that My Name might be proclaimed in all the earth" (9:17).*

No one is in a position to criticize God or His actions, denying the fact that He has a right to do what He wills with His own, for the whole world has been brought guilty before God (3:19) and so has no claim on a holy God Who is Judge of all the earth. He is a God of mercy and grace, and no sinner can be entitled to this. Neither zeal nor sincerity is enough in God's sight. This is where Israel stumbled and fell so badly. They never had learned the lesson which Paul the Pharisee had, namely, that Christ put an end to the law as a means of acquiring favor with God. "*Christ is the end of the law*" (10:4). The Greek word *telos*, "end," can mean either goal or termination.

The Lord Jesus provides the very righteousness which God demands, making all human attempts to produce it superfluous and useless. The two ways of law and faith are illustrated by two quotations from the Pentateuch:

*Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments; which if a man do, he shall live in them (Leviticus 18:5).*

*They would live long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee (Exodus 20:12).*

It must be said immediately that these words do not teach that a man could obtain eonian life by his efforts to keep the law. The blessing on those who kept God's commandments resulted in prolonged life and enjoyment in the land of promise.

There is no need for Israel or anyone else to reach heaven and bring Christ down. The Incarnation had already accomplished that. Nor was there any need to bring Christ from the dead, for His resurrection and ascension was an accomplished fact. The word of faith was so near that it was in their minds. They had only to exercise it and believe God's testimony concerning Christ, confessing, proclaiming Him to be the One Lord, which then would result in their salvation. Note how the resurrection is an essential part of the gospel of grace (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). Too often it is forgotten by preachers who limit their gospel to Calvary, "*If Christ has not been roused from the dead, your faith is also vain*" (1 Corinthians 15:14). We do not proclaim a dead Christ, but a risen Savior Who is the One Lord of the

Bible, Old Testament and New, that is, Jehovah, the great almighty God. “*Jesus Christ is assuredly our great God and Savior*” (Titus 2:13), and all who put their trust in Him will never be confounded, that is, disappointed or “let down.”

The apostle Paul goes on to state that there is now no distinction between Jew and Gentile. So we see that unbelieving and disobedient Israel will be put to shame by believing gentiles who had nothing like the privileges of Israel. All through the Acts period, the record shows that God’s hands were extended in blessing and forgiveness to Israel who had just committed their climax sin in murdering their King, Savior and Messiah. The most important statement of Peter (Acts 3:19-26) should be carefully considered here. In spite of this, Israel still refused to respond. They were indeed a disobedient and contradicting people (Romans 10:21).

Romans 11 continues with God’s purpose for Israel in spite of their failure and unfaithfulness. We shall see that, although this failure is written all over Israel’s history, it was not total failure, for there always was a number, sometimes few, who responded to the call of God. God always saw to it that there was a faithful remnant in Israel so that He was never without a witness in the nation. On the surface, one might think that with all of Israel’s unbelief and unreliability, God would cast the nation aside and find other means of carrying out His earthly kingdom purposes – but no, for chapter 11 commences,

*I am saying, then, “Does not God thrust away His people?” May it not be coming to that! For I also am an Israelite, out of Abraham’s seed, Benjamin’s tribe. God does not thrust away His people whom He foreknew. Or have you not perceived in Elijah what the Scripture is saying, as he is pleading with God against Israel? (11:1-2).*

In fact, in His foreknowledge He knew that this would happen, so He had provided for this very thing. God is never taken by surprise. He had not cast away His earthly people at this point any more than in earlier days when they failed Him. The apostle Paul’s answer to the question is settled first of all by referring to himself. “I am,” he says, “a true Israelite,” and “God has not cast me off,” nor for that matter was this true of numbers of Jews who had responded to the gospel after the resurrection and ascension. In the days of Elijah, a time of deep national apostasy, there was a faithful remnant of 7,000 who refused to worship Baal. God sees to it that He always has a witness, and this is an act of sheer grace on His part. As for the rest of the unbelieving nation, they came under God’s judicial penalty for their disobedience, and in connection with this Paul quotes three Old Testament Scriptures:

*God gives them a spirit of stupor, eyes not to be observing, and ears not to be hearing, till this very day. And David is saying, “Let their table become a trap and a mesh, And a snare and a repayment to them: Darkened be their eyes, not to be observing, And their backs bow together continually” (11:8-10).*

The quotations are from Isaiah 29:10, Deuteronomy 29:4, and Psalm 69:22. When Israel made it perfectly clear that they were not going to believe and obey God’s Word, they then were disciplined by God and left in their darkened state. Yet one thing is perfectly clear: Israel did not fall so as to rise no more.

*Again I ask, did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgressions, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgres-*

---

*sion means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring! (11:11-12, NIV).*

These verses give the apostle's interpretation of the words from the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:21) already quoted in 10:19. When Israel began to see that God's blessing was resting on the despised gentiles and her unique position was slipping away, it might have the effect of stirring them up to belief and response. It is important to note that this is the divine reason given for the admission of the far-off gentile for blessing. It was not to form the church revealed in Ephesians and Colossians, but to wake up slumbering Israel to realize what they were losing. Paul's argument is that if, through the failure of the chosen people of Israel, great blessing has resulted for the gentiles, how much more blessing will come when they are converted and at God's disposal again! It will be like resurrection life to a dead world! The apostle uses the Greek word *plērōma*, translated "fullness." It means "full strength" or "complement." He continues,

*Now if the first-fruit is holy, the kneading is also; and if the root is holy, the boughs are also (11:16).*

Paul uses two figures here. The former is an allusion to Numbers 25:20. He regards the faithful Jewish remnant as a pledge of the final salvation of all Israel. The second is likened to a tree where the condition of the root vitally affects the branches, and this leads Paul to develop his parable of the olive tree in (11:17-21). Israel represents the olive tree, and the branches that were broken off were the unbelieving among Israel. The remaining branches were the faithful elect remnant, and when the unbelieving Israel had been "broken off," the believing gentiles had been "grafted in."

We must remember that it was God's purpose that the gentiles should be blessed through Israel, and not the other way round. This is clear in the first great promise to Abraham, "*in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed*" (Genesis 12:3). Yet when we reach the period covered by the Acts of the apostles, through Israel's repeated failures and disobedience, this abnormal condition of things caused God to reverse the process and bless the nations "before the time," as it were, and so seek to stimulate Israel who was so rapidly declining into apostasy and darkness.

## **Chapter 12 to 15:14**

These chapters begin the practical section of the epistle. To the apostle Paul, doctrine alone was not sufficient. God's teaching always brings responsibility. Consequently, we find in Paul's epistles that doctrine is balanced by practice. It could be said concerning all doctrine, "*If you are aware of these things, happy are you if you should be doing them!*" (John 13:17). Everyone who rejoices in the truth of justification by faith must be concerned about his practical response, and in these last chapters of Romans we find guidance concerning our daily lives. Our concern should be that of the Psalmist when he said, "*What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me?*" (Psalm 116:12). It is significant that Paul not only talks about faith, but the obedience of faith, and it is to this that true faith always leads.

The mercies or pities of God found in 12:1 are given here as the compelling reason as to why we should now yield ourselves back to Him. The logical service or worship leads us to 12:2 where we are not to be configured to this eon, but to be transformed by the renewing of our mind, for us to be testing what is the will of God, good and well pleasing and perfect. This eon is full of the exploits of man

and his considerable accomplishments, yet the Word of God reminds us that this is an evil wicked eon (Galatians 1:4). It is dominated by the “*god of this eon*” who blinds the mind (2 Corinthians 4:4), in consequence of which Christ is still rejected. To be conformed to this eon is therefore dangerous and always to be avoided by the believer.

In 12:3 the apostle now deals not only with diversities of personalities, but diversities of gifts. He once more uses the illustration of a human body, as he had done when writing to the Corinthian church. Each member of the human body has its own particular work to perform; yet all of the parts work together harmoniously, otherwise good health would be impossible. In the same way, an assembly of God’s people should function together in love and harmony. In 12:9 there is a transition from faith to love, and 12:12 mentions hope. Faith, hope and love are often seen together in Paul’s epistles. They are a trinity of graces that cover the believer’s walk so admirably. The rest of chapter twelve echoes the Sermon on the Mount.

Chapter thirteen begins a new section dealing with the relation of believers to the authorities. The believer’s attitude to authority was one of extreme importance. The position of Jews in the Roman Empire was regulated by a number of imperial edicts. They enjoyed many privileges, for their religion was registered as a lawful one (*religio licita*), and these included the Sabbath law, food regulations and the prohibition of graven images. After the death of Christ, Roman law tended to regard Christianity as a variety of Judaism; yet it started with a great handicap in the eyes of Rome, for Paul had been convicted and executed by the sentence of a Roman magistrate. He had led a movement which challenged the authority of Caesar.

The submission to authorities includes the paying of taxes. The authorities are God’s servants who give their full time to governing. No one enjoys paying taxes. Most think this is to be avoided as far as possible, yet we remember that the Son of God did not consider Himself to be free from this duty (Matthew 17:24-27). Moreover, He gave the injunction, as we have seen, to “*render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s*” (Matthew 12:21).

In 13:8-10 Paul gets to the very heart of the law of God given through Moses. It is really perfect love in action. The first five commandments deal with our love to God, and the second five our love to our neighbor. We must not imagine that the apostle is teaching that a believer in loving fulfills the law, and therefore does not need salvation or justification. One breach alone of the law is sufficient to come under its condemnation, as this epistle and Galatians clearly testify, and the apostle here is certainly not contradicting himself.

Dr. C.K. Barrett writes,

Love is not the completion, but the performance of the law. He does not say that a man is justified by fulfilling the law through love, rather he is pointing out the ethical expression of the true meaning of the law, which, when rightly understood, itself points the way of faith which expresses itself in love (Galatians 5:6). It is not a means of salvation, but the ethical channel through which the new life in Christ Jesus flows. — *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 251

In 13:11-14 Paul mentions the nearness of the end of the eon, which culminates in the second coming of Christ. We must never forget that the book of Romans is an Acts period epistle, when the second



coming of Christ was a glorious possibility according to the divine offer of forgiveness to Israel and the promise to send back the Lord Jesus Christ, if only the nation would turn back to God and repent (Acts 3:19-26). It is significant that all of the epistles written during this time mention the nearness of the Lord's second coming as the hope of the churches.

In 14:1-4, Paul mentions the duties of one believer to another, bearing in mind that all had not attained to the same level of growth. There were those who were "*strong*" and those who were "*weak*" in the faith, and their attitude to food and the religious observance of certain days was not the same. The Jew would be scrupulous concerning meat, which had to be slaughtered according to Old Testament rules, otherwise he would abstain. The gentile would not be so particular. Some would insist that certain religious days should be observed, while others might think that this was not important.

Believers at this time needed some advice as to their behavior to each other. It is not for one believer to judge or criticize another. The habit of criticizing others was very prevalent among believers, who seemed to act as though they had a divine right to do this. The act of one criticizing another is absurd and unedifying, and the apostle's conclusion is, "*By no means, then, should we still be judging one another*" (14:13). What we can do is to "*judge ourselves,*" which may not be pleasant, and if we do "*we should not be judged*" (1Corinthians 11:31).

No one will escape the final interview. We must all give an account of ourselves to God (Romans 14:12). The drift of this long section then is clear: the "*strong*" must not flaunt their liberty before weaker believers and upset them. The apostle Paul was always willing to restrict his liberty so that others might be helped and encouraged (1 Corinthians 9:19). After all, the kingdom of God is not concerned with food and drink, but with righteousness, peace and joy in holy spirit (14:17).

In 15:1-4 the apostle Paul now brings forward the example of Christ Who "*pleased not Himself.*" To those who follow Christ's example in practice, there can be only one result. They will aim first to please the Lord, and second their neighbor, with the aim to edify or build him up in the truth, and thirdly they will be ready to receive all true believers without discrimination, even though they may be weak in the faith (15:5-13).

In 15:14-21 the apostle now contemplates the plan of God as it affected himself. It was in his Christ-given capacity as the apostle of the gentiles that he had written to the believers at Rome. In 15:23-24, Paul mentioned Spain. Did he ever reach Spain? There is no further reference to Spain in the New Testament, nor any certain evidence that he did so; but it was not impossible. However, he had a more immediate task. He was concerned about organizing a collection from the gentile churches for the poor saints living at Jerusalem. This not only recognized the indebtedness of the gentile churches to the mother church, but it also helped to cement the bond between the Jerusalem believers and the churches of the gentiles. It was a practical expression of brotherly love. At the same time, Paul realized that the stricter brethren at Jerusalem looked on his gentile ministry with suspicion, and he therefore had misgivings as to the sort of reception he would receive from them (15:25-33).

Chapter 16 consists mainly of personal greetings and a short section of warning and encouragement. The greetings are addressed to twenty-six individuals and five households. In 16:17-19 the adversary seeks to break the unity that the Lord creates (Ephesians 4:1-6, 13, 16) among believers and cause friction and division among the people of God. The apostle declares that these troublemakers should be

avoided. They were probably the same as the evil workers he denounces in Philippians 3:18, who were tainted with incipient Gnosticism and possibly preoccupation with food laws rather than gluttony. Yet Paul reiterates his confidence in the Roman believers (Romans 16:19) and assures them that the Lord would give them victory over the adversary and his works.

In 16:25-27 the word “*secret*” (some versions use “*mystery*”) is found.

*Now to Him Who is able to establish you in accord with my evangel, and the heralding of Christ Jesus in accord with the revelation of a secret hushed in times eonian, yet manifested now and through prophetic Scriptures, according to the injunction of the eonian God being made known to all nations for faith-obedience – to the only, and wise God, through Christ Jesus, be glory for the eons of the eons. Amen!*

Many translations insert the definite article “the” before the word “*mystery*,” or “*secret*,” but it is not in the original. The addition of the article creates a problem, for it makes the phrase parallel with Ephesians 3:9 and Colossians 1:26, and appears to be a reference to the great “*secret*” revealed in those two epistles. Yet neither of them had been written when Romans was composed, and therefore the revelation of the secret concerning the church which is His body, and Christ’s headship in relation to it, had not yet been made known. Some get over the difficulty by the suggestion that this doxology was added by Paul at a later date after he had written Ephesians and Colossians. This was put forward by John B. Lightfoot in his book *Biblical Essays*; but after the secret had been revealed, what need was there to add this doxology to the epistle to the Romans, and that in an enigmatic way which does not reveal the details of this great secret? Just what purpose would this serve? We should note that the time elements concerning the secret of Romans 16:25-27 do not agree with Ephesians and Colossians. In Romans the secret was hushed in times eonian, whereas in the prison epistles, the secret has been concealed from the eons and from the generations (Colossians 1:26) and related to a period “*before times eonian*” (Titus 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:9). This hidden subject had “its own season” of manifestation, which manifestation was through “*preaching*” and “*according to a commandment*” (Titus 1:3). This manifestation is now in this present eon.

Paul was a steward of the mysteries (secrets) of God (1 Corinthians 4:1), some of which were made known through his ministry during the Acts period, such as the secret of Israel’s blindness (Romans 11:25) and the instantaneous change of the believer in resurrection (1 Corinthians 51-52), so there is no need to try to fit the later revelation of Ephesians 3:9 and Colossians 1:26 into Romans 16:25-27.

What is the meaning of “*prophetic Scriptures*”? We should bear in mind that a prophet was not confined to revealing future events. He was a forth-teller as well as being a foreteller. This phrase must not be confined to such books as Daniel or the Revelation. There is a sense in which all Scripture can be classed as prophetic writings, making known the mind and will of God (2 Peter 1:20-21). As there were New Testament prophets as well as Old Testament ones, the title “*prophetic Scriptures*” could be applied to the New Testament as well as the Old Testament.

Let us state what the secret of (Romans 16:25-27) cannot mean:

1. It cannot refer to the gospel of grace and salvation, for this was never hidden but was made known “*by His prophets in the holy Scriptures*” (Romans 1:2), *i.e.*, the Old Testament.

2. It cannot refer to the blessing of the gentile with the Jew, for this likewise had been revealed in the Old Testament, that “*all families of the earth*” should be blessed through Abraham’s seed (Genesis 12:1, 3). It must refer to truth not previously revealed.

There are those who look on the doxology of Romans 16:25-27 as superfluous to the epistle as a whole, but the structure of the epistle is defective without it. The doxology balances chapter one.

<u>Romans 1:1-17</u>	<u>Romans 16:25-27</u>
The gospel of God ... concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, promised afore by prophets in the holy Scriptures.	The preaching of Jesus Christ, kept silent in eonian times, now made known through prophetic writings.
Grace ... from God our Father	Praise to the eonian and only wise God
To the end ye may be established	To Him Who is able to establish you
The power of God unto salvation	To Him Who is of power
Righteousness revealed	Revelation of a secret
As it is written	Scriptures, the prophets

Professor F.F. Bruce says,

There is in the doxology a recognizable echo of dominant themes of the opening salutation; in particular the mention of the Scriptures of the prophets recalls “which He had promised afore by His prophets in the holy Scriptures” and make known to all nations “for the obedience of faith” is practically a repetition of “for obedience of faith among all nations” (1:5). This rounding off of the epistle on the same note as was struck at its commencement suggests the author himself. — *Epistle to the Romans*, p. 282

We come back to our original question. What is this secret, hushed since eonian times began, but now made known through prophetic writings? The answer must be made from the Scriptures themselves, and we believe the best explanation is given by Charles H. Welch in his exposition, *Just and the Justifier*.

The mystery of Romans 16 is not said to be related to a period “before eonian-times,” but “silenced in eonian times.” This theme is the secret of the central section of Romans (chapters 5-8), and its subject is Adam, not Abraham; man, not Israel or gentile; the law of sin, not the law of Sinai; the dominion of sin and death, not the domination of Canaanites or Babel.

He points out that

The period covered by the Scriptures from (Genesis 12 to Matthew 1), is as long as that covered by Genesis chapter 1:3 to chapter 11. If Israel should finally fall and fail, the prophets had nothing to tell us of how God would cope with the resulting problem. It is accordingly the purpose of the central section of Romans (chapters 5-8) to reveal the relationship of man, as such (*i.e.*, neither Jew nor gentile) to Adam and to Christ, irrespective of the promises made to the fathers, and the failure or success of the chosen people (Israel). But this is not the theme of the Old Testament prophecy in general. Much important truth latent in Genesis 1-11 was “hushed” until the time to

speaking had arrived. In that small space of eleven chapters is written all that can be known of the first 2,000 years of this present creation. What is written is pregnant with truth, but it must await its appointed time, and just as the gospel itself revealed teaching hidden in Old Testament Scriptures, so these early chapters of Genesis hold much basic teaching, throwing light on the position of the believer who is saved and justified without reference to the law of Moses. — *Just and the Justifier*, pp. 350-352

Once again, we point out that the secret of Romans 16 was silenced in eonian times. Part of the divine purpose, which relates to the highest heavens, concerns a period “*before eonian times*” (Titus 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:9). This concerns the great mystery or secret of the prison epistles of Paul which was hidden “*from the eons*” and “*from the generations [of people]*” (Colossian 1:26), and is linked to a divine purpose “*before the disruption of the world*” (Ephesians 1:4). Romans 16 refers to a mystery (secret) not related to a period “*before eonian times,*” but silenced “*in eonian times.*” We will discuss the secret 16:25 in more detail, between Adam and Christ, in upcoming chapters.

When the apostle Paul was inspired by God to write the epistle to the Romans, the prophetic writings, which for generations held their secret, began to speak. The fact that Romans 16 was for “*the obedience of faith to all nations*” links it with Romans 1:5 and establishes the unity of God’s purpose. The final doxology is given in 16:27

*To the only, and wise God, through Christ Jesus, be glory for the eons of the eons. Amen!*

(This concludes the commentary on Romans 7-16 by Stuart Allen.)

## **FIRST CORINTHIANS**

(The study of First and Second Corinthians was taken from E.W. Bullinger’s book *The Church Epistles*, available from Clyde Pilkington & Sons. See Resources for contact information.)

We have seen earlier, according to the canonical order, that first and second Corinthians follows Romans. The Corinthian letters were the most personal of all Paul’s writings. Paul experienced much anxiety over the condition of the church at Corinth. It would appear that the apostle had more trouble with the Corinthian church than with any of the other assemblies he founded by his missionary work. Yet his patience and love for them never failed, even though he had to correct them sharply. Let us never forget that the most wondrous ode ever written concerning love in its highest sense was addressed by Paul to this church. The Corinthians failed and departed from the “doctrine” and “instruction” contained in the epistle to the Romans. The apostle Paul wrote the Corinthian letters because he disapproved of their practices and had to reprimand them. He wanted to make right what was wrong. Even the parts which look like doctrine or instruction are introduced by way of reproof.

---

**First Corinthians as a Whole**

- A. 1:1-9. Epistolary. Salutation. Introduction.
  - B. a. 1:10 - 4:16. Ministerial reproof and explanations.
    - b. 4:17. Mission of Timothy to bring before them the remembrance of Paul's "ways" and teaching.
      - c. 4:18-21. Visit of Paul promised.
        - C. 5-6. Things reported to Paul.
        - C. 7-8. Things enquired of Paul.
  - B. a. 9-15. Ministerial reproof and explanations.
    - c. 16:1-9. Visit of Paul promised.
      - b. 16:10-18. Mission of Timothy.
- A. 16:19-24. Epistolary. Salutations. Conclusion.

In chapter 13, charity is enlarged upon, but there was "*a more excellent way*" than that which they had been dwelling on in chapter 12. They might covet "*spiritual gifts*," but it was better to covet Divine love with all of its grace and powers.

In chapter 15 the resurrection is taught; but it is introduced by way of reproof, because some among them had said, "*There is no resurrection of the dead*" (:12), and asked, "*How are the dead being roused?*" (:35).

This is the tone which pervades the whole epistle. In Romans the teaching is positive, but here it is negative. In Romans the teaching is put forth as something to be learned and understood, but here it is presented as something which had been taught but abandoned.

There are points of contact, many and marked, but it will be noted that what is stated dogmatically in Romans is treated apologetically in Corinthians, and indirectly rather than directly. For example, in Romans 4:15, 5:13; 7:5, 7, 13, we have the direct teaching that without law there can be no transgression, but in 1 Corinthians 15:56 it is introduced as part of the argument to show what resurrection does for us in destroying death, sin and law.

In Romans 3:27 we have the direct statement of a fact that all boasting is excluded. In 1 Corinthians 1:29 it is brought in, indirectly, as a reason for what has been said, "*that no flesh at all should be boasting in God's sight.*"

In Romans 8:39 nothing is able to separate us from the love of God in Christ, "*neither things present nor things to come*," but in 1 Corinthians 3:21-23 the same fact is introduced as a reason why they should not "*glory in men, for all things are yours, whether things present or things to come.*"

In Romans 8:30 we have the direct statement that whom God "*did predestinate them He called also; and whom He called them He justified also; and whom He justified them He glorified also*," but in 1 Corinthians 6:1 the same thought is introduced indirectly. The Corinthians "*did wrong and defrauded*" their brothers, as the unrighteous and ungodly did, and after describing their characters the holy spirit says, "*And some of you were these, but you are bathed off, but you are hallowed, but you were justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the spirit of our God*" (1 Corinthians 6:11).

In Romans 7:24-25 we are taught directly that there is a deliverance from this dying, mortal body, and that God in due time will accomplish that deliverance, but in 1 Corinthians 15:57 it is introduced, indirectly, as one of the glorious results of resurrection: *“Now thanks be to God, Who is giving us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

In Romans 14 we have definite positive, practical instruction as to our walk before those who are *“weak in the faith,”* and among other things, the principle is laid down as to matters that offend the weak conscience of a brother in Christ, inasmuch as *“none of us liveth to himself.”* Meat or wine could hardly be obtained, except that which had been offered to idols. As to the eating of this, the question is settled in Romans 14. It is not wrong in itself, but if a brother’s weak conscience considers it as partaking of idolatry, and regards it as *“a thing offered to an idol”* and therefore an insult to God, then we are not to touch it in his presence and cause him to stumble. Yet in 1 Corinthians 8 the same matter is addressed from a different standpoint. It was one of those questions which the Corinthian saints had enquired of Paul as a practical question, and it at once becomes a personal question, and is dealt with by way of reproof – *“Take heed”* (:9). *“Now in thus sinning against brethren, and beating their weak conscience, you are sinning against Christ”* (:12). It is not addressed merely as something they were not to do (as in Romans), but as something they had done.

In Romans 6 and 7 the conflict between the new nature and the old is explained and set forth in all detail. In 1 Corinthians 9:26-27 an example of it is given, showing how he maintained this conflict in himself because he did not wish his ministerial labor to be thrown away, but to be such as God would approve.

In Romans 5:12-21 we have the *“first man”* and the *“second man”* — the first Adam and the Last Adam — and all of the wondrous contrast between them, showing how death entered by the one and life comes by the Other. In 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45 these two federal heads are referred to not as a plain direct statement of doctrine, but indirectly as part of an argument:

*For since, in fact, through a man came death, through a Man, also, comes the resurrection of the dead. For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified. If there is a soulish body, there is a spiritual also. Thus it is written also, “The first man, Adam, became a living soul:” the last Adam a vivifying Spirit.*

The object, therefore, of this first epistle to the Corinthians is thus to lead them back, and to lead them on by the reproof administered to see what Jesus Christ and His resurrection again means.

## SECOND CORINTHIANS

The second epistle to the Corinthians has precisely the same scope as the first epistle. An examination of its structure shows us that the great bulk of it (more than one-half) is taken up as the (first epistle) is with ministerial explanations and epistolary matter, and this by way of reproof for failure as to the teaching given in the epistle to the Romans, and departure from its doctrine and precepts.

---

**Second Corinthians as a Whole**

- A. 1:1-2. Salutation.
  - B. a. 1:3-11. Thanksgiving.
    - b. 1:12. His Ministry.
      - C. 1:13-2:13. Epistolary.
  - B. a. 2:14-17. Thanksgiving.
    - b. 3:1-6:10. His Ministry.
      - C. 6:11-13:10. Epistolary.
- A. 13:11-14. Salutations.

It will be seen from this that considerably more than half of the epistle is occupied with epistolary reproof, and a comparison of this with the epistle to the Romans will bring out the same features as those seen in the first epistle. It is evident from the above structure that the two important members are C and C, which occupy eight chapters out of the thirteen into which the epistle is divided. We must, therefore, set these two members out in greater detail, and it will be seen that, though they are separated in the general structure, there is a perfect design and correspondence between them.

**The Expansion of "C" and "C"**  
(1:13-2:13) and (7:5-8:10)

- C. D. c. 1:13-14. Present Epistle.
  - d. 1:15-2:2. Visit.
    - g. 1:15-16. Purpose.
    - h. 1:17-2:2. Vindication.
  - E. e.
    - i. 2:3-11. Former Epistle.
      - k. 2:12-13. No rest in spirit.
    - f. 2:13. Macedonia. Journey.
- C. E. e.
  - k. 7:5-7. No rest in flesh.
    - i. 7:8-16. Former Epistle.
  - f. :8-9. Macedonia. Journey.
- D. d. :10-13:1. Visit.
  - h. 10:1-12:13. Vindication.
  - g. 12:14-13:1. Purpose.
- c. 13:2-10. Present Epistle.

The more the above structure is examined, the more its perfection and beauty will be seen. Member answers to member with perfect correspondence. Nothing is wanting in any part. There is, first, the main introversion of D, E, E, D. Then there are the sub-introversions of c, d, d, c; i, k, k, i, and g, h, h, g. Between all of these introversions there comes one alternation, e, f, e, f.

If the scope of this epistle is to be understood, its structure must be studied. Then, we must remember that the portions marked by the corresponding letters read on from one to the other, and must be taken together. There is the same reference to Romans as we saw in the first epistle, and these references have the same character. In Romans we have the frequent mention of "*the righteousness of God,*" as a matter of doctrine and instruction. We have the same in 2 Corinthians, yet introduced not as a

revelation but in the course of argument, and given as a reason in 2 Corinthians 5:21, “*that we may be becoming God’s righteousness in Him.*”

In Romans 4:15 and 5:13 we learn directly that “*Now where no law is, neither is there transgression,*” “*sin is not being taken into account when there is no law.*” In 2 Corinthians 5:19 it comes in as part of another argument, “*how that God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them.*”

In Romans 5:15 the vicarious death of others in Adam is stated, and all are said to have “*died*” through the one offense of that one man Adam. In 2 Corinthians 5:14 the same fact that “*all died*” comes out indirectly, and as part of an argument shows the love of Christ as a power constraining the apostle in his devotion to their cause.

*For, whether we were beside ourselves, it is to God, whether we are sane, it is to you. For the love of Christ is constraining us, judging this, that, if One died for the sake of all, consequently all died. And He died for the sake of all that those who are living should by no means still be living to themselves, but to the One dying and being roused for their sakes (5:13-15).*

Thus the great truth of our death in Adam and our death in Christ comes out indirectly, whereas in Romans 5:15 it is stated dogmatically, as is also the truth that we, having died with Christ, should henceforth “*walk in newness of life*” (Romans 6:4; 14:7-8).

In Romans 8:3 we are taught as a matter of doctrine that God sent His Own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and by His sacrifice for sin He condemns sin (*i.e.*, the old nature) in the flesh. Yet in 2 Corinthians 5:21 it is given as a reason why, in acting as ambassadors for God, God exhorted by them, and the begging on behalf of Christ, “*For Christ, then, are we ambassadors, as of God entreating through us. We are beseeching for Christ’s sake, Be conciliated to God!*” (5:20).

In Romans 8:18 we are taught that “*the sufferings of the current era do not deserve the glory about to be revealed for us,*” but in 2 Corinthians 4:17 precisely the same truth is introduced as a reason why he was not despondent (:16) at all of the persecutions and tribulations he underwent for their sakes (:8-16).

*For the momentary lightness of our affliction is producing for us a transcendently transcendent eonian burden of glory, at our not noting what is being observed, but what is not being observed, for what is being observed is temporary, yet what is not being observed is eonian.*

Closely connected with this is Romans 8:23. We are taught as a matter of fact that, like the whole creation, “*we ourselves also, who have the firstfruit of the spirit, we ourselves also, are groaning in ourselves, awaiting the sonship, the deliverance of our body.*” Yet in 2 Corinthians 5:1-2 this same groaning for the same object is introduced, indirectly, as a further reason why the apostle was not despondent at the persecutions and afflictions which he endured for their sakes, and why we consider the things which are unseen, and desire that resurrection body.

*For we are aware that, if our terrestrial tabernacle house should be demolished, we have a building of God, a house not made by hands, eonian, in the heavens. For in this also we are groaning, longing to be dressed in our habitation which is out of heaven.*



Resurrection is the one great theme of this passage. It commences with resurrection in 4:14, "*being aware that He Who rouses the Lord Jesus will be rousing us also, through Jesus, and will be presenting us together with you,*" then it goes on to give three reasons for this assurance: "for" (4:15), "for" (4:17), "for" (5:1). This is why we groan, earnestly desiring our resurrection body, knowing that, while we dwell here in this body, we must continue to be absent from the Lord. Therefore we are always of good courage, knowing that, while we dwell here in this earthly body (our terrestrial home), we are away from our resurrected body (celestial home) with the Lord (5:6, 8). We have no right whatever to introduce the thought of death into this passage. There is no reference whatever to it, except in :3 as the one condition in which he would "*not be found.*" Resurrection is the one great thought and subject of the whole passage. Death would never have been introduced by interpreters if the blessed hope of resurrection had not been well-nigh lost by the churches.

In Romans 11:25 we have the dogmatic explanation of Israel's present "*unbelief*" and "*blindness,*" and the definite promise that it was to be only temporary and partial, because "*Arriving out of Zion shall be the Rescuer. He will be turning away irreverence from Jacob*" (:26). Yet in 2 Corinthians 3:1-3 all of this is referred to as part of another argument and as flowing from the reproof with which the chapter commences.

*Are we beginning again to commend ourselves? Or need we not, even as some, commendatory letters to you or from you? You are our letter, engraven in our hearts, known and read by all men, for you are manifesting a letter of Christ, dispensed by us, and engraven, not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God, not on stone tablets, but on the fleshy tablets of the heart.*

Then he goes on to explain this dispensation of the spirit (3:8), and contrasts it with the writing on the table of stone given by Moses. This latter was glorious, but it was done away. This dispensation of the spirit (Christ's epistles in your hearts) is glorious, and it shall never be done away as that was.

*For if that which is being nullified was nullified through glory, much rather that which is remaining, remains in glory. Having, then, such an expectation, we are using much boldness, and are not even as Moses. He placed a covering over his face, so that the sons of Israel were not to look intently to the consummation of that which is being nullified (3:11-13).*

That is, we are not as Moses. He gave the law, and though it ministered death, it was glorious – so glorious that even his face shone with such glory that the people could not look on it, and he had to put a veil over it; which (glory) is done away, as is the law which he ministered. The people could not look on Moses' face, neither could they see that the law was to be done away. Nor can they see now, but the illustration is now reversed. It is they who now have a veil on their heart, their minds are blinded, and they cannot understand the "*reading of the old covenant, in which the old covenant is done away with in Christ.*" They could not look on the glory of Moses' face (which was afterward done away) because of his veil, and they cannot see now the glory of the gospel (though it remains in glory) because of a similar veil, but that veil is not on Christ or the gospel, but on their own hearts. Then comes in, incidentally, the blessed fact which is a matter of doctrine and revelation in Romans 11:23, 26 that that veil is to be taken away from their heart, for "*when their heart shall have turned to the Lord, that veil will be taken away*" (II Corinthians 3:16).

In Romans 14:10 the Dais, or *Bema*, is the "*judgment seat*" of Christ, and is spoken of directly in con-

nection with a definite precept in the practical portion of the epistle. “For we shall stand before ...” This is the reason why we are to deal graciously with those who are weak in the faith, and who have a tender conscience. In 2 Corinthians 5:10 a similar statement is made.

In Romans it is *parastēsometha*, “we shall stand before,” and in Corinthians it is *phanerothēnai*, “we shall be manifested,” but in 2 Corinthians 5:10 it is introduced, not in connection with a direct precept, but indirectly, as a consideration about why the apostle labored with and suffered among the Corinthian saints, endeavoring that, whether present or absent, he might be acceptable to God (5:9).

In Romans 15:20 he states a definite fact and says, “Yet thus I am ambitious to be bringing the evangel where Christ is not named lest I may be building on another’s foundation.” Yet in 2 Corinthians 10:13-16 this is introduced in self-defense, as will be seen by reading from :8.

In Romans 15:30 so simple a thought as to their striving together in prayer for him is a direct request, whereas in 2 Corinthians 1:11 it is introduced indirectly. God had delivered him, and would yet deliver him, they also “helping together by prayer.”

From all of these examples (and there may be several others), it is clear that there is a close connection between these two epistles to the Corinthians and the epistle to the Romans. We do not mean that the Corinthians had read the epistle to the Romans, and then departed from its teaching (for Romans was written after Corinthians), but as a church, they had received the same or similar instruction as the Romans did through his ministry, and had failed to give a practical manifestation of it individually, socially and ecclesiastically. Unless we learn the teaching contained and given in the epistle to the Romans, we too shall fail in like manner.

The study of First and Second Corinthians was taken from E.W. Bullinger’s book entitled: “The Church Epistles,” available from Clyde Pilkington & Sons. See Resources for contact information.

## GALATIANS

Galatians was written to correct doctrinal failure, and the departure from the teaching found in Romans. There is similarity between the epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians. When we compare the epistle to the Galatians with the second epistle to the Corinthians, we discover that much of the conflict that had been fought in Galatia was repeated, in a slightly modified form, in Corinth. For example, the strange reference to the apostles at Jerusalem, “these who seemed to be somewhat” (Galatians 2:6), finds an echo in the reference to “the extra-super apostles” of 2 Corinthians 11:5. The preaching of “a different gospel” in Galatia (Galatians 1:6-9) has its counterpart in the preaching of “another Jesus,” “a different spirit” and “a different gospel” of 2 Corinthians 11:4.

In both epistles reference is made to “false brethren” (Galatians 2:4; 2 Corinthians 11:26), and the comparison of Galatians 2:8, “according as Peter of the Circumcision (for He Who operates in Peter for the apostleship of the Circumcision operates in me also for the nations),” is repeated in another form in the words of 2 Corinthians 11:5, “For I am reckoning to be deficient in nothing pertaining to the paramount apostles.” Paul spoke of “the marks of the Lord Jesus” which he bore in his body (Galatians 6:17). To the Corinthians these “marks” are given in fuller detail. Five times was he given the “forty stripes save one” of the synagogue scourging, thrice was he “beaten with rods,” once he was “stoned,” thrice

*“shipwrecked”* (2 Corinthians 11:24-25). He repeats the figure of *“devouring”* one another (Galatians 5:15; 2 Corinthians 11:20). Also the argument of Galatians 3:3, *“having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh,”* compared to 2 Corinthians 8:6, *“That as He had begun, so He would also perfect in you the same grace.”* Finally, in both epistles there is the triumphant reference to the *“new creation”* (Galatians 6:15; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

The Galatians were being carried away from the basic facts of salvation by grace to a system of legal works and ceremonial religion. This is diametrically opposed to the great central fact of the gospel that *“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.”* To this sacrificial death the apostle returns again and again in the course of his argument. See how it forms the climax to his personal testimony of the second chapter, *“I am crucified with Christ”* (2:20). It shatters the whole fabric of legalism that the Judaist party had been erecting. *“O foolish Galatians”* the apostle cries. Why? Because, displayed before their eyes, Jesus Christ was graphically crucified (3:1). How then could they think of being made perfect by the flesh?

Do they lean toward the possibility of accomplishing a righteousness in their own works of the law? It is met, exposed and rendered impossible by the fact that *“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law” by hanging on a tree* (3:13). So on to the personal appeal with which the epistle ends, *“God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus”* (6:14). The same love for truth which made Paul use such language of the apostles as is recorded in 2:6, which made it necessary to speak of Peter's defection and Barnabas' fall, which justified the use of the word *“foolish”* and the charge of being *“bewitched”* (3:1), which classed the withdrawal from free grace to legal observances, as all one and the same with Paganism (4:8-11). Sacrifice for sin was being made meaningless by the false teaching combated by this epistle. If righteousness came by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. Not only did Christ give Himself for our sins, but also that He might deliver us out of the present wicked eon (1:4).

Christ came to deliver from both systems, and for a gentile who had professed to believe in Christ to come out of the evil world of gentile Paganism and to turn to the equally evil world of Judaic formalism was such a lapse that the apostle could only say, *“You fall out of grace”* (5:4). *“Christ will benefit you nothing”* (5:2).

Paul uses the negations *“not – neither – but,”* declaring that the gospel which he preached was not *“according to man,”* neither was it received from man, nor taught by man, but received by revelation of Jesus Christ (1:1).

God severed Paul from his mother's womb and called him through His grace, to unveil His Son in him (1:15). One of the reasons that helped Paul to make the decision that he would not confer with the apostles at Jerusalem is found in the words of (:16): *“That I may be evangelizing Him among the nations.”* Paul takes an oath, saying, *“Lo! in God's sight, I say that I am not lying”* (:20). Paul was entrusted with the commission of the gospel of free grace, and chapter one ends with the simple yet full words, *“And they glorified God in me”* (124).

After the very thorough defense which the apostle has put up in the first chapter, one might have reasonably expected that he would have proceeded forthwith to the exposition of the great doctrine which was at stake, namely *“Justification by Faith.”* This, however, does not come into prominence until we reach 2:15. From other epistles we know how foreign it was to Paul's nature to appear to

boast, and how reluctant he was to say anything derogatory to the character of another servant of the Lord. Yet in the section now before us, he shows quite plainly that the church today owes the full gospel of grace to his lone stand against the prevailing views of many in authority, and not only so, but he shows as in marked contrast with his own loyal stand the defection of Peter and Barnabas and a company of Jewish believers who were associated with Peter. If we seek a word to justify such an exposure and such a record, we shall find it in the one word “*gospel*.” If it had been a matter of defending his own personal honor, Paul would have suffered in silence, but silent he could not be when the very “*truth of the gospel*” was at stake.

It was the fatal shadow of “*a different gospel*” that stirred Paul to the depths and demanded his utmost in countering its dreadful blight. It was the perversion of “*the gospel of Christ*,” not merely the ingratitude of the Galatians that set his heart aflame. The taking of Titus was something of a test. The Judaizers had intimidated the Galatian converts, quoting chapter and verse just like many of their successors do today, failing to rightly divide the Scriptures. They urged the necessity for circumcision to make salvation secure, and had such a view been entertained by the leaders at Jerusalem, Titus, a Greek, would not have been accepted as he was. Yet Paul said, “*But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised*” (2:3). The basic doctrine of Paul’s preaching is on the death of Christ, and his own death as reckoned in Him: “*For I, through law, died to law, that I should be living to God*” (:19). Paul died to law by being crucified with Christ (:20). If we are righteous through law, then Christ died in vain.

In chapter three, Paul calls the Galatians foolish and asks if they received the spirit by works of law or by hearing of faith. “*Having begun in spirit, are you now made perfect in flesh?*” (3:3). We have learned from the preceding set of references that “*spirit*” and “*flesh*” are contrary to each other, so that there can be but one answer to this question. “*But as then he that was born according to flesh, persecuted him that was born according to spirit, even so is it now*” (4:29). This, as we know, is a part of the allegory that the apostle built on the record of the two sons of Abraham: the son of the bond maid, and the son of the free; Mount Sinai with its bondage, and Jerusalem that is above (holy city) with its freedom (4:26).

The apostle Paul introduces “*Abraham*” into the argument. Both in Galatians and in Romans the name of Abraham occurs nine times, and every reference is a definite part of a consecutive argument. Let us note these references in Galatians.

1. Justification is by faith – “*According as Abraham believes God, and it is reckoned to him for righteousness*” (3:6).
2. Sons of faith – “*Those of faith, these are sons of Abraham*” (3:7).
3. The Gospel and faith – “*The Scripture, perceiving before that God is justifying the nations by faith, brings before an evangel to Abraham, that In you shall all the nations be blessed*” (3:8).
4. Blessing by faith – “*Those of faith are being blessed together with believing Abraham*” (3:9).

The apostle now reveals the fact that any attempt to be justified by works of the law is virtually putting oneself under a curse (3:10). Accomplishing redemption, Christ became a curse for us (3:13).

5. Promise through faith – “*That the blessing of Abraham may be coming to the nations in Christ Jesus, that we may be obtaining the promise of the spirit through faith*” (3:14).
6. Promises made to the Seed, which is Christ – “*Now to Abraham the promises were declared, and*

to his Seed. He is not saying 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of One: And to 'your Seed,' which is Christ" (3:16).

7. Inheritance by promise – "For if the enjoyment of the allotment is of law, it is no longer of promise. Yet God has graciously granted it to Abraham through the promise" (3:18).
8. Christ's are Abraham's seed – "Now if you are Christ's, consequently you are of Abraham's seed, enjoyers of the allotment according to the promise" (3:29).

After an interval in which the figure of adoption is introduced, and the retrograde movement of the Galatians placed on all fours with a turning back to paganism, the last reference to Abraham is made in which the two children, one of the free woman and one of the bondmaid are used as an allegory.

9. "It is written, that Abraham had two sons; the son of the bond maid and the son of the free. Mount Sinai with its bondage, and Jerusalem that is above [holy city], with its freedom" (4:22-26).

Today the call of Paul resounds. It is as imperative that those whom Christ has set free should "stand firm" to that freedom, and refuse any attempt, however plausible, to put on their necks the yoke of bondage from which by grace they have been so gloriously set free. Whoever attempts self justification by means of the law is separated from Christ and fallen from grace (5:1-4).

"For we, in spirit, are awaiting the expectation of righteousness by faith" (5:5). The meaning of "in spirit" (*pneumati*), is the sphere in which justification by faith is attained, and "spirit" is contrasted with "flesh," "works" and "law" in this epistle, and aligned with "grace" and "faith." The whole theme of Galatians is justification by faith, so Paul states 5:5 as example. Following this personal summary of the position of the believer in Christ whose hope is not the flesh, law or works, but in spirit, grace and faith, Paul gives the following conclusion: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision is availing anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith, operating through love" (:6). Circumcision is useless as a means to justification. It is also just as evil to believe that by abstaining from the rite that any merit will accrue. Faith in the finished work of Christ alone can avail.

Paul was constrained to write two epistles on the great theme of justification by faith without works of law (Galatians and Romans). In Galatians, at the beginning of the conflict he threw the whole weight of his apostolic authority and independence into the scale, and not until the last word is uttered can he take the attitude which love dictated, namely to subscribe himself "a bond slave" of Jesus Christ. At the opening of the epistle he stresses his credentials. At the close, he draws attention to the marks his body bears of his faithful adherence to the truth. By the time he came to write Romans, the conflict with Judaism had died down and he was then free to open that great epistle not with his apostolic authority, but with the words, "Paul a bond-slave of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle" (Romans 1:1).

In every salutation made by Paul, the core word is "grace." The salutation with which this epistle ends contains one unusual word: "brethren." The word is placed at the very end of the sentence. Apart from "Amen," it is the apostle's last word. It seems as though he would remind them that, in spite of all his censure, and in spite of all of the trouble they had caused him, they were and always would be "brethren." A blessed word with which to end an epistle in which so much felling has been manifested, and so much error exposed and condemned. Thus we bring to an end a study that embraces doctrine that lies at the very center of the gospel of grace. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren! Amen!"

---



---

## EPHESIANS

As in Romans, we get all of the truth concerning the standing of the sinner in Christ as having died and risen with Him. So now we are taken onto a further stage of direct, positive, doctrinal teaching, showing how we the sinner not only died, but that God rouses us together and seats us together among the celestials, in Christ Jesus (2:6). Our sphere of blessings is among the celestials where Christ is now (1:20). The first half of the epistle is about doctrine. The second half is for our conduct and behavior. Let us briefly look at the following layout of Ephesians chapter one:

Ephesians 1:3-14 – The charter of the church, which is His body.

Let us break it into three groups.

Ephesians 1:3-6 – The Father's will choosing heirs and inheritance (Father).

Ephesians 1:7-12 – The work of His Son in redemption (Son).

Ephesians 1:13-14 – Sealing with the spirit guarantees inheritance (holy spirit).

Remember, though, that the work of a Redeemer is the basic theme of all callings and Scripture.

There is no mention of sin and redemption in :3-6. Our Father's choice was not influenced by sin, since we were chosen before the disruption of the world, before sin entered the scene. However, :7-14 remind us that we were born sinners, so we need redemption because Adam sinned, thus we all are sinners (Romans 3:23).

The word "*redemption*" (deliverance) is mentioned twice.

Ephesians 1:7 – It is past (forgiveness of sins).

Ephesians 1:14 – It is future (for a purchased possession).

The word "*forgiveness*" is also mentioned twice.

Ephesians 4:32 – Translated "dealing graciously" (to forgive).

Ephesians 1:7 – Meaning "to set free." Refers to Passover, the blood of the Lamb (Luke 4:18).

Look at (Luke 4:18):

*The Spirit of the Lord [is] upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach **deliverance** to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, **to set at liberty** them that are bruised ... (KJV).*

The word "*deliverance*" and the phrase "*set at liberty*" are derived from the same Greek word for "*deliverance*" in Ephesians 1:7. So this tells us that forgiveness in Ephesians 1:7 is much like the great

---

Passover for Israel in the Old Testament. Israel was in bondage in Egypt, which was a picture of the bondage of sin; but through the blood of the Passover Lamb they were delivered, they were set free. So we, too, as members of the church are set free from sin.

It is not for us to reason why we are His heirs, but to accept the wonderful fact that God did this “*according to the good pleasure of His will,*” “*according to the purpose of Him Who works all things according to the counsel of His Own will.*” Faith accepts the truth of God’s Word. Our heavenly Father has a purpose for you and me. We are not a random number. We are not here because of some “big bang.” We were known “*before the disruption of the world*” and appointed as the heirs among the celestials where our inheritance and blessings are located. What a God of grace!

The hope is that we will be seated in our inheritance among the celestials in all wonderful and glorious reality. Our Heavenly Father will bring to pass these things for us in the times or the seasons which He has put in His Own authority. Paul writes of these future days:

*... to have an administration of the complement of the eras [dispensation of the fullness of times], to head up all in the Christ – both that in the heavens and that on the earth ... (Ephesians 1:10).*

We can begin to identify the times when we shall literally be seated together among the celestials. Today we are seated there so far as God is concerned. We are there now in spirit, “*in Christ,*” but in the future we will be in our inheritance in reality. We are left in no doubt as to when we take our seats among the celestials, and as a foretaste we turn to this passage of glory:

*If, then, you were roused together with Christ, be seeking that which is above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Be disposed to that which is above, not to that on the earth, for you died, and your life is hid together with Christ in God. Whenever Christ, our Life, should be manifested, then you also shall be manifested together with Him in glory (Colossians 3:1-4).*

The purpose in Ephesians one is concerning Christ. All blessings are among the celestials, in Christ (:3). We are chosen and designated beforehand, predestined for the place of a son (:5). Paul’s prayer is that God may be giving us a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization of Him, for us to perceive what is the expectation of His calling (:15-18). Christ is made Head over all things (:9, 22).

In chapter two and three, the secret reveals that God vivifies us, rouses us and seats us together among the celestials in Christ Jesus, that in the oncoming eons, He should be displaying the transcendent riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. We are saved in grace through Christ’s faith. No works on our behalf. We were once apart from Christ, alienated from the citizenship of Israel, and guests of the promise covenants, having no expectation. Yet now, Christ Jesus tears down the wall between Jew and gentile and makes us both one, creating the two in Himself, into one new humanity. We are no longer guests, but are fellow-citizens of the saints and belong to God’s family. A chosen people, made up of both Jews and gentiles, are to be joint enjoyers of an allotment, and a joint body, and joint partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus, through the evangel. The apostle Paul brought the evangel of the untraceable riches of Christ, and to enlighten all as to what is the administration (dispensation) of the secret, which has been concealed from the eons in God, Who creates all, that now may be made known to the sovereignties and the authorities among the celestials, through the ecclesia (church), the multifarious wisdom of God. We will have part in reconciling the celestials.

Let us discuss the secret of Ephesians as this is the dispensational message for today. Some topics will be reiterated to refresh our memory. Because of being unable to “rightly divide” the prophecies, many Rabbis in Israel had to invent two Messiahs. It was beyond their comprehension that one Messiah could both suffer *and* reign. Human reason just couldn’t imagine how one could possibly meet the requirements of Messiah. They could not separate the first and second coming of the Messiah, the first to suffer, the second to reign.

The same is true concerning this present eon. God’s present purpose as found in this dispensation, the secret, is as unreasonable to modern day “Rabbis” as was the first and second coming of Christ to their ancient counterparts. The secret is not reasonable to the carnal mind and to those who have not bothered to rightly divide the Word. It is absolutely essential that the Word of God be divided aright if one is to see the secret. As long as Israel is robbed of her blessings and her hope by believers, the word of truth is dishonored, and the holy spirit is not at liberty to “enlighten” the eyes of their understanding (1:18).

It should also be pointed out that, just because somebody is rightly dividing the Word, there is no guarantee that he knows the secret. Far too many are wrestling with the problem. They talk a great deal about “right division.” They make a difference between the Jew and gentile, between Peter and Paul, between the kingdom and the church, between law and grace, and yet do not comprehend the secret. They sow discord and confusion and hinder many from coming to the knowledge of the truth. The characteristics that make the church of the secret a distinct and separate calling from any of God’s other company of redeemed, are as follows:

– **The Secret Was Known Only to God.**

This out-calling of believers fulfills a secret purpose of God known only to Him (3:11). It was not made known until Israel was officially and judicially set aside in unbelief (Acts 28:26-28). This called-out group of believers makes up a company of redeemed that is referred to as “*the ecclesia which is His body, the complement of the One completing the all in all*” (1:22). This secret was given exclusively to the apostle Paul by revelation (3:3).

– **The Secret Was a Special Calling.**

The word “*calling*” is used to make known dispensational truth. The Bible reveals at least three callings.”

1. The calling of Israel;
2. The calling of the church before Acts 28;
3. The calling of the church of the Secret (after Acts 28).

Each calling differs in its Origin, Constitution and Sphere of blessing. The special calling of the secret is said to be a “holy calling (2 Timothy 1:9), and we are to know what is the expectation of His calling (1:18).



---

---

– **The Secret Was Concealed.**

This was not only a secret, but a well-kept one. The depository was the Heart of God. This secret has been concealed from the eons in God (3:9). Notice that it was not concealed from the Old Testament writings. It was “*concealed in God.*” The secret, which had been concealed from the eons and from the generations, was now made manifest to His saints (Colossians 1:26). This eonian purpose (3:11) was not known by “*the fathers*” or “*the prophets.*” It was God’s most sacred secret, and who could wrest a secret from Him until He was ready to make it known?

– **The Secret Was planned Before the Eons Began (2 Timothy 1:9).**

This present church is the only company of believers that is said to have its origin “*before the disruption of the world*” (1:4). The calling of the “*kingdom*” (Matthew 25:34) is related to a calling “*from the disruption of the world.*” The “*one expectation*” (4:4) of the church of the secret was promised “*before the eons began*” (Titus 1:2).

– **The Secret Was Revealed Exclusively to Paul, the Prisoner.**

The internal evidence in Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 2 Timothy and Philemon designate that they were the apostle’s writings while he was a “*prisoner of Jesus Christ.*” Paul also states that he is a prisoner for “*you gentiles*” (3:1). Paul makes many references to his prison ministry (Ephesians 4:1; 6:19-20; Philippians 1:7, 13; Colossians 4:3; 2 Timothy 1:8, 16; 2:9; Philemon 1:9-10).

– **The Secret Was for the Nations.**

Paul says in Acts 28:28 that salvation, which had been of the Jews, is now sent to the nations, and that they will hear it. Gentiles during God’s dealings with Israel had a dispensational disadvantage, “*Yet now, in Christ Jesus, you, who once are far off, are become near by the blood of Christ*” (2:3). Until the revelation of the secret, the oracles of God were committed to Israel (Romans 3:2). The “*restoration of Israel*” is now no longer possible as long as God’s secret purpose is operative and as long as the nations now have the dispensational advantage.

– **The Secret Was Not Related to Any Covenants or Promises.**

This sacred secret was promised “*in Christ before the eons began*” (Titus 1:2). The “*covenants*” and the “*promises*” belonged to the fathers of Israel (Romans 9:3-5), not to the church of the one body. The promises made to the fathers were from the disruption of the world, and the covenants were made since the eons began. We were called with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His Own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the eons began (2 Timothy 1:9), thereby eliminating the church which is His body from any connection with “*covenants and promises*” that were made in time, *i.e.*, since the eons began.

Romans 15:8 says that Christ has become the Servant of the Circumcision, for the sake of the truth of God, to confirm the patriarchal promises to the fathers, not the church of the one body. The “*covenants*” were with Israel. The Lord promised a new covenant with the house of Israel and Judah (Jeremiah 31:31-36), not the church which is His body. The secret was hidden in God. It was not in a veiled

language in the Old Testament, and the secret has no connection with any “covenants” either “old” or “new.” God’s present purpose was planned before the eons began, thus eliminating the need for any ties with “promises or covenants.”

– **The Secret Has a Unique Sphere of Blessing.**

The company of the one body is ascended, accepted, blessed, and seated together among the celestials in Christ Jesus (1:3; 2:6). No other company of God’s redeemed is said to enjoy this place of blessing. The sphere of blessing is at God’s right hand, where Christ sits, up above the firmament of (Genesis 1:7-8) where the heavens are stretched out like a curtain (Isaiah 40:22), up to the heaven of (Genesis 1:1). It is there, up over all who are of the heavens (4:10), that the church which is His body enjoys its unique sphere of blessing.

Israel “according to the flesh” (Romans 9:3) had for its hope the “earth” as a place of blessing. Matthew 5:5 states, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” This sphere of blessing is associated with the “Kingdom,” and an earthly city, Jerusalem. This is the sphere of blessing for which listeners to the Sermon on the Mount were told to pray: “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).

The faithful from the call of Abraham to the close of Acts had for their hope a heavenly sphere, not “far above all heavens,” but one that was heavenly in character and associated with the heavenly city, New Jerusalem (Hebrews 11:10). This city is referred to in Galatians 4:26 as “Jerusalem which is above.” In Hebrews 12:22 it is referred to as “the city of the living God, the celestial Jerusalem.” The “overcomers” of the book of Revelation are also associated with this city called “the Bride, the Lamb’s wife” (Revelation 21:9). This heavenly sphere of blessing is viewed as coming “down from God out of heaven.” In other words it is seen descending after the new heavens and new earth appear (Revelation 21:1-2, 9-10). Those believers who made or will make up that company of redeemed will enjoy their place of blessing in New Jerusalem, not among the celestials where Christ sits.

– **The Secret Has Its Own Figure.**

The church which is His body is figured as One New Man, a New Humanity (2:15). The church of the Acts economy and the Great Tribulation is likened to a bride (2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 21:2, 9-10). Israel according to the flesh was a called-out nation from among other nations, and is referred to as Jehovah’s “wife,” that is now cast off, but will be reunited in the Millennium (Hosea 2:16-20; 3:3).

Each of three spheres of blessing is associated with a peculiar destiny.

**Wife – Bride – New Humanity**

The earth – New Jerusalem – Among the Celestials

This epistle to the Ephesians was written from a Roman prison by the apostle Paul around 62 A.D. It was written to the saints at Ephesus and to “the faithful in Christ Jesus” anywhere. The truth contained in this epistle is the most profound truth in all of the Word of God. It is the loftiest truth in the Scripture where there is no room for anything but PRAISE and PEACE from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Certain points are worth repeating. The “Secret” is here revealed. It had been kept secret

since before the eons began; not made known to the sons of humanity (3:5); concealed in God (3:9); never revealed in the Scriptures, but made known to the apostle Paul by means of a special revelation (3:3). The great "Secret" is that of the church which is His body (1:22; 2:16) with Christ Jesus revealed as its Head. It concerns the "new humanity" (2: 15), *i.e.*, "a mature man" (4:13). It makes known a sphere of blessings "over all who are of the heavens" (4:10) which had never been the subject of man's delight.

Yet now it is made known that God has an election out of the earth that was chosen in Christ before the disruption of the world (1:4). This calling is destined to occupy the heavenly places where Christ is now enthroned and seated at the Father's Own Right Hand. Those who have received the place of a son, by Christ Jesus unto Himself (1:5), will one day be received up over every sovereignty and authority and power and lordship (1:21), there to enjoy the inconceivable glory. Truth contained in this epistle is immeasurably higher than the glorious truth concerning the Kingdom. This company of believers is blessed with every spiritual blessing among the celestials, in Christ (1:3). They are viewed as having been quickened, roused and exalted together with Him. The church which is His body is the only company and calling of God's redeemed that is said to be "to the praise of the glory of His grace" (1:6).

Paul is given a revelation of such a nature that man and all of his religion find no place for forms and ceremonies. We learn in the Ephesians epistle that God is concerned with His Own purpose, will, Son and inheritance. Ephesians is for those who have enlightened eyes that they may see the revelation of the secret. This epistle is considered "strong meat" of the word. It is certainly for those who have grown in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is written for those who are faithful (*i.e.*, full of faith). It is impossible for those who still hold to rituals, rites, form and ceremony to grasp the truth recorded here. It is for those who have passed on from types and shadows and symbols. It concerns the realm of the spirit where full-grown men of God are to live, even while they tabernacle in the flesh. As the Lord Jesus Christ grants wisdom and revelation in the Word of Truth, full-grown, mature men of God are to grow accustomed to seeing the things that are invisible, as they begin to move in mind, heart and spirit among the invisible and spiritual things.

This Ephesians epistle was written after the landmark of Acts 28:28 was reached, where the dispensational boundary line was crossed and Israel's hope was left behind, unfilled and set aside. The churches which had been established during the Book of Acts found that the miraculous had ceased. Signs, wonders and miracles were no longer the order of the day, but rather silenced. Perhaps the most awesome and far-reaching pronouncement made, since the messengers heralded the birth of Christ, was in a Roman prison when the apostle Paul solemnly pronounced Israel's blindness in Acts 28. For with his pronouncement in Acts 28:28, kingdom truth ended abruptly. Ephesians explains God's purpose and silence during this present age. Shortly after Paul made known to the believers that the Lord is no longer dealing on kingdom grounds but rather on the basis of the secret, they turned from him and the new revelation. Before Paul was martyred, he testified that all who were in Asia had turned away from him (2 Timothy 1:15), and had forsaken him (2 Timothy 4:16). Most evidently, the majority of believers in Paul's own day failed to acknowledge the landmark of Acts 28, as they do today. They took truth made known after Israel was set aside and read it back into those epistles Paul wrote before he knew the secret.

Paul told Timothy to "present yourself to God qualified, an unashamed worker, rightly dividing the Word of Truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). I listed these in a previous chapter, but will do so again because of

their importance, and to refresh your memory. Recognize that the apostle had two ministries - one during the Acts period and the other after the Acts period ended.

Ministry During the Acts Period Past Dispensation	Ministry After the Acts Period Present Dispensation
Galatians, Hebrews	Ephesians-Colossians
1, 2 Thessalonians	Philippians
1, 2 Corinthians	Titus, Philemon
Romans	1, 2 Timothy

Present Truth is found in those epistles written after Israel was set aside. When Paul ceased being “*bound for israel’s hope*” and became “*a prisoner of Jesus Christ for the nations,*” he received a new and fresh revelation.

Paul wrote seven epistles after the Acts 28 crisis. Five are written from prison and two are written between the Roman imprisonment recorded in Acts 28 and the imprisonment that ended in his death. Charles H. Welch gives a good outline of the seven epistles in his work entitled *Heavenly places*, which we set forth below.

- A. Ephesians                      The dispensation of the Secret made known to and through the Apostle, as the prisoner of Jesus Christ.
- B. Philippians                    Bishops and Deacons; Prize of the high calling; Work out . . . salvation; Try the things that differ. Run the race.
- C. Colossians                      The dispensation of the Secret, and similar teaching to Ephesians with warnings added concerning the prize. Personal exhibition of truth.
- D. Philemon                        Teaching having personal regard to individual servants with respect to work of administration while the new teaching was being established.
- A. 1 Timothy                        The Secret of Godliness; Bishops and Deacons appointed; Special instructions in view of the great dispensational change.
- B. Titus                              Bishops appointed to maintain the truth against Judaic opposition. The truth which is after godliness.
- C. 2 Timothy                        No Bishops or Deacons; Intensely individual. The Crown; Right Division; Those who Opposed the Truth.

### The Salutation

*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, to all the saints who are also believers in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ (1:1-2).*

The apostle Paul is the writer of this epistle and he says so in the salutation of the letter. Paul is writing this to the saved at Ephesus. All of the saved are “*saints,*” meaning “*set apart ones.*” You don’t wait until after you are dead for some church to make you a saint. This epistle is of necessity addressed to the saved, and not only that, it is addressed to the “*faithful.*” There is a big difference between being a

---

saint and being a FAITHFUL saint. Remember that all of the saved are “*saints*,” but not all of the saints are FAITHFUL. The word “*faithful*” means “believing what God has said.”

This letter is addressed to the saints, but more in particular to the ones who will believe the latest revelation from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. You have many people who are saints but don't believe the latest revelation that we have from God. The Lord would have us understand and believe the latest TRUTH that we have from Him. A “*faithful*” saint believes the latest report that he has heard from God. “*Now faith cometh by hearing, and hearing [cometh] by the Word of God*” (Romans 10:17).

The apostle Paul, as the “*prisoner of Jesus Christ for the nations*,” has a special revelation that is connected with him as the Lord's prisoner. This special revelation, given to Paul after Israel is set aside, is identified with Paul's prison ministry. It is while he is in prison that the RISEN, ASCENDED and GLORIFIED Lord Jesus Christ gives the latest revelation to Paul the apostle. He reveals to him a most carefully concealed secret. This secret has been concealed in God. God the Father had kept a secret and had not made it known until He gave it to Paul the prisoner by special revelation. Paul calls this special revelation “*the testimony of the Lord's prisoner*” (2 Timothy 1:8). He tells Timothy not to be ashamed of this testimony. In plainer words, the testimony for present truth is to be found in the epistles written by Paul the prisoner, not Paul the free man. However, don't misunderstand: “*All Scripture is inspired by God, and is beneficial for teaching, for exposure, for correction, for discipline in righteousness*” (2 Timothy 3:16).

Present truth for the church, which is “*His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all*,” is found in this peculiar cluster of epistles we call the prison epistles. The “*faithful*” believe what is heard from God, not just that which is written for other ages and dispensations, but those who believe that which was written by the Lord's prisoner. The prisoner of the Lord is the chosen vessel to make known God's secret purpose. It is in the epistle to the Ephesians that this secret is made known. The high truth concerning the church which is His body is explained and revealed here. The faithful recognize Paul's distinctive ministry as the great revelator of God's secret purpose, that is, the purpose that God had planned before the eons began and before any promises were made to any of the “*fathers*.” It is only the faithful who will believe PRESENT TRUTH. That's why Paul addresses this to the saints at Ephesus and the “*faithful in Christ Jesus*.”

As he always does, he bestows the blessings of “*grace and peace*” to the readers of this epistle. Grace is, of course, the main characteristic of Paul's ministry. In 3:2 Paul says that the administration of the grace of God is “*given to me for you*.” So, since God's administration of His program of GRACE was given to Paul to explain, it is natural that Paul opens his epistles with that famous salutation of his: “*Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ*.” You might notice that grace and peace have God the Father as the originator and source, and this grace and peace comes through and flows out from the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no grace or peace apart from being in Christ. The unsaved have no peace with God. They are at enmity with God, but after being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1). Those who have peace with God can also have the peace of God (Philippians 4:7).

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who blesses us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials, in Christ* (Ephesians 1:3).

We are not given much insight into what “*spiritual blessings*” are. What physical material blessings would be in the earthly sphere, spiritual blessings would be in the heavenly sphere. They would be in perfect harmony with the environment for which they are designed. The wealth of glory has been willed to the members of the church over which Christ Jesus is the Head. No wonder Paul says, “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who blesses us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials, in Christ.*”

The church which is His body is to be received up into glory one day. When this takes place, the church will then receive its inheritance. While we pilgrim through this world, the material blessings that we enjoy from time to time are only as manna in the wilderness. The real joy of our blessings awaits us. Thus, we are instructed to be disposed to that which is above, not to that on the earth (Colossians 3:2). What the blessings of the Land of Promise will be to Israel, and what the blessings of New Jerusalem will be to Abraham and his faithful followers and the Overcomes in Revelation, is what every spiritual blessing will be to the church which is His body. This will be realized in resurrection on the “tip-top” of the universe, up above the firmament, up where Christ is now seated at God’s right hand.

As members of the faithful saints, we may be called on to suffer need or want, sickness or sorrow, or we may abound and be full. Whatever our state, we are to “*therewith be content*” (Philippians 4:11). There is no guarantee for abundance in this life. The ungodly may seem to prosper, and some saints may appear to be so richly blessed; but to judge a man’s spiritual worth by what we see would be foolish. Today we are to live in light of a new plane, that is, a spiritual plane. This plane is on resurrection and ascension ground, where every blessing that is spiritual is reserved for this new company and calling.

### **Heavenly Places**

Each company of God’s redeemed is to enjoy a particular sphere of blessing. “Heavenly places” answers the question of where the Church of the Secret Dispensation will enjoy its blessings. No other company or calling was ever given any hope at all of “*heavenly places*” being the place of their inheritance. Not until the apostle Paul received the revelation of the secret did anyone ever entertain a legitimate hope of living again in the highest heaven. A legitimate hope would be based on a promise from God. Most all pagans and heathens had the idea that at death they would go to “the great spirit in the sky,” or to “the happy hunting ground in the sky,” or to “hillbilly heaven,” or some other such place; but God had never given anyone a promise that they would live again in “*heavenly places*” until the secret dispensation was made known to Paul the prisoner.

Until Acts 28:28, all of God’s redeemed looked either to the land of Palestine, Paradise restored (*i.e.*, the New Earth) or New Jerusalem as their place and sphere of blessing. No one who believed what God had revealed had any idea of heaven becoming their abode. For it was known by Bible believers that,

*The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord’s: but the earth hath He given to the children of men*  
(Psalm 115:16).

Those who looked for the establishment of the Kingdom were told by the Lord Himself that the meek

shall inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5). Even Job was assured that his Redeemer lived, and that in the latter day in resurrection he would see God *"upon the earth"* at the resurrection when the current heavens are no more (Job 14:12; 19:25-26; Revelation 21:1).

Those who walked in the steps of faithful Abraham from Genesis 12 to Acts 28 looked for a city which has *"foundations whose builder and maker is God. ... for God has prepared for them a city"* (Hebrews 11:10, 16). It is heavenly in origin and character, but it comes down from God out of heaven (Revelation 21:2, 10) and comes to rest on the New Earth. This city is the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22). Even the apostle Paul (the writer of Hebrews) during the Acts economy said, *"For here we are not having a permanent city, but we are seeking for the one which is impending"* (Hebrews 13:14). He did not say that they sought it to go to, but rather one to come. He refers to a Jerusalem *"which is above is free, which is the mother of us all [i.e., those who walked in Abraham's steps of faith]"* (Galatians 4:26).

When the Acts 28 crisis was reached and Israel's blessings connected with the kingdom program were set aside, Paul ceased being bound for Israel's hope (Acts 28:20), and then became an ambassador in bonds to make known the secret (Ephesians 6:19-20; Colossians 4:3). *"Heavenly places"* is then revealed to be the place of blessing for the new calling, the church of the secret dispensation. The new and fresh revelation which Paul receives from the ascended, enthroned, exalted Christ Jesus is that there is now going to be a called-out company that is to be blessed with all spiritual blessings, not in the land, not in Paradise restored, nor in the City of the Living God, but in *"HEAVENLY PLACES."*

*"Heavenly places"* is a phrase that occurs only in the Ephesians epistle. This fact makes its association with the secret even more obvious. Therefore, it could be said that the destiny of the church over which Christ is the Head is heavenly places. It is a definite place. Its location is above the highest heaven (Ephesians 4:10). The church of God during the Acts period was looking for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in the air. He was in heaven and the church of God was anticipating His return from heaven. Notice the contrast between the two callings. The church of God looked for His coming, but the church of the secret dispensation looks for its manifestation with Him in Glory (Colossians 3:4).

The fact that the Church during the Book of Acts looked for the Lord's return is very significant when we realize that, after Acts 28:28, Paul receives the revelation of the secret and ceases looking for the Lord's return, because His return was postponed. The Lord is no longer in heaven awaiting Israel's repentance. The possibility of Israel's repentance ended with Acts 28:17-28. Thus ended the possibility of the Lord's return to the earth at that time. This did not take the Lord by surprise. He was not "left holding the bag." The purposes of God were not frustrated. Instead, Paul, the prisoner, learns that God ushered in His eonian purpose (Ephesians 3:11) and it concerns the great secret. That is to say, Christ is now the Head over all things to the church which is His body (Ephesians 1:22), as well as Head over all principality and power (Colossians 2:10). When God's purpose is worked out with the church which is His body, then He will again deal with Israel. Revelation 1 will pick up where Acts 28 ended.

In Ephesians 4 we are dealing with the believers' walk. We have the unity of the body and diversity of gifts to build up and adjust the body of Christ. If you can recall, the body of believers that crossed the Acts 28:28 dispensational divide needed to be adjusted to understand Paul's revelation of the secret dispensation. Holding the truth in love, we should be making all grow into Him Who is the Head,

Christ. Our walk will be in accordance with the measure in which we learn Christ. It is not what we read or who taught us, but have we heard Him?

*Him you hear, and by Him were taught (according as the truth is in Jesus) (4:21).*

For His words which He speaks to us are spirit and life (John 6:63).

In Ephesians 5 we have the domestic relationship between husband and wife. The duty of husband to wife is illustrated by the relation of the Head to the body, inasmuch as the husband is the head of the wife. This is not the bride of Christ. As discussed in a previous chapter, that phrase is not found in the Bible. The bride is the subject of Old Testament prophecy, and therefore could not form part of the secret dispensation which was concealed in God from the eons.

In Ephesians 6:14-17 we have the armor (panoply) of God.

- The girdle of truth: the truth taught in Ephesians (*cf.* 4:21).
- The Breastplate: God's righteousness as taught in (*cf.* Romans 3:22).
- The Sandals: to proclaim that God is at peace, conciliating the world to Himself (*cf.* 2 Corinthians 5:18).
- He is our peace (*cf.* Ephesians 2:14).
- The Faith's Shield: Christ is faith (*cf.* Psalm 5:12; Galatians 2:16; Philippians 3:9).
- The Helmet: Christ is our salvation (*cf.* Ephesians 1:7, 13).
- The Sword: The Word of God (*cf.* John 1:14; Hebrews 4:12-13).

This is our Divine Panoply. It is to be used against spiritual forces in defense of our spiritual blessings; but remember that it is all about our Savior. He is every part of the armor. We can be assured that we are more than conquerors through Him Who loves us and gave Himself for us.

## **PHILIPPIANS**

Philippians was written to demonstrate the failure of adhering to the truths found in the Ephesians letter. The great doctrinal teaching of Ephesians is that Christ is the Head of the church which is His body. This calling requires a worthy walk, not only with respect to Christ the Head, but to the fellow members of the one body as well. Paul and Timothy are portrayed as slaves instead of apostles. Emphasis is put on suffering and service. Paul brings conviction in order to remedy what went wrong. His adversaries were in-house believers (1:27). He told them to behave according to their heavenly citizenship and to walk worthily of the gospel of Christ.

Philippians contains the root word *Phili*, meaning Love. *Philippic* (PHIL-hippic, "fil hip' ik") is an adjective which describes the love or fondness for horses.

So Philippians is a book about running a race for a prize, a prize having to do with our walk. Salvation is God approaching us (1:28). The word "*salvation*" in 1:28, 2:12 and Ephesians 1:13 is not referring to our justification or eonian life. Salvation doesn't always mean being saved from the penalty of sins. Salvation can include the whole blessing that God gave to us. For example, in Luke 2:30 Simeon said that "*my eyes have seen Thy salvation.*" Simeon was looking forward to the bless-



ings of Israel to be fulfilled. He saw that in the birth of our Lord Jesus. It's the same with us. We are looking forward to our prize, our crown (wreath, 4:1). We want to do the work that God has assigned to us. We are to suffer good works, but will not be rewarded today. We should consider others and not ourselves.

Paul was a great example. He wanted us to become imitators of him (3:17). He had no confidence in the flesh. If anyone could, it would be him. He was circumcised the eighth day, of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, in relation to law. He was a Pharisee in relation to zeal, persecuting the church, in relation to the righteousness which is in law, becoming blameless. Yet all of these things which were gain to him, these he deemed a forfeit because of Christ (3:4-7). The following verse has been misinterpreted to mean that if Paul died, it would be gain for him because he would immediately be with the Lord.

*For to me to be living is Christ, and to be dying, gain (1:21).*

This is false, because the resurrection of the body must occur first, and when we die we do not pass onto immortality. Only Christ has immortality at the present. More about these topics in a later chapter. What Paul is saying is that it was not his gain, but gain for Christ by the furtherance of the gospel. He would be willing to die if it meant gain for Christ. The following verse is also misinterpreted.

*For I am being pressed out of the two [living and dying], having the desire for the return [analu-sai], and to be with Christ, for it is very far better (1:23, Companion Bible).*

Paul was referring to the Lord's return to earth. This was the hope of the saints all through the Acts period. Paul would have loved to have seen His Savior return during his imprisonment, especially being close to his death. The Greek word *anulusai* means "to depart or return." The only other place this word is found is in Luke. The Greek word *analuö* means "to return from another place to here," not from here to another place.

*Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns [analuö] from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks (Luke 12:36).*

So Paul would rather have the Lord return than to live in prison or be put to death, but since the Lord was not returning in his lifetime he would rather stay in the flesh, because the saints needed his help.

The enemies of the cross of Christ (3:18) are not unbelievers against the gospel of salvation, but are believers who are stumbling blocks (1:10) against our worthy walk.

The book (scroll) of life is mentioned by Paul in 4:3. I discuss the book of life in a later chapter, but for now, it is found only in the Circumcision writings, except here in Philippians. I guess Paul was stressing that it is a book of service for those who are competing for the prize.

Below are differences between Ephesians and Philippians, differences between what we learned and how we are to pursue the prize of God's calling.

- Ephesians 1:19: To know the hope of His calling (Our Position);
- Philippians 3:14: Not the hope. We strive for the prize of our calling (Our Condition).
  
- Ephesians 3:12: We have boldness;
- Philippians 2:12: Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.
  
- Ephesians 4:13: Christ is the fullness;
- Philippians 2:7: Christ emptied Himself (Example for us).
  
- Ephesians 1:4: Chosen to be holy and flawless;
- Philippians 2:15: Do all things without complaining so you can become flawless.

Reading this epistle will strengthen our conduct and walk so as not to cause strife, contention and vain glory among other believers. Be obedient to God Who is operating in you to will as well as to work for the sake of His delight. Do all things without murmurings and reasonings, that you may become blameless and artless, children of God, flawless, in the midst of a generation crooked and perverse among whom we are appearing as luminaries in the world.

Four examples whose lives typify service and suffering are Christ, Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus. Our humility should reflect our Lord's. He emptied Himself of glory and took on the form of a slave, being humbled to death. We, too, should be having no confidence in the flesh. May we be found in Him, not having our righteousness, which is of law, but through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is from God for faith (3:9). Forget the things of flesh which are behind, yet stretch out toward the goal that Paul pursued, which is conformity to Christ Jesus in His glory (3:13-14). Although the full impact of this conformity cannot be enjoyed until the Lord appears, Who will transfigure our bodies of humiliation, to conform it to the body of His glory, (3:20-21), the believer should strive to come as close as possible to acquire the prize. Become imitators of Paul. Through his conduct we see the resurrection life of Christ.

In (4:4-7), there is a comforting prayer for believers when trials or sufferings come our way, or if man crosses us and retaliation becomes tempting. Rejoice in the Lord always, and be easygoing toward all mankind, for the Lord is near. He will look after our concerns. Do not worry, for it solves nothing; but in everything by prayer and petitions, let your requests be made known to God. There is no guarantee that all prayers will be answered because of God's will. However, we are promised that the peace of God shall be guarding our hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus.

*Be rejoicing in the Lord always! Again, I will declare, be rejoicing! Let your lenience be known to all men: the Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, that is superior to every frame of mind, shall be garrisoning your hearts and your apprehensions in Christ Jesus.*

Believers may not receive everything they want or ask for from God. We should be thankful that He equips us with our needs. He treats us as He perceives us in Christ Jesus.

*Now my God shall be filling your every need in accord with His riches in glory in Christ Jesus (4:19).*

---



---

## COLOSSIANS

Like the epistle to the Galatians, the epistle to the Colossians has to do more with doctrine than with practice, and it stands in the same relation to Ephesians as Galatians stands in relation to Romans. The subject of Galatians is “correction” for failure as to the doctrine and instruction contained in Romans, while the subject of Colossians is correction for failure as to the doctrine and instruction contained in Ephesians.

The likeness between Colossians and Ephesians is as marked as that between Romans and Galatians, if not more so; for, out of 95 verses in Colossians, 78 have a marked resemblance to Ephesians (*i.e.*, more than three quarters of the whole), while out of the 155 verses in Ephesians, one-half resemble Colossians – but it is the nature of this resemblance which is so significant. What is stated by way of teaching in Ephesians comes up again in Colossians by way of correction for departure from that teaching.

There is also another and peculiar link which binds this group of three epistles together. Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians were all written during Paul’s first imprisonment in Rome – all three mention the fact (Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; Philippians 1:7, 13-14, 16, 25-26; 2:24; Colossians 4:3, 10, 18).

The structure of Colossians will show us that there is the same manifestation of concern as there is in the epistle to the Galatians. This is most marked. The same care, fear and anxiety are observable in both.

### Colossians as a Whole

- A. 1:1-2. Epistolary: and Salutation.
- B. 1:3-8. Mutual reports and messages by Epaphras, “*our dear fellow-servant and your faithful minister.*”
- C. 1:9-2:7 Paul’s concern for the Colossian saints, and his prayer for them (“*we pray for you*”), and that concerning their holding the Secret.
- D. 2:8-23. Doctrinal correction for failure as to Instruction in Ephesian truth, having “*died with Christ.*”
- D. 3:1-4:1. Doctrinal correction for failure as to Instruction in Ephesian truth, having “*risen with Christ.*”
- C. 4:2-6. Paul’s concern for the Colossian saints; and their prayers for him (“*praying also for us*”), and that concerning his preaching the Secret.
- B. 4:7-9. Mutual reports and messages by Tychicus and Onesimus, “*beloved brethren.*”
- A. 4:10-18. Epistolary: and Salutation.

The Colossian saints had been taught concerning the secret dispensation as set forth in Ephesians, that Christ is the Head of the body, and we are the church which is His body.

The Philippian saints failed practically concerning the body, and the Colossian saints failed doctrinally, “*not holding the Head*” (2:19). These are the keynotes of the two epistles.

In the one case, the failure led to strife, contention and vain-glory, while the other led to various doctrinal errors which necessarily arose out of it.

In Romans “*justification by faith*” was practically recovered at the Reformation. The Galatian departure and failure are not so well known today as they were before the Reformation.

The Ephesians truth never has been really or properly recovered. Today we can see the effects of failure and departure from it, with regards to all of the errors and “*winds of doctrine*” which characterize the present day.

No epistle has such a warning voice for us as the epistle to the Colossians. None is so practical or so timely in the correction it contains for us.

To learn its lessons with the view of getting back to Ephesians truth is the first step in that great Reformation, which the churches stand in such need of at the present moment. The evils and errors are seen by many, but all do not see the root cause of them in the departure from Ephesian teaching.

This is the cause of all of the want of union and unity of believers in the present day. They do not realize their union in Christ, as having died and being roused with Him. Hence, they are betrayed into various vain methods of seeking union – from the schemer for the reunion of Christendom to the smaller evangelical alliances and associations.

The same cause produces all that we call Ritualism, spreading through all of the churches, which leads to ordinances of all kinds, making them the center of union because of “*not holding the Head*” (2:19).

### **1:9-11 – Concern as to their faith, and a walk worthy of it.**

*Therefore we also, from the day on which we hear, do not cease praying for you and requesting that you may be filled full with the realization of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (:9).*

Paul is making reference to :3-8, with happy tidings and thankfulness to God, on hearing of their faith in Christ Jesus and the love which they have for all of the saints, because of the expectation reserved for them in the heavens. Paul reiterates sound doctrine in Ephesians 1:17 and 4:13, for them to have wisdom and spiritual discernment, not in accord with the teachings of men (2:22).

*... walk worthily of the Lord for all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and growing in the realization of God (:10).*

Paul repeats again (Ephesians 4:1; Philippians 1:27) for them to walk worthy, and to be well pleasing to Christ, not men (3:22), bringing forth fruit and growing as in Ephesians 5:9.

*Being endued with all power, in accord with the might of His glory, for all endurance and patience with joy (:11).*

Paul reminded them to be strengthened with all strength according to His glorious might unto all patient endurance and long-suffering with joyfulness (such is the power of this wondrous truth of the secret dispensation), that by means of its knowledge we may have joyful endurance, and joyful suffering, which finds its expression in thanksgiving (Romans 5:3).

---

**1:14-22 – The Secret revealed, as to the “Head.”**

We next take the knowledge of the secret imparted, so far as it first concerns “*the Head of the body,*” Christ Jesus the Lord. The Colossian saints failed in doctrine, in consequence of “*not holding the Head*” (2:19). Therefore the glory of “*the Head*” is the first part of the secret which is here developed in order to show His fullness and His glory.

- *In Whom we are having the deliverance, the pardon of sins* (:14).

Paul repeats for them the truth found in Ephesians 1:7.

- *Who is the Image of the invisible God, Firstborn [the Heir] of every creature* (:15).

Not Adam (Genesis 1:26), but (Psalm 8)

- *For in Him is all created, that in the heavens and on the earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or sovereignties, or authorities, all is created through Him and for Him* (:16).

Paul repeats for them the truth found in Ephesians 1:21-22.

- *and He is before all, and all has its cohesion in Him* (:17).

Christ is before all in time (John 1:1-4), and by Him all consist. He holds the universe together. He holds all in the unity of harmonious order and law. Not only is this so as regards to the old humanity, but it is the same with regard to the new humanity, the one body in Ephesians 2:15.

- *And He is the Head of the body, the ecclesia, Who is Sovereign, Firstborn from among the dead, that in all He may be becoming first* (:18).

Paul makes reference to truth in Ephesians, as Christ being the Head (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15).

- *for in Him the entire complement delights to dwell* (19).

Paul makes reference to truth in Ephesians, that all fullness should dwell in Christ (Ephesians 1:10, 22; 4:13).

- *and through Him to reconcile all to Him (making peace through the blood of His cross), through Him, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens* (20).

Paul wrote in (Ephesians 1:10) that Christ will head up all in the heavens and on the earth.

- *You, being once estranged and enemies in comprehension, by wicked acts, yet now He reconciles* (21).

Paul reminds them of what we taught in (Ephesians 2:2, 3)

- *through His death, to present you holy and flawless and unimpeachable in His sight (22).*

This was repeated from (Ephesians 1:4; 5:27).

### **1:23-25 – Concern as to their continuing in this faith.**

- *Since surely you are persisting in the faith, grounded and settled and are not being removed from the expectation of the evangel which you hear which is being heralded in the entire creation which is under heaven of which I, Paul, became the dispenser. I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for you, and am filling up in my flesh, in His stead, the deficiencies of the afflictions of Christ, for His body, which is the ecclesia of which I became a dispenser, in accord with the administration of God, which is granted to me for you, to complete the Word of God.*

Paul was concerned for them, and encouraged them to continue in the faith which is built on the foundation that he taught in Ephesians 2:20. Christ is the capstone of the corner of that foundation. The church (*ecclesia*) is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15).

### **1:26-27 – The Faith stated, the Secret declared.**

- *the secret which has been concealed from the eons and from the generations, yet now was made manifest to His saints, to whom God wills to make known what are the glorious riches of this secret among the nations, which is: Christ among you, the expectation of glory.*

Paul reiterates this glorious revelation of the secret, hidden in God, concerning the church which is His body, found in Ephesians 3:8-11.

### **1:28-2:2 – Concern, warning, teaching, and conflict as to their growth and assurance.**

- *Whom we are announcing, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we should be presenting every man mature in Christ Jesus; for which I am toiling also, struggling in accord with His operation, which is operating in me with power. For I want you to perceive what the struggle amounts to which I am having for your sakes and for those in Laodicea, and whoever have not seen my face in flesh, that their hearts may be consoled, being united in love, and to all the riches of the assurance of understanding,*

Paul taught in Ephesians 4:13 how to become a mature man.

### **2:2-3 – The secret acknowledged.**

- *unto a realization of the secret of the God and Father, of Christ, in Whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are concealed.*

Prayer that the saints may come into a realization (Ephesians 1:16-18), the secret which was concealed in God (Ephesians 3:9).

**2:4-7 – Concern as to their steadfastness and establishment in “the Faith.”**

- *Now I am saying this, that no one may be beguiling you with persuasive words. For even if, in flesh, I am absent, nevertheless, in spirit, I am with you, rejoicing and observing your order and the stability of your faith in Christ. As, then, you accepted Christ Jesus, the Lord, be walking in Him, having been rooted and being built up in Him, and being confirmed in the faith according as you were taught, super-abounding in it with thanksgiving.*

The church should be built up on Him, not as a building is built up, but as a body that grows (Ephesians 4:12; 5:9).

**2:8-23 – Doctrinal Correction: We Having Died with Christ*****Caution: Do not be deceived.***

- *Beware that no one shall be despoiling you through philosophy and empty seduction, in accord with human tradition, in accord with the elements of the world, and not in accord with Christ (2:8).*

Paul stresses for the saints to use caution not to be deceived. The warning is heightened by first stating the danger positively, and then repeating it negatively, so that there may be no mistake about the matter. We have here also in this chapter a wonderful link which unites the Galatians and Colossians, and confirms our statement as to the object of these two epistles. It is very remarkable that the word “*elements*” (*stoicheion*), occurs only in two of these seven epistles, Galatians and Colossians, the two epistles which are corrective of errors of doctrine. It occurs twice in each epistle, thus linking them together (Galatians 4:3, 9 and Colossians 2:8, 20).

*Stoicheia* refers to ceremonialism, whether pagan or Jewish, whether the Essenic asceticism, Heathen mysteries, or Jewish meats, drinks, washings, days and months, seasons and years, etc. (Galatians 4:10). Three times out of its four occurrences in these two epistles, the word is connected with the “*world*” (*cosmos*), and refers to what is material as opposed to what is spiritual.

The *stoicheia* were the religious rites and ceremonies of heathen idolatry. In Greece today, every mountain, tree, grove and fountain has its *stoicheion*, or divinity, who has to be appeased and propitiated. These Galatians had been such idolaters, but they had abandoned these rites and ceremonies for Christianity, and yet wanted to bring in the rites and ceremonies of Judaism into the Church.

The same term is thus applied both to Paganism and Judaism, and from the standpoint of being “*all one in Christ Jesus*” (Galatians 3:28), the Jewish rites of circumcision, purification and the observance of “*days and months and times and years,*” etc. are put on the same level as the worship and propitiation of spirits in trees and mountains etc. So here, in Colossians 2:8, 20, we have exactly the same thought and argument. Here, then, we have the source of all of the errors of doctrine. Four distinct warnings are given (2:4, 8, 16, 18) lest the saints should fail to hold fast the truth contained in the epistle to the Ephesians concerning Christ as the Head of the body. To preserve them from man’s vain deceitful philosophy their perfection and completeness in Him is emphasized.

***Christ the Head: we are complete in Him.***

- *For in Him the entire complement of the Deity [Godhead] is dwelling bodily. And you are complete in Him, Who is the Head of every sovereignty and authority (2:9-10).*

God dwells amid all of His possessions in bodily form. In Him we are complete, “made full.” What a wondrous fact! How calculated to make all ceremonial ordinances appear to be the weak and beggarly things that they really are. He is the Head of all government and authority (Ephesians 1:21), whether they are human, spiritual, good or evil.

***Ordinances therefore done away in Christ.***

- *In Whom you were circumcised also with a circumcision not made by hands, in the stripping off of the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ. Being entombed together with Him in baptism, in Whom you were roused together also through faith in the operation of God, Who rouses Him from among the dead, you also being dead to the offenses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He vivifies us together jointly with Him, dealing graciously with all our offenses, erasing the handwriting of the decrees against us, which was hostile to us, and has taken it away out of the midst, nailing it to the cross, stripping off the sovereignties and authorities, with boldness He makes a show of them, triumphing over them in it (2:11-15).*

The ordinances referred to here belonged to the rites and ceremonies of religion. In Christ they are done away. The holy spirit teaches us here, through Paul, that for those who are in union with Christ the Head, as members of His body, these ordinances have been fulfilled, and are ended and done away in the body of His flesh through His death. To return to them, therefore, in any way, is to deny our completeness and perfection in Christ. It is practically to say that He is not sufficient, that something further is necessary to be added to Him, that in spite of all He has done and notwithstanding all His merits, we are incomplete and need some ordinance to make us quite complete.

If believers died with Christ and were buried with Him, there is an end of the whole matter. Believers are complete in Christ through His death, burial and resurrection. The ritual of circumcision (cutting off of flesh) typifies Christ's death. The ritual of baptism typifies Christ's burial and resurrection. The decrees which held both Jews and the nations under bondage has been erased. The nations are no longer subject to Israel. Christ Jesus tore down the central wall of the barrier (Ephesians 2:14). Christ Jesus is triumphant. This being so, another warning becomes necessary, and it is not to be judged.

***Caution: Not to be judged.***

- *Let no one, then, be judging you in food or in drink or in the particulars of a festival, or of a new moon, or of sabbaths, which are a shadow of those things which are impending – yet the body is the Christ's. Let no one be arbitrating against you, who wants, in humility and the ritual of the messengers [angels], to parade what he has seen, feignedly, puffed up by his fleshly mind (2:16-18).*

These are a shadow of the things (realities) to come, but the body (which is the real substance) is



Christ's. These things were the shadows of the future Millennial kingdom, and do not now concern those who have been crucified and buried with Christ. We are the church which is His body, and therefore hold quite a unique position with regard to that kingdom. We have listed here ordinances of Judaism (:16), and ordinances and dangers of heathen Gnosticism (:18). To hold fast to Christ as the Head of the one spiritual body is to keep us from being defrauded of that wondrous possession and prize.

The danger to these Colossian saints was the religion which had to do with the will, thus making them an easy prey to "the willers," or familiar spirits, who would defraud them of their prize. We have the same danger today, and need the same caution. It also appears that these saints had fallen so low as to worship angels, also common today. Messengers, commonly translated angels, were used for the purpose of Israel only and should not be adored as some spiritual guardian being.

- *and not holding the Head, out of Whom the entire body, being supplied and united through the assimilation and ligaments, is growing in the growth of God (19).*

It is not merely unity which is taught here (as in Ephesians), but growth. This is the ultimate result of the intermediate processes. The origin of all is God, Who has given Christ to be the Head over all things to this wondrous body. Christ, the Head, is the source of all, but the members of the body are made and used as the channels of communication in their mutual relation to Him and to one another.

To cease "*holding the Head*," therefore, is to lose, practically, all of our special privileges as members of His body. It is to take up an attitude before God in our access to Him below that in which His love and grace has set us. It is to take the place of humility as the angels, as servants instead of sons, even the sons of God. It is to worship with veiled faces at a distance, instead of "*with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord*," in the face of the glorified Lord Jesus. It is a feigned humility, not apprehending the exceeding riches of the grace of God toward us in Christ Jesus, which is sure to issue in a regard for visible things and religious ordinances, which are the natural objects of the fleshly mind (the old humanity), the only things which it can comprehend or understand. All of this is the sure result of "not holding the Head."

- *If, then, you died together with Christ from the elements of the world, why, as living in the world, are you subject to decrees: "You should not be touching, nor yet tasting, nor yet coming into contact," (which things are all for corruption from use), in accord with the directions and teachings of men? which are (having, indeed, an expression of wisdom in a willful ritual and humility and asceticism) not of any value toward the surfeiting of the flesh (:20-23).*

Those who are reckoned as having died with Christ, and have the spirit of God dwelling within them, and therefore are "*not in the flesh*" (Romans 8:9), are "*set free from all those restraints which were enjoined by God upon those who were in covenant with Him by an ordinance in their flesh*" (Genesis 17:13). The law of commandments in ordinances, which has been abolished by the Lord Jesus in His death and burial, includes not only the ordinances of the Mosaic Law, but extends to all enjoined by men. They are "*the stoicheia of the world*" (Colossians 2:8, 20); the observances, rites and ceremonies of religion, as distinct from Christianity. They may be taught with a show of wisdom of words, as a self-devised religion of man's will, with feigned humility, abstinence and

discipline. This is the present teaching of Christendom, but the result of that teaching, as seen in the present state of the religious world, shows that these things are “of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.”

### 3:1-4:1 – Doctrinal Correction: We were roused together with Christ.

Having thus received the solemn and important doctrinal correction contained in (Colossians 2:8-23), showing the wondrous consequences which come from our having died with Christ, we are now, going to look at (3:1- 4:1), the blessed consequences of our having been roused with Christ. All is based here on the fact that the saints, being “in Christ,” were roused with Him, and now stand on resurrection ground in Him.

#### *Our calling as roused with Christ.*

- *If, then, you were roused together with Christ, be seeking that which is above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God [cf. Ephesians 1:20]. Be disposed to that which is above, not to that on the earth, for you died, and your life is hid together with Christ in God. Whenever Christ, our Life, should be manifested, then you also shall be manifested together with Him in glory. Deadened, then, your members that are on the earth: prostitution, uncleanness, passion, evil desire and greed, which is idolatry, because of which the indignation of God is coming on the sons of stubbornness – among whom you also once walked, when you lived in these things. Yet now you also be putting away all these: anger, fury, malice, calumny, obscenity out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, stripping off the old humanity together with its practices (3:1-9).*

Verses 1-4 deals with our expectation. We are hidden together with Christ. When he is manifested, we will be manifested with Him. This appearing will occur prior to his descending to earth. Verse 5 says to deaden our members. How are we to put our members to death? If we did so physically, it would be suicide, but it must be a possible act. What is it? It surely can be nothing other than what we have in Romans 6:11, “*Reckon ye yourselves to be dead ...*” It is an act of faith in the one act of Christ on the tree, when “*our old humanity was crucified with Him*” (Romans 6:6).

“They that are Christ’s, crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts” (Galatians 5:24). When did they do this? When they, by faith, made this blessed reckoning once for all, and learned the wondrous truth of what God had done for them on Calvary! “*If by [the] spirit [the new humanity] ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye will live*” (Romans 8:13).

In these passages we have the same reference: “*They that are Christ’s did crucify the flesh.*” It is one past definite act, and if any are now complaining of the lowness of their life and walk, then it is for them now to do what they have never yet done, and reckon themselves to have died when Christ died, and thus, practically, obey the injunction of Colossians 3:5. “*If ye were raised with Christ ...*” you must have died with Him; deadened, then, your members, reckoning by faith that you did thus die. Occupy your mind and activities in seeking the things which are above, as roused ones. Thus, and thus only, will you truly live, and will find that your members which are on the earth are dead, practically, having no sphere for their activities as long as your heart and mind are among the celestials. While by faith you dwell there, all will be heavenly.

---

Occupation with heavenly things will produce a heavenly walk on earth. Nothing else will really accomplish this. Other plans and devices may appear to do so, but the result is only artificial and temporary. It will not last. It is like tying paper flowers onto a plant. It is an attempt to produce holiness of life in a way other than that which God has revealed. Just as Cain attempted to procure justification (and therefore "righteousness") by a way of his own instead of taking God's way, so do those who are in the modern movement of the present day attempt to procure a "progressive sanctification" by means and methods, arts and artifices, which are other than God has revealed in these epistles.

In Christ we are complete. We are justified and sanctified in Him. This is our standing which God has given to us in Christ. We cannot grow in this – we can never grow in relationship. We may and can grow in our knowledge of it, in our experience of it, and in our enjoyment of it, but not in the relationship itself. We can grow in all of this only by learning and resting in what God has done, and not by continually trying to do it ourselves!

If we learn the blessed fact that the Lord's people died and were roused again with Christ, by and in His one definite act which can never be undone, then the more we realize this, the more we shall walk worthy of such a wondrous calling. When Christ died and was buried, as we are taught in Colossians 2:12, His people were crucified with Him, hence the reality of this wondrous reckoning when they, by faith, put off the old humanity. When Christ was roused from the dead, those who were then "*quickened together with Him*" (2:13) "*put on the new humanity,*" with Christ as Head, and we are one with Him.

Now, this is the blessed standpoint of every believer. It is now made known among the nations, now made manifest to His saints, "*to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this secret,*" which is Christ – the hope of glory – in you. It is not the possession of those well-instructed in Scripture, or advanced in knowledge, but it belongs to children, still in their parents' homes, and to slaves still in bondage to their masters. This is shown in 3:17-4:1.

The prayer of Epaphras in 4:12 is, "*that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.*" This prayer is similar to the two prayers of Paul in Ephesians 1 and 3. These prayers are that the saints may live in the experimental enjoyment and in the practical manifestation of the grace revealed in "the secret" of the gospel.

Thus the epistle to the Colossians completes the Word of God to the gentile believers in making known "*the riches of the glory of the secret*" which has been "*concealed from the eons and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints*" (Colossians 1:26-27).

The epistle to the Colossians stands side-by-side, as we have shown, with the epistle to the Galatians. Both are marked by "correction." Both are concerning failure, and in both that failure is with respect to doctrine. Both churches had been instructed in the doctrine and truths contained in the epistle to the Romans, therefore both had received "*the beginning of the gospel,*" and now further truth was communicated to them.

Yet in Colossians the correction is in advance of that in Galatians, inasmuch as the Colossians had received the further truth as it affects the subject of ordinances, for those who have Christ for their sanctification (as well as their righteousness), and who know their perfection and completeness in

Him. Those who died with Christ and are justified in Him need no law of works for justification. In like manner, those who are roused with Christ are sanctified in Him need no rules, regulations or ordinances for their sanctification.

(The study of Colossians was taken from E.W. Bullinger's book *The Church Epistles*, available from Clyde Pilkington & Sons. See Resources for contact information.

## **FIRST AND SECOND THESSALONIANS**

We come to the last church epistles in the canonical order of the Bible. However, they were the first letters written by the apostle Paul. I am not going to discuss these epistles in length, because they were written to those saints during the Acts period who's hope was in the return of their Lord Jesus from heaven. Don't get me wrong: I, too, am looking for the Lord to return to earth and set up the millennial kingdom, but according to the epistles which are for us today, we are to be mindful to that which is above, not to that on the earth (Colossians 3:2). We will be manifested with Christ among the celestials when He is manifested. Our citizenship is in the heavens, not on the earth. In chapter six of this e-book, under the sections of the "Second Coming" and "The Rapture Theory," you will find many references to the Thessalonian epistles, relating to the Lord's return to earth. Thessalonians, Mathew, 1 Corinthians and Revelation all tie together with trumpets sounding.

There is one thing, however, that I would like to mention about the church of the Thessalonians. It was a model church. It stands out by itself. In other words, the letter to the Thessalonians wasn't like the letters to the Romans and Ephesians which needed additional letters tied to them for doctrinal and instructional correction, and reproof as to practical failure (Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, Colossians). They were rooted in what Paul taught them and remained true to it, regardless of living among gentiles who sunk into heathen idolatry and persecuting Jews who hated the very name of Christ. Through all of this, not only was it a model church, it was most remarkable for its missionary activity. Sound doctrine produced their fruitful service for God.

## **1 AND 2 TIMOTHY, TITUS AND PHILEMON**

These are not church epistles, but personal ones. The two epistles to Timothy and the epistle to Titus are called the pastoral epistles, because they were written by Paul to Timothy and to Titus, not as friends or believers, but as pastors of the church of God. They were written for the purpose of instructing these ministers in the proper methods of pastoral work. The three epistles have a common character. The subjects of all three are very much the same. As the epistles to the Thessalonians were the first that Paul wrote, so these pastoral epistles were the last of his writings.

There was the danger arising from false doctrine. Paul had been absent from the churches for several years. He had not been able to give them continuous instruction, and therefore was compelled to commit his work to others. During that time Judaizing teachers had crept in and were propounding their endless genealogies. Also, Gnosticism was felt in each one of these churches of Christ. In these epistles we find more in regard to church offices and church government than we find anywhere else. We have here the qualifications for the deaconship. We have directions with regard to discipline of those who are heretics, greedy and of those who are sensual.

---

There is instruction with regard to the conduct of affairs in the church which is His body. Paul wanted to put into other hands the work of preaching the truths found in his epistles, especially Ephesians and Colossians. He charges Timothy to commit these same truths to faithful men who should be able to teach others also. Paul was a whole theological seminary by himself. He desired to raise up and instruct those who should afterward teach the Word of God.

The letter to Philemon was a private one. Paul writes on behalf of Onesimus, Philemon's slave. Following his conversion, Onesimus became a valuable helper of the apostle. Paul desired to keep Onesimus with him, but felt a greater responsibility to return the slave to his master. Onesimus had to make things right with Philemon whom he had wronged. Paul and Onesimus both knew the danger that the slave faced in returning, since slave owners had absolute authority over their slaves and often treated them as property rather than as people. Paul wrote this brief appeal to pacify Philemon and to effect reconciliation between the slave and his master. His other purposes were to commend Philemon for showing compassion to other believers.



## –Chapter 9 –

# Savior of All

Those saints who believe that God will save all mankind and reconcile all to Himself, making peace through the blood of His [Christ's] cross, should not be labeled a “Universalist” or “Unitarian.” We believe that the Bible teaches baptism, but we are not “Baptists.” The most critical difference between Universalists and those who believe in universal reconciliation is that the former rejects the work of the cross, but their rejection of the Bible as anything more than some ancient writings that have influenced the world and contain some good advice is probably the root of our difference with them.

Universalists do not rely much on scriptural evidence, whereas those who believe in universal reconciliation base their evidence on Scripture, and believe that the blood of Christ is the basis of all blessing. So don't be alarmed – this is not a new age religion where there are different ways to God. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one is coming to the Father except through Him. When you read the words “*God is All in all*” in some of the chapters in this e-book, we are not implying that everyone will become a god. These words simply mean the same as saying, “God is everything in everyone.”

Almost everyone agrees that all believers in Christ Jesus are assured endless bliss; but what about unbelievers? There are three opinions regarding their destiny:

- Many declare eternal torment for them in the fires of a so-called hell;
- Some believe that they will cease to exist;
- A few believe that they will eventually be saved.

Differences of opinions would not arise had there been consistency in Bible translations. The wrongful rendering of two Greek words in particular has caused much havoc when speaking of the destiny of mankind. They are *aion* and *aionion*, from which we get our words “eon” and “eonian.” Refer to chapter two of this e-book to recall the various meanings given to these words. There is a difference between the eons and our modern definition or understanding of “forever.” Applying terms such as “forever,” “eternal,” “everlasting,” etc. to the word “punishment” has led to the teaching of unending torment.

God's plan for unbelievers is quite different, with no cruelty involved. Sin, suffering, condemnation and death abide for the eons, not forever. Believers suffer in this wicked eon but are delivered at the presence of Christ. At the Great White Throne judgment unbelievers will suffer distress, agony and death for their sins, but are reconciled to God at the consummation of the eons. Judgment is during the eons, not after.

Teachers of eternal torment have strong scriptural evidence to back their belief. The passage below is used by them to support everlasting punishment:

*Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me. And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life (Matthew 25:45-46, RSV).*

Since the phrase "eternal life" refers to the believer, it is assumed that the punishment must have the same duration of endlessness. However, by comparing this popular verse with the consistent *Concordant Version*, one discovers that it does not deal with the final state of unbelievers. This particular verse should not be taken out of context. To get the full meaning of Matthew 25:45-46, begin reading from 25:31.

The incident referred to in Matthew 25:31-46 is not a judgment for final destiny. When Israel's Messiah returns in glory, the nations (:32) are judged not for their sins, but according to their treatment of Israel. Sheep and kids are nations. The sheep on His right receive blessings through Israel in the Millennium. The kids at His left are chastened for the eon. Below is the correct *Concordant Version* rendering.

*Then shall He be answering them, saying, "Verily, I am saying to you, In as much as you do it not to one of these, the least, neither do you it to Me." And these shall be coming away into chastening eonian, yet the just into life eonian (Matthew 25:45-46).*

Another passage used by those teaching everlasting punishment is found in Revelation 20:10.

*And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Revelation 20:10, RSV).*

Since the phrase "for ever and ever" is attached to Revelation 15:7, where it is written that God lives "for ever and ever," it is assumed that the torment is endless also. Once again, a comparison to the *Concordant Version* shows that eternal torment for the unbelievers is a misconception. Also, Revelation 20:10 should not be taken out of context. At the end of the Millennium Satan will be loosed out of his jail, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth. Then he will mobilize an army the number of which is as the sand of the sea and will surround the beloved city, but fire will descend out of heaven and devour them. The Adversary who is deceiving them will be cast into the lake of fire and sulphur, where the wild beast and false prophet are also.

The lake of fire is also referred to as the second death. This is not in relationship to the Adversary, wild beast and false prophet, for they live in it, but with respect to those who stand before the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:15; 21:8). Torment is mentioned in connection with the Adversary,



wild beast and false prophet only. All agree that the Adversary is not human. The wild beast and false prophet are not human either. In Revelation 13:2-4 the dragon restores life to the slain wild beast (:3, 12, 14). The second wild beast (:11) emphasizes the religious character of the first and is called the false prophet (16:13). The false prophet gives life to the image of the wild beast (13:15). These two superhuman beings do not die during the battle recorded in 19:19. The rest are killed, but the wild beast and false prophet are cast into the lake of fire a thousand years before the Adversary (19:20).

The destiny of the Adversary, wild beast and false prophet is distinctive. They will suffer and be tormented in the final eons. However, all unbelievers stand before the Great White Throne for judgment. They will suffer, being condemned according to their acts, then cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death (20:14). These unbelievers are resurrected humans who could not withstand endless torment. This becomes clear in a later chapter when a study is made on the different resurrections. Whenever God imposes judgment, affliction and pain, it is very brief; but salvation is complete and lasting. The second death is not the final destiny for the unrighteous, because Christ will abolish the last enemy which is death (I Corinthians 15:26), and reconcile all to God (Colossians 1:20). With Revelation 20:10 now put into its proper context, let us turn to the *Concordant Version* for the proper translation.

*And the Adversary who is deceiving them was cast into the lake of fire and sulphur, where the wild beast and where the false prophet are also. And they shall be tormented day and night for the eons of the eons.*

Referring to the Divine Calendar shows that the “eons of the eons” are not endless, but are the final two eons in God’s plan. After the eons have run their course, God will become All in all. Some of you may be wondering that if the eons of the eons end, then in Revelation 15:7 God’s life must come to an end also. This is absurd. In the eons of the eons God’s contact with the earth will not be hidden as it is now in this present wicked eon. His life will be apparent everywhere. Besides, it is written in I Corinthians 2:7 that God existed before the eons. Why, then, would He not exist afterwards?

There are those who also do not believe in eternal punishing, but eternal punishment. That is, it does not consist in tormenting, but in death, in which there is no sensation. I agree that there is no sensation in death, but disagree that punishment is death, especially when it is written that Christ will abolish death and reconcile “all” to God. Those who believe that the second death is the final state for unbelievers, and that they are not made alive at the consummation of the eons, hold true to annihilation. In other words, they believe that billions of souls will cease to exist — “out of sight, out of mind.” This is the second opinion.

The final opinion is that God, through His infinite love, will put away all enmity between Himself and mankind. This is accomplished through the blood of Christ. Those who believe in universal reconciliation claim that everlasting punishment is a mistranslation. Punishment is eonian or “age long” chastening for certain individuals at a specific time, and does not refer to their final destiny. There is a judgment for their acts and then they enter the second death, after which they are made alive and reconciled to God. Every passage of Scripture must be left in its proper place for the time and people involved. Then, and only then, can all Scripture be enjoyed. Believers in universal reconciliation have many strong passages for support which are quoted in this study. Those who cling to the teachings of eternal torment and annihilation fail to explain all of these passages.

## DID GOD LOSE CONTROL?

Did God create a perfect universe, but then sin slipped in through the back door? One of God's attributes is love. He even tells us to bless those who are persecuting us (Romans 12:14), and to help our enemies in distress. We are to conquer evil with good (Romans 12:20-21). Yet orthodox theology says that this God of love, Who teaches us to conquer evil with good and to help distressed enemies, is going to cast billions upon billions of unsaved beings into fire to be tormented endlessly or to be annihilated. This figure is probably well over ninety percent of all created beings. Is God unable to deliver them from Satan's power? By looking at the percentages, it appears that Satan is mightier than God! What about Calvary? Was this shameful, painful crucifixion of God's Son only meant for a few?

God's purpose for the ages will conclude one day and believers will enjoy endless bliss with God. Will God really be satisfied with the outcome? From deep inside of His loving heart, will He say, "Well, I saved at least a few million over the years, but as for the majority – well, I tried so hard to save and reconcile them. After tossing them in an eternal hell of fire, I will put them light years away from My ears so as not to hear their groaning. Or if I am to annihilate them, it will be easy for Me to put them out of My thoughts. I feel no sense of pain or emptiness of heart over the loss of billions for whom I sent My only begotten Son to die. I guess His sacrifice wasn't enough to reconcile My whole creation." Praise God, this is NOT true. The iniquity of us all was laid on Christ Jesus (Isaiah 53:6). Jesus shall see the fruit of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied (Isaiah 53:11). Would He be satisfied dying for two percent of the creation? If you paid the price for one hundred acres of land and then received the deed for only two acres, would you be satisfied?

How can believers who value the meaning of life by standing firm against abortions turn around and worship, love and serve a God Who may cast the very life they saved from being aborted into endless torment or annihilate them? Oh, what a miserable God He would be. We do not wish to insinuate for a moment that evildoers will escape judgment. Our God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is righteous and just, not cruel. He will judge, chastise, discipline and condemn all of the irreverent, each in accord with their acts, not endlessly torture or annihilate them. Is anything really too hard for God? Children say that their daddy can do anything. This should be our attitude towards our heavenly Father.

Orthodoxy has so defamed, maligned and blackened God's name that many turn from Him in disgust. The all-powerful, wise and loving God is given limits. He is made out to be feared instead of loved. He is known as an infinite Creator, but a limited Redeemer.

*Worthy art Thou, O Lord, our Lord and God, to get glory and honor and power; For Thou dost create **all** (Revelation 4:11).*

No, our Sovereign God did not lose control. Sin did not enter the universe without God allowing it. In John 1:3 it is written that all came into being through the Word, and apart from it not even one thing came into being which has come into being. Evil is necessary to understand God's love. In Job 26:13, God's spirit makes the heavens seemly, His hand travails with the fugitive serpent. Isaiah 54:16 says that God created the ravager to destroy, and in 45:7 that He made weal and created woe. God in His infinite wisdom wanted sin and salvation to operate in His universe. Without sin, there could be no Savior. Without enmity between God and man, there could be no Reconciler.

God made a provision for sin ahead of time, which was the precious blood of Christ. In Acts 2:22-23, I Peter 1:19-20, Revelation 13:8 and Hebrews 9:26 it is written that there was a foreknowledge of God that Christ would suffer and be slain. For the *Concordant Version* rendering of these passages, turn to chapter two of this e-book to the topic, "Was Satan purposely made for evil?" Yes, God is going to accomplish all things in accord with the counsel of His will for the laud of His glory.

*according to the purpose of the One Who is **operating all** in accord with the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:11).*

God's purpose for evil, salvation and the eons will bring to pass that long-awaited and well-deserved exaltation from "everyone" that Jesus Christ is Lord. Then He will hand it "all" over to God. God will be Everything to everyone, or All in all.

*Wherefore, also, God highly exalts Him, and graces Him with the name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should be bowing, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and every tongue should be acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God, the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).*

*Now, whenever all may be subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also shall be subjected to Him Who subjects all to Him, that God may be **All in all** (I Corinthians 15:28).*

## ALL

A word used by Paul the apostle more than any other writer in the Scriptures is the word "all." This is most appropriate, because his epistles are not limited to the earth but include the entire universe. It is a marvelous word when we think of it in relation to God. On earth there are many divisions that segregate and exclude, but when God finishes His work He will have embraced all of His creation with outstretched arms, excluding none (1 Corinthians 15:28).

God put this word in His sacred writings to show whom He loves, for whom His Beloved Son died, whom He will save, whom He will justify, whom He will vivify (make alive) and whom He will reconcile after the eons have run their course. Yet orthodox theology limits the word "all" to mean a few when reference is made to God's redemptive work of Christ's shed blood on the cross. God has a purpose for creation which affects all of humanity and all spiritual beings. There should be no limits put on God, because He can do all things. Satan, who is the god of this wicked eon (2 Corinthians 4:4), cannot even prevent God from His purpose. God controls the Adversary.

*I know that **Thou canst do all things**, and that no purpose of Thine can be thwarted (Job 42:2, RSV).*

*O give thanks to the God of gods (Psalm 136:2, RSV).*

Creation was not brought into existence without a plan. There was nothing that caught God by surprise. Christ is God's Firstborn, and all is created through Him (Christ) and for Him. In Christ, all things hold together. No way is part of creation for Satan and part for Christ. God's Son is appointed heir of all. Neither is part of creation for sin and death. In fact, orthodox theology says that the major-

ity of creation is lost to sin, death and the Adversary. The following passages teach us that all is out of God and in His Son and through His Son. All in the heavens and in the earth is the Lord's. God is not going to lose any of it.

*For **all** that is in the heavens and in the earth is thine, thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above **all**. Both riches and honor come from thee, and thou rulest over **all** (1 Chronicles 29:11-12, RSV).*

*Seeing that out of Him and through Him and for Him is **all**: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen! (Romans 11:36).*

*Nevertheless for us there is one God, the Father, out of Whom **all** is, and we for Him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom **all** is, and we through Him (1 Corinthians 8:6).*

*For even as the woman is out of the man, thus the man also is through the woman, yet **all** is of God (1 Corinthians 11:12).*

*Christ is the Image of the invisible God, Firstborn of every creature, for in Him is **all** created, that in the heavens and that on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or sovereignties, or authorities, **all** is created through Him and for Him, and He is before **all**, and **all** has its cohesion in Him (Colossians 1:15-17).*

*There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of **all**, Who is over **all** and through **all** and in **all** (Ephesians 4:5-6).*

*Wherein there is no Greek and Jew, Circumcision and Un-circumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, freeman, but **all** and in **all** is Christ (Colossians 3:11).*

*By many portions and many modes, of old, God, speaking to the fathers in the prophets, in the last of these days speaks to us in a Son, Whom He appoints enjoyer of the allotment of **all** [heir of **all**], through Whom He also makes the eons (Hebrews 1:1).*

### **SALVATION OF ALL MANKIND**

God's love and grace is fathomless in reference to how He saves. He accomplishes this by the sacrifice of Christ. We who teach or share that God will be All in all are not calling out a group of followers for ourselves. Rather, we are presenting what is revealed in God's heart which is supported by Scripture. Also, there is no boasting in understanding this truth, because it is for the laud of His glory and we only boast in Christ Jesus. Believers are saved by grace. Christ loves the ecclesia and gave Himself up for its sake (Ephesians 2:4; 5:25).

God uses the method of judgment to save the unbeliever but this does not remove his sin or guilt, just as faith has no productive part in our salvation. Both the believer's and unbeliever's salvation is based exclusively on the blood of Christ. The salvation of unbelievers will be from sight, not faith. After being raised from the dead, they will stand before the Great White Throne judgment. Evidence will be all around them. Why were there unbelievers during our Lord's ministry? Wasn't He evidence

enough? Each human being is different. The human senses can be beneficial or restraining. Below are examples that restrain.

In Matthew 19:16-22 the rich youth wanted life eonian by following Jesus, but was restrained by his assets. In Luke 14:15-24 those who were invited to a great dinner made excuses for not coming. One bought a field and wanted to see it. Another bought five yoke of oxen and needed to test them. The last was just married and therefore could not come.

Next are examples that are beneficial. In John 4:7-42, at Jacob's spring Jesus reveals some hidden secrets of a Samaritan woman. Being overwhelmed with His knowledge of her, she went into the city saying, "Hither! Perceive a Man Who told me all whatever I do. Is not this the Christ?" Many Samaritans believed because of her word. However, many more believed because of His word. The incidents involving the resurrection of the body are such strong evidence for belief. Many believed when Jesus raised decaying Lazarus and when Peter raised Dorcas from the dead.

How does this relate to those standing before the Great White Throne judgment? As previously mentioned, we are saved in grace, through faith (Ephesians 2:8). All unbelievers are saved in grace, through sight. This is typical of Paul's salvation. He was the foremost of sinners; but on the way to Damascus, when the Lord appeared as a bright light, he became a changed man. Unbelievers are judged after the present earth and heaven are gone and prior to the new heaven and earth (Revelation 20:11-21:1). Unlike the rich youth, these individuals will have no earthly assets to obstruct them. All of their earthly possessions were consumed by fire, along with the present earth and heaven (II Peter 3:7, 10). Unlike those who refused an invitation to a great dinner, there will be no excuses before the Great White Throne judgment. The Lord revealed only a few facts about the Samaritan woman, and many believed. It will be much greater in that day when God will be judging the hidden things of humanity (Romans 2:16). All of their inner corrupt secrets will be revealed. The greatest piece of evidence is going to be their resurrection.

These unbelievers are going to be raised from the dead and stand in the presence of Christ, surrounded by all His power and justice, bringing into view their most intimate secrets by His knowledge without being influenced by earthly acquisitions. How could anyone who witnesses this awesome display of evidence have any reservations, standing in His presence? Truly they will believe and be saved. Then each is condemned in accordance with their acts and cast into the second death (lake of fire). Yet orthodox theology teaches that all of this evidence, plus the shed blood of Christ Jesus, won't be enough and the wicked shall be tormented endlessly. The Word of God says something different. In the first letter to Timothy, Paul teaches us that God is the Savior of all mankind.

*Faithful is the saying and worthy of all welcome (for, for this are we toiling and being reproached), that we rely on the living God, Who is the **Savior of all mankind**, especially of believers. These things be charging and teaching (1 Timothy 4:9-11).*

In this passage, "Savior" is translated from the Greek word *sōtēr*. The term preserver (*suntéreō*) or provider (*pronoēō*) should not be substituted. How can we rely on this passage as being true? God tells us that it is a "faithful" saying and "worthy" of all welcome or acceptance, but orthodoxy has turned it into an unfaithful saying, worthy of being rejected. Let us rely on the faithful sayings of our living God.

He is the Savior only of those He actually saves. So if Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and all have sinned, then He is the Savior of all. Below are more faithful sayings from God's Word.

*Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all welcome, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners (I Timothy 1:15).*

*For all sinned and are wanting of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).*

Sin and death are works of the Adversary. God is continuing with His purpose until sin is put away, death is abolished and the acts of the Adversary are annulled. This is done for all through the sacrifice of Christ, for He is the Lamb of God Who tasted death for the sake of everyone. He was given up for all and died for the sake of all, even the irreverent. Christ is concerned with the sins of the whole world, that He is giving Himself a Ransom for all and shall be drawing all to Himself.

*Since then He must often be suffering from the disruption of the world, yet now, once, at the conclusion of the eons, for the repudiation (putting away) of sin through His sacrifice, is He manifest (Hebrew 9:26).*

*The last enemy is being abolished: death (1 Corinthians 15:26).*

*Yet he who is doing sin is of the Adversary, for from the beginning is the Adversary sinning. For this was the Son of God manifested, that He should be annulling the acts of the Adversary (1 John 3:8).*

*On the morrow he is observing Jesus coming toward him, and is saying, "Lo! the Lamb of God Which is taking away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).*

*Yet we are observing Jesus, Who has been made some bit inferior to messengers (because of the suffering of death, wreathed with glory and honor), so that in the grace of God, He should be tasting death for the sake of everyone (Hebrews 2:9).*

*Surely, He Who spares not His Own Son, but gives Him up for us all, how shall He not, together with Him, also, be graciously granting us all? (Romans 8:32).*

*And He died for the sake of all that those who are living should by no means still be living to themselves, but to the One dying and being roused for their sakes (2 Corinthians 5:15).*

*For Christ, while we are still infirm, still in accord with the era, for the sake of the irreverent, died (Romans 5:6).*

*And He is the propitiatory shelter concerned with our sins, yet not concerned with ours only, but concerned with the whole world also (1 John 2:2).*

*For there is one God, and one Mediator of God and mankind, a Man, Christ Jesus, Who is giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for all (1 Timothy 2:5-6).*

*And I, if I should be exalted out of the earth, shall be drawing all to Myself (John 12:32).*

Did you know that the salvation of all mankind is God's will? In 1 Timothy 2:4 it is written that our Savior God *WILLS* that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth. However, this truth is glossed over through man's mistranslation and the vagueness of our English language. The word "will" is taken from the original Greek word *thelêma*, but it has lost its true scriptural definition to a variety of English meanings, one of which in particular is the word "desire," used by the *Revised Standard Version*. "Desire" comes from the Greek word *epithumia*. It is listed in the keyword concordance along with words such as "coveting," "lust" and "yearning," all having to do with human feelings. Instead, God uses the word "will" in the original Scriptures which means "effect," that which is the subject of decision, choice or purpose. It is God Who wills, and man who desires. There is only one will operating in the universe, and that is God's. He is the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:11).

Our Sovereign God does as He wills. When the apostle Paul writes about Israel and the nations he says, "For God locks up all together in stubbornness, that He should be merciful to all" (Romans 11:32). In the Old Testament it is written that He kills, He makes alive, He wounds and He heals (Deuteronomy 32:39). God's sovereignty over the nations allows Him to be merciful, to pity and harden whomever He wills so as to display His power and indignation. There are vessels for honor and dishonor (Romans 9:15-23).

Not only is God's will operating on a national scope, but also on an individual basis. Our destiny was determined by God from the beginning. We had no say in it. He designates, calls, justifies and glorifies us (Ephesians 4:1; Romans 8:28-30; 1 Corinthians 1:23-24; 1 Timothy 6:12).

Here is more scriptural evidence of God's sovereign will. Our steps are ordered and directed by God (Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 16:9; 20:24). He calls and chooses us (2 Timothy 1:9, 2:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:7; Ephesians 1:4; John 6:44; 15:16).

God can reveal Himself with any means He chooses, whether with love or evil. Should we throw up our arms in disgust, feeling like robots or puppets? We are lower than that. We are mud ("*clay*," Romans 9:18-24). In Philippians 2:13 Paul says, "*It is God Who is operating in you to will as well as to work for the sake of His delight.*" God is determined to work in the lives of His children. He has given us our wills for His glory. Some may ask, "What is God's will for me?" The answer is simple. God's will is that you come into a realization of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4). Pray for that truth (Ephesians 1:15-22). Realize your calling, position and future in Christ, and whatever you do in this life, do it according to Ephesians 4-6 and Colossians 3. Those are our guidelines for behavior. Whether you are a doctor, lawyer, janitor, cook, housewife etc., be the best you can be and have a righteous record in the sight of men and a life to delight the heart of God. Our Lord Jesus was a marvelous example. He was not seeking His will, but His Father's. It was always, "*Not My will, but Thine!*" Our will is displaced by His determination.

### WHEN WILL GOD SAVE ALL?

In Scripture, all will not be judged or resurrected at the same time. This also holds true for salvation. In the following passage it is written that Christ is giving Himself a Ransom for all (the testimony in its own eras). The saints are redeemed during the eons. Ransom is for all when the eons end.

*For there is one God, and one Mediator of God and mankind, a Man, Christ Jesus, Who is giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for all [the testimony in its own eras] (1 Timothy 2:5-6).*

Salvation cannot be fully enjoyed until we are in His presence. All shall be vivified (made alive, never to die again), each in his own order. The Firstfruit is Christ, next are those in His presence, then the consummation (end of the eons or ages).

*For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified. Yet each in his own class: the Firstfruit, Christ; thereupon those who are Christ's in His presence; thereafter the consummation (1 Corinthians 15:22-24).*

Currently, God is saving only those whom He has chosen and called for the special salvation of the eons. In 1 Timothy 4:9-10 it is written that God is the Savior of all mankind, especially of believers. This does not mean exclusively, which limits God's saving capabilities to a few. This salvation, especially for believers, entitles us to eonian (age-lasting) glory. In other words, from the moment when Christ appears (manifested), we will enjoy the last two eons with our precious Savior. I can't even begin to fathom living all of those eonian years, let alone the endlessness after the ages! Indeed, this is a unique privilege for us. Praise God that we are chosen in Christ Jesus with this special eonian glory (2 Timothy 2:10).

Being elected and predestined to a special salvation should cause the believer to bow their knees and exalt His name, because, through the ecclesia, the sovereignties and authorities among the celestials will be reached. When Christ appears we will live, and some will reign with Him. We will display the transcendent riches of God's grace and also make known His multifarious wisdom. Everyone in this special salvation is delivered from the second death.

All unbelievers enjoy their salvation at the consummation of the eons. This is based only on the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Keep in mind that the irreverent are not going to escape judgment. Indignation and fury, affliction and distress comes on every human soul which is effecting evil (Romans 2:9). God will be paying each one in accord with his acts (Romans 2:6).

### **JUSTIFICATION OF ALL MANKIND**

Search deep into your heart when answering the following question. Who do you say is greater: Adam or Christ? God's love tells me that Christ is. Orthodox teaching has it that Adam is. Sin, suffering and death came through Adam's one offense and affected all humanity. It is impossible for all humanity NOT to sin (Romans 3:10, 23).

Thus, Christ's one righteous act (death) will justify all mankind. Since Christ is the second Man and last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45-47), He displaces all that was done through Adam. Because of Christ's sacrifice, a new creation will be blessed, just as through Adam's offense, the old creation was condemned. Once again, through Adam it is impossible for all humanity NOT to sin, so through Christ it is going to be equally impossible for all humanity NOT to be saved, justified, reconciled and have immortality. Two persons, two acts and two results affect the entire human race. Adam's disobedience put humanity in a miserable situation. Christ's obedience will give humanity a magnificent outcome. It's a pity that the miserable situation is believed but the magnificent outcome is doubted.



In Adam, all are dying; thus also in Christ all shall be vivified, which means to be made alive, immortal (1 Corinthians 15:22). Let us turn to Scripture and make a comparison between two acts and two human beings.

### Romans 5:18

#### Adam's Act

Consequently, then,  
as it was through one offense  
for all mankind  
for condemnation

#### Christ's Act

thus also  
it is through One Just award  
for all mankind  
for life's justifying

### Romans 5:19

#### Adam

For even as,  
through the disobedience of the one man,  
the many  
were constituted sinners,

#### Christ

thus also,  
through the obedience of the One,  
the many  
shall be constituted just.

Not only will Christ's one just act affect all mankind, but it is universal in scope. All will be headed up in the Christ, both in the heavens and that on the earth (Ephesians 1:10). God will reconcile all (making peace through the blood of His cross), through Him, whether those on earth or those in the heavens (Colossians 1:20). Truly, Christ is much greater than Adam. Pray that God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, may be giving you a spirit of wisdom to realize this.

## THE MANY

Are you wondering why it says "*the many*" in :19 instead of "all"? Those who deny that God will save all refer to this passage of Scripture for support. Verse 19, for the sake of emphasis, excludes the one bringing forth the disobedience (Adam) from the effects of his actions. He was also affected by the action. True, he became a sinner; but we are excluding him in order to point him out as the source. In :18 we are not talking about Adam the individual, but rather the action itself.

A moment's thought however, will prove that even this apparently formidable argument against the reconciliation of all mankind is really in its favor. In :18, where we have the phrase "*all men*" in connection with both condemnation and justification, the point in question is the way in which the act of Adam and that of Christ affected the men themselves as well as humanity.

The disobedience of Adam and the obedience of Christ necessarily reacted first of all on the heads themselves, resulting in the death of the one and the resurrection of the other; but in :15 and :19, where "*the many*" are spoken of in connection with both Adam and Christ, the apostle contemplates the two heads themselves in their universal relation to the rest. Once the fact is grasped that one man is distinguished from the rest, it becomes apparent that the phrase "*all men*" is out of place. In other

words “*all men*” is used of either natural or spiritual humanity, including the head. “The many” is employed when either natural or spiritual humanity is spoken of, as distinct from the head.

One man caused heartache, and one Man will bring happiness. Adam’s single act of disobedience constituted many sinners. Christ’s single act of obedience will yet constitute many just. Through Adam, sin and death reaches all. Through Christ, righteousness and life will yet reach all. Blessed be God Who blesses us!

### RECONCILIATION OF ALL

We are saved by the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. He was given up for our offenses and roused because of our justifying (Romans 4:25). The gospel should also contain the message of conciliation. God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself. It is not the sinner begging God, but God beseeching him.

*Yet all is of God, Who conciliates us to Himself through Christ, and is giving us the dispensation of the conciliation, how that God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them, and placing in us the Word of the conciliation. For Christ, then, are we ambassadors, as of God entreating through us. We are beseeching for Christ’s sake, “Be conciliated to God” (2 Corinthians 5:18-20).*

The gospel of the conciliation is glossed over, obscuring God’s present attitude. He is at peace with the world. Here Paul is telling us that the sinner is most offensive and insulting, but God does not reckon or count these offenses against the sinner. God is not charging men with their sins, because Christ died for sins. The gospel is not concerned with the sinner at all, but with God’s attitude toward him and the sufferings of Christ. God insists on being at peace with the world, no matter how they treated His Son or Paul. Paul is trying to get this point across to the Corinthians so much that he is actually begging them again and again.

There were many problems among the Corinthians such as immorality, divisions, pride, pursuit of wisdom, goddess worshiping, denying the resurrection and so forth. Thus Paul wrote a second letter to the Corinthians. In this divinely inspired letter we see Paul’s great love for the Corinthians and the great concern which he had for their progress in the Lord. The Corinthians also needed to recognize that Paul was God’s man and God’s apostle. In both 1 and 2 Corinthians, Paul helped them to understand that he was really an apostle sent from God to care for the churches. So Paul is begging them to be conciliated to God, for He is at peace with them.

You will also find reconciliation in the letters to the Ephesians and Colossians. We, the church which is His body, do not need to be entreated for conciliation. God did it all. He chose us, saved us, designated us beforehand, roused and seated us with Christ and reconciled both Jew and gentile into one body.

Some or many may disagree, but the introduction of evil and sin by means of the Adversary was the intention of our Sovereign God. We could never experience His love without it. He formed light and created darkness. He made weal and created woe. He is the Lord Who does all of these things (Isaiah 45:7). Evil and sin did not catch the Deity off guard. All that the Adversary wronged, Christ Jesus will

---

make right. For from the beginning is the Adversary sinning, for this was the Son of God manifested, that He should be annulling the acts of the Adversary (1 John 3:8).

God's provision, the precious blood of Christ, for the reversal of evil and sin was made before the disruption of the world (1 Peter 1:19-20). If our Sovereign God is all-knowing, and He knew that all mankind would sin (Romans 3:23; 5:12), and He knew to make Christ a Sacrifice before the disruption, then He knows and wills that every drop of blood shed by His Beloved Son during that shameful and disgraceful death is for all – those on earth as well as in the heavens. Remember that the heavens were affected by evil also; if not, then God would not have to create a new one, along with a new earth! (Isaiah 65:17; Revelation 21:1).

The reconciling work of God's Son will not be completed until He has reconciled all to God. The Word became flesh. This refers to Christ taking on a human form. In John 1:3 it is written that all came into being through the Word, and apart from it not even one thing came into being which has come into being. Out of Him and through Him and for Him is all (Romans 11:36).

In Colossian 1:15-20 Christ revealed His highest glories to Paul. First let us examine :15-17, where the range of creation is compellingly expressed as universal.

### **Colossians 1:15-17**

#### *His Glories in Universal Creation*

Christ is the Image of the Invisible God, Firstborn of every creature, for in Him is all created, that in the heavens and that on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or sovereignties, or authorities, all is created through Him and for Him, and He is before all, and all has its cohesion in Him. The next section of this passage expresses His present and future glories also being universal.

### **Colossians 1:18-20**

#### *His Present and Future Universal Glories*

And He is the Head of the body, the ecclesia, Who is Sovereign, Firstborn from among the dead, that in all He may be becoming first, for in Him the entire complement delights to dwell, and through Him to reconcile all to Him (making peace through the blood of His cross), through Him, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens. Here is foretold the reconciliation of all.

Within this short passage is found eight words describing the total effect of Christ's glories. He is the Firstborn of every creature. All is created in Him, and all is created through Him and for Him. He is before all and all has its cohesion in Him. In all He is becoming first. In Him dwells the entire complement. He will reconcile all, making peace through the blood of the cross.

There are no limitations placed on the "all" of creation, but many limit its range with respect to the reconciliation. The "all" to be reconciled to God is precisely the same "all" that is said to be created in the Son, through the Son, and for the Son. The "all" to be reconciled is said to include "all," whether

on the earth or in the heavens. This consists of the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or sovereignties, or authorities. The visible and the invisible includes human beings (living and dead), and even spirit beings. Christ's sacrificial work was a total success and victory, one hundred percent (100%). It is sad that theology says, "No, Christ's sacrifice was not quite successful, but He should be satisfied with a small percentage."

Not so, dear beloved, for all will be subjected to Him (Philippians 3:21). All will be headed up in the Christ, both that in the heavens and that on the earth (Ephesians 1:10). God roused Christ from among the dead and seated Him at His right hand among the celestials, up over every sovereignty and authority and power and lordship, and every name that is named, not only in this eon, but also in that which is impending. He subjects all under His feet, and gives Him as Head over all, to the ecclesia which is His Body, the complement of the One completing the all in all (Ephesians 1:20-23). For He must be reigning until He should be placing all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be abolished is death. For He subjects all under His feet. Now whenever He may be saying that all is subject, it is evident that it is outside of Him, Who subjects all to Him. Now, whenever all may be subjected to Him [Christ], then the Son Himself also shall be subjected to Him [God] Who subjects all to Him, that God may be All in all (1 Corinthians 15:25-28). When God is All in all, there is no further need for the Son to reign. Which of the following do you honestly feel gives God glory?

"God much in many"

"God All in a few"

"God All in some"

**"God All in all"**

Some say that if all are going to be subjected, then many individuals are forced against their will. This only discredits God and our triumphant Savior. Christ Jesus, being inherently in the form of God, emptied Himself and took on the form of a slave. He came in the likeness of humanity and humbled Himself, becoming obedient to death, even the death of the cross. He descended from His heavenly glory to the lowest place on earth, being whipped, scoffed at, crowned with thorns, spit on, beaten over the head and finally crucified. For this, God highly exalts Him and graces Him with the name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should be bowing, celestial, terrestrial and subterranean, and every tongue should be acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:5-11). The willingness and obedience of Christ will bring about a heart-warming and loving subjection, not forceful. The entire universe will be reconciled to God through Christ's blood.

In addition, we will be conformed to the image of His Son. God has a plan for the elect (the ecclesia) who are being saved through faith. Christ should be presenting to Himself a glorious ecclesia not having spot or wrinkle, being holy and flawless and unimpeachable in God's sight (Ephesians 5:27; Colossians 1:22). We will express and image God as only the Son Himself does now, and display the riches of God's grace to the celestials.

An analogy is made between Christ's glories in creation and reconciliation. One reaches back to the

very beginning before the eons, while the other carries us past the eons. During the eonian times, sovereignty and authority, power and death are still in operation. Yet when Christ subjects all to Him and abolishes death, then all will enjoy total love and peace with God and with each other. This is all for the laud of God's glory, and He will not have it any other way. He is ALL in all (I Corinthians 15:24-28).

<b>The Image of God</b>	<b>The Complement of God</b>
Firstborn of all Creation	First born from the dead
The Universe	The Universe
Celestial and Terrestrial	Celestial and Terrestrial
Created in Him	Reconciled through Him

Are you presently enjoying this great truth? Salvation is by grace and not of works, but reconciliation is two-sided. God is at peace with you and all mankind. As a believer you should relish this favor from God. Give thanks and praise that it is not only for believers but for all, at the consummation of the eons.

### **OPPOSING SCRIPTURES?**

This section lists more Scripture used by those who deny the teaching that God can reconcile His entire creation. In Mark 14:21, the incident pertaining to the salvation of Judas is most often used. Only a comparison between man's revised version and God's Original text, using a literal consistent interlinear as found in the *Concordant Version*, will clarify this matter.

*For the Son of man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born (RSV).*

*Seeing that the Son of Mankind is indeed going away according as it is written concerning Him, yet woe to that man through whom the Son of Mankind is being given up! Ideal were it for Him if that man were not born! (CLNT).*

The second sentence in each passage will be compared. According to the *Revised Standard Version*, it appears that reference is being made to Judas. However, in the original Scriptures the pronoun "Him" is found. Now we have a contrast between "Him" and "that man." The subject is the Son of Mankind, and "that man" is referred to as Judas in the previous sentence. The proper translation must read, "Ideal were it for Him [the Son of Mankind] if that man [Judas] were not born." There were situations in our Lord's life that were ideal and not ideal. It would have been ideal for Jesus if Judas wasn't born. In Mark 14:6 Jesus speaks of the woman who anointed Him, saying, "For it is an ideal work she works in Me."

Another passage referring to the so called fate of lost Judas is found in John 17:12. True, it is written that Jesus said the son of perdition (Judas) perished. However, this does not indicate his final state.

You must keep in mind that God is using the eons for a purpose, and in these eonian times we will find evil, sin, suffering, death, perdition, perishing, judgment, chastisement and salvation in full operation. Those who are saved during the eons will enjoy a special eonian salvation. After the eons have past, *all* will enjoy His salvation. This is not my opinion but our Sovereign God's declaration, Who is the Savior of all mankind, especially believers (1 Timothy 4:10). He wills that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4).

In this next passage, again theology uses the word "*many*" to limit Christ's saving work of His shed blood.

*The Son of Mankind came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His soul a ransom for many*  
(Matthew 20:28).

In Matthew 17:24-27 the Lord and Peter paid the double drachma (half shekel) as a ransom for them. This was known as the temple tribute, and is a custom according to the law found in Exodus 30:11-16; but Jesus did not pay the tribute from their savings, because He was the real Temple of God and Sacrifice. So Jesus told Peter to cast a fish hook into the sea, and the first fish caught had a coin in its mouth which Peter gave for the tribute. Peter did not know of His Lord's sacrifice at that time. However, after the death and resurrection of Jesus, Peter writes to the dispersed Jews (Circumcision), telling them that they were ransomed not with corruptible things as silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18-19).

The context of these passages is for Israel only – the nations are not mentioned. Also, Jesus was commissioned for the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 15:24). In Matthew 20:28 reference is made to His soul, which takes the place of the half shekel ransom for many. Soul relates to life, not death. His life was that of suffering and degradation. It was His soul, setting an example to His people on how to serve others.

Once again, may we refrain from applying certain Scriptures to God's ultimate goal, the salvation of all. Christ gave His soul for many, but gives Himself a Ransom for all (1 Timothy 2:6). He will be to all mankind what He was to His people in Israel.

While on the subject of Israel, it is written in Romans 11:26 that all Israel will be saved. After their history of disobedience, complaining, killing, adultery, worshiping false idols, denying their Messiah, rejecting the kingdom, etc., still all will be saved. I don't think the rest of mankind was any worse. Why is it hard to accept 1 Timothy 4:10, that God is the Savior of *all* mankind?

### **DANGEROUS DOCTRINE?**

Those who oppose the teaching that God, through Christ, will ultimately save all mankind, say that it is a dangerous doctrine because it influences humanity to sin and to persist in corruption. This is not so. God is righteous and just. There is going to be a day of judgment and chastisement. All evildoers must stand before Him and be requited according to their acts. Everyone who has heard of God or owns a Bible most likely knows the story of Noah and the flood. The rainbow is a reminder. They know that God did not tolerate wickedness. In the future, God is going to pour out His wrath on the earth at the beginning of the Lord's Day. Also, there is the Great White Throne judgment after the

millennium. Yet future judgment is not the only factor to discourage wickedness. Our Sovereign God uses other provisions as well. Anyone who thinks about doing wrong must take into consideration the aftermath. If you shoot at a police officer, he is going to return fire and perhaps cause serious injury or death. If you start a fight, most likely you'll get a broken nose or lose some teeth. Consequences control most actions.

Then Paul the apostle tells us in Galatians 6:7-8 that whatsoever a man may be sowing, this shall he be reaping also, for he who is sowing for his own flesh, from the flesh shall be reaping corruption, yet he who is sowing for the spirit, from the spirit shall be reaping life eonian. What we sow to the spirit cannot be seen now, but will be harvested in the eons to come. What we sow to the flesh will decay.

Next there are authorities. In Romans 13:1 it is written that every soul is to be subject to the superior authorities. What a mess it would be without a government, laws, courts and police.

The ultimate provision, however, to refrain from wickedness is the gospel, for it is God's power for salvation. When God saves us, we die to sin and should be walking in newness of life. Just because where sin increases grace super-exceeds, this does not license us to live loosely. Remember, according to Romans 5:21 grace should be reigning through righteousness, not at the expense of it. We should not turn the grace of God into lasciviousness like those who will in Jude 4. Being freed from sin, we are enslaved to righteousness (Romans 6:18). There will also be crowns, rewards and losses in His presence. God's transcendent grace is the most powerful incentive to a godly life, regardless if we are blessed with a spirit of wisdom to understand God's ultimate goal of reconciling His entire creation. I prefer to proclaim the reconciliation of all instead of hell fire, because future eternal torment doesn't seem to be refraining humanity from sin and corruption. Much of Paul's teaching was considered dangerous in his day and has been many times since. The all wise God and Father knows how to deal with His children in discipline if they walk after the flesh, but He will never deny Himself or His truth in doing this.

### WHY PRAY?

If God has everything planned from the beginning of the eons to their magnificent consummation, what place does prayer have in the universe? There are certain things that prayer cannot change because it is against God's will. Praying for peace will never stop wars. Praying for the starving will never cure famine. These and more are part of God's Word.

Surely He knows the end from the beginning, but this shouldn't deter our relationship with Him. God tells us in Philippians 4:4-7 to let your requests be made known, so don't let one thing on your mind go without bringing it to Him in prayer and petition. God is not Santa Claus. Prayer is more than just requests. It's not about begging for something. The purpose of prayer is not to change God; rather, prayer changes *us*. It makes us adjust to His purpose and to use what He is willing to give us. Unlike a child who gets everything and is spoiled, when you receive things sparingly you appreciate and know how to use them. Prayer brings us into communion with God. He longs for fellowship with His creatures, and there should be a two-way communication. He speaks to us in His Word, and we speak to Him in prayer. Also, :7 tells us that, when we are in communion with God, His peace guards and protects our hearts and apprehensions (mind) in Christ Jesus. So, in other words, we are less likely to have a heart attack or mental illness.

Many say, "I never seem to get any answers to my prayers." This is wrong, because all prayer is answered when we realize that when God says "no" it is just as much an answer as when He says "yes." Too often we pray only when we are experiencing some great problem or danger, or when we badly want something. We can be sure of one thing: our heavenly Father loves us too much to give us anything that will be to our lasting hurt. The baby sees the light glistening on a sharp razor blade and wants to handle it, but who would be so cruel as to give it to the infant?

When Jesus walked on this earth He was a marvelous example of always being in communion with His Father. He constantly sought God in prayer. Even when He knew it was time to be sacrificed, He asked God three times if this cup could pass from Him. Jesus was about to be separated from His Father and undergo a horrible experience; yet He added to His prayer, "*Not My will, but Thine.*" Our Lord's prayer went unanswered, not because He was unworthy, but because it was not in line with His Father's will. If God answered His Son's prayer, we would have no salvation, justification, reconciliation and glorification. So if our prayers seem to go unanswered, we are praying against God's will. Aren't you thankful that God did not succumb to the will of Jesus? We should give thanks for any of our unanswered prayers also.

If your earthly father promised you something great, something really to anticipate, something that you would enjoy every day for the rest of your life, would you stop talking to him? Would you disobey him? Would you not be thankful to him? Our heavenly Father promises us transcendent riches. Let us thank Him and be in communion with Him.

God is known as our heavenly Father when we get the spirit of son-ship in which we cry, "*Abba, Father!*" (Romans 8:15). This title should always make us want to have a close relationship with Him; but what really gives Him honor is not only to address Him as our Father, but also as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer changes with God's administrations (dispensations). Once we realize how God is operating in this administration, our prayers will be in harmony with His will. During the Acts period, the disciples prayed at a particular time and occurrence. However, in this administration Paul teaches us to pray on every occasion (Ephesians 6:18) and to persevere in it (Romans 12:12; Colossians 4:2). He also tells us what to pray for. In Ephesians 1:17 and Colossians 1:9-11, we are to pray that God would give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization of Him, and to grow in the realization of God.

Paul is praying that God may be giving us a special portion of spirit, permitting us to better understand Him and His purpose for our future. This spirit of revelation alone is not enough, though. Remember, God speaks to us in His Word. We must study the Scriptures and rightly divide the Word of Truth. This special spirit of wisdom and revelation can unlock God's transcendent riches for us, which are found in Paul's Prison epistles.

The Incarnation was another marvelous act of God's love for His creation. Jesus revealed His Father while walking on this earth in flesh. However, many believers can't see beyond the earthly kingdom ministry of Jesus and His apostles. Yet if we pray that God may be giving us this special spirit, we will realize the greatness of His grace found in Paul's Prison epistles. Paul's revelations were from the ascended and glorified Christ. God's spirit inspired Paul to record these revelations. These things are what we should pray for today, while in close communion with God. Don't forget to let your requests



---

be made known to God. Request means “to ask for.” To claim something is demanding. May we refrain from claiming this and claiming that in the name of Jesus, for this is not in line with the will of God in this administration.

*Be rejoicing in the Lord always! Again, I will declare, be rejoicing! Let your lenience be known to all men: the Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, that is superior to every frame of mind, shall be garrisoning your hearts and your apprehensions in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:4-7).*

### WHY PREACH?

Why preach and teach the evangel if all are to be saved eventually? It is not known who the elect are. We don't know who God is calling and choosing to receive the message of the secret administration hidden in Him. So we must proclaim it. We must carry on Paul's epistles which he wrote after the close of the Acts period. They include the message of the salvation of all and the reconciliation of the heavens and earth.

Paul is a key example as to why we should preach the salvation of all. He tells us to become imitators of him (1 Corinthians 11:1). In his first letter to Timothy, Paul writes instructions and guidelines for how the church is to behave. I find the verse below very interesting. Paul is commanding us to teach all of these things, and in the same verse he tells us that God is the Savior of all mankind.

*For this are we toiling and being reproached, that we rely on the living God, Who is the Savior of all mankind, especially of believers. These things be charging and teaching (1 Timothy 4:10-11).*

Paul labored and suffered reproach for the epistles he wrote after the Acts period. Reproach means that his message was met with disapproval, criticism and disappointment. In fact, all of those in Asia, except a few, turned away from Paul. In his second letter to Timothy, Paul talks about the church's departure from the truth (2 Timothy 1:15).

So, for those today who are critical and disapprove of the salvation and reconciliation of all, I don't find their sarcasm uncommon when they say, “Why Preach?”

Regardless, I will remain faithful and stand by Paul's message and try my best to share his truths with others (2 Timothy 2:2; 4:2), thus the reason that I wrote *God's Truths Recovered*.



# Hell

What is the standard concept of hell in our western civilization? Dictionaries call it the abode of the dead, the underworld where departed souls were believed to dwell; the abode of condemned souls and devils; the place or state of torture and punishment for the wicked after death, presided over by Satan; the infernal powers of evil and darkness; a place of torment and anguish.

Where did this concept originate, and how did the word “hell” find its way into our Bibles? It stems from the verb *helan*, of the West Germanic dialect, and was also spelled as *hele*, *helle*, *hell*. This word had an innocent meaning of simply covering up, concealing or hiding something. In England, it referred to a hole in the ground which was covered up. Our first English Bible translators had good intentions by using the word “hell” to describe a covered or unseen place. Yet today almost everyone believes that “hell” is a fiery place where the wicked and unsaved will be tormented endlessly.

Pagan philosophy had a tremendous impact on the concept of hell. Poets such as Homer and Virgil wrote about spirits lurking deep in the underground world accessible through specific entrances on the earth.

Dante Alighieri (1265-1321 A.D.) was Italy’s greatest poet. Dante was educated by learned scholars and through extensive reading on his own. In his travels he noticed the works of evil through covetousness, jealousy, chaos and so forth. This encouraged him to write a lengthy poem about evil, and through his imagination show how the divinely reconditioned world would appear. Dante believed that he was divinely inspired. His fictitious excursions through heaven, hell and purgatory are presented in his work *Divine Comedy*. Many believed that he truly had seen hell! Being a brilliant instructor, his influence on society was exceptional. These pagan beliefs, coupled with the English word “hell,” have caused a sad misconception of God’s original meanings. Let us turn from poetic hodgepodge and pagan philosophy to the sacred Scriptures for enlightenment.

Did you know that there are three hells in Scripture? Well, at least according to the teaching of theology. The word “hell” is rendered from three different Greek words in the Bible: *Hades*, (*Sheol* in the Hebrew), *Gehenna* and *Tartarus*.

- *Sheol* occurs sixty-five times in the Hebrew Scriptures. It has been translated in English thirty-one times as “grave,” thirty-one times as “hell” and three times as “the pit.”
- *Hades* occurs eleven times in the Greek Scriptures. It has been translated in English ten times as “hell” and one time as “grave.”
- *Gehenna* occurs twelve times in the Greek Scriptures and has been translated in English as “hell.”
- *Tartarus* occurs one time in the Scriptures and has been translated in English as “hell.”

Listed below are the occurrences taken from the popular *Authorized Version*. Included is the phrase “*Lake of Fire*.” It is not translated as “hell,” but gives the impression.

### HEBREW

#### **SHEOL**

Occurs 65 times

“**Grave**” – 31 times: Genesis 37:35; 42:38; 44:29, 31; 1 Samuel 2:6; 1 Kings 2:6, 9; Job 7:9; 14:13; 17:13; 21:13; 24:19; Psalm 6:5; 30:3; 31:17; 49:14-15; 88:3; 89:48; 141:7; Proverbs 1:12; 30:16; Ecclesiastes 9:10; Song of Solomon 8:6; Isaiah 14:11; 38:10, 18; Ezekiel 31:15; Hosea 13:14.

“**Hell**” – 31 times: Deuteronomy 32:22; 2 Samuel 22:6; Job 11:8; 26:6; Psalm 9:17; 16:10; 18:5; 55:15; 86:13; 116:3; 139:8; Proverbs 5:5; 7:27; 9:18; 15:11, 24; 23:14; 27:20; Isaiah 5:14; 14:9, 15; 28:15, 18; 57:9; Ezekiel 31:16-17; 32:21, 27; Amos 9:2; Jonah 2:2; Habakkuk 2:5.

“**The Pit**” – 3 times: Numbers 16:30, 33; Job 17:16.

### GREEK

#### **HADES**

Occurs 11 times

“**Hell**” – 10 times: Matthew 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27, 31; Revelation 1:18; 6:8; 20:13-14.

“**Grave**” – 1 time: 1 Corinthians 15:55 (not in all mss.).

#### **GEHENNA**

Occurs 12 times

**Hell** — 12 times: Matthew 5:22, 29-30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6.

#### **TARTARUS**

Occurs 1 time

**Hell** — 1 time: 2 Peter 2:4.

**“LAKE OF FIRE”**

Occurs 5 times:

*For the Wild Beast, False Prophet and the Adversary, it is eonian torment (Revelation 19:20; 20:10).*

*For irreverent mankind – those not found written in the book of life – it is the second death (Revelation 20:14-15; 21:8).*

**HADES AND SHEOL**

*Hades* comes from the Greek word a(i)dês. The “a” is a prefix which means the same as our English “Un” or “not.” The stem “id” means to “perceive.” When joined together we have the pure meaning that God intended, which is “not to perceive,” “imperceptible” or “the unseen.” This is in agreement with the divine usage of *hades*. Greek *hades* and Hebrew *sheol* are equivalent in meaning. *Hades* was almost always used to translate *sheol* in the Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures. God, in the Greek language, made *hades* a synonym for His own word *sheol* in the Hebrew. This is confirmed by comparing Acts 2:27, 31 to Psalm 16:10, which is about the interval between our Lord’s death and resurrection. In the next chapter, more will be said about *hades* (the unseen) when we talk about what happens to the body, soul and spirit at death.

**GEHENNA**

*Gehenna* is the Greek form of the Hebrew *Ge Hinnom*, or “Valley of Hinnom.” This valley is located on the southwestern side of Jerusalem (Joshua 15:8). In the days of the kings it became a place where Jews would sacrifice and burn their children for idolatrous worship (2 Chronicles 28:3; 33:6). The Lord said that this valley would no longer be called the Valley of Hinnom, but the “Valley of Slaughter,” due to the evil committed by the sons of Judah. They will bury in this valley because there is no room elsewhere. Their dead bodies will be food for the birds of the air, and for the beasts of the earth (Jeremiah 7:30-33). King Josiah defiled the Valley of Hinnom and made it unclean (2 Kings 23:10). Later, the valley became a garbage and waste dump. Dead animals and unburied bodies were put there also. Fires burned constantly to minimize the foul smelling matter. In the Old Testament, those deserving death were executed and cast into the Valley of Hinnom.

This valley will serve the same purpose in the coming eon. During the Millennial kingdom, which is the era of Israel’s restoration, the Valley of Hinnom once again will be the incinerator for Jerusalem, where garbage and bodies are consumed. The worms (maggots) will prey on the unburned garbage, animals and human carcasses (Mark 9:43-48). The Sermon on the Mount consists of the code of laws which will be in force when the kingdom is reestablished. Any infringement will be judged, and those sentenced to death will be cast into *Gehenna*. There will be a reign of righteous law. The Messiah will rule with a rod of iron. The following passages show how transgressors against Jehovah’s law will be dealt with. If any part of the body causes one to sin, the whole is liable to death and the *Gehenna* fire.

*You hear that it was declared to the ancients, “You shall not murder.” Yet whoever should be murdering shall be liable to the judging. Yet I am saying to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to the judging. Yet whoever may be saying to his brother, “Sakai” shall*

*be liable to the Sanhedrin. Yet whoever may be saying, "Stupid," shall be liable to the Gehenna of fire (Matthew 5:21-22).*

*Yet I am saying to you that every man looking at a woman to lust for her already commits adultery with her in his heart. Now, if your right eye is snaring you, wrench it out and cast it from you, for it is expedient for you that one of your members should perish and not your whole body be cast into Gehenna. And if your right hand is snaring you, strike it off and cast it from you, for it is expedient for you that one of your members should perish and not your whole body pass away into Gehenna (Matthew 5:28-30).*

*Gehenna* should not be thought of as the "hell" so popularly accepted today. It never contained living bodies walking about the flames in torment, and never will. Those who represent the nations will come to Jerusalem to worship. They will gaze on the dead bodies in *Gehenna* where the worms shall not die and the fire shall not be quenched. It will be an abhorrence to all flesh (Isaiah 66:24). God's purpose for *Gehenna* is eonian. Its future operation is confined to the temporal judgments of the Millennial kingdom. It is not the final destiny of unbelievers. God will do away with *Gehenna* long before the consummation of the eons.

### **TARTARUS**

*For if God spares not sinning messengers, but thrusting them into the gloomy caverns of Tartarus, gives them up to be kept for chastening judging (2 Peter 2:4).*

*Besides, messengers who keep not their own sovereignty, but leave their own habitation, He has kept in imperceptible bonds under gloom for the judging of the great day (Jude 6).*

Tartarus appears only once in Scripture. The passages above refer to messengers or angels, and not men. There is no mention of eternal torment. The gloomy caverns are the temporary dungeon of spirits awaiting judgment.

### **THE "LAKE OF FIRE"**

The word "hell" is not found in place of "*the lake of fire.*" However, theology ties it into the final destiny of unbelievers who are tormented for eternity. Out of the five occurrences of this phrase, only two make reference to consciousness and torment. The Adversary, wild beast and false prophet are not human. They never stand before the Great White Throne for judgment and chastisement, thus they are the only ones who are tormented in a lake burning with fire and sulphur for the eons of the eons.

*And the wild beast is arrested, and with it the false prophet who does the signs in its sight, by which he deceives those getting the emblem of the wild beast, and those worshiping its image. Living, the two were cast into the lake of fire burning with sulphur (Revelation 19:20).*

*And the Adversary who is deceiving them was cast into the lake of fire and sulphur, where the wild beast and where the false prophet are also. And they shall be tormented day and night for the eons of the eons (Revelation 20:10).*

The other three occurrences of “*the lake of fire*” are found in revelation also. It is referred to as the “*second death*.” All of the irreverent who stand before the Great White Throne will be judged and paid according to their acts. Anyone not found written in the scroll of life were cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death.

*And I perceived the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne. And the scrolls were opened. And another scroll was opened which is the scroll of life. And the dead were judged by that which is written in the scrolls in accord with their acts. And the sea gives up the dead in it, and death and the unseen give up the dead in them. And they were condemned, each in accord with their acts. And death and the unseen were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death – the lake of fire. And if anyone was not found written in the scroll of life, he was cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:12-15).*

*Yet the timid, and unbelievers, and the abominable, and murderers, and paramours, and enchanters, and idolaters and all the false – their part is in the lake burning with fire and sulphur, which is the second death (Revelation 21:8).*

More should not be added to what God’s Word already says about the lake of fire. With respect to humanity it is a return to the death state. This will become clearer when we discuss death in the next chapter. When the lake of fire is mentioned in conjunction with the Adversary, wild beast and false prophet, there is no reference made to death. In Revelation 19:20 the wild beast and false prophet are cast in alive. One thousand years later the Adversary is cast in the lake of fire where the wild beast and false prophet are. Death is not mentioned here either. It says that they will be tormented day and night for the eons of the eons (pertaining to the last two eons – see the Divine Calendar).

Now, when the lake of fire is mentioned with respect to the dead, the timid, unbelievers, the abominable, paramours, enchanters, idolaters and all of the false, there you will find the words “*the second death*.” It is written that they were cast into the lake of fire, which is “*the second death*.” It does not say, “living, they were cast into the lake of fire,” or “they were cast into the lake of fire and shall be tormented day and night.” Only with respect to the three superhuman beings is reference made to living consciousness.

Some conclude that, in the future, the lake of fire is a rekindled *Gehenna* used by God for the purpose of annihilation. These individuals don’t believe in eternal torment, because they believe that God is merciful and loving; but they say that this same loving and merciful God will annihilate and destroy most of His creation in *Gehenna*, a rekindled fiery lake. The two are distinct. *Gehenna* was used in the Old Testament and will be reinstated during the Millennium. Following the Millennium is the Great White Throne judgment for all of the irreverent. Those not found in the scroll of life are cast into *the lake of fire*, not *a lake of fire*.

Then there is a new heaven and a new earth. This is the final eon called the “*eon of the eons*” (Ephesians 3:21) and the “*eon of the eon*” (Hebrews 1:8). God Himself will be with the new creation, brushing away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more, nor clamor, nor misery (Revelation 21:4). The timid and unbelievers, the abominable and murderers, the paramours, enchanters and idolaters – all have their part in the lake of fire, which is the second death (Revelation 21:8). What need is there for *Gehenna* in the new creation? It passed away with the former heaven and earth (Revelation 21:1, 4).

Death may be no more in the new creation, but the second death still exists, at some divine appointed place in God's universe. How do we know that the only death existing at this time is the second death? God said there will be no more death in the final eon. Also, in the final eon, reigning is still in progress according to Revelation 22:5. Christ must reign until He should be placing all of His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be abolished is death (1 Corinthians 15:26). As long as Christ is reigning (Revelation 22:5), death is existing! The only death remaining is the second death, which is abolished at the consummation of the eons when all are made alive, when God becomes All in all (1 Corinthians 15:28). If the second death is the final destiny in which unbelievers and the wicked are destroyed (annihilation), why doesn't it pass away with the former heavens and earth? If this is the case, 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 would not make sense.

The sequence is that Christ reigns, placing "all" enemies under His feet. He abolishes death, subjects "all" to Himself, and then He subjects Himself to God that God may be All in all. It is not written that Christ annihilates most of God's creation and then reigns, placing some enemies under His feet, subjecting a few to Himself and then subjects Himself to God that God may be All in some. Death is abolished, not those who are in it.

It is easy to understand how someone could believe in hell as being a place of fire and brimstone where the wicked and unbelievers are tormented eternally. Through pagan myths, lakes of fire, poetic underworld imaginative journeys and the mistranslation of the word "eonian" for everlasting, have all been linked to *hades*, *gehenna* and *tartarus*.

*Gehenna* was a valley where garbage, dead animals and bodies were burned. Unburned matter was covered with worms or maggots. According to Christ and Isaiah, it will be in operation once again in the Millennium.

*Tartarus* is a temporary prison for sinning messengers awaiting judgment. There is a judging of spirit beings. After all, they are part of God's creation who sinned.

The lake of fire is the eonian conscious torment for the three superhuman beings. They are the Adversary, wild beast and false prophet. It is also the second death for irreverent mankind and those whose names are not written in the scroll of life..

*Hades* and *sheol* are the unseen and will be better understood in the next chapter when the subject of death is discussed.

I hope that this presentation has helped you to realize that the pagan view of hell never should have found its way into God's sacred Word. Errors in translation, plus human philosophy, have blemished God's character. His judgment is swift and just. It needs not to be carried out endlessly. He is a loving, gracious and merciful God.



# Death

The Adversary is a liar, and the father of it (John 8:44). He started in the Garden of Eden and continues to this very day, deceiving many with the words, “*Ye shall not surely die*” (Genesis 3:4). It is understandable for unbelievers to cling to his lie, but God’s saints who study the Scriptures should not have fallen prey to Satan’s trap, especially when God earlier said, “*You shall die*” (Genesis 2:17).

However, it is Satan’s lie that is being proclaimed and believed instead of God’s truth. Just as theology and pagan philosophy pulled the wool over our eyes about “hell,” the same is true of “death.” Around four hundred years before Christ there was a pagan philosopher who learned from Socrates. His name was Plato, and he was the author of a book titled *Phaedo*, where the theory of the immortality of the soul originated.

To understand the meaning of “soul” and its relationship to death, a look at what occurred in the creation of man will be helpful. In Genesis 2:7 God formed man from the soil of the ground. This first step in the creation of man is very important to grasp. Picture in your mind God forming a human body with all of its organs from the soil. Did you notice something? Man is nothing more than a lifeless body! He did not speak, nor could he hear, smell, taste, see or feel! He had no consciousness or sensation whatsoever. What did God do next? He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, which is what? The spirit! So we have a lifeless body plus the spirit. What is the result with the union of the body and the spirit? Man became a living soul! Now the man had all of his senses and was aware. He heard God, he ate fruit, he named the living creatures and so forth. God gives life through the spirit. May we stress that He did not breathe the soul into man, but the breath of life, the spirit. The chief characteristic of the soul is consciousness or sensation, and it cannot exist without the body and spirit. Ezekiel gives a similar analogy of what occurred at the creation of man:

*O dry bones ... I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live* (Ezekiel 37:4-6).

Plants have life, but they are not conscious. Living souls are associated with moving about from place to place, being aware of their existence. This is true of animals in Genesis 1:21, referring to “*every living moving soul*.” When speaking of the term “*living soul*” there is a similarity between man and animal as to being able to move about and sensing the things of the world. Paul gave the characteristics of man in his speech to the Athenians. In Acts 17:28 he says, “*for in Him [God] we are living and moving and are*.” The words “*in Him we are living*” relate to the spirit. “*Moving*” refers to the soul. “*Are*” is the usual word for body. The word “*soul*” occurs 488 times, 430 times in the Hebrew Scriptures and 58 times in the Greek. It is not associated with deathlessness or immortality. It is found with some words

that have negative meanings, such as “*fainting*” (Hebrews 12:3), “*slain*” (Revelation 6:9), “*destroy*” (Matthew 10:39), and “*laying down [dying]*” (I John 3:16).

The soul is attached to the senses, as the following passages denote (taken from the *Authorized Version*):

*Whatsoever thy soul lusteth after* (Deuteronomy 12:15, 20-21);

*Thy soul longeth to eat flesh* (Deuteronomy 12:20);

*Eat grapes thy fill at thine own pleasure* (Deuteronomy 23:24);

*Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat* (Psalm 107:18);

*A thief if he steal to satisfy his soul* (Proverbs 6:30);

*Eateth to the satisfying of his soul* (Proverbs 13:25);

*An honeycomb, sweet to the soul* (Proverbs 16:24);

*If thou be a man given to appetite* (Proverbs 23:2);

*The full soul loatheth an honeycomb, but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet* (Proverbs 27:7);

*Should make his soul enjoy good* (Margin reads: “*delights in senses*” Ecclesiastes 2:24);

*The appetite is not filled* (Ecclesiastes 6:7);

*To make empty the soul of the hungry* (Isaiah 32:6).

Since the body and food are from the same soil, there is a sensation of physical satisfaction when eating.

Preachers herald the message, “save your souls!” However, Jesus said that whoever may be wanting to save his soul shall be destroying it.

*Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone is wanting to come after Me, let him renounce himself and pick up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever may be wanting to save his soul shall be destroying it. Yet whoever should be destroying his soul on My account shall be finding it”* (Matthew 16:24-25).

Why would Jesus tell anyone to lose their soul? Remember that Jesus also came to set up a literal kingdom on earth, and those who would suffer with Him (pick up his cross) would reign in the coming Millennial eon, enjoying physical blessings. Those who prefer physical sensations (soul) over following Jesus will miss the Millennium glory. Paul seldom mentions the word “soul” in his epistles,

because he was acquainted with no one after soulish desires.

The blood is to the soul as the spirit is to the breath. This analogy has been lost through the English versions. Soul is often translated by the expression “life,” so that the difference between soul and life, as well as soul and spirit, is widely unknown. The activity of the spirit gives life. It gave life to a body at creation and will impart life at the resurrection. English words which have originated from the Greek *psuchē*, the word for “soul,” mistakenly refer to the spirit. For example, psychology deals with the mind, instead of the soulish sensations.

Also, “psychic,” which really means “soulish” or “sensual,” mistakenly indicates “pneumatic,” or spiritual. If soul meant life, Genesis 2:7 would incorrectly read, “man became a living life.” The *Concordant Version* renders the following passages thus:

*Yea, only flesh with its soul, its blood, you shall not eat (Genesis 9:4).*

*For the soul of all flesh, it is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11).*

*For the soul of all flesh, its blood is it. It is in its soul ... for the soul of all flesh, its blood is it (Leviticus 17:14).*

The Scriptures tell us that there is a soulish body and a spiritual body. The first Adam became a living soul (a soulish body with flesh and blood). The last Adam became a vivifying Spirit (a spiritual body with flesh and bones). Flesh and blood is not able to enjoy an allotment in the kingdom of God, because blood is identified with the soulish body.

*If there is a soulish body, there is a spiritual also. Thus it is written also, “The first man, Adam, became a living soul: the last Adam a vivifying Spirit.” But not first the spiritual, but the soulish, thereupon the spiritual. The first man was out of the earth, soilish; the second Man is the Lord out of heaven.*

*Such as the soilish one is, such are those also who are soilish, and such as the Celestial One, such are those also who are celestials. And according as we wear the image of the soilish, we should be wearing the image also of the Celestial. Now this I am averring, brethren, that flesh and blood is not able to enjoy an allotment in the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 15:45-50).*

### WHAT IS DEATH?

Keeping in mind the order of man’s creation, we now can see what occurs at death. Death is simply a return. The spirit returns to God Who gave it (Ecclesiastes 12:7), the soul returns to the unseen [*sheol* (Hebrew) or *hades* (Greek)] (Psalm 9:17; Acts 2:27,31), the body is soil and returns to the soil (Genesis 3:19). Job says,

*For I know that Thou wilt return me to death (Job 30:23).*

*If He should take back His spirit to Himself, and gather to Himself His breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust [soil] (Job 34:14-15).*

David says,

*... when Thou takest away their breath, they die and return to their dust [soil] (Psalm 104:29).*

Everything returns to its original condition. Paul speaks of his own death by saying, “the period of my dissolution [not departure] is imminent” (II Timothy 4:6). A return to death is a condition of complete unconsciousness. There was no awareness prior to our birth, and the same is true after we die. The Scriptures refer to it as sleeping, where there is no awareness around us. Those who are asleep in death will be awakened at their appointed resurrection. For those of us who sleep straight through the night for eight hours, doesn't it appear that just a short time has elapsed? Or what about going under anesthesia for an operation? There is no recollection until you wake. The following portions of Scripture refer to death as sleeping and as having no consciousness or perception, which is the true meaning for *sheol* or *hades*:

*For there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol (Ecclesiastes 9:10);*

*For Sheol cannot thank thee, death cannot praise thee ... The living, he thanks thee as I do this day (Isaiah 38:18-19);*

*Illuminate my eyes, lest I should sleep in death (Psalm 13:3);*

*For in death, there is no remembrance of Thee; in the unseen, who is acclaiming [praising] Thee? (Psalm 6:5);*

*His spirit will pass forth, he will return to his ground; in that day his reflections perish (Psalm 146:4);*

*For the living know that they will die, yet the dead know nothing whatever, and there is no further hire for them; for their remembrance is forgotten (Ecclesiastes 9:5);*

*The dead do not praise the Lord (Psalm 115:17);*

*He has made me sit in darkness like those long dead (Psalm 143:3).*

The following chart will further help us understand that only the soul is connected with the unseen, not the body or spirit. However, there were two phenomenal instances when the body went down into sheol. The sons of Korah, Dathan and Abiram went down into sheol alive and Jonah found his sheol in the belly of a fish.

<u>Origin</u>	<u>Component</u>	<u>Manifestation</u>	<u>Dissolution</u>
Soil	Man	Body	Soil
God	Breath	Spirit	God
Unseen	Breath and Body	Soul or Sensation	Unseen

---

---

## DENYING THE RESURRECTION

Though innocently not realized, anyone who believes Satan's lie, "you will not die," or clings to Plato's pagan theory and the orthodox teaching of the "immortality of the soul," are denying the resurrection. Some Corinthians said that there was no resurrection of the dead. Paul tells them that if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ was not roused and their faith is vain for they are still in their sins (1 Corinthians 15:12-18). These are pretty strong accusations, but very true to the point. There is no doubt in my mind that you, as a believer, do not deny the resurrection, but are caught in a whirlwind of human traditional teaching.

When a believer dies, and his soul supposedly enters a better life, what would be the purpose of the resurrection? If our spirit has consciousness and is enjoying ecstasy in His divine presence, what need would there be for a body promised to us (Philippians 3:21)? Remember, there are two ingredients necessary for consciousness and sensation: the body, and spirit. At the resurrection, when awakened out of our death sleep, our bodies will conform to Christ's. The spiritual body which is flesh and bone will be made alive by the spirit, and thus we will have consciousness. It is the resurrection from the dead, not from another form of life! Death is the essential prerequisite to resurrection.

Death for the believer is made out to be a blessed happening. Though the loved ones of the departed are grieving, they are told that the deceased have gone home to be with the Lord, as if they are up there somewhere looking down. There is even a tendency to talk to the departed; but the Word of God says that death is evil and life is good (Deuteronomy 30:15). God finds no pleasure in the death of anyone, so turn and live (Ezekiel 18:32).

The motion picture industry does not help matters by making movies with ghosts talking and the dead walking about. Some movie titles are so contradictory such as "Night of the Living Dead." How can you be dead and alive? This may be a harmless thought in a movie, but it is sad when proclaimed from the pulpit. If the dead are consciously alive, then they are not dead at all – which makes the resurrection unnecessary.

Then there are the near-death experiences (NDE), where many have testified to be floating about their bodies free of pain and full of energy, or soaring through time and space into a world of colors and music, or passing through a gray mist and cold winds and tunnels with a light at the end. This subject has considerable controversy, as scientists argue that NDE can be explained by psychological or physiological processes. It may be a way for people near death to separate themselves from the pain or reality of what they are experiencing. Others believe it is a response from the brain and nervous system. Using various medications, or stimulating the brain, have actually induced NDE-like incidents. Also, if there is a lack of oxygen to the brain coupled with drugs, as is the case in these emergency conditions, the brain responds in unusual ways. Regardless of these findings, which tend to support that there is no death, they are unscriptural.

## IMMORTALITY

Plato was on the right track, for death is not mankind's finale; but he was ignorant of God's power to rouse the dead, and taught that the soul or spirit is immortal and that man's existence continues based on this theory. However, humanity is not kept alive, but we shall all be made alive or vivified.

Vivification will be discussed later, but for now it means simply to have immortality, which puts us beyond the reach of death.

To claim immortality through death is an error. How can anyone believe Satan's lie when the Scriptures teach us that Christ alone has immortality? He was not the first to be roused from the dead, but He is the first One to be made alive (vivified) beyond the power of death. He is the First-fruit of those who are vivified and will never die. All of the others who were roused have died. There is only one way for us to put on immortality, and that is to be roused from the dead and to be in His presence when He is manifested. Immortality is from the Greek *athanasia*, which means "deathlessness." It is found only three times in two passages:

*I am charging you in the sight of God, Who is vivifying all, and of Jesus Christ, Who testifies in the ideal avowal before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this precept unspotted, irreprehensible, unto the advent of our Lord, Christ Jesus, which, to its own eras, the happy and only Potentate will be showing: He is King of kings and Lord of lords, Who alone has immortality (1 Timothy 6:13-16).*

*Lo! a secret to you am I telling! We all, indeed, shall not be put to repose, yet we all shall be changed, in an instant, in the twinkle of an eye, at the last trump. For He will be trumpeting, and the dead will be roused incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality. Now, whenever this corruptible should be putting on incorruption and this mortal should be putting on immortality, then shall come to pass the word which is written, "Swallowed up was Death by Victory." Where, O Death, is your victory? Where, O Death, is your sting? (1 Corinthians 15:51-53).*

"Immortal" and "immortality" are sometimes misused in place of "incorruptible" and "incorruption." Incorruptible is from the Greek word *aphthartos* (found in Romans 1:23; 1 Timothy 1:17; 1 Corinthians 9:25; 15:52; 1 Peter 1:4, 23; 3:4). Incorruption is from the Greek word *aphthaisia* (found in Romans 2:7; 1 Corinthians 15:42, 50, 53-54; Ephesians 6:24; 2 Timothy 1:10; Titus 2:7).

Through Adam sin entered into the world, and through sin came death. Thus death came through into all mankind. Death cannot be denied, because it makes the resurrection power of God known. Christ alone has immortality, and the next extraordinary event in God's plan is the manifestation of Christ, when we will put on immortality and incorruption. However, theology and paganism have turned this powerful display of God into something that does not require much effort, because He is making alive that which already has life.

After we are manifested with Christ and He then returns to earth, who are the dead whom Christ is coming to rouse? If you say He is coming for the bodies, then it proves that the two (body and spirit) are inseparable, and according to creation, consciousness cannot exist without their union. Thus the soul or spirit really isn't immortal after all. In Revelation, John wrote about "*the former resurrection*," telling us that the rest of the dead do not live until the thousand years should be finished. If this particular class of the dead do not live until an appointed time, this has to be true of all of the dead. An hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs will be hearing His voice. Are the conscious in their tombs?

*Marvel not at this, for coming is the hour in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and those who do good shall go out into a resurrection of life [resurrection], yet those who commit bad things, into a resurrection of judging [great white throne] (John 5:28-29).*

*And I perceived thrones, and they are seated on them, and judgment was granted to them. And the souls of those executed because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the Word of God, and those who do not worship the wild beast or its image, and did not get the emblem on their forehead and on their hand, they also live and reign with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead do not live until the thousand years should be finished.) This is the former resurrection (Revelation 20:4-5).*

*For, if we are believing that Jesus died and rose, thus also, those who are put to repose [sleep], will God, through Jesus, lead forth together with Him. For this we are saying to you by the word of the Lord, that we, the living, who are surviving to the presence of the Lord, should by no means outstrip those who are put to repose [sleep], for the Lord Himself will be descending from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the Chief Messenger, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall be rising first (1 Thessalonians 4:14-16).*

*(Yet now Christ has been roused from among the dead, the First-fruit of those who are reposing (sleeping). For since, in fact, through a man came death, through a Man, also, comes the resurrection of the dead. For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified. Yet each in his own class: the First-fruit, Christ; thereupon those who are Christ's in His presence (1 Corinthians 15:20-23).*

## CHRIST'S DEATH

Our precious Savior is such a marvelous example of so many topics. Looking at what occurred at His death may shed light on the subject of death and hell. Before Jesus died He said, "*Father, into Thy hands am I committing My spirit*" (Luke 23:46). He did not say, "into hell am I committing My spirit." In all that our Lord experienced during His crucifixion, He deserved nothing but the highest glory. Yet theology says He went to hell until His Resurrection. If *hades* is "hell," why would God subject His Son to more pain and misery? Are we denying the very words of our battered, bruised, beaten and bloody Savior when He said, "*It is accomplished*" (John 19:30)?

The sacrifice of Christ at Golgotha *did* accomplish God's purpose. There was no need for further sufferings to finish His work. The power of His blood should not be taken lightly. Christ's spirit did not go to hell, a place of torment. Rather, His soul went to the unseen, a state of unconsciousness, a place of oblivion called *hades*. He has the keys of death and of the unseen – *not* to put individuals in a so called fiery, tormenting hell, but to rouse them from the dead.

His spirit had been committed to His Father, thus it returned to God. Was Christ's spirit conscious in His Father's presence before God roused Him? The words of Jesus spoken to Mary Magdalene in the garden after His resurrection give us the answer:

*Do not touch Me, for not as yet have I ascended to My Father (John 20:17).*

So when He died, His spirit returned to God (Ecclesiastes 12:7), and was not conscious. He did not ascend to His Father until *after* He had been roused from among the dead. His soul had been in the “unseen,” which is spoken of in the following passage.

*Therefore gladdened was my heart, And exultant my tongue. Now, still my flesh also shall be tenting in expectation, For Thou wilt not be forsaking my soul in the unseen, Nor wilt Thou be giving Thy Benign One to be acquainted with decay. Thou makest known to me the paths of life. Thou wilt be filling me with gladness with Thy face (Acts 2:26-28).*

His body and spirit was separated, so His soul was in the unseen. In resurrection He was vivified, made alive by the return of His spirit (1 Peter 3:18). As the above passage states, His soul was not forsaken in the unseen. The one difference between our death and Christ’s is that His body saw no decay. He arose with the exact body used to take away the sin of the world. Death didn’t even harm His physique.

The fact that Christ went to *hades* (the unseen) should make us aware that it is not limited to the unsaved. It pertains to *all* who die, believer and unbeliever alike. All go to the unseen at death, and appear when they are roused. Knowing this is beneficial for the grieving mother whose wicked son had died young, without him ever realizing salvation in Jesus. She can wipe her teary eyes, and looking up to heaven can say, “Thank you dear God, the Savior of all mankind, that my son who I dearly miss is not burning in the flames of traditional hell. Thank you dear Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for being a just Judge and Justifier, paying my son according to his acts. Thank you God that at the consummation (end) of the eons, my son will be vivified, made alive for our reuniting.”

Peter is not presently standing at the pearly white gates. These gates will be found in the holy city, New Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven to the new earth in the final eon. This is for those who walked in the footsteps of faithful Abraham. Peter is as dead and in the same state as Judas. Both are asleep in *hades* waiting to hear His voice. May this also help many refrain from praying to so-called saints who are supposedly alive in heaven.

## JUDGMENT

Another subject that wouldn’t make sense is judgment. As a believer, you have to have a resurrected body to be judged. To be judged, we must be manifested in front of the dais of Christ so that each of us can be requited for that which we put into practice through our bodies, whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10). The dais is a raised platform. Christ is not presently sitting or standing on the dais, requiting every believer who dies now. Instead, He is seated at the right hand of God (Ephesians 1:20).

Another problem would be at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11). Those here will be judged according to their acts. Some enter eonian life into the new heavens and earth (Job 14:12; 19:25), and others enter the second death. If wicked unbelievers are presently in hell being tormented, why would God call them to stand before the Great White Throne just to toss them back into hell again? What further judgment could be added to their endless torment?

Some say that those resurrected at the Great White Throne will be annihilated – but this throne is for *judgment*. Why resurrect billions in front of the Throne just to tell them that they will never be



---

vivified, and that their judgment with all of the surroundings won't be enough to convince them that Jesus is Lord, and that He shed His blood for them? God is not an annihilator, but the *Savior* of all mankind (1 Timothy 4:10).

Have you been wondering how the dead are standing before this Throne (Revelation 20:12) after just discussing that the dead are not alive? Although the word "*resurrection*" does not appear in :12-15, this is referring to a resurrection. These individuals are not roused to a resurrection of life, as we are at the Lord's appearing (Colossians 3:1-4), at the *parousia* (2 Thessalonians 1:10), or with those at the former resurrection (Revelation 20:5). In truth, they are considered as good as dead, because they are not vivified (made alive, immortal) and will be condemned in accord with their acts and cast into the lake of fire, the second death. When you die, there is no life without resurrection, and to prove that this event is a resurrection, please read Revelation 20:4-5. The rest of the dead, who are not roused at the former resurrection, will not live until the thousand years are finished. These dead will be resurrected for judgment and condemnation.

### THE SECOND DEATH

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the lake of fire is the second death; but if you recall, the lake of fire is first mentioned without relationship to death. In fact, the word "*living*" is found in the same sentence of its first occurrence: "*Living, the two [wild beast and false prophet] were cast into the lake of fire burning with sulphur*" (Revelation 19:20). A thousand years later the Adversary is also cast into the lake of fire (20:10). The Adversary, wild beast and false prophet are three wicked superhuman beings who will actually be alive in the lake of fire being tormented day and night for the eons of the eons (pertains to the last two eons).

The second death is mentioned in connection with the lake of fire after the dead are raised for judgment. All of those not included in the previous resurrections will stand before the Great White Throne for judgment. As mentioned earlier, those being judged in accord with their acts will either enter the last eon or return to the death state and enter the second death, known as the lake of fire.

If those who were brought back to life to be judged were previously in hell, God would have to perform a miracle to preserve them in this type of environment. No human can survive in a so-called fiery hell. Will God protect them like He did Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego? Those appearing before the Great White Throne are to be judged, and will suffer in accord with their acts. Why would God miraculously preserve them just so they could be tortured endlessly? We already know that immortality is the result of a body being vivified (made alive by the spirit), never to die again; but those resurrected before the Throne are not vivified, neither are they resurrected as superhuman beings possessing the qualities of the Adversary, wild beast and false prophet who are not associated with death.

Just because God divinely associates the second death with the lake of fire, there is a refusal to believe that it is a death at all. Don't lose the concept of death that we have just learned. Death is death, whether it is the first or second death. Why should the second death not be death as well as the first? Was the second watch (Luke 12:38) not a watch at all, or the second sign (John 4:54) not a sign? Was Jesus not a Man because He is called the Second Man (1 Corinthians 15:47)? Is not the second covenant (Hebrews 8:7) a covenant at all? Was the second curtain (Hebrews 9:3) not a curtain? The

second epistle of Paul (2 Corinthians), the second animal (Revelation 4:7), the second seal (Revelation 11:14), and the second foundation (Revelation 21:19), are all precisely what they are said to be, in spite of the fact that they are not the first of their kind. Why, then, should the second death be anything other than death?

It is only to those unbelievers and wicked evil doers who come out of the first death that the lake of fire becomes the second death. The first death is a temporary place of oblivion. The same is true of the second death, until death is abolished and all are made alive in Christ at the close of the eons. Death is not abolished in the lake of fire, because the lake of fire is the second death! It is the only death remaining during the reign of our Lord. When Christ abolishes the second death, all of those who died this death will be made alive at the end of the eons, and Christ will give back to God all of the reconciled creation which was blemished by evil.

### OPPOSING SCRIPTURES

Those who believe that hell is a fiery place of endless torment, and that the dead are conscious without resurrection, use certain Scriptures to support their opposition. Let's begin with Psalms.

*The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forgot God (Psalm 9:17).*

As we have disclosed earlier, "hell" is a misleading theological term used in place of *sheol* and *hades*, which means imperceptible or unseen. Another mistranslation in the same passage is the word "turned," translated from the Hebrew word *shub*. However, *shub* always means "return," as in Genesis 3:19, "till thou return to the ground." The above passage simply means that the wicked will return to the unseen. At death, the soul returns to the unseen from which it came. The next Scriptures are found in Matthew.

*Then He [Jesus] will say to those at His left hand, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).*

*And they shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal (Matthew 25:46).*

The word "eonian" is mistranslated and given numerous meanings, two of which are "everlasting" and "eternal." "Eonian" means "age-abiding," and in this event refers to the Millennium. The proper translation of the previous passages found in the *Concordant Version* is rendered,

*Then shall He be declaring to those also at His left, "Go from Me, you cursed, into the fire eonian, made ready for the Adversary and his messengers" (Matthew 25:41).*

*And these shall be coming away into chastening eonian, yet the just into life eonian (Matthew 25:46).*

The whole theme of these passages pertains to the treatment of Israel by the nations. The nations (:32), not individuals, are judged at the time of our Lord's return to earth. This is not a final judgment for mankind where those on the right go to heaven and those on the left go to hell. It is the "Glory

Throne” judgment. The nations at His right will receive eonian blessings, while those at His left will receive eonian chastisement in the Millennium. In Matthew 25:41, the justice of fire eonian is disciplinary and corrective, as it was for Sodom and Gomorrah.

*As Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them in like manner to these committing ultra-prostitution, and coming away after other flesh, are lying before us, a specimen, experiencing the justice of fire eonian (Jude 7).*

If you were to visit Sodom and the surrounding cities today you would not find an eternal fire burning, but would see that these cities are still experiencing the justice of eonian fire. The fire has long ceased, but its effects remain and will continue and testify to God’s judgment until the end of this eon, after which Sodom shall return to her former estate (Ezekiel 16:53-56). The Adversary, wild beast and false prophet are superhuman, so they will be disciplined and corrected in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10). Let us turn to another Scripture in Matthew.

*And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire (Matthew 18:8-9).*

Once again the words “eternal fire” should be rendered “fire eonian” and the phrase “hell of fire” should be rendered “the Gehenna of fire.” In the Millennium the law will be very strict with disciplinary and corrective action. Gehenna will be the city’s incinerator where executed bodies of criminals will be tossed. If any part of the body causes sin, the whole body is in jeopardy of death. The correct *Concordant Version* rendering of the previous passage is as follows:

*Now, if your hand or your foot is snaring you, strike it off and cast it from you. Is it ideal for you to be entering into life maimed or lame, or, having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the fire eonian? And if your eye is snaring you, wrench it out and cast it from you. Is it ideal for you to be entering into life one-eyed, or, having two eyes, to be cast into the Gehenna of fire? (Matthew 18:8-9).*

Also in Matthew is the parable of the darnel (Matthew 13:37-43). The close of the age in this parable refers to the present age in which we now live, and the darnel represents the hypocrites. At the end of this age the messengers will reap a harvest. The wicked will be destroyed by the terrible judgments of the seven bowels of fury poured out by the seven messengers (Revelation 15:5-16:21). This event is not a final judgment of mankind where the reaping of the just go to heaven and the wicked to hell. The furnace of fire is in reference to God’s disciplinary and corrective judgment and not the so-called hell.

In Matthew 3:11 John the Baptist says that Jesus will be baptizing in holy spirit and fire. Those whom He does not baptize in holy spirit in grace, He will baptize in fire in judgment. The baptism of fire in this passage is the burning of the chaff. Also found in Matthew is another Scripture:

*Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear Him [Jesus] Who can destroy both soul and body in hell (Matthew 10:28).*

*Do not fear those who are killing the body, yet are not able to kill the soul. Yet be fearing Him, rather, Who is able to destroy the soul as well as the body in Gehenna (CLNT).*

The apostles who died or were martyred had nothing to fear. As far as their souls (sensation) were concerned, they would have immediate entrance into the Millennium, enjoying the delights of the earthly kingdom. Yet those who come under God's judgment in the Millennium will not only have their bodies destroyed in the Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna), but will lose all of the joys which their souls long for in the kingdom. The word "hell" in the previous passage is rendered "Gehenna" in the *Concordant Version*. The next Scripture is taken from Mark:

*... where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched (Mark 9:48).*

If this passage is referring to our traditional hell, then the worms have to be "super worms" possessing eternal life, or else fire-proof. The word "die" comes from a root word meaning "finish." This passage simply means that there will be no end of worms feeding on the unburied bodies of criminals, animals and rubbish. The *Concordant Version* renders the above passage as, "where their worm is not deceasing and the fire is not going out."

The gospels pertain to our Lord's life on earth, including His apostles, and the nation of Israel and its coming kingdom. References to fiery judgments and Gehenna (not hell) are for the end of this eon and during the Millennium. They are eonian and not the ultimate destiny of mankind. The next Scripture is taken from Thessalonians:

*They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might (2 Thessalonians 1:9).*

Once again the word "eternal" is incorrect and should be rendered "eonian." The *Concordant Version* translates the above passage as, "... who shall incur the justice of eonian extermination from the face of the Lord, and from the glory of His strength." Once again, this does not relate to the eternal torment of the wicked. The Thessalonians thought that the day of the Lord had begun and that God was afflicting them with His judgments. In 1 Thessalonians Paul consoled them with the teaching that they would be taken out of the earth prior to God's indignation. Now in 2 Thessalonians Paul again comforts them by speaking about the future, saying that they will be resting and relaxing during the unveiling of the Lord, when God's indignation comes on those who are not acquainted with God and those who do not obey the evangel of our Lord Jesus Christ (1:7-8).

The next portion of Scripture refers to the torment, day and night, in the lake of fire. It was mentioned earlier that the Adversary, wild beast and false prophet are the only ones capable of existing in this environment of fire and sulphur (Revelation 19:20; 20:10). The next Scripture to discuss is found in the gospel of Luke:

*Truly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise (Luke 23:43).*

The word "paradise" is a very controversial term. It is thought of as a present place in the celestials where we go after dying. However, "paradise" is the Persian word for "park." It is used in the *Septuagint*, spoken of as "the garden of Eden." It is used three times in the Greek Scriptures and is found

in the new creation of the last eon (Luke 23:43; Revelation 2:7; 2 Corinthians 12:4). Also, there is a punctuation error in this passage. When Jesus was speaking to the criminal, He did not mean that he would join Him in paradise that same day, but in the future. Let us turn to the *Concordant Version* translation for clarity. It is rendered as, “*Verily, to you am I saying today, with Me shall you be in paradise.*” Which of the following statements make the most sense?

1. I’m telling you today, you’ll be sorry in the future.
2. I’m telling you, today you’ll be sorry in the future.

If you said number one, you are correct. The Lord assured the criminal that his request will be honored, and that his present sufferings shall be exchanged for the joy of that day. In reality, even though it has been nearly two thousand years since Jesus spoke these words, it will seem like the same day to the criminal. There is no awareness to him in death.

The next Scripture is taken from the letter of Paul to the Philippians:

*Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death. **For to me to be living is Christ, and to be dying, gain.** Now if it is to be living in flesh, this to me means fruit from work, and what I shall be preferring I am not making known. (Yet I am being pressed out of the two, having a yearning for the solution and to be together with Christ, for it, rather, is much better.) Yet to be staying in the flesh is more necessary because of you* (Philippians 1:20-24).

Philippians is a book about running a race for a prize. It has to do with our walk. Paul is talking about service. In :21, Paul is not talking about leaving his body and going on to the Lord. The gain is not Paul’s, but Christ’s, which is evident in :20. To Paul, life or death were of no account so long as the cause of Christ was advanced. If his being bound in chains had furthered the gospel, what might not his death do? He found it more necessary to be alive because of the Philippians.

Once again there is no consciousness or immortality of the soul or spirit through death. If you recall, the Lord has no pleasure in death (Ezekiel 18:32). He is not the God of the dead, but of the living (Luke 20:38). If we believe that dying is gain because it puts us in the presence of Christ, then we miss the meaning of resurrection.

### LAZARUS AND THE RICH MAN

The most popular portion of Scripture which supports the theory of eternal torment and the dead being alive is found in Luke 16:19-31. First of all, the story of Lazarus and the rich man is not a parable in itself, but part of one. The entire parable must be considered in order to understand that the truth our Lord is speaking. However, theology separates this parable and applies a fraction of it to their doctrine of hell and the immortality of the soul.

Our Lord Jesus always spoke in parables to the multitudes (Matthew 13:34), but He explained all privately to His own disciples (Mark 4:34). He spoke in parables, not to make the truth plain, but to hide it from the majority. A parable is a statement which is parallel to its real spiritual significance, a figure of likeness in action. This parable, like the rest of the Lord’s parables, is not just a portrayal of divine

truth, but a pictorial of spiritual facts as they existed in the nation to which He was sent. Parables are always spoken in reference to Israel or its kingdom. The word “parable” is not even found in Paul’s writings, where the ultimate destiny of all mankind is truly revealed. Let us take a look at the entire parable, starting at Luke 15.

Many tribute collectors and sinners drew near to Jesus to hear Him. Also present were Pharisees and scribes saying, “This man is receiving sinners and eats with them.” Instead of denying this accusation, Jesus takes the opportunity to reveal a “five-part parable” in which He stresses the critical truth that God is not concerned with the self-righteous but with sinners.

This parable was designed to show the tax collectors and sinners (as well as the Pharisees) that God was concerned for them and that He would seek out the lost and welcome them into His family when they repented and turned back to Him.

The self-righteous accusing Pharisees and scribes, whom Christ acknowledged as the legitimate religious teachers of the Jews (Matthew 23:1-3), should have been the ones telling these people of God’s love for them. They should have been the ones teaching these sinners, exhorting them to return to God and to receive His love and forgiveness. However, because of their faith in their own righteousness and their contempt for these tax collectors and sinners who didn’t measure up to their standards, the Pharisees and scribes excluded them and considered them accursed (John 7:49).

The first part of the parable is called the “lost sheep” (Luke 15:3-7). The Lord is the Shepherd Who was commissioned for the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The ninety-nine are the self-righteous majority of the nation who, like the Pharisees and scribes, thought they had no need of repentance. The self-righteous gave God little satisfaction, but the tax collectors and sinners who responded to His love and mercy, and repented, caused joy in heaven. He received sinners, because no others would have Him or felt their need of Him. Remember that repentance is for Israel.

The lost sheep gives us God’s side. In the second part of the parable, which is called the “lost coin,” it gives us Israel’s side (Luke 15:8-10). The nation often is seen under the figure of a woman. It is the custom among women to wear silver coins for a headdress. These are their most prized ornaments, and mean much more to them than the mere money value. Israel had been decked with ornaments by Jehovah, and it was one of these that was lost. Each sinner who repented had a foretaste of the day when the redemption money is found for Israel’s ransom.

The third part of the parable is called the “prodigal son” (Luke 15:11-32). The two sons portray the moral difference between the two classes in Israel. The prodigal was far from his father’s house; the elder brother was far from his father’s heart. The Pharisees and scribes boast of a ceremonial nearness to Jehovah, but their hearts are far from Him. The tax collectors and sinners are outcasts, yet they yearn for the compassionate mercy of God.

The elder son portrays the proud conduct of the self-righteous Pharisees and scribes who do right and live up to the law as best they can. This behavior, even though sincere, does not give the Father a chance to reveal His affection. The prodigal portrays the sinner. He was far off and came back pleading for a place in his father’s service. His father saw him afar off, heard his confession, and ignored his

---

plea. He was forgiven without meritorious conduct. This is true of the sinners and outcasts. The Lord directly forgave them. The sinners rejoiced in the God of grace and truth.

The fourth part of the parable is called the “unjust steward” (Luke 16:1-18). It is addressed only to the Pharisees and scribes, the stewards of Israel’s wealth. They were dissipating His treasures and were fond of money and served their own greed for gain rather than ministering to the glory of God. They were jeopardizing their prospects in the eons to come. Those who were faithful stewards of material wealth may expect a reward in kind in the kingdom. The Pharisees died rich and will have no place in the glories of the Messianic reign. Christ died in poverty, yet He will be weighted with the wealth of all of earth’s highest glories. In :18 the Lord mentions divorce. Not only are the Pharisees dismissed from the stewardship, but apparently the nation is to be divorced from Jehovah and left desolate. This is a fitting link to lead us up to the final part of this parable, in which Israel’s fate during her divorce is discussed.

The fifth part of the parable is called “Lazarus and the rich man” (Luke 16:19-31). In :19 the cambric of the priest and the purple of the king in the rich man’s garments indicate Israel as the royal priesthood. In :20, we now see Lazarus, a contrast to the rich man. In :21 the first thing to note is that he is depicted as a beggar for scraps. This is a very appropriate description of the gentiles who “laid at the gate” of Judah. Paul describes the predicament of the gentiles prior to becoming reconciled with the Jews into one body.

*that you were, in that era, apart from Christ, being alienated from the citizenship of Israel, and guests of the promise covenants, having no expectation, and without God in the world (Ephesians 2:12).*

In :22 the rich man and Lazarus are represented as being dead. He says that Lazarus dies first and is taken to the bosom of Abraham. Notice, there is no mention of his burial here. Then the rich man dies later and is buried in *hades* (unseen – not a fiery hell). So the time sequence given indicates that, at his death, Lazarus was taken immediately to Abraham’s bosom, while afterward the rich man was buried in *hades* after his death.

If this story is literal, then we have a contradiction in the Bible. Here, Lazarus is shown to have immediately received the promise of eonian life. Yet the author of Hebrews clearly tells us that Abraham, as well as all of the other Old Testament saints, have not yet received the promises given to them by God.

*In faith died all these [Abraham, Noah, Abel, etc.], not being requited with the promises, but perceiving them ahead and saluting them, and avowing that they are strangers and expatriates on the earth (Hebrews 11:13).*

*And these all [Abraham, Noah, Abel, etc.], being testified to through faith, are not requited with the promise of God concerning us (the looking forward is to something better), that, apart from us, they may not be perfected (Hebrews 11:39-40).*

The deaths of both the rich man (who represented the Jews) and Lazarus (who represented the gentile nations) are symbolic in this parable. Here, their demise depicts an elemental change in the status and position of the two groups. To confirm this, let’s look at the meaning of Lazarus being “carried to

*Abraham's bosom.*" The figurative meaning of being in one's bosom is to be in a position of closeness, to be highly regarded. This symbolism is indicated by the ancient practice of having guests at a feast recline on the chest of their neighbors. The place of highest honor would therefore belong to the one seated next to the host, calling to mind the example of John at the Last Supper (John 13:23). Paul explains this imagery in Galatians by telling us how the gentiles could be in this place of highest honor.

*Abraham believes God, and it is reckoned to him for righteousness. Know, consequently, that those of faith, these are sons of Abraham. Now the Scripture, perceiving before that God is justifying the nations by faith, brings before an evangel to Abraham, that In you shall all the nations be blessed. So that those of faith are being blessed together with believing Abraham (Galatians 3:6-9).*

As the passage above (as well as the fourth and ninth chapters of Romans) shows, gentile believers become "sons of Abraham" through Jesus Christ's faith. This faith allows gentiles to be no longer "*strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God*" (Ephesians 2:19). For centuries the Jews had received the benefits of being God's chosen people by virtue of being Abraham's physical descendants; but after the sacrifice of Christ, this place of honor and blessing would be given to the people represented by Lazarus. This is the meaning of being "*carried to the bosom of Abraham*" in this parable.

In contrast to Lazarus, the rich man was buried in *hades* (unseen). Symbolically, this parable shows that a point would come when the house of Judah would become "unseen" by God, out of favor because of their unbelief. There would come a time when the Jews as a whole no longer would be God's favored nation. Their hard hearts would lead them to reject their Messiah (John 1:11).

In :23, what did Christ mean by saying here that the rich man was in "*torments in Hades*"? The key to discovering the symbolic meaning of this verse is the Greek noun *basanois*, translated "*torments*" above. In this verse, *basanois* simply conveys a sense of testing and proving through punishment. When this understanding is combined with the proper recognition of the word *hades*, we can begin to see the point that our Lord is making. At Acts 28 Israel was set aside and replaced during this current eon by those gentiles who, in faith, realize what the sacrifice of Christ meant.

If the Pharisees and scribes understood this prophetic parable, then it must have astonished and infuriated those who listened as Christ spoke. The implication that the house of Judah and the gentile nations were to change places, with the Jews becoming alienated from God while the gentiles were to become the "seed of Abraham," would have been almost impossible for them to believe.

In :24, notice that the rich man identifies Abraham as his father, just as the Pharisees did (John 8:39). The rich man (Judah) is now shown to be undergoing reproof, testing and punishment in "this flame" (singular, not "these flames"). It is quite obvious that the flame is not literal, because a wet fingertip on the tongue would do nothing to quench the pain inflicted by real flames.

The word rendered "torment" here is a form of the Greek verb *odunao*, which literally means "grief," "pain" or "suffering." Predominantly, it conveys the sense of mental anguish, not physical pain. Forms of this word are found only four times in the Scriptures, all in the writings of Luke. It appears twice in this parable, in :24-25. In Luke 2:48 it is used to describe the anxious distress that Mary and Joseph felt after they discovered the 12-year-old Jesus missing on the trip home from Jerusalem after the



---

Passover feast. In Acts 20:38, it depicts the sorrow that the elders of the Ephesians church felt at Paul's farewell announcement that they would never see him again.

The rich man cries out from the symbolic darkness of *hades* for comfort because of the suffering caused by the flame. When one looks at the history of the Jewish people from the time of Christ until today, one theme remains constant: persecution. With the quashing of the Jewish revolts against Rome (66-70 A.D. and 132-135 A.D.), the saga of the Jewish people in the Diaspora has been one of persistent and harsh persecution from virtually all quarters. The Inquisition of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the Holocaust of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are two of the more well-known anti-Semitic episodes, but many more are recorded on the bloody pages of history. For their unbelief and rejection of truth and knowledge, the Jews have been cursed by God with the "flame" of suffering and grief down through the centuries. Unfortunately, most of that mistreatment has come at the hands of those who called themselves "Christians."

The Jews pictured by the rich man in this parable are in their present state because of their unbelief, which ultimately manifested itself in the rejection of the Messiah, Yeshua. Unfortunately, this parable shows that the punishment and testing they would undergo would not **immediately** lead them to Christ. Instead of calling on the Messiah, the rich man calls on his ancestor Abraham to help ease his suffering.

In :25, Abraham clearly identifies the rich man as his descendant by calling him "child." He tells him that things have changed. When the Jews were God's chosen people they enjoyed the spiritual blessings associated with that status; but now, Abraham says, Lazarus is enjoying those blessings while the rich man is grieving and in sorrow. "Tormented" here is another form of *odunao*, the same Greek verb found above in :24.

In :26, what is the "great chasm" which stands between the rich man and Lazarus? Paul aptly explains it to us in the eleventh chapter of Romans. He tells us that, because of the Jews' unbelief, "*God has given them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear, to this very day*" (Romans 11:8). Paul goes on to say that a partial hardening would happen to Israel "*until the fullness of the gentiles be entering in*" (Romans 11:25). In 2 Corinthians 3:14-15 Paul tells us that the Israelites' "*minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains un-lifted in the reading of the old testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.*"

The "*great chasm*" mentioned by Abraham is nothing less than God's blinding in this age of the Jews as a whole to the truth about their Messiah! It's not that the Jewish nation won't acknowledge Christ; they cannot recognize his true identity because of God's actions! Yet because of God's great mercy, this state of affairs will not be permanent (Romans 11:26).

In :27-28, yielding himself to his destiny the rich man asks one more thing of his forefather Abraham. He pleads with him to send someone to warn his brothers, so that they may escape "this place of torment" (*basanou*), the testing and punishment that he was undergoing. The fact that the rich man has five brothers is a vital clue to his true symbolic identity. Judah, the ancestor of the Jews, was the son of Jacob through Leah (Genesis 29:35). He had five full-blooded brothers: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Issachar and Zebulun (Genesis 35:23). While the significance of this seemingly pointless detail has been

neglected by scholars throughout the centuries, you can be certain that it did not escape the notice of the Pharisees and scribes to whom Christ was speaking. They thoroughly knew their history and were extremely proud of their heritage. Christ wanted those self-righteous Pharisees to know exactly to whom He was referring with this parable. This detail cements the identity of the rich man as the house of Judah, the Jews!

In :29, once again Abraham refuses the rich man's request, telling him that the brothers already have a witness in the writings of Moses and the prophets that will allow them to escape his fate. Moses, as well as the prophets, are shown several times in the New Testament to support our Lord's identity as the Messiah (Luke 24:27, 44; John 1:45; 5:46; Acts 3:22-24; 7:37; 26:22-23; 28:23). Abraham tells the rich man that his brothers would have to recognize the prophesied Messiah because of the things written about Him in the Tanakh. This echoes what our Lord told the Jews in John:

*Be not supposing that I shall be accusing you to the Father. He who is accusing you to the Father is Moses, on whom you rely. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he writes concerning Me. Now if you are not believing his writings, how shall you be believing My declarations? (John 5:45-47).*

As the Scriptures show, the Jewish leaders of Christ's day generally failed to recognize the very One about Whom Moses wrote (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18).

Christ uses the last two verses of this parable as an amazing prophecy of his pending resurrection from the dead. The rich man says that, although his brothers may not accept the scriptural evidence for the identity of the Messiah, they will accept the evidence of one who is raised from the dead. Yet Abraham answers and plainly tells him that anyone who rejects God's Word about the Messiah will also refuse to acknowledge the evidence of a miraculous resurrection. This last verse is a sad prophecy about the Jews and about all of the Israelites who have not, despite God's resurrection of His Son from the power of the grave, recognized Christ as the Messiah.

Christ ends this parable abruptly, with no real resolution presented. The picture presented is a bleak one, yet there is hope for the Jews and for all Israel. In Romans 11 Paul laid out that hope in such a manner that scarcely few today have really believed it.

In Romans 11:1 Paul rhetorically asks if God has cast away His people, Israel. He answers his own question emphatically by saying, "Certainly not!" He tells us that God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Paul writes that there is currently a remnant of Israel, analogous to the seven thousand reserved to God in Elijah's time (1 Kings 19:18), whom God has elected by grace. The rest God has hardened, that the nation might also be included in salvation through grace. He gives the resolution of the situation in the following Scripture. All Israel will be saved:

*For I am not willing for you to be ignorant of this secret, brethren, lest you may be passing for prudent among yourselves, that callousness, in part, on Israel has come, until the complement of the nations may be entering. And thus all **Israel shall be saved**, according as it is written, "Arriving out of Zion shall be the Rescuer. He will be turning away irreverence from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them Whenever I should be eliminating their sins." As to the evangel, indeed, they are enemies because of you, yet, as to choice, they are beloved because of the fathers. For un-*

---

*regretted are the graces and the calling of God. For even as you once were stubborn toward God, yet now were shown mercy at their stubbornness, thus these also are now stubborn to this mercy of yours, that now they also may be shown mercy. For God locks up all together in stubbornness, that He should be merciful to all. O, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How inscrutable are His judgments, and untraceable His ways! For, who knew the mind of the Lord? or, who became His adviser? or, who gives to Him first, and it will be repaid him? seeing that out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen!* (Romans 11:25-33).

The same God Who blinded Israel to disobedience will have mercy on all who have been rebellious due to that blindness. To quote Paul once again, “*Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How inscrutable are His judgments and untraceable His ways!*”

The parable of Lazarus and the rich man, long used by mainstream ministers to teach the reality of “hell,” really has nothing to say about punishment or reward after resurrection. Christ used this story, which fit the common misconception about life after death in his day, to show the fate that awaited the Jewish nation because of the unbelief and faithlessness which led them to reject him as the Messiah. They still suffer from that fate to this very day. Yet the time is coming when God will pour on the Jews the spirit of grace and supplication, and then they will look on Christ Whom they pierced and will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn (Zechariah 12:10).

### SUMMARY

It is natural for people to fear death, so they portray it as an immediate entrance into another life. This is all well and good in comforting the grieving; however, we cannot rob God of His resurrection power. The dead are asleep, and are in *hades* (the unseen, unconscious). I think we are more concerned in comforting ourselves than what the dead are really experiencing. To them it will seem that Plato was correct, with the exception of one major event: The Resurrection! When someone dies, the spirit returns to God, the soul will no longer have sensation and the body returns to soil (or, as we say, dust). Regardless of being dead for two years or two centuries, their unawareness will be a split second, a twinkling of an eye. It will seem as though there is no interval between death and resurrection because of unconsciousness. It is safe to say that there is no life after death, because life comes after the resurrection. He is the God of the living, not of the dead. Jesus did not say, “I am the death and the Life” but “*I am the Resurrection and the Life.*”

## RESURRECTIONS – VIVIFICATIONS

### RESURRECTIONS

There is no life without resurrection. Many believe there is one general resurrection, but actually there are five occurrences (Figure 4), Christ being the first and most important One. Before discussing these, it is necessary to distinguish the difference between resurrection and vivification.

“Raise” or “resurrection” refers to the body. “Rouse” refers to the soul (sensation). “Vivify” (quicken) refers to the spirit. Vivify means to make alive, never to die again. One becomes immortal and incor-

# RESURRECTIONS & VIVIFICATIONS

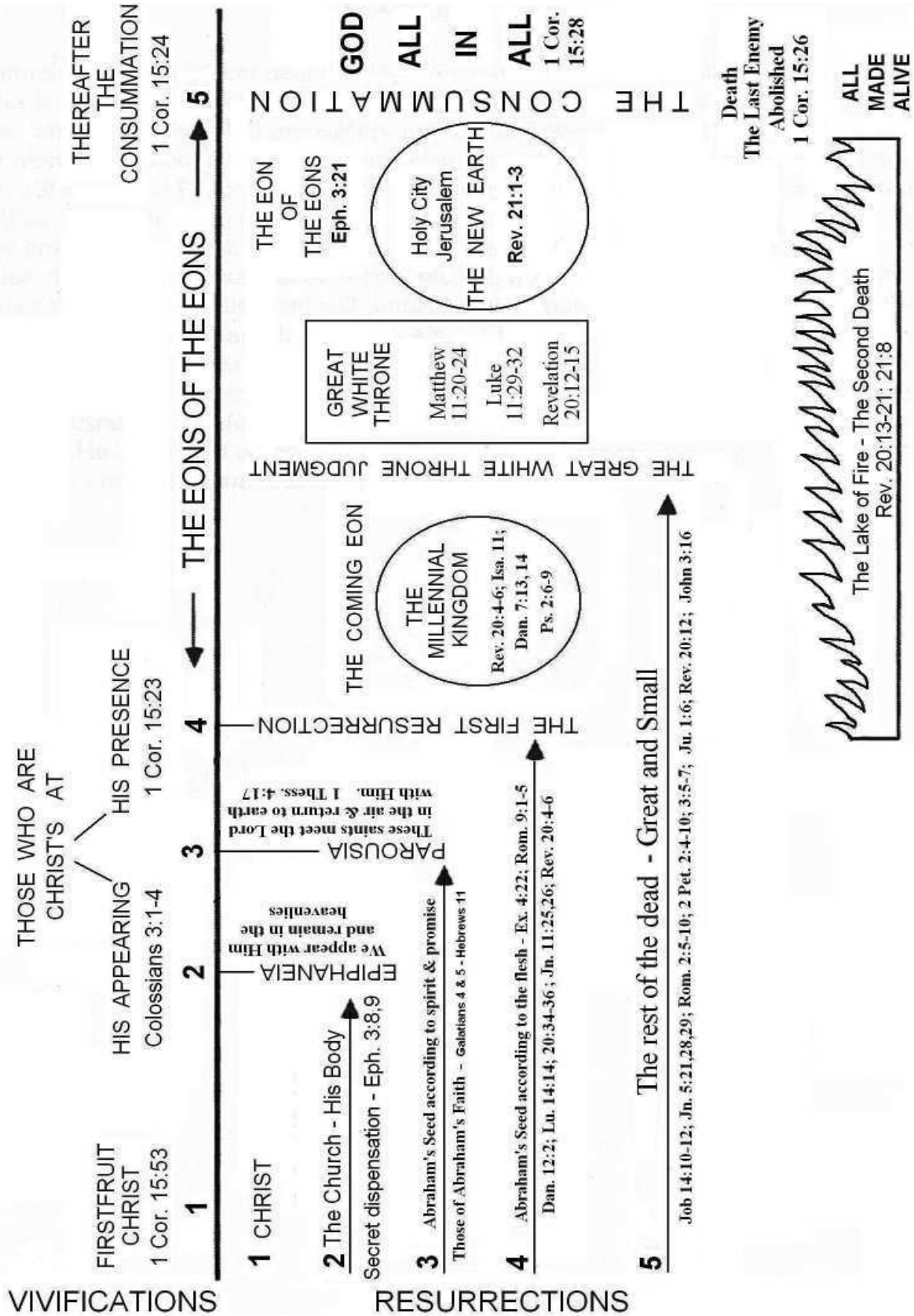


Figure 4

---

ruptible not by death, but by being made alive, “vivified.” Not all resurrections lead to immortality. There have been bodies resurrected from the dead that were not vivified. For example, Jesus raised Lazarus, Peter raised Dorcas and Paul raised Eutychus – but they eventually died again.

### **Epiphanies: Christ’s Appearing**

After Acts 28:28, when God set aside Israel, Paul preached the same gospel of grace to both Jews and gentiles. His message was that both are reconciled in one body to God (Ephesians 2:15-16). Those who have faith in and understand Paul’s message to the Ephesians make up this group of believers, the true church today, which is His body (Ephesians 1:22). This resurrection hope which is ours is called the *epiphanies*, which means “manifestation.” We have an elite calling, chosen before the disruption of the world (see Divine Calendar). In love, God designated us beforehand for the place of a son (Ephesians 1:4-5). We are presently seated with him among the celestials (Ephesians 2:6). This is the earliest and best resurrection of all. Before Christ makes His descent for the meeting in the air (*parousia*) and the setting up of the millennial kingdom at His unveiling (*apocalypse*), He will appear among the celestials and we will be manifested with Him (Colossians 3:1-4; Philippians 3:20). We will also be vivified, made immortal and incorruptible, never to die again (Ephesians 2:5).

### **Parousia and Apocalypse: At Christ’s Presence and Unveiling**

Before the call of Abraham, the only resurrection hope was at the Great White Throne, after the current heavens and earth pass away. Job mentioned this (Job 14:12). Then in Genesis 12 Abraham enters the scene, and through his fleshly seed God promises a land to him and his seed. This resurrection hope (*apocalypse*), which means Christ’s revelation, is for a literal millennial kingdom on earth, which will occur 1000 years before the Great White Throne. This is the “First or Former Resurrection” (Revelation 20:6).

Then in Genesis 15:6 God told Abraham that his seed would be as many as the stars. Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Because of faith’s righteousness, Abraham and a faithful remnant who walked in his steps looked forward to the heavenly city, New Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven to the new earth, Paradise, in the last eon. This was never revealed throughout the Old Testament. Paul was the first to mention this (Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 12:22). Starting in Galatians 3 you will read that Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

In Acts 10 Peter opened the door of the Kingdom to the gentiles at the house of Cornelius. This was the first and last time any of the twelve apostles preached to the gentiles. Prior to Acts 10, salvation was to the Jews only, because after the call of Abraham in Genesis 12, God had given up the nations because they worshipped idols and did not glorify God as God, neither were they thankful (Romans 1:21). So Cornelius was grafted into the good olive tree and could partake of the promise made to Abraham (Romans 11). The twelve apostles preached the gospel of the circumcision, and Paul the gospel of the un-circumcision. Paul also had a twofold ministry: He preached to the Jew first, and then to the gentiles, to provoke Israel to jealousy so that they might believe. Those Jews who did not believe were cut out from the good olive tree, and the gentiles were grafted in. So this faithful remnant, both Jews and gentiles who believed during the Acts period, were looking for a better resurrection hope, which occurs before the “First Resurrection” (Revelation 20:6), prior to the setting up of the millennial kingdom. This

resurrection is called the *parousia* (Christ's presence), the snatching away to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53). Vivification occurs at these two events (*parousia* and *apocalypse*). Also, those whose names are written in the scroll of life are roused and vivified.

### **Great White Throne:**

Job, the criminal on the cross and gentile nations have their resurrection at this event. Job mentioned his resurrection in (Job 14:12; 19:25). The criminal asked our Lord for a place in the millennial kingdom, but gentiles at that time could not have a resurrection early enough for that, so our Lord said to the criminal that he would be with Him in Paradise (new earth), not the millennial kingdom (Luke 23:42-43).

The scroll of life has to do with service and conduct as connected with the Circumcision. Those whose names are not written in the scroll will be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. The rest of the dead are also present and judged according to their acts. Each individual will be judged, and all wrongs will be set right. Some enter eonian life (like Job and the criminal hanging next to Christ), and others enter the second death. God will reconcile all eventually, so they will one day be vivified, but not at the Great White Throne. The next vivification after the Great White Throne will occur when death is abolished at the consummation of the eons (1 Corinthians 15:24-26).

### **SCROLL (BOOK) OF LIFE**

In the *Concordant Version* the word "book" is translated "scroll." In Revelation 20:15 there is written a negative statement, "*and if anyone **was not** found written in the scroll of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.*" This seems to allow a possibility that some will be found written in the scroll and will not be cast into the lake. This scroll also has to do with conduct. The striking feature about it is that some of the names which once were in it have been erased on account of flagrant departure from God. Even those whose names were once in the scroll of life, if they have been erased and cannot be found, also will enter the second death.

The *Concordant Version* has six references to the "scroll of life" in Revelation:

*The one who is conquering, he shall be clothed in white garments, and under no circumstances will I be erasing his name from the **scroll of life**, and I will be avowing his name in front of My Father and before His messengers (3:5).*

*And all who are dwelling on the earth will be worshipping it, everyone whose name is not written in the **scroll of life** of the Lambkin slain from the disruption of the world (13:8).*

*And marvel shall those dwelling on the earth, whose names are not written on the **scroll of life** from the disruption of the world, observing the wild beast, seeing that it was, and is not, and will be present (17:8).*

*And scrolls were opened. And another scroll was opened, which is the **scroll of life**. And the dead were judged by that which is written in the scrolls, in accord with their acts (20:12).*

*And if anyone was not found written in the **scroll of life**, he was cast into the lake of fire (20:15).*

---

*And under no circumstances may anything . . . be entering into it (the holy city) except those written in the Lambkin's **scroll of life** (21:27).*

The obvious details in the above Scriptures are as follows:

1. A promise not to erase is given, hence;
2. Erasure of a name is a possibility;
3. Absence of a name leaves open to worship the "wild beast";
4. The scroll of life was written from the disruption of the world, hence;
5. It corresponds with the Lambkin slain from the disruption of the world;
6. The scroll of life has a value pre-millennial;
7. Also millennial;
8. It is in point at the great white throne;
9. It has value in regard to entry into the holy city.

The matter around these points is wholly regarding conduct.

Scattered throughout the Scriptures, almost casually and meagerly, are further references to a *book*, which may afford some evidence. In Exodus we have recorded the request of Moses, arising in view of the people's idolatry:

*"Yet now, If Thou wilt forgive their sin ... and if not blot me, I pray thee, out of Thy **book** which Thou hast written." And the Lord said unto Moses, "Whosoever hath sinned against Me him will I blot out of My **book**" (Exodus 32:32-33, AV).*

Jehovah's answer to Moses is very notable. Are we warranted in considering this to be the scroll of life? If so, does it not agree with the statement of Revelation 3:5? It arises in connection with the worship of the golden calf. Were the people's names written in the book?

In the book of Daniel it is written,

*... at that time thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the **book** (Daniel 12:1, AV).*

This is referring to the introduction of millennial blessings. Does this refer to the "scroll of life?"

Was the psalmist also referring to this "scroll of life" when he penned, "Let them be blotted out of the **book of the living**, and not written with the righteous (Psalm 69:28, AV).

This gives us the fact that those in the book are righteous, but on what basis are they righteous? Is it related to the death of Christ, or to the keeping of the law of the Lord? The character of the economy in which the Psalms were written suggests that it is on the basis of the righteousness of the law.

In the gospel of Luke, when speaking to the seventy two, is there a millennial relationship to the "scroll of life"? "... yet be rejoicing that your names are **engraved** in the heavens" (Luke 10:20).

Also, Isaiah 4:3 seems to be referring to Jerusalem in the day of the glory and beauty of the Branch of Jehovah: "... everyone that is **written** among the living in Jerusalem (AV).

Psalm 87:5-6 seems to speak similarly of Zion:

*And of Zion it shall be said, "This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The LORD shall count, when he **writeth** up the people, [that] this [man] was born there. Selah."*

Malachi 3:16 may also have connection here:

*Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard [it], and a **book of remembrance** was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon His name.*

Mention may also be made of Hebrews 12:23.

*... and the ecclesia of the firstborn **registered** in the heavens.*

This is along the lines of Luke 10:20.

*However, in this be not rejoicing, that the spirits are subject to you, yet be rejoicing that your names are **engraven** in the heavens.*

Revelation 21:27 states, regarding the celestial Jerusalem,

*... and under no circumstances may anything contaminating, or one who is making an abomination and a lie be entering into it, except those written in the Lambkin's **scroll of life**.*

Revelation 22:19 mentions a stern warning:

*And if ever anyone should be eliminating from the words of the scroll of this prophecy, God shall be eliminating his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, that is **written in this scroll**.*

As a final reference, Philippians 4:3 may be quoted:

*Yes, I am asking you, also, genuine yoke-fellow, be aiding these women who compete together with me in the evangel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers whose names are in the **scroll of life**.*

Does this refer to the "scroll of life" as recording fellow workers in the evangel? Or is it that the "scroll of life" records them as believers in the blood of Christ for righteousness? The first would appear to be the truth, indicating that the "scroll of life" is a record, positive and negative, of the works meriting recognition. This is the only reference in Paul's epistles, and the manner of reference appears to be casual, referring to the works in the evangel.



---

The just judgment takes place at the great white throne, and the details regarding it are given in Revelation.

*And I perceived a great white throne, and Him Who is sitting upon it, from Whose face earth and heaven fled, and no place was found for them. And I perceived the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne. And scrolls were opened. And another scroll was opened which is the scroll of life. And the dead were judged by that which is written in the scrolls in accord with their acts. And the sea gives up the dead in it, and death and the unseen give up the dead in them. And they were condemned, each in accord with their acts. And death and the unseen were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death – the lake of fire. And if anyone was not found written in the scroll of life, he was cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15).*

The principles on which judgment proceeds have been stated in other parts of the Scriptures, the most complete being in the second chapter of the Roman epistle. Briefly stated, each one appearing before the Great White Throne will be paid in accord with his acts.

The believer is blessed with salvation during the eons, and at the time of this judgment there is still one more eon remaining (eon of the eons). Will any who appear before this Throne enjoy eonian life during that eon, or does the second death function to obviate that possibility? According to the gospel of John, which tells the good news of God's Son to the world, there will be a resurrection to eonian life and to judgment (John 5: 29). The question arises as to whether they will be the subjects of vivification, or will their vivification occur at the consummation of the eon of the eons? According to 1 Corinthians 15:24, the next vivification does not take place until the consummation of the eons. Those who receive eonian life after the Great White Throne will be sustained by the leaves and fruit from the tree of life.

The scroll of life did not keep anyone in Israel from the first death, but seems rather to be connected with the second. Those whose names are not blotted out are the family of faith who are vivified at the presence of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:23). The names which are expunged are subjects of the second death. If anyone was not found written in the scroll of life, he was cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15). Viewed from this standpoint, the negative statement is the only one possible. Those whose names are written are not in view, for they have long since become immortal, and they could not possibly be among the "dead" who appear before the Great White Throne. Only the disobedient circumcision, who have forfeited their place in the book, can have any place there. These are distinguished from the rest of mankind in judgment, just as Israel is always distinct from the nations in blessing. Their case is quite exceptional and calls for special procedure. The scroll is examined, in their case, to certify to the fact that their acts have condemned them.

There are written many scenarios about who will be present at the Great White Throne, those whose names are in the scroll of life, what their destination is, etc. Let us not be so concerned about these far off events. What is important to know is your calling. As members of the church, the one body in Ephesians, saturate yourself in Paul's post Acts 28 letters, and do what he tells us. Pray that God will give you a spirit of wisdom to understand the present secret dispensation in which we live. Seek that which is above where we are sitting with Christ (Colossians 3:1-4). We are not looking for the Great White Throne. We are awaiting His appearing in the heavens (Philippians 3:20).

**VIVIFICATION OF ALL**

(1 Corinthians 15:21-28)

- :21** *For since, in fact, through a man came death, through a Man, also, comes the resurrection of the dead.*
- :22** *For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified [made alive].*
- :23** *Yet each in his own class: the Firstfruit, Christ; thereupon those who are Christ's in His presence;*
- :24** *thereafter the consummation, whenever He may be giving up the kingdom to His God and Father, whenever He should be nullifying all sovereignty and all authority and power.*
- :25** *For He must be reigning until He should be placing all His enemies under His feet.*
- :26** *The last enemy is being abolished: death.*
- :27** *For He subjects all under His feet. Now whenever He may be saying that all are subject, it is evident that it is outside of Him Who subjects all to Him.*
- :28** *Now, whenever all may be subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also shall be subjected to Him Who subjects all to Him, that God may be All in all.*

There are five vivifications mentioned in the Word of God. It is well understood and believed that you and I will be vivified or made alive. Why? Because we are in Christ! Imagine having life beyond the reach of death, all because of the precious blood of Christ. Our bodies will be immortal and incorruptible. Which Scripture teaches us about this glorious expectation of being vivified? The answer is found in :22. It is written that in Christ *all* shall be made alive. To whom is the “*all*” referring? Does it include only believers who are alive today and those who died in Christ? Let us look at the verse again.

*For even as in Adam, all are dying, thus also in Christ, shall all be made alive.*

Adam is nature, and by virtue of our relationship to him we are “*all*” dying, thus the same “*all*” in Christ have to be made alive. Through a man (Adam) came death, and this dying process touched every human being. Yet through a Man (Christ) also comes the resurrection of the dead, which will touch every human being. The second Man is the Lord out of heaven.

*For since, in fact, through a man came death, through a Man, also, comes the resurrection of the dead. For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified (1 Corinthians 15:21-22).*

*Therefore, even as through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death, and thus death passed through into all mankind, on which all sinned (Romans 5:12).*

*The first man was out of the earth, soilish; the second Man is the Lord out of heaven (1 Corinthians 15:47).*

Perhaps a side by side comparison of First Corinthians 15:21-22 will enable us to grasp this important analogy between what occurred through Adam and what occurs through Christ.

**1 Corinthians 15:21**

Adam	Christ
through a man	through a Man
came death	comes the resurrection

**1 Corinthians 15:22**

For even as	thus also
in Adam	in Christ
all are dying	shall all be vivified

ALL have to be made alive, but at different times. As we move on to :23-24, the five vivifications and the order of their occurrence are revealed. By repeating :22, it will lead up to the phrase, “*Yet each in his own class*” or as the RSV translates it, “*But each in his own order.*” For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified.

**Yet each in his own class:**

1. the Firstfruit, Christ;
2. thereupon those who are Christ’s in His presence;
3. thereafter the consummation (the end).

The first two classes (or the first and second order) are accepted without a doubt. However, it is the third class or order that is overlooked. There are no exceptions to any of these classes. Giving the time when each vivification occurs may enlighten us as to who the “all” really includes.

The time of each occurrence:

1. Three days after Christ’s death;
2. At His manifestation and coming;
3. When Christ gives the kingdom to His God and Father, and when all is subject to God.

Christ was the first and only One thus far Who has been made alive after dying. This occurred three days after His death. He alone has immortality (1 Timothy 6:16). We, too, will have immortality after being made alive, not by dying (*i.e.*, at death). Our time is when He is manifested in the heavens. The others will receive immortality at His coming in the air and His return to the mount of Olives.

Christ the Firstfruit (first class) and those who are Christ’s at His appearing and presence (second class), include only a fraction of the “all” who died and are dying in Adam! The only way that the first two classes could be the “all” who died and are dying in Adam is if they are all in Christ. We know

this is not true. The majority of the population is comprised of unbelievers. When Christ returns to the earth He does so in judgment and battle, not to vivify all. Christ is in a class by Himself. It would then be impossible for the second class alone to equal the all in Adam. The second class is comprised of believers, which coincides with a Scripture found in 1 Timothy 4:10, “*God is the Savior of all mankind, especially [not exclusively] of believers.*”

So do we stop there? God’s sacred Word says that “*all*” in Adam will be made alive in Christ. Theology, though, says that only a few in Adam will be made alive. The only way that God’s declaration can be fulfilled is if the third class is vivified. This occurs at the end of the eons when Christ nullifies all sovereignty, authority and power, and abolishes death. Then all will be subject to God, including Christ. This marvelous truth is practically unknown in Christendom. God has no limits. He will bring to pass a glorious ending (consummation) where sin, evil and death are defeated, and all are subject to Him. Theology has no ultimate goal. Death and insubjection are never defeated. I find more comfort in God’s consummation where there are no blemishes. How can God be satisfied by losing the majority of His creation? His consummation will be total subjection.

Insubjection to God is the cause for evil. We can see it operating in this present wicked eon. Through Adam’s insubjection, all are dying. When Christ subjects all under His feet, all will be made alive! Thus it is necessary for the third class to be included. 1 Corinthians 15:21-28 is the ultimate goal of our heavenly Father. In it contains the accomplishment of Christ’s shed blood, His obedience and reign. The end or consummation of the eons (:24) will never be fulfilled as long as there is sovereignty, authority and power in operation, and death. Christ must be reigning until He should be placing all of His enemies under His feet (:25), including His last enemy, death (:26).

Let us take a look at future events to determine what authority and ruling is taking place, and what death needs to be abolished. The next event in God’s purpose for the eons is the manifestation of our Lord in the heavens, where we will be manifested also. Then, shortly after that, Christ descends in the air and returns to earth. We have a heavenly destination, and there you will find that reigning will be in operation. In Ephesians 1:20-23 it is written that God roused Christ from among the dead and seated Him among the celestials, up over every sovereignty, authority, power and lordship. The ecclesia has a part in making known the multifarious wisdom of God to these sovereignties and authorities (Ephesians 3:10). The reign of Christ, and those with Him (II Timothy 2:12), will bring these sovereignties and authorities under subjection.

I am uncertain when the church, which is His body, will be manifested with Christ. We have to be with Christ first, before He descends to earth, because His appearing is the first step. So we could go to be with Him either before the tribulation, or during. No one knows for sure. No one knows how, but you can be certain that there will be no shouting, or trumpets blowing. That is dealing with the feast of Israel which is also on hold. Remember that the meeting of the Lord in the air was the hope for those living in the days of the Acts period. That hope ceased when God set aside Israel at Acts 28:28. We, today, are not the church looking for the Lord coming in the air. When that event does take place, then those who were looking for it will be resurrected and vivified. Those who are faithful during the tribulation will also meet Him in the air.

So while we are with Christ before His manifestation, the indignation (Great Tribulation – Jacob’s Trouble) is probably already in progress. The antichrist is revealed and approves a treaty with Israel

---

for seven years. In the middle of the seven years the antichrist breaks the treaty and claims to be God. Then the Lord's Day commences with judgments. There will be such great tribulation as never before. The tribulation ends with a great battle between Christ with His army and the wild beast, the kings of the earth and their armies. The wild beast and false prophet are cast into the lake of fire and Satan is bound for a thousand years. This present wicked eon will come to an end. The fourth eon known as the coming eon will start with the setting up of the millennial kingdom on earth.

*The kingdom of this world became our Lord's and His Christ's, and He shall be reigning for the eons of the eons (Revelation 11:15).*

Christ with His faithful remnant, will reign for a thousand years (Revelation 20:4), so there is also authority in operation on the earth. During the millennium, death is in operation, too, because criminals will be executed and cast into the Gehenna of fire (Matthew 18:9). Whenever the thousand years are finished, Satan will be loosed to deceive the nations and orchestrate a battle against the beloved city; but fire from God out of heaven devours them, and the Adversary who is deceiving them is cast into the lake of fire where the wild beast and false prophet are also (Revelation 20:7-10). The present heaven and earth which are stored with fire will pass away (2 Peter 3:7, 10; Revelation 20:11). Then we have the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:12-15).

This will be followed by a new heaven and a new earth which begins the fifth and final eon (Revelation 21:1). Is authority still being exercised on the new earth? Yes, for the kings of the earth are carrying their glory into the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:24) and His slaves shall be offering divine service to Him and they shall be reigning for the eons of the eons (Revelation 22:3-5). Thus reigning is still in operation, which means that death is also, because it is the last enemy to be placed under Christ's feet (1 Corinthians 15:26).

What death is still in operation? As mentioned earlier, God's holy Word tells us that, on the new earth, death will be no more (Revelation 21:4). Please note, not all will possess immortality on the new earth. There is not the slightest hint of it mentioned. Then how is there no death? The nations will have the privilege of partaking of the leaves from the tree of life (concordantly, "log of life"), for the preservation of perfect health (Revelation 22:2). Without the tree of life they would die. Just as Israel enjoyed physical blessings in the millennium, so will the nations on the new earth.

The only death existing in the new creation is the second death. Once Christ nullifies all sovereignty, authority and power, the only enemy in operation is the second death. How will Christ abolish death? By making alive the third class! Keep in mind the key to all evil. It is due to insubjection to God. Also keep in mind the key to 1 Corinthians 15:21-28, and to whom it is referring. The key is that Christ will vivify all who are dying in Adam, subjecting all, including Himself, to God. The "all" who are going to be subjected includes the entire human race (all in Adam), and those in the heavens.

In order to subject someone you must nullify or abolish their activity, not destroy them. We should not look on Christ as an annihilator or exterminator. He is our Savior. The words "nullify" and "abolish" come from the Greek word *katargeō*, meaning "DOWN-UN-ACT, DOWN-idle." This simply means to make inactive or inoperative. Throughout the eons there has been a gradual increase of evil. This will turn into perilous times in the last days of this eon (2 Timothy 3:1). However, in the eons to come Christ will gradually reverse this insubjection by making all sovereignty and authority inop-

erative. The second class is made alive to have a part in the reign of Christ. This involves both heaven and earth (Ephesians 1:10; Colossians 1:20). Christ's saints will be the government of the universe. The church which is His body will rule in heaven, faithful Israel will rule on earth. This universal reign will take us to the consummation of the eons. Then the last enemy for Christ to abolish or make inoperative is the activity of death. He does this by vivifying the third class. These include all of the living who are not immortal and all of those in the second death. All will finally be subjected to the Son, Who Himself will be subjected to God, Who will be All in all.

## Appendix

# Salvation

God's grace never ceases to amaze me, especially concerning our salvation. I just accept and don't try to understand it, because our minds are finite. The question arises: Did I have a choice in my salvation? Scripture says the gospel (death, burial and resurrection of Christ) is God's power for salvation to everyone who is believing (Romans 1:16). So it sounds as though we have to believe first, and then we are saved. This is true, but not totally our doing. If one has to make a choice to believe the gospel, then it becomes a work on our part, and an offer from God. The opposite is true. It is God's work, by His grace. We read in Ephesians 2:8-9, "*for in grace, through faith are you saved, and this is not out of you.*" In other words, salvation is not our doing, but it is a gift from God. It says in grace, through faith, not through faith, by grace, are we saved.

In Philippians 1:29 it is written that "*salvation is from God, for to us it is graciously granted, for Christ's sake, to be believing on Him.*" So if God's power is used in salvation, and this is graciously granted (gift) from God, how can someone's independent will refuse this gift from God's power? Yet one may ask, "Then what about all of the passages referring to the fact that you have to believe or have faith to be saved?" Faith is not something that a person can conjure up by themselves. It is graciously granted by God (Philippians 1:29). Even though the great reformer Martin Luther believed that God cannot and will not save anyone without faith, he did testify that God is able to grant faith.

The granting of faith is no problem to God, Who places us where He wills, Who arranges circumstances and operates all in accord with the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:11). The children of Israel were all saved through the Sea (Exodus 14:21-31). With the Egyptian forces behind them and the opened path before them, they were saved quite willingly. Also, God had no problem in granting faith to the stubborn calumniator, Saul of Tarsus. To all of us, looking back, has come the realization that our acceptance of the gospel was and is due entirely to the grace of God. Our faith does not qualify us for salvation, for our salvation is a gratuitous gift. Thus, our faith has nothing to do with qualification or worthiness.

Faith is the result of salvation, not the cause. God saves us, not as a reciprocal act, but of grace. Furthermore, we believe, not because of something about or within ourselves, but because the grace of our Lord has overwhelmed our unbelief "*with faith and love in Christ Jesus.*" In 1 Timothy 1:14 it is written that "*the grace of our Lord overwhelms, with faith and love in Christ Jesus.*" The believer's faith, then, does not constitute an entitlement to salvation, but instead constitutes a surety to the believer that he or she, indeed, is one of God's chosen ones, for that very faith is God's gift to us.

Our faith introduces salvation into our lives and consciousness. Believing God is exercising our faith. The gospel is what Christ did as an actual achievement, not a condition depending on human response. It is a declaration of Divine achievement, not an offer. This strictly accords with His predestination, His calling, His choosing, His justifying and His glorifying of the believer. Following are more verses based on God's Amazing Grace! Study and ponder them to see if you qualify for salvation without His intervention: Romans 3:24; 6:23; 8:28-30; 1 Corinthians 1:24-26; Ephesians 1:4-5,18; 2:4; 4:4; Colossians 1:13; 3:12; 2 Timothy 1:9; 2:10.

**WHAT GOD WILLS, HAPPENS;  
WHAT HE WILLS NOT, WON'T**

by — George F. Howe

Courtesy of Bible Student's Notebook – Issue 334

Available from Pilkington & Sons (see Resources)

**Every Wandering Lost Sheep Will be Found:**

*What man of you having 100 sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the 99 in the desert and go after the one having been lost, until he find it? (Luke 15:4).*

This parable is a picture of God, Who wills to find every lost sheep and will accomplish it. It is fascinating that God not only seeks the sheep but continues until He finds it. Isaiah 29:24 reports that *“Those who are wayward in spirit will gain understanding.”* “Lost” comes from the Greek verb *apollymi*, which means “to destroy” when applied to an inanimate object, but when referring to a living person it can indicate “... to kill (by taking a life), cause to lose (especially a life); to die or perish” (*Goodrick and Kolenberger's Greek and Hebrew Dictionary (GK)*). So, the word means “lost” and it includes those lost sheep who are also dead. Nothing in the parable or the rest of Scripture shuts off salvation after the hour of death. So the word “lost” actually encompasses lost in death. This parable supports the idea that God will someday redeem all such lost souls.

Luke 19:10 uses the same verb *apollymi* this way: *“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which had been lost.”* The lost sheep in Luke 15:4 represents lost people, all of whom will be sought out, saved and reconciled to God. Paul knew that if only the lost among the living could be saved, then believers would be the most pitiable people on earth: *“If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men”* (1 Corinthians 15:19). If the dead who are lost were permanently consigned to everlasting torment in hell, living with that knowledge of such austere punishment would make believers the most miserable people on earth. Isaiah 49:6, however, proclaims that Christ is a light to all of the gentiles, and that salvation is not limited just to Israel or to those who are alive: *“I will also make you a light for the gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.”*

**All Will Be Headed up Under One Head, Jesus Christ**

*He purposed within Himself, when the times have reached fulfillment, to head up all under one head in Christ, both in the heavens and on the earth in Him (Ephesians 1:9-10).*

The word “*purposed*” is the Greek verb *protithēmi*, which is found three times in the Greek new testament, having been translated three ways in the NIV: “*planned*,” “*presented*” and “*purposed*.” When



it was a human, like Paul in Romans 1:13, who did the planning, the outcome was uncertain. For example, Paul, speaking to the believers in Rome, wrote, "... *I planned [protithēmi] many times to come to you, but have been prevented from doing so until now ...*"; but when *protithēmi* was used about a plan of God, as in Romans 3:25 where it was used about Christ's death for the sins of the world, the outcome was quite certain: "*Whom God purposed [protithēmi] for a Propitiatory shelter, through faith in His blood ...*" God's plan to send Christ was carried out flawlessly.

In Ephesians 1:9, *protithēmi* ("purposed") was also used in its fixed sense about a plan of God. It was made doubly firm in that God's purposing to "*head up all under one head in Christ*" arose out of His innermost being: "*He purposed within Himself.*" Nothing could be more incontrovertible than God's developing a plan from His inner being to head up all on earth and heaven in Christ. Philippians 2:10 includes all "*under the earth,*" which covers the dead as well. The ultimate reconciliation of mankind is a "done deal," a "*fait accompli.*" There is no room in the Bible for the "everlasting hell" concept, because all will be included under Christ's blessed dominion.

### All Will Be Worked Out According to the Purpose of God's Will

*In Whom [Christ] our lot was also cast for an inheritance, predestined according to the plan of Him Who works all according to the purpose of His will (Ephesians 1:11).*

The "lot" of those who receive the faith of Christ is cast with Jesus for an inheritance. The believers have been predestined in keeping with the plan of Him Who works all according to the purpose of His will. Each of the words below in parenthesis indicate certainty, and together they show an end result which is firmer than the Rock of Gibraltar!

When a (lot) is cast, an issue was permanently decided. The Greek verb (predestined) (*proorizō*) means "decided beforehand." (Plan) is an accurate translation of the Greek noun *prothesis*. It indicates a fixed program of events. The inheritance which lies ahead is based on the plan of One Who (works all) (Greek, *energōo*) according to the (purpose) (*boulen*) of His (will) (*thelēma*). These six words in one verse emphasize the incontrovertible manner in which God works all according to His will. Whatever He wills is going to happen, and nothing can stand in its way, not even man's "free will." There is an unwavering resolve on God's part seen in this verse. The final result is that all will transpire exactly as God has proposed, for believers and for all humanity as well.

### God Will Bring All Men to Salvation and to Full Knowledge of the Truth

*For this is right and acceptable before God our Savior, Who wills [thēlo] all men to be saved, and to come to full knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:3-4).*

In this verse, the Greek verb *thelō* ("wills") means that God exercises His immutable plan to save all people. There are several other verses in which *thelō* indicates absolute certainty. James 4:15, for example, says, "*Instead you ought to say 'If The Lord wills [thelō], we will live and also do this or that.'*" One's very life depends on the operation of God's will. Using *thelō* in Acts 18:21, Paul had this to say when he left Ephesus: "*I will return to you again, if God wills [thelō] ...*" Paul understood the fixity of God's plan in all matters. He knew that if it was not God's design that he return to Ephesus, he would not. One way to understand the firmness of *thelō* (1 Timothy 2:4) is to determine what topic was un-

der discussion. Paul previously had been encouraging Timothy to make petitions, prayers, thanksgiving and intercessions for kings, others in authority and for all people (1 Timothy 2:1).

One result of such universal prayer would be the ability to lead quiet, holy, godly and productive lives (:2). Another result of broad-based prayer is that the believers will appreciate the fact that God is going to save all people and bring them to full knowledge of the truth. When believers pray broadly for people, they are getting “in step” with God Who wills and plans to save them all. Praying for all people helps believers “get with the program” of God! Some of the ways the *NIV* translators rendered *thelō* in the new testament are: want(s)(ed), will(s), is willing, desire(s), would, wish(es), choose(s)(ing), longed, decided, delights, and determined. While the key meaning of *thelō* in the context of 1 Timothy 2:3-4 is “wills,” each of the other concepts contained in these English words sheds more light on God’s outlook for the great work of redeeming everyone. For example, reconciliation of all is something God really wants and wishes to accomplish – He desires to save all men. The Lord longed for such a comprehensive work to occur. He determined to do so, not grudgingly, but delighting in the task.

### **God’s Will, will Take Place on Earth, as It Does in Heaven**

*Thy kingdom come. Thy will [thelēma] be done, as in heaven, on earth also* (Matthew 6:10).

This model prayer links directly to words in 1 Timothy 2:4, “*God our Savior Who wills all men to be saved.*” A major part of God’s will is that all people experience salvation. So when God’s will (*thelēma* of Matthew 6:10) has been accomplished on earth, then the saving of all souls (*thelō* in 1 Timothy 2:4) likewise will have been completed! Whether realizing it or not, people who pray the Lord’s Prayer are thus actually asking God to save everyone.

### **Jesus Prayed that the Father’s Will Be Accomplished, Not His Own**

*Going forward a little, He [Christ] fell upon His face, offering prayer, and saying – “My Father! If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me – Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt”* (Matthew 26:39).

With His face to the ground, Christ uttered these requests to His Father. Although flinching at the horrible hours that lay ahead of Him, Christ asked for the Father’s will [*thelēma*] rather than His Own. Christ knew that the Father had sent Him to be the Savior of the world (I John 4:10), and He wanted to fulfill that grandiose plan, even knowing the great cost involved!

### **Christ Is Going to Gather the People of Jerusalem Under His “Wings”**

*Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who were sent to her! How often I wanted [thelō] to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling [willed not – thelē] (Matthew 23:37).*

Whatever God “wills” [*thelō*] in Scripture will always come to pass, even if the event is delayed. In Matthew 23:37 and in Luke 13:34 Christ expressed a deep desire for close fellowship with Israel when He longingly made those remarks. Although it may seem that the rebellious will of the people in

Jerusalem overcame and outflanked Jesus' desire, this is going to change. The fellowship that Christ wanted with Jerusalem is going to take place because "*all Israel shall be saved ...*" (Romans 11:26). God intends to operate His rule of earth from Jerusalem, through Christ, using His beloved, redeemed Israelites to carry out the task.

### What God Wills Not to Happen, Will Invariably Not Occur

*Thus it is not the will [thelēma] in front of your Father Who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish (Matthew 18:14).*

Christ made it quite plain here and in the parallel text (Luke 15:4-7) that it is not in the Father's agenda for even one of the "*little ones*" to perish. This very special verse comes right after Christ's parable of the lost sheep. The words of Isaiah 14:26-27 apply here:

*This is the plan determined for the whole world; this is the hand stretched out over all nations. For the Lord Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart Him? His hand is stretched out and who can turn it back?*

### What God Won't Do and What He Will

God wills (*boulomai*) no one to perish, and they won't. God wills (*boulomai*) everyone to repent, and they will.

#### What God Won't Do:

*The Lord is not tardy as to the promise, as some are deeming tardiness, but is patient because of you, not intending [Greek verb *boulomai*] any to perish ... (2 Peter 3:9).*

This verse is not speaking about believers. It is not showing that God proceeds slowly so that all of the elect will have time to place faith in Christ before His appearing. Such an exegesis is clearly inaccurate. The passage points instead to the ultimate salvation of all people. The word "*intending*" is a good translation of the Greek verb *boulomai*. *Boulomai* appears 37 times in the new testament, where the NIV adopted several words to translate it, including the following: want(ed)(ing), choose, chose, planned, willing, determined, etc.

When *boulomai* deals with the intentions of human beings throughout Scripture, its outcome is somewhat problematic, entailing results that might or might not happen. This uncertain outcome is illustrated in the case of what Barnabas wanted to do: "*Barnabas also intended [boulomai] to take with them John, surnamed Mark ...*" (Acts 15:37). Yet a repeat missionary trip by these three men (Paul, Barnabas and John Mark) never occurred, even though it was desired (*boulomai*) by Barnabas, a fine Christian. Acts 15:37 is one of the many Scriptures demonstrating that what humans intend (*boulomai*) may or may not take place.

*Boulomai* has an assured completion when attached to God's work, as is seen also in the different "gifts" conferred on various believers by the holy spirit: "*All these are the work of one and the same spirit and He gives them to each man, just as He determines [boulomai]*" (1 Corinthians 12:11). This

passage is an example of the many Scriptures proving that what God purposes (*boulomai*) to do always transpires. 2 Peter 3:9 is very similar in that it speaks of God's will, not man's. It proves that God wills (*boulomai*) that not any people perish. Therefore, surely none of them will!

### **What God Will Do:**

*But [God is willing] all to make room for repentance (2 Peter 3:9).*

This is one of the many Bible passages in which the Greek verb *boulomai* has been used in conjunction with God's plan, not man's. This is not a weak whim or a vague wish that may or may not be accomplished. It is instead an expression of God's holy will, which certainly will be fulfilled. All people of all time will repent.

### **A Grand Finale**

As a result of all that God does and does not will, an amazing reconciliation scenario appears in the end, a picture in which God's every wish and desire has been fulfilled. God's purpose for every last human will have been accomplished. Mankind will have been headed up under one beneficent head, the Lord Jesus Christ. Humanity will be safe at last from sin, having been purified through Christ's great work and God's wise remedial judgments. Each person will rejoice in full knowledge of the truth. Not one single soul will permanently perish. Every hardened sinner will have repented, and God will be "*All in all*," as stated in 1Corinthians 15:28. Is it not what God wills? Will it not take place?

## **COMPLETE IN HIM**

Believers in the Lord have much in common. We walk worthily with all humility, meekness and patience, bearing with one another in love. We keep the unity of the spirit with the tie of peace. As God's children we walk in love. We pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace with all who are invoking the Lord out of a clean heart. All of this is based on love.

Another common tie we have is God's love for us through the completeness in Christ. God sees us in Christ as holy, flawless and unimpeachable in His sight (Colossians 1:22). This is how Christ presents us to God. Each part which makes up our completion in Christ is not based on our merits, but is a gift from God. They are based solely on God's love and His grace through Christ's sacrifice. Let us list each item separately to get the full impact of our completeness. The following portions of Scripture are taken from Colossians.

1. Our faith is "rooted" in Him (2:7).
2. Our faith is "built" in Him (2:7).
3. We are an elect, or "cut off people," signified by His circumcision (2:11).
4. We are "baptized into His death" (2:12).
5. We are "roused" from death in Him (2:12).
6. We are "vivified" (made alive) with Him (2:13).
7. We shall be "manifested in glory" with Him (3:4).

Keep in mind that Christ put an end to all ceremonial religious rites through His death, burial and

resurrection. His death symbolizes the circumcision. His burial and resurrection symbolizes baptism. Together we are very blessed, both present and future, by having the above gifts in common. Be seeking that which is above where Christ is sitting. Be disposed to that which is above, not to that on the earth. Our life is hidden together with Christ in God, but one glorious day we will be manifested when Christ is. Thanks be to God for our completeness in Christ and for His gracious gifts.

**“AMAZING GRACE”  
“HOW GREAT THOU ART”**

The above two songs are sung weekly throughout the world as church members unite their voices in giving God praise. These songs portray a God of love. Yet according to philosophy, human traditions and faulty translations, the titles take on a different meaning.

Amazing Grace becomes LIMITED GRACE.

How Great Thou Art becomes How GREAT THOU TRIED.

God saved a wretch like you and I;

*but why do we limit His amazing grace for the rest of wretched mankind?*

We once were lost, but now are found;

*yet orthodoxy tells us that His amazing grace lost billions.*

Amazing grace will lead us home in His presence;

*however, according to false teachings, billions find their home in eternal flames.*

We are in awesome wonder when considering the power that God displays throughout His universe;

*but are we in awesome wonder when contemplating how such a God of power and love lost the majority of His creatures to Satan.*

Because of God's creation we can look down from lofty mountains of grandeur and hear the brooks and feel the gentle breeze;

*but today's beliefs say that, because of God's damnation, the unbelievers will not hear a cool babbling brook, but screams from a hot lake of fire; they will not feel a cool gentle breeze but will encounter scorching back drafts.*

God spared not His Son and sent Him to die. We can scarcely take this in;

*orthodoxy says that Christ's death was not enough for all of God's creatures. This is really hard to take in.*

God is not going to lose any of His creatures. He is not a loser but the Savior of *ALL* (1 Timothy 4:10). Only then can we truly sing, “Amazing grace! how sweet the sound!” Only then can our souls sing to our Savior God, “How GREAT THOU ART, How GREAT THOU ART!”

### **THE LOVE OF GOD**

It is difficult to know the love of God without knowing the God of love. The information in this e-book is an honest attempt to bring the church which is His body to maturity, thus understanding God's purpose. When we grasp the necessity for the eons and how they will fulfill God's ultimate goal of becoming All in all, then we will truly know the God of love.

God always was. Some day we may understand this, but for now we do know that all is out of Him and through Christ (I Corinthians 8:6). It was through Christ that the universe was created (Colossians 1:16). The first eon was a perfect world (Genesis 1:1). The heavens and its beings were created first (Job 38:4-7 states that the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy when the foundation of the earth was laid). The heavenly hosts could only experience God's awesome power of creation. He had to reveal His love, and the only way to do this was to make hate, or evil. Thus there was the need for Satan the Adversary. Woe was created by God (Isaiah 45:7), not Satan.

The stage was thus set. We became a theater to the world and to the messengers (1 Corinthians 4:9). We have the eons and now evil. The entrance of evil caused a disruption of the first eon (Genesis 1:2). God's primal creation was overflowed with water (Genesis 1:7). No one knows for sure how long the disruption lasted before God restored the heavens and earth. Man was created so that God could fulfill His loving purpose of being everything to everyone. Through this human form, God was in Christ conciliating the world to Himself (II Corinthians 5:19).

God is invisible, so Christ is His visible Image (Colossians 1:15). Can you imagine the love God has for all of His creatures? There His Son hung on the cross, the Image of the invisible God, the Original Creator and Sustainer of the universe. Through the blood of His cross He is making peace. He will reconcile all in the heavens and on the earth (Colossians 1:20). The celestial messengers and principalities and powers do not have a foreknowledge of God's dealing with mankind. They were surprised just as much as those on earth who witnessed the sacrifice of Christ. Messengers are yearning to peer into the sufferings of Christ and the glory to follow (1 Peter 1:10-12). The messengers peered into these things as an inquiry. Reconciliation is needed in the heavens.

The whole reconciliation process started on earth through humanity. The Reconciler of the universe took on a human form in order to reveal His loving heart. Only through a human body could He feel the pain and shame of the crucifixion. Only through a human body can there be shed blood. The blood of His cross will make peace in the heavens and on the earth. Throughout the eons, God is calling those whom He has chosen to fulfill His final goal of reconciling all. Through His chosen race (Israel), God will save, reconcile and, at the consummation, vivify all those on earth. The kingdom on earth was promised to Israel, and will be set up according to the teachings from the ministries of Jesus and the twelve apostles.

Those who were called according to the evangel that Paul preached (the church which is His body) have a heavenly destiny and will be displaying the transcendent riches of His grace. We will be responsible

---

for making known God's multifarious wisdom to the sovereignties and authorities among the celestials until all those in the heavens are reconciled. Not only will those on earth and in the heavens be reconciled, but don't forget about those who appear before the Great White Throne. Throughout the eons judgment is a necessary work of God. It corrects and disciplines. It makes all wrongs right. God uses it in approaching His goal. However, the popular doctrines of today have it backwards, making it God's goal. The end result for the unbeliever is not endless judgment. Endless torment or annihilation makes the God of love appear to be angry from His failure to save the bulk of His creatures.

Does it seem as though God is failing? The first eon was disrupted because of evil. In the second eon, Adam disobeyed God in which sin and death affected the entire human race. Humanity became so wicked that God had to wipe out everyone by a flood (except Noah and a few). In the third eon, God chose a people and the nation Israel to be a blessing to all nations, but they crucified Christ. Every step God takes "seems" to end in failure; but the real failure is among believers who cannot see the wisdom of God in His "apparent" failures.

Those whose hearts have been opened to the secret which God concealed from the eons until Paul's revelations are able to comprehend the wisdom exhibited. Having a realization and knowledge of Him (Ephesians 1:17) will remove the darkness from His so-called failures which is part of His plan for the eons. It is vital to understand that the eons are not eternal. So when the consummation of the eons is mentioned, this does not indicate an end to our future bliss. Not many promises are mentioned beyond the eons, therefore we cling to the many promises for Israel and the millennium. Also, there are few references made to the new heaven and earth.

Yet how much more needs to be said about life beyond the eons other than what Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:20-28. At the consummation of the eons, all will be vivified (made alive). God gives us deathlessness, incorruptibility and immortality. All will be vital with life. Sovereignty, authority and power are nullified. The last enemy, which is death, will be abolished. All will be subjected to God. No more enemies, no more sin, no more death, no more need of salvation or faith, no more need for judgments. Once we realize that all of this is based truly on the love of God, then all of His so-called failures are merely stepping stones to reach His ultimate goal. God is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will for the laud of His glory. Now we can know Him as the God of love. It is God who determines our final destiny, not our wills.

This is the kind of God and Father Whom all believers can find trustworthy. However, God's ultimate glory is shattered in the minds of others by unbelief in His capability of reconciling the entire universe, *i.e.*, that God will annihilate the majority of His creatures or, worse yet, torment them endlessly. Let us not forget that this is God's glory we're talking about. If He is all-loving, almighty and all-powerful, wouldn't He have premeditated the destiny of all of His creatures? After all, the final results of God's purpose will be from His efforts. What kind of hope do believers have in a God Who has seemingly lost the majority of His creatures to Satan? Can we trust Him in the future?

These are only honest thoughts. If God could not save the bulk of His creatures in the past, what is the security of our future? Is it the blood of Christ? The answer should be yes, but false teachings say the shedding of His precious blood fell short because it only covered a minority. Yet you may say we had a choice. However, it is God Who called, chose and predestined us (Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:5, 12). You may say that we have a free will, but it is our Savior God Who wills that all mankind be saved (1 Timothy 2:4).

So if evil supposedly slipped into God's universe and wrecked most of it, what will prevent it from happening again? After all, not much is said about life after the consummation of the eons. When the false doctrines of annihilation and eternal torment are erased from the pages of Christian history, then all doubts will be erased from the hearts of His creatures. Thus there will be full confidence in God. Our future is not a leap into darkness, but a tranquil entrance into unlimited light and love. It is man who is writing such a miserable end for himself; it is man who is decimating the majority of God's creatures by underestimating God's deity, sovereignty and ability to fulfill His heart's masterpiece. Faith, hope and love are remaining. When God fulfills His purpose, faith and hope are no longer required. They are done away, and the greatest of the three remains, which is love (1 Corinthians 13:13). Love never ends (1 Corinthians 13:8).

How can God and a minority enjoy this endless love when the majority of His creatures were annihilated or are endlessly being tormented? When the holy Word of God says that love will never end, there is not going to be an endless blemish to accompany it.

If you have three children, and two of them turn out bad and are executed in prison, would not your heart be broken? If these same two bad children join the armed forces and are captured during war and constantly tortured, would you not cry out for their release? Of course you would. You shared in the miracle of creating them. You love them. Proud feelings say, "I don't care what happens to them," but when circumstances hit home, love makes you break down and weep. If God was to have these conditions constantly before Him, He would weep also as He did for Lazarus.

Manmade teachings on the goal of God's universe may have their way now; but beginning with the millennial reign all the way through the new creation (fifth eon), Christ will reverse what evil and sin brought about. He will rule heaven and earth with His saints until all sovereignty, authority and power are nullified. All enemies will be placed under His feet – including the abolishment of the last enemy, death. Because of Christ's humility and love He will lay at His Father's feet a universe subject to His will. Christ, Who has the highest glory in the universe and Who labored for the eons, will then subject Himself to His Father. This is the only goal worthy of love. God will be,

**ALL IN ALL !!!**



# Resources

Below are listed faithful servants of our Lord, unashamed workers, rightly dividing the Word of Truth and analyzing things that differ.



***Study Shelf is your source for rare and hard-to-find Bible study materials for the serious minded, hungry-hearted students of scripture ... Since 1980***

Clyde L. Pilkington is a speaker, writer and publisher of books and the *Bible Student Notebook*, a weekly publication promoting Bible study. You can also receive Daily Email Goodies and listen to the Bible Student's Radio, broadcasting the Good News of the Happy God!

## **Pilkington & Sons**

PO Box 265  
Windber, PA 15963  
1-800-784-6010  
<http://www.studysshelf.com/>

**Martin Zender** – Speaker, writer and publisher of books and audios.

<http://www.martinzender.com/> Toll free from US and Canada: 1-866-866-BOOK (2665)

**Dan Sheridan:** Speaker, writer and audios – <http://sheridanvoice.com>

**Brian Kelson:** Speaker, writer, videos & audios – <http://www.bibleunderstanding.com>  
<http://acts28.net/> <http://midactsdisp.blogspot.com>

When receiving any materials related to Bible study, imitate the Bereans and ***examine the Scriptures to see if those things are so!*** (Acts 17:11).

If you were enlightened by these truths and desire to help us spread the ***REAL GOOD NEWS***, any donation amount will be appreciated.

## **Donations can be made at:**

[https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=\\_s-xclick&hosted\\_button\\_id=C3XT48WF9UEFW](https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_s-xclick&hosted_button_id=C3XT48WF9UEFW)

Or mail check/money order to:  
Saundra Russino  
1122 Maple Ave  
Verona PA 15147-1804

Thank You!



# The Divine Calendar

<p><b>ALL out of GOD</b> Rom. 11:36</p>	<p>First heaven <b>Heavens of Old</b> 2 Pet. 3:5, 6</p>	<p>Overflowed with water 2 Pet. 3:5, 6</p>	<p>Second heaven The Heavens and Earth which are now Shall pass away - Matt. 24:35 Shall perish - Heb. 1:10, 11</p>	<p><b>ALL for GOD</b> Rom. 11:36</p>
<p>Beginning Rev. 21:6; 22:13 Genesis 1:1</p>	<p>Christ Satan God's Creative Original Rev. 3:14. Firstborn of all creation. Col. 1:15</p>	<p>Desolation and emptiness Genesis 1:2</p>	<p>Living Soul Genesis 2:7</p>	<p>Third heaven <b>The New Heavens</b> 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1 Isa. 65:17; 2 Cor. 12:2</p>
<p>Before eonian times 2 Tim. 1:9 Titus 1:2</p>	<p>The world that then was 2 Pet. 3:6</p>	<p>Disruption (kata bol e) Commonly translated Foundation</p>	<p>Adam Genesis 1:27</p>	<p><b>New Creation</b> Eph. 2:15</p>
<p>Before the eons 1 Cor. 2:7</p>	<p>The Primal Creation Gen. 1:1; Isa. 45:18</p>	<p>Earth was in this condition for a long unknown length of time</p>	<p>The eonian times Fullness of time Galatians 4:4</p>	<p><b>New World</b> Rev. 21:4</p>
<p>Before the eons 1 Cor. 2:7</p>	<p>The Present wicked eon Galatians 1:4</p>	<p>From the disruption Matt. 13:35 Heb. 4:3</p>	<p>The present wicked eon Galatians 1:4</p>	<p><b>The coming eon</b> Mt. 10:30; Lu. 18:30</p>
<p>Before the eons 1 Cor. 2:7</p>	<p>The New Earth Paradise</p>	<p>Present yourself to God, an unshamed worker, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15</p>	<p>Justice Reigns - Isa. 26:9 The Lord's Day - Isa. 13:6-15; Rev. 1:10 Hades gives up its dead - Rev. 20:13, 14 Lake of fire - Second death. Rev. 21:8</p>	<p><b>After the eons</b> 1 Cor. 15:28</p>
<p>GOD ALL in himself 1 Cor. 8:6</p>	<p>Before the disruption John 17:24; Eph. 1:4</p>	<p>From the disruption Matt. 13:35 Heb. 4:3</p>	<p>Center of God's Plan Lord returns to earth at the 7th (last) trumpet. Matt. 24:31 - Rev. 11:15 1 Cor. 15:52 - 1 Thess. 4:16</p>	<p><b>The New Earth Paradise</b> Deut. 7:9</p>
<p>GOD ALL in all 1 Cor. 15:28</p>	<p>The eons of the eons and ever ends here</p>	<p>Present yourself to God, an unshamed worker, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15</p>	<p>Center of God's Plan Lord returns to earth at the 7th (last) trumpet. Matt. 24:31 - Rev. 11:15 1 Cor. 15:52 - 1 Thess. 4:16</p>	<p><b>The eons of the eons</b> and ever ends here</p>

Courtesy of Concordant Publishing Concern

Drawn by - Danny Russino

Designed by Adlai Loudy June 1925

1st Eon

2nd Eon

3rd Eon

4th Eon

5th Eon





