

BIBLE MESSAGES

THE BODY OF CHRIST

THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF GOD'S POWER TO US-WARD WHO BELIEVE.

What is the measure of God's power toward believers? What can be accomplished in the believer by that power? How can the believer appropriate and apply that power?

THE MEASURE OF GOD'S POWER TO US-WARD

“That ye may know . . . what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the super-heavenlies, and put all things under His feet.” Ephesians 1:18 to 22.

Such is the measure of God's power to the believer in the matter of salvation; salvation from sin. “The Gospel of Christ which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” Romans 1:16. Something more than human power is needed to save the sinner from sin. Divine power is needed. And the very best news that any human being ever heard is, that Divine power is available. The news that there is power that will save from the power of sin is good news, or “the gospel”. Every human being is utterly helpless to deal with sin. But the majority of sinners are more interested in being delivered from some of their sinful habits than they are in being saved from the penalty of sin. To be saved from the penalty of sin means to be saved from the wages of sin, which is death. Romans 6:23.

God demands death for sin. Unless the sinner finds and appropriates the Divine remedy for sin, the death penalty is certain; it is fixed by the just and holy Judge. Apart from Divine merciful intervention, the sinner's doom is inevitable; Divine judgment inescapable. So far as man is concerned he can do nothing to deliver himself from the presence of sin, from the power of sin, or from the penalty of sin. So far as God is concerned His very character demands justice. The question is, how can the helpless, powerless sinner escape justice at the hands of the God against whom he has sinned? There must be death for sin. Must each sinner die for himself? Is it justice for the innocent to suffer for the guilty? The world says, “no.”

God's Word declares that “Christ hath once suffered for sins the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” I Peter 3:18. Then this question, “has the holy Judge the right to be the sinner's Saviour?” Can He act as Judge and Saviour and be both just and merciful? The world says, “true justice knows no mercy.” But the Just One, who has accomplished the redemption whereby man can be brought to God, was both God and man. The Offended One was delivered for our offenses. He satisfied His own justice by becoming the God-man and receiving the wages of sin; death.

The Lord of Glory was crucified; put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit. Christ died for our sins: He was buried and was raised again on the third day. He dealt with sin, which he put away by the sacrifice of Himself. Then He abolished death and hath brought life to

light in the gospel and incorruptibility to light in the gospel. In this redemptive work Christ proved His Deity, vindicated and satisfied Divine righteousness and justice; and fulfilled His word: "I lay down my life, that I might take it again . . . I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." John 10:17 and 18. It must be admitted that such power is Divine power.

God was ever well pleased with His Son; when He was in the bosom of the Father; when He was Jesus of Nazareth in the midst of His people, and since He has raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His own right hand in the super-heavenlies. God manifested His great power in the act of the resurrection and exaltation of His Son. God manifests that same great power, to save from the penalty of sin, any and every sinner who believes this Divine gospel.

There is absolutely no saving message for any sinner in the sinless life and holy example of the Son of God, apart from His death and resurrection. The penalty of sin is death. How could the sinner escape that death penalty by trying to live like Jesus lived? There would be no death penalty in such a struggle; but there would be utter failure; and eternal death after the futile struggle. It is the privilege of redeemed sinners to know Christ in the power of His resurrection; but not until they have escaped the death penalty by identification with Christ, "baptized into His death."

If the same exceeding great power that God manifested in raising Christ from death to the super-heavenlies is available for the believer to enable him to have power over sin, it would seem that the believer's defeat could only be the result of his failure to appropriate and apply that exceeding great power. If such exceeding great power is available for the believer, then the believer should be delivered from the power of sin.

ACCOMPLISHED BY GOD'S POWER

"How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" Romans 6:2. The believer is baptized into the death of Christ, and having been crucified with Him he is raised to walk in newness of life. "Sin shall not have dominion over you." "Let not sin reign in your mortal body." Romans 6:4, 12 and 14.

From these, and many other verses, it seems that victory is provided for the believer in Christ and that victory is expected of the believer in Christ. The believer is identified with Christ in death. Christ died unto sin. The believer is positionally and potentially dead unto sin.

"Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Colossians 3:3. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Colossians 3:1. What things are where Christ is? Not a thing that has to do with sin. A very high standard? It couldn't be higher. It is the "super-heavenlies" standard. It is the Christ standard. The things which are where Christ is are the things which are in Christ. And the believer is in Christ. The believer is raised with Christ. The believer is seated with Christ in the heavenlies. Because the exceeding great power God used to accomplish the resurrection of Christ is to us-ward who believe, the believer is exhorted to manifest that resurrection power in his life. "That I may know Him in the power of His resurrection." Philippians 3:10.

It is one thing to be kept by the power of God through faith unto that glorious salvation at the coming of the Lord; it is another thing to day by day live in resurrection power.

As believers we fail to measure up to God's standard, but we have no Divine authority to lower the standard to the level of our failures. When we would do good evil is present. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and we may not do the things that we should. But the exceeding great power of God is available.

APPROPRIATION AND APPLICATION

Believers are exhorted to pray without ceasing. Quite a big order for one who has many other duties. But it is God's order. And the principle is always, "Be it unto you according to your faith."

The believer is exhorted to study, to present, to resist, to let, to hope, to overcome, to live, to watch, to be vigilant and sober, to seek. Then there are many negative exhortations.

He is to put on the whole armour of God. He is to witness and work. He is to walk in the Spirit and make no provisions for the flesh. He is to yield himself to God and his members as instruments of righteousness. He is to put on the new man and to put off the old man. There is to be no let-up and no let-down; no unoccupied moments; no surrender to Satan or self; no compromise; but constant abiding in Christ, in fellowship and communion, yielded every moment to the Holy Spirit, saying with Paul, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

The believer is instructed to abstain from all appearances of evil. He is exhorted to keep himself unspotted from the world. "Love not the world; neither the things of the world." In fact there are several hundred admonitions, injunctions, orders, warnings, beseechings and rules for his Christian conduct.

Such is the price of victory. Paul practiced what he preached. How are we getting along? Our sufficiency is of God.

THE SON OF MAN STANDING IN HEAVEN

In the year 34 A.D. Stephen, who was stoned by his Nation Israel because he rebuked them in the Name of the Lord for their rejection of the Son of Man, their Messiah; said, just before he died: "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God." Acts 7:51 to 56. They resisted the Holy Spirit. No doubt Stephen had in mind, and the Nation had in mind, the words of the Lord Jesus recorded in Matthew 12:31 and 32 . . . "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit. it shall not be forgiven him." They had sinned against the Son of man; delivered Him to Pilate to be put to death. They had committed an awful sin against Him. But on the cross the Son of man said, "Father forgive them"; and the Father did forgive their sin against the Son of man; or rather, He was willing to forgive that great sin against the Son of man, if they would yield to the Holy Spirit's witness as to the resurrection and Messiahship of that Son of man. They did not yield; they resisted. Stephen was declaring that they were committing that unpardonable sin, to which the Lord had referred in Matthew 12:31 and 32.

Now, let us note the contrast between Stephen's message concerning the Son of man, in the year 34 A.D., and Paul's message concerning the risen Christ, in the year 64 A. D. In the year 64 Paul addressed an Epistle to the saints in Ephesus, declaring therein that God had raised the Lord Jesus and had seated Him at His own right hand in the upper-heavenlies, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion; and gave Him to be head over all things unto that Church which is His Body. Ephesians 1:19 to 22.

At the time Stephen addressed Israel, in the year 34 A.D. and for several years thereafter, the Gentiles were aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel. Ephesians 2:11. In the year 64 A.D., when Paul addressed his Epistle to the saints at Ephesus, he declared that it was God's purpose to make of believing Gentiles and believing Jews, in Christ and with Christ, One New Man. Ephesians 2:15. He said that was God's eternal purpose in Christ. Ephesians 3:11, "For this cause, "Paul declared that he "was the prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ for Gentiles." Ephesians 3:1. Stephen was the martyr for the Lord Jesus Christ for Israel. Stephen spoke to Israel of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of man, standing in Heaven. Paul wrote of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Head of the Body sitting in the upper-heavenlies. Stephen rehearsed the history of Israel from the call of Abraham to the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, Israel's Messiah, the Son of man. But Paul declared that the "upper-heavenly" position of the Lord Jesus Christ, His headship unto the Church, and the membership of redeemed heathen in that Body, had no place in the history of Israel, never having been mentioned nor intimated even once by any one of Israel's prophets. The Father chose to keep as a secret, hid in Himself, not made known to the sons of men in other ages, facts concerning the Headship and membership of Christ's Body. Ephesians 3:8 and 9 and Ephesians 3:3. It was the will of God to keep this a mystery until after He was through with His dealings with Israel, as a nation. He declared the temporary abandonment of His purpose concerning that nation about 60 A.D., in Romans 11:7 and 17 and 25. God is to again deal with His Nation when He has brought to an end His purpose in this dispensation of grace; to make the One New Man; to complete the Body of Christ.

All Premillennialist Bible students, who are Fundamentalists, are agreed on this program of God, but it is quite difficult, if not altogether impossible, for them to agree as to when God set aside His Nation and when He began historically the making of the New Man. Perhaps the difference of opinion as to when the Body began can be expressed in the "yes" and "no" to this question: "When Stephen saw Jesus as the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God in heaven, some months after the death and resurrection of the Son of man, was the Lord Jesus then the Head of the Church which is His Body?" This is by no means an easy question to answer. But let not our answer be, "I have always been taught that the Body of Christ began historically before Stephen's death." But rather, let us search the Scriptures in giving our answer.

Perhaps the best way to answer this question is to study some of the statements made by the Lord Jesus concerning Himself, when He spoke of Himself as the Son of man while He was. Jesus of Nazareth a man approved of God in Israel's midst. Acts 2:22.

The Lord Jesus is mentioned in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, about eighty times as the Son of man. Aside from the question of the bewildered Israelites, "who is this Son of man," the title was always used by the Lord Himself. Any student of the Word of God who will carefully read and study the eighty references will be convinced that the title "Son of man", was the Lord's title in His relations and dealings with His own Nation Israel. Paul never used the title in the Lord's relationships and ministries to the Body.

What the Son of man did while He was on earth was in fulfillment of Scriptures; and what He promised to do when He shall come back to earth will be in fulfillment of Scriptures. All of Israel's prophets foretold the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, for two purposes; one purpose was to offer Himself, in suffering, on the tree, and the other was to place Himself, in glory, on the throne of David. The two lines of prophecy were concerning the Sacrifice and Kingdom of Israel's Messiah. But not one of Israel's prophets had one word to say about the heavenly position and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ during this parenthesis. Jesus of

Nazareth, in the midst of Israel, referred to His Sacrifice and Kingship over Israel; but not to His Headship over His Body and His relationship to the One New Man of Ephesians 2:15.

In Matthew 26:24 we read this statement of the Lord: "The Son of man goeth as it is written of Him." In Matthew 25:31 we read, "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him: then shall He sit on the throne of His glory." Matthew 25:34 . . . "The King say . . . Come, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Yes, the Son of man goeth and the Son of man cometh. This is the message of the Messiah in the Four Gospels.

When the Son of man went to the cross He was fulfilling Scriptures. On the cross the Lord did that which God spoke by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. When the Son of man shall come back to Israel, in power and great glory, and sit as the King on the Throne of His glory, He will be fulfilling Scriptures. He will be the King of that Kingdom, reigning over the house of Israel, as was spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began. Luke 1:70; Acts 3:21; Matthew 25:34.

But the Son of man standing in heaven, according to the seventh chapter of Acts, was there in fulfillment of Scriptures. The Lord Jesus Christ, Head of the Church which is His Body, according to the first chapter of Ephesians is not seated there Head of the Body, as spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began, but Head of that Body which was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Ephesians 1:4; Ephesians 3:9. The prophets said nothing about the Body.

The message of the King and the Kingdom was the subject of prophecy. The message of the Head and the Body was not the subject of prophecy; but was given by revelation to Paul . . . Ephesians 3:3; Colossians 1:24 to 28.

The Lord was the Son of man to Israel in Acts 7:51 to 56. If Israel had repented, Jesus would have come back to Israel on earth to fulfill the prophecies concerning the King and the Kingdom. If Israel would not repent, God would set that Nation aside and make His Son to be the Head of the Church which is His Body. How long was the opportunity to repent and the Kingdom offered to the Nation? Until some time after Stephen was stoned to death. Several thousand Israelites had repented and were saved before Stephen's death. Were they in the Body of Christ at the time they were saved or did they become members of that Body later on? Was God putting saved Israelites in the Body of Christ while He was speaking in mercy to Israel concerning their King and Kingdom? Acts 3:19 to 26. The Israelites saved during the days of Stephen's ministry were in the Church of God; that is, in the "called out" of God. Galatians 1:13. Acts 8:1. Were they in the Body of Christ?

When God spoke by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began, concerning the sufferings and glory of Christ, concerning His Sacrifice and Kingdom, He never revealed the fact that there would be months or years or centuries between the Lamb on the cross and the King on the throne. He never spoke of the time between, except to say that He would not leave His soul in Sheol.

Therefore we cannot learn from any of Israel's prophets when the Body of Christ began historically. Neither can we learn it from the oral or written messages of the Twelve. Neither is there any prophecy, stating that God would give to Israel another opportunity to receive the Kingdom during the years between the sacrifice of Christ and the revelation of the Body mystery. But He did.

When was the secret of Ephesians 3:6 made known to and through Paul? The "unsearchable" (untraceable) riches of Christ, revealed in Ephesians, differed from the

“traceable” riches of Christ preached by Peter and the Eleven. Compare Ephesians 3:8 and 9 with Acts 2:16; Acts 2:25 to 30; Acts 3:19 to 26; Acts 10:47 and Acts 15:14 to 17.

If the “traceable” riches of Christ refer to the King and the Kingdom and the “untraceable” riches refer to the Head and the Body, the Church of Stephen’s day must differ from the Church of Ephesians 1:19 to 22.

FOUR CHURCHES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES

Our word “Church” is from the Greek “Kurios”, translated several hundred times, “Lord”. Why the translators used the word “Church” we do not understand, for it has caused much confusion and misunderstanding. The Greek word, from which the word “Church” is translated “Ekklesia”, This word “Ekklesia” is found 118 times in the New Testament Scriptures, translated 85 times, in the singular, “Church”; 35 times, in the plural, “Churches”; and three times “Assembly”. The word “Assembly” is used in Acts 19:32, 39 and 41. The Greek word, “Ekklesia”, means “Called-out”, and suggests a called-out company, or a gathering, or an assembly. Thus we can see the unfortunate translation, “Church.” It would have been far better had the word “Ekklesia” been translated, “Called-out” or “Assembly”, all 118 times.

THE FIRST CHURCH

In Acts 7:38 Stephen spoke of the “Ekklesia”, or “Church”, “in the wilderness.” He was referring to Israel’s pilgrimage through the wilderness, about 1490 B.C. Surely the Israelites were God’s “called-out” people. He called them out of Egypt. He led them into Canaan. They were still the “Ekklesia” of God years after their pilgrimage was over, when they were worshipping Jehovah in the temple at Jerusalem. This leads us to ask the question; “how about the seventy souls out of the loins of Jacob more than two hundred years before the Israelites were in the wilderness?” Were not the seventy souls of Exodus 1:5 God’s “Called-out?” Two hundred years before this some of God’s people were in the household of Abraham. Genesis 17:4 to 14. One of the four churches referred to in the New Testament Scriptures is the “Church in the wilderness.”

THE SECOND CHURCH

In Acts 8:1 we read of “the Church which was at Jerusalem.” In that Church there were only Jews. Acts 11:19. In referring to that Church, Paul said, “I persecuted “the Church of God.” Galatians 1:13. The Church in Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, was the Church of God. Before the day of Pentecost there were one-hundred-twenty souls in the upper room. They were the Called-out of God. Acts 1:15. To a called-out company the Lord on earth had said some months before the day of Pentecost, “Fear not little flock.” Luke 12:32. They were called-out. To them He said; “if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the “Ekklesia.” Matthew 18:17. This leads us to this question, “did the Church of God which Saul of Tarsus persecuted begin on or before the day of Pentecost?” The Post-millenarian’s answer to this question is, that the Church of God began before the flood. Some Bible teachers believe that the Church of God began with John the Baptist. Some Premillenarians teach that there was a Church of God before the

resurrection of Christ, but that the New Testament Church of God began when the Lord Jesus breathed upon His apostles, saying “receive ye the Holy Spirit.” John 20:22.

Other Premillenarians—and the majority of them—teach that there was at least one Church before the day of Pentecost; but that a new and different Church of God began on the day of Pentecost. They support their teaching by the words of the Lord Jesus, “Upon this Rock I will build my Church.” Matthew 16:19. They also use I Corinthians 12:13 to support their teaching, “baptized by one Spirit into one Body.” Believers, they claim, could not have been baptized into the Church of God until the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost. The believers added on the day of Pentecost, they teach, were added to the Church of God by the work of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:47. Then they claim that the expression “the Church of God” was not used before the day of Pentecost. All of these Premillenarians are Dispensationalists to the extent that they teach that the Kingdom of God was taken from Israel with the death of Israel’s Messiah, in fulfillment of Matthew 21:43 and Matthew 23:34 to 39. They teach that Israel’s national redemption will take place by the coming of the Son of man in power and great glory after God has accomplished His purpose in this age; namely, to build the Church of Christ. Therefore, they teach the postponement of the Kingdom or the suspension of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants that have to do with the restoration of the Kingdom and Canaan to Israel. They teach that when the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in all Israel shall be saved. Romans 11:25 and 26. Therefore, they teach that the Kingdom of God which was at hand, in the message of the Lord Jesus in Mark 1:14 and 15, is not now at hand; but will be at hand when the Son of man shall return and fulfill Luke 21:27 to 31. That Kingdom of God is now in abeyance. Since the day of Pentecost the Church of God has been at hand. Therefore, they claim that the Church of God, which began historically on the day of Pentecost, is identical with the Church which is Christ’s Body, mentioned in Ephesians 1:19 to 22.

There are some Scriptures that seem to support the teaching that the Church of God began on the day of Pentecost and that that Church of God is the same as the Church which is Christ’s Body, mentioned in Ephesians and Colossians. Yet there are some Scriptures that seem to disprove both facts; that is, the one fact that the Church of God which Saul persecuted began before the day of Pentecost, and the other fact that the Church of God of the day of Pentecost is not identical with the Body (Church of Ephesians 1:19 to 22.) Let us consider them:

Read the words of the Lord Jesus, in Mark 1:14 and 15: “The Kingdom of God is at hand.” It was at hand for Israel; because their King was at hand. Whether or not we believe that the Body of Christ began historically on the day of Pentecost or some years after, Premillenarians are agreed that the Kingdom of God that was at hand in 30 A.D. was not the Body of Christ mentioned in 64 A.D., in Ephesians and Colossians. According to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ to Israel, “the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you.” Matthew 21:43. Now, if that Kingdom of God had been taken away from Israel before the day of Pentecost, there might be Scriptural proof that the Body of Christ began historically on the day of Pentecost. But the fact is, that the same Kingdom of God that was offered to Israel while the Lord Jesus was on earth was again offered to the same Nation after Pentecost. Acts 3:19 to 22. In Matthew 8:1 to 11, the Israelites were “Children”. Mark 7:27. In Matthew 23:34 to 39 the Israelites were “serpents”. In Acts 3:25 the Israelites were “Children”. Quite a transformation from “Children” to serpents, and from “serpents” back to “Children”. In Matthew 16:20 the Messengers of the Messiah were no longer to witness to the Nation that Jesus was their Messiah. But in Acts 2:32, the Messengers of the Messiah were witnessing to Israel that Jesus was their Messiah; “Let all of the House of Israel know.” The “these days” of Acts 3:24 referred to the same Israelitish

Kingdom of God that was at hand in Mark 1:14 and 15. Yes or no? If yes, did the “these days” of Acts 3:24 refer to the Body of Christ of Ephesians 3:6, about which days no prophet ever spoke or wrote?

According to Peter’s message on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit did not come to form the Body of Christ, but for Israel’s blessing in their land. Read Joel 2:18 and Acts 2:16. According to that same message, Jesus Christ was not raised from the dead to be the Head of the Church which is His Body, but to sit as King and Messiah on David’s throne. On that throne the Messiah and King will be the “Son of Man.” Matthew 25:31 to 34. Some months after the day of Pentecost Stephen saw the Messiah standing in heaven as the “Son of man”. The Lord Jesus is not the Son of man to the members of the Church which is His Body. No one can prove by the Word of God that the Nation Israel had been set aside, as a nation, or that the Kingdom of God had been taken away from them at the time Stephen saw the heavens opened and the Son of man standing. Acts 7:51 to 56.

We have taken too much for granted, without diligently studying the Word of God. In what respect was the Kingdom of God taken away from Israel, in the seventh chapter of Acts, that it was not taken away when Jesus was in their midst on earth? The Lord had to go to the cross in fulfillment of the Scriptures. How could He have gone to the throne of David before He went to Calvary, and have fulfilled the Scriptures? What Scripture prevented His return to establish His Kingdom after His sacrifice? The answer to this is; that the Body of Christ was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Ephesians 1:4 . . . Ephesians 3:11 and II Timothy 1:9. So then this question, what was the difference between the Kingdom of God, offered to Israel before the day of Pentecost, and the Kingdom of God offered to Israel after the day of Pentecost? In the one case Israel was sinning against the Son of man. That was to be forgiven them. Matthew 12:31 and 32. For the forgiveness of that sin Christ on the cross prayed for them. In the second case, after Pentecost they were sinning against, or resisting, the Holy Spirit. That was not to be forgiven them. In the one case the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of the heavens, was being offered to them while their Messiah was on earth, Jesus of Nazareth the man approved of God in their midst by signs. Acts 2:22. In the other case the Kingdom of God was being offered to them after God had made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ and had raised Him up to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance unto Israel. Acts 2:32. Acts 5:31. Repentance on the part of Israel meant the Kingdom of God restored unto Israel. Acts 3:19 to 26.

Twenty-seven years after the death of Israel’s Messiah there was an “election” of Israelites. But Israel, the Nation, was to be set aside until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. Romans 11:7 and 8 and 25 and 26. When did this election of Israelites begin? Certainly before the day of Pentecost. While the Lord Jesus was in the flesh in the land of the Jews individual Israelites were saved. Whether or not they were born into the Kingdom of God or became members of the Church of God, there was something more than an offer of salvation, or entrance into the Kingdom of God, to individual Israelites. The proclamation of the Kingdom by John the Baptist, the Lord Jesus and the Twelve and the Seventy, while the Saviour was on earth, was for the Nation. When the Lord said, “the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you”, He did not mean that individual Israelites would not be permitted to enter into the Kingdom of God. No, He meant that the Kingdom of God which was offered to the Nation, and which shall yet be given to that Nation, would be taken away. While the Lord Jesus was on earth He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matthew 15:24. He was confirming to Israel God’s Kingdom promises. Romans 15:8. Messages concerning the Body of Christ were not messages of confirmation; but messages of revelation. They were not preached by the Lord Jesus on earth.

The Israelites saved while the Lord was on earth did not become members of the Body of Christ mentioned in Ephesians and Colossians. But the question is, “would it be unscriptural to speak of that company of saved Israelites as the Church or a Church of God before Pentecost?” Did the little flock constitute an “Ekklesia?” If not, would we call them “the Kingdom of God”? Is there any name by which they might collectively be called? Were not all Israelites the children of the Kingdom? Matthew 8:11. The children of the Kingdom were not cast into darkness until after Acts 13:46.

The coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, in fulfillment of Joel’s Kingdom prophecy concerning Israel’s Kingdom and Land, did not make the saved company of Israelites the One New Man of Ephesians 2:15. Just as before the death of the Messiah, individual Israelites continued to be saved, or enter the Kingdom of God, on the day of Pentecost and thereafter. Just as before the death of Christ, God was still dealing with the Nation Israel on Kingdom grounds; presenting to them the message of that Kingdom spoken by the mouth of Moses, Samuel and all of Israel’s prophets. Acts 3:21 and 24.

Perhaps, the most difficult task for the Bible student is to learn just When, during the Book of Acts period, the Lord ceased to deal with Israel, as a Nation, on Kingdom grounds. Certainly in the year 46 A.D., when the Apostle Paul said, “seeing ye have put it from you, Lo, we turn unto the Gentiles”, he was not saying that God would withdraw from individual Israelites the privilege of becoming members of His Church, Acts 13:46. He was there dealing with the Nation, as He was in Acts 28:25 to 28. With Acts 28:25 to 28 we have a most radical change in the program of God. With that judgment God began to withdraw spiritual authority and Church leadership from Israel and to usher in a period of Gentile favour wholly independent of Israelitish covenants, promises, rites and religion; and to reveal His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus concerning the One New Man and the heavenly position and blessings of the members of the Body of Christ chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. There is a decided difference between the Kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world, of Matthew 25:34, the restitution to Israel spoken by the prophets since the world began, of Luke 1:70 and Acts 3:21, and the purpose of Christ given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, of Ephesians 1:4 and II Timothy 1:9. We must not confuse the Kingdom promises with the eternal purpose of God concerning the position of saved Gentiles in the Body. One was the subject of prophecy; the other was unknown to the prophets; hid in God. Ephesians 3:3, 5, 8 and 9.

THE THIRD CHURCH

In the study of this third Church mentioned in the New Testament Scriptures we can appreciate the unfortunate and obscure translation of the word “Ekklesia” to the word “Church”. Read Acts 19:32, 39 and 41. “The Ekklesia was confused”. “In a lawful Ekklesia”. “He dismissed the Ekklesia.” Who dismissed the Ekklesia? A heathen judge. Who made up the Ekklesia? There were several saints there, but the Ekklesia was an unruly mob of lost heathen. What a Church! As the word “Church” comes from the word translated Lord, “Kurios”, we know that mob should not have been called “Church”. The word Ekklesia is properly translated “Assembly” in the three verses. Suppose such an unruly mob had gathered in Jerusalem while the Lord Jesus was on earth, could they not have properly been called an Ekklesia? Certainly. Then was the word “Ekklesia” added to the Greek language because a company of saved Israelites was to be called “the Church of God” on the day of Pentecost? (Certainly not. If a mob of heathen could have been properly called an Ekklesia or an Assembly before Christ died, then

a company of God's redeemed people could have been called an Ekklesia of God, or a Church of God, while Christ was on earth.

Well, of one thing all students of the Word of God are sure; that is, that the Church which is the Body of Christ is not a building made of inanimate stones or other inanimate material. The Church which is the Body of Christ is a building made up of sinners saved by pure and unadulterated grace, without religion. Acts 2:8 to 22.

THE FOURTH CHURCH

“In Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the upper-heavenlies, or super-heavenlies, . . . and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” Ephesians 1:19 to 22. “They two shall be one flesh; This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.” Ephesians 5:31. “In other ages was not made known to the sons of men. . . . That the Gentiles should be joint-heirs; of the joint Body.” Ephesians 3:5 and 6. “To make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.” Ephesians 3:9.

Is the Holy Spirit, in these verses in Ephesians, speaking of a Church of God, or the Church of God, which began before or on the day of Pentecost?

The generally accepted answer to this question among Premillenarians is, that the Church of God began historically on the day of Pentecost and that that Church of God which then began is the same Church of God called in Ephesians and Colossians, the “Body”. This teaching is supported by Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians. First Corinthians was addressed “unto the Church of God.” In I Corinthians 12:13 we read that “by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks.” The argument is, that the Church of God of the first chapter is the Body of the twelfth chapter; and that the Body of I Corinthians 12:13 is identical with the Body of Ephesians and Colossians. Another verse of Scripture used to support the teaching is Ephesians 2:20: “And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner.”

Whether or not Premillenarians believe that the Church of God began on the day of Pentecost and that that Church of God is the same Church or Body of Ephesians and Colossians, they are agreed that the Body of Christ did not begin historically until Israel, as a nation, was set aside; and they should be agreed that the Body of Ephesians and Colossians was not in fulfillment of any promise that God made to Israel by the mouth of all of His holy prophets since the world began. If Israel was set aside, as a nation, on the day of Pentecost, then undoubtedly the Body of Christ began historically at that time, if not before. If Israel was not set aside until after Stephen saw the Son of man standing in heaven, or until after Acts 13:46, then it is more than doubtful that body of Christ began historically on the day of Pentecost or before. Therefore, it seems rather important that we search the Scriptures diligently to learn when the Lord set Israel aside. To be sure, the Lord on earth said to Israel, “your house is left unto you desolate.” Matthew 23:38 and 39. At that time He addressed them as a generation of vipers and as serpents. But after Christ prayed, “Father, forgive them”, God spoke to them in great mercy and addressed them, not as serpents, but “ye are the children of the covenants.” Acts 3:25. God wot that ye did it in ignorance. Therefore, repent. Acts 3:17. This was to “every one of you”, to “all the house of Israel.” Acts 2:38 . . . Acts 3:26 and Acts 2:36. Their house was not yet desolate. Their temple stood in Jerusalem and for years after Paul was converted God permitted him to become a Jew to

the Jews. Surely God delayed the execution of the judgment pronounced upon the house of Israel, in Matthew 21 and 23 and 25. It was in the year 60 A.D. that God wrote by the pen of Paul to the Romans concerning the setting aside of Israel, not on the day of Pentecost, but after the thirteenth chapter of Acts; perhaps, not definitely until Acts 28:25 to 28. Israel's house was no more desolate in the thirteenth chapter of Acts than in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew. Were the natural branches any more cut off in Acts 15:1 to 19 than they were in Matthew 23:34 to 38?

Here is a sensible question: "If Israel was set aside with the death of Christ, if the Kingdom of God was taken away from Israel with the death of Christ, why did God's messengers say to Israel, "to you first"? Acts 3:26 and Acts 13:46. Why were no Gentiles saved until eight years after the day of Pentecost? Acts 11:18. Why was it unlawful for an Israelite apostle to go to a Gentile with the message until Peter's housetop vision? Acts 10:28. Surely we know, with but little study, that the dispensation of pure grace for Jew and Gentile alike did not begin with Peter's message on the day of Pentecost. No messenger of grace today would preach to an unsaved Gentile, "repent and be baptized for the remission of sin," Acts 2:38. Neither would he preach to any one Acts 3:19 to 21.

The teacher who has the Body of Christ begin historically on the day of Pentecost has for the program of that Body all of the program of the Book of Acts period, from Pentecost until Paul reached Rome. But they find very little of this program in the Body of Christ today, except in the counterfeit. They have no Scriptural explanation for the absence of the signs and visions and miracles and ceremonies that were practiced by the authority of the risen Christ during the thirty years after His death? They should either be recovered or explained away by an intelligent application of the Scriptures rightly divided, which is difficult, if not impossible, if the Body of today and the Pentecost Church of God are one and the same. We have either a different Church today with a different sphere of blessing or the same Church with such a different program that it might as well be a different Church.

Let us carefully compare Amos 9:11 to 15 with Acts 15:14 to 17, and we shall learn that God by the mouth of His holy prophet told Israel that there was to be a called-out company of Israelites and Gentiles; and we shall also learn that Peter and James declared that the Church of God of the Book of Acts was the called-out company to whom Amos referred. A study of the first chapters of the Book of Acts should convince us that Peter and the Eleven were preaching to none but Israelites, "none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:" And then Peter said, "God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe." Acts 15:7. This referred to Peter's message to the Household of Cornelius; "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." Acts 10:43.

Some years after Peter's ministry to the Gentiles the Apostle Paul wrote: "I am the apostle of the Gentiles." Romans 11:13. And about that same time it was agreed that Peter and his associates should preach the "circumcision" gospel to the circumcision. Galatians 2:7 and 9. It is no easy matter to understand Galatians 2:7 to 9 in the light of Acts 15:7; unless we can learn in the Scriptures that the risen Lord gave Paul a message and ministry for the Gentiles that superseded His commission to the Twelve. Paul was the prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ for the Gentiles with the dispensation of grace and with the mystery among the Gentiles. Ephesians 3:1 to 9. Colossians 1:27. Peter preached to Israelites and Gentiles the "traceable" riches of Christ. The Apostle Paul finally preached to Gentiles the unsearchable (untraceable) riches of Christ. Ephesians 3:8. The word translated "unsearchable" really means "not to be tracked." Included in

the “not-to-be-tracked” riches of Christ was the Body referred to in Paul’s last Epistles as “the Mystery”.

In the second of Acts believers were added to the Church of God. They were all Israelites. About eight years later the first company of Gentiles was added. Acts 11:18. If the called-out company of Acts 15:14 to 17 referred to the Jews and Greeks of I Corinthians 12:13, baptized by one Spirit into one Body, then the one Body of I Corinthians 12:13 can hardly be identical with the Body of Ephesians 3:6. Membership in the Body of Ephesians 3:6 was a mystery not made known to the prophets of Israel, whereas the saved company of Acts 15:14 to 17 was prophesied in Amos 9:11 to 15.

God’s Son made under the law, sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, was a minister of the circumcision. Galatians 4:4. Matthew 15:24. Romans 15:8. His ministry to Israel was one of confirmation; that is, confirming what Israel’s prophets had foretold. Romans 15:8. That referred also to a message of salvation for Gentiles. Romans 15:9. The ministry of the Twelve, before and after the death of their Messiah, was also a ministry of confirmation. Hebrews 2:2 to 5. To Israel Paul likewise preached “none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come.” Acts 26:22. “That Christ should be the first to rise from the dead and show light unto Israel and the Gentiles.” Acts 26:23. So the Apostle Paul had a ministry of confirmation, or “traceable” riches of Christ. But he had another ministry, about which Israel’s prophets knew nothing. He preached among the Gentiles the “untraceable” riches of Christ, concerning the dispensation of the mystery, which God would have all men to know; since He revealed it to and through Paul. Paul had a two-fold ministry; one of confirmation, and one of revelation. Otherwise we could never reconcile Acts 26:22 and Ephesians 3:8 and 9; the “none other things of Israel’s prophets” and the mystery hid in God from the beginning of the world; the “traceable” and “untraceable” message. Who could learn of the “dispensation of the grace of God” or of the “dispensation of the mystery” by reading Israel’s Old Testament prophets or the Four Gospels or the Book of Acts or even the first six Epistles from the pen of Paul?

As we said, Premillenarians are generally agreed that the Body of Christ did not begin until Israel was set aside, as a nation. The disagreement is concerning the time of that setting aside, or as to when the Lord cast the children into darkness, according to Matthew 8:11. As you carefully study the Book of Matthew and the Book of Acts, can you truthfully say that God sent any more judgment upon Israel in the Book of Acts than he did in Matthew? All can see that He did after the “Book of Acts” period, but not during it. Those who disagree with their Premillenarian brethren that Israel had been set aside when the day of Pentecost was fully come are called “Ultradispensationalists.” Some Ultradispensationalists teach that Paul wrote several Epistles before Israel was set aside, and in those Epistles he referred to an “Ekklesia”, a called-out” people, Israelites and Gentiles, which was the subject of prophecy. They teach that Paul wrote several Epistles after Israel was cast into darkness generally called his “Prison” Epistles, including Ephesians, Colossians and II Timothy; and that in those Epistles he referred to an Ekklesia” about which no prophet of Israel wrote. That “Ekklesia” is called “the Church which is His Body”. That Church was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Let us search the Scriptures diligently to see whether these things be true. This teaching suggests “The Book of Acts” Church and the “Body” Church. To which of these Churches did the Lord Jesus refer when He said, “upon this Rock I will build my Ekklesia?” The reason why we feel sure we can correctly answer this question is because outstanding Bible teachers among Fundamentalists have decided it for us. To which Church did the Lord Jesus refer in Matthew?

The Book of Matthew is a Book of signs and ceremonies; a message concerning the Kingdom, Matthew is very largely a Jewish Book. But how about the Book of Acts? Seven strictly Jewish words, found 86 times in the Book of Matthew, are found 250 times in Acts. The honest, open student of the Word of God will find no more radical change passing out of Matthew into Acts than he will passing out of Acts into Ephesians, Colossians and II Timothy. Signs and ceremonies and Judaism pass out of Matthew into Acts and go through Acts, all the way; but they do not pass from Acts to Ephesians, Colossians and II Timothy. They are missing; they have ceased; something has happened.

What happened to John the Baptist and the other saved Israelites who died while Jesus of Nazareth was a man in the midst of Israel? They certainly were not members of the Body of Christ mentioned in Ephesians. To this all Premillenarians are agreed. Were they members of some Church of God? If Israel was set aside when the Lord said to them, “your house is left unto you desolate”, and if the kingdom of God was then and there taken from them, and if the Body of Christ did not begin until fifty days after Christ arose from death, to what company of saved Israelites did the thief on the cross belong? Was he not in the same Church of God to which the thousands were added some weeks later? And concerning the 120 in the upper-room, were they not members of a Church of God while the Lord was in their midst as a man? Did they become members of a new and different Church of God on the day of Pentecost? Surely they were a saved group before the death of their Messiah and they were a saved company after His death. But if any one of them had died before the day of Pentecost, he would have died outside of the Church of God, according to our Premillenarian brethren who teach that the Church of God, began on the day of Pentecost. All of us should agree that he would not have died as a member of the Body of Christ mentioned in Ephesians; but we are by no means agreed that they were not members of a Church of God.

If it could have been that such a radical change could have taken place on the day of Pentecost, as is taught by our Premillenarian brethren who say that the Church of God began then, and if it is true that the “Kingdom of God” saved people from before Pentecost could have become “Church of God” saved people on the day of Pentecost, why could not an equally radical change have taken place with the close of the Book of Acts period and the saved people of the Church of God have become members of the “Body Church” of the post-Acts Epistles? Certainly the Scriptures show that just as radical a change took place at the close of Acts as took place in the Second Chapter of Acts.

The Premillennial brethren, who teach that the Church of God began on the day of Pentecost, teach that when Jesus was on earth He offered to Israel that literal physical Messianic Kingdom that was to be, and is to be, established on this earth, according to the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began. There are many chapters in Isaiah, Zechariah Micah, Jeremiah, Daniel and the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh chapters of Ezekiel that speak of “these days”. They spoke of the same Kingdom “these days” as are mentioned in Acts 3:25. Acts speaks of the very same Kingdom on earth that Christ announced in Mark 1:14 and 15. The very same Kingdom is spoken of in Amos 9:11 to 15 and Acts 15:14 to 18. In fulfillment of the Scriptures, the builders rejected the Stone. As the Kingdom offer was rejected, the attitude of Israel caused the Lord to withdraw the offer and postpone the Kingdom and change His program and build the One New Man before He would lay His hand the second time to restore the Kingdom to Israel. If Israel had received their King and Kingdom, would there not have been the fulfillment of Joel 2:1 to 18 and Amos 9:11 to 15? Certainly. Then if Amos 9:11 to 15 is a Kingdom promise, what has that prophecy to do with the One New Man of Ephesians 2:15? Did

not Israel's attitude toward God's offer after the Holy Spirit came to witness to them again cause God to postpone fulfillment of the Kingdom program of Acts 15:14 to 17 until after He has made the One New Man of Ephesians 2:5. There is no more Scriptural proof that Jesus Christ would have taken the throne of David, if Israel had repented before His death than that He would have taken that throne if Israel had repented within a few years after His death. Christ was prophesied for that purpose. Isaiah 9:6 and 7. He was born for that purpose. Luke 1:29 to 33. He was resurrected for that purpose. Acts 2:25 to 30. He shall return for that purpose. Acts 15:15 and 16. Israel rejected the King and the Kingdom in Acts as well as in Matthew.

Did not the Body of Christ begin after that rejection? Does Acts 15:14 to 17 refer to the Body?

Surely Amos and the other prophets of Israel did not prophesy concerning the present position of Christ in the super-heavenlies, far above principality, power and dominion, and that present position of the members of His Body, seated in and with Christ in the super-heavenlies, described in the Body message in Ephesians 1:4 and 1:19 to 22 and 2:5 and 6. It is not so difficult to see that the "Body" Church of Ephesians 1:19 to 22 differs from the Church of Acts 15:14 to 18, when we study together carefully Amos 9:11 to 15, Acts 15:14 to 18 and Ephesians 3:5 to 11. Amos prophesied Gentile salvation with Christ on David's throne. The Epistle to the Ephesians speaks of Gentile salvation with Christ and His Body seated, not on David's throne, but in the super-heavenlies. Of this Body Amos never spoke a word. Neither did any other prophet before Christ came, or while He was on earth; nor did the Twelve in their ministry to the House of Israel during the Acts period.

Be a true Berean and let the Holy Spirit lead you to diligently search the Scriptures, and you will rejoice in the two "Buts" in the Second Chapter of Ephesians, "But God who is rich in mercy for the great love wherewith He loved us"; and "But now in Christ Jesus". How wonderful is this message of pure grace; saved, sealed and seated, all of grace and all by grace, on the basis of the shed blood of Christ, without religion, legalism, ceremony or ordinance. "They two shall be one flesh. I speak a mystery concerning Christ and the Church."

THE SAD PARADOX—DIVIDED UNITY

"THAT THEY MAY BE ONE IN US; THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE THAT THOU HAST SENT ME."

How many, or rather how few, Christians today are obeying the Lord's instructions to the members of the Church which is His Body:

"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?" "One Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord; one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all." Ephesians 4:3 to 7.

Surely no Christian would be senseless enough to believe that the unity of the Spirit could be kept on the basis of two God's, or two Christ's, or two Holy Spirit's.

Then all Christians should know that it would be impossible to keep the unity of the Spirit on the basis of two Bodies, or two faiths, or two hopes, or two baptisms. All Christians who contend for more than one Body, or more than one faith, or more than one hope, or more than one baptism, are hindering the obedience to the will of God as to keeping the unity of the Spirit.

In the sight of the one God and Father believers today who have been saved by His grace are members of the Church, Christ's Body. They are likewise members one of another. Ephesians 4:25. And the Word of the Lord also says, that he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. I Corinthians 6:17.

As to the "oneness" of those who have received the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, the will of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit is expressed in the Saviour's prayer, recorded in John 17:20 to 25: "That they all may be one that they may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." "That they may be one, even as We are one." With the Church of the risen Lord divided into more than three hundred denominations, carrying on their competitive programs in rivalry, jealousy, with a marked absence of mutual brotherly love and spiritual fellowship, the world today is not believing that the Father sent the Son from heaven's glory to suffer and bleed on the cross of Calvary for the redemption of the lost human race, and therefore, the world is not believing that God has raised that Son to His own right hand in glory and made Him to be Head over all things to the Church, the one and only Church, which is His one Body.

Again God's will concerning the unity of His children, redeemed by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, is expressed in I Corinthians 12:25; "that there be no schism (division) in the body." It is in that same chapter that the Holy Spirit has recorded the fact that believing Jews and Gentiles were baptized by one Spirit into the one body. 12:13 For centuries there had been a great gulf between God's chosen Nation, Israel, and the other nations of the earth. At Mount Sinai God had erected a middle-wall of partition between the Nation and the nations, and He said "I have made a difference between you and all other people." Israel was God's peculiar treasure, His sanctified Nation, created for His own glory. The Gentiles were a foolish nation; no people. But according to the Divine record, Ephesians 2:11 to 19, God permitted His Son to make peace on the cross and there to break down the middle-wall and make both one . . . "to make in Himself of twain One New Man." Ephesians 2:14. And since the revelation of this glorious fact we have both had access by the one Spirit unto the one Father, by the work of the one Son; and being part of that One New Man, we are members one of another and members of the one and only Body of Christ. We all have the one and same blessed hope, looking for the Lord to come, to appear in glory, so that we shall likewise appear with Him in glory. Our hope is laid up in heaven. "Christ in you the hope of glory." Colossians 1:27. Therefore we have this blessed truth revealed to us in God's Word: "They Two shall be one flesh . . . I speak a mystery concerning Christ and the Church." Ephesians 5:31 and 32.

So we see that the clear and unmistakable teaching of the Word of God is, that in spite of the divisions and subdivisions of the redeemed of the Lord into denominations, sects, and church-organizations, in spite of the doctrinal differences that are causing discord, dissension, strife, jealousy and ungracious relationships, all truly saved people are members of the One Body of Christ; are called into the One Hope; because of the One Faith in the redemptive work of the eternal Divine Christ. When the Lord Jesus shall appear in glory and all of the members of His Body shall appear with Him in glory then there will not be a divided unity; for all of the differences shall have disappeared.

Must we say then that there is neither probability nor possibility of any realization on this earth of the desire of the Lord, for the oneness of His people, expressed in His prayer to His Father? From present indications and conditions that prayer will not be answered until every member of the One Body is at home in glory; and then it will be too late to give a testimony to the world of the "oneness" of the Church. Undoubtedly the consensus of opinion among the

members of Christ's Body is, that we are too far gone into a divided unity to even endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit: the general feeling is, "what's the use of trying; it can't be done." Why waste time trying to get Christians to forget their doctrinal differences, remove their denominational barriers and eliminate their sectarian creeds? Every effort in this direction will only prove futile; it is apparently an impossible task. Some are indifferent and uninterested, while others look on the pitiable scene, sad and helpless. This is true of even the most zealous, earnest, faithful, obedient loving Christians, who are more loyal to Christ than they are to any denominational leaders, who are more eager to follow the Word of God than they are to obey the established creed of any sectarian group or organization, who are much more concerned about membership for themselves and for others in the one true Church, or Body, of Christ than they are in getting Christians to join some denominational assembly. Yes, the task of bringing Christians to the position of undenominational fellowship and Scriptural unity, in any great numbers, is a hopeless one. We are utterly powerless to produce on earth an actual, visible, united fellowship among the redeemed of the Lord; and we must continue to present to the world of lost sinners a divided unity, and leave in their minds the question, "who is right and which way shall we turn; what shall we join; whom shall we believe?" It is the same old question, "is Christ divided?" This desired Christian unity is impossible as long as Christians insist on allegiance to some particular denominational church organization as the basis of Christian fellowship. We are unanimously agreed as to this.

The members of the Body of Christ are not instructed to prepare a church constitution, or to compel others to join with them in some denominational branch of the one Church, in order that the unity of the Spirit might be established. It is not a question of establishing this unity. The instructions are to maintain that which the Lord, on His own doctrine and Divine truth, has already established; "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit." That unity was established nineteen hundred years ago and Christians are no more expected to establish the basis of unity than they are to provide a redemption from sin.

Then the question, if we look upon the situation as hopeless, and the task as apparently impossible, should we cease to endeavor to keep the unity? Most assuredly not. The Lord would say to us as He said to Peter concerning John, "What is that to thee; follow thou Me." The Lord will hold us responsible for endeavor; not for success. What others do or fail to do, will not relieve you or me of our God-given responsibility. Our duty is to begin, or to continue, to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit, according to God's will and in God's own way. Shall we do our duty, even if we have to stand with the very small minority?

If all truly saved people are joined to the Lord, they are truly joined to Him for time and eternity; and most assuredly they will not be "unjoined" because they join some denominational organization, or for any other reason. The believer sealed by the Holy Spirit is sealed unto the day of redemption and after that day he will be safe forever in glory. Ephesians 1:13 and 4:30. But let us be honest with ourselves and answer these questions concerning God's desire for unity in the church, which is denominated in the Bible, "the Church which is His Body". Ephesians 1:19 to 22. Will joining a denomination help any Christian to keep the unity of the Spirit? Will remaining a member of some denominational church-organization hinder obedience to the instructions; "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit?" I shall not attempt to answer for you. But it would be well for each Christian to ask himself this question and answer it in the light of the Word of God. Can any one of us find a single verse of Scripture authorizing any Christian to use the expression, "joining the church?" All of us must agree that we can never expect to see the realization of the Lord's desire for unity among the members of the Body of Christ on this

earth, as long as the members join different church-organizations with denominational barriers and refuse to fellowship with other members of the Body of Christ who belong to another denomination with different requirements for membership. There are some who are trying to forget some of the denominational differences in interdenominational conferences and associations, while remaining loyal denominationalists among their own members. But such Christian fellowship, though it be in the Lord, is not the unity of the Spirit which believers are urged to endeavor to keep in Ephesians 4:3.

It must be obvious to any thinking Christian, as we have remarked, that every individual believer must endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit no matter what others may do. Do we not know of faithful men of God who have tired of their lonely and unpopular position and in despair have yielded to the bid for a more popular ministry among the denominationalists and have abandoned their true Scriptural position? It is certainly more pleasing to the flesh to compromise for an inoffensive ministry; but how about the explanation when we meet the Lord?

In endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit, there are other important Scriptures to obey; such as Galatians 1:10 and Jude 3: "If I yet please men, I should not be the servant of Christ;" "Contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints." Therefore, it is plain that no child of God in endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit, is expected to sacrifice or surrender a Holy Spirit conviction as to the infallibility, integrity and Divine authority of the Word of God, or to compromise for one moment with any man or; group of men who would oppose or suppress any precious truth of God. Neither will any intelligent child of God ignore another most important command of the Lord.

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth." II Timothy 2:15.

This most important principle of Bible study is set forth in the very last message which the Holy Spirit directed the Apostle Paul to write. Without a doubt the Apostle was referring to the difference between the ministry, message and program he had received from the Lord before the close of the "Book of Acts" period and the revelation of God's program concerning the Body of Christ after the close of that period. Any student of the Word of God, who has carefully studied Acts 15:3 to 23 and Acts 21:18 to 28, and I Corinthians 9:20 to 25, has learned that, during the Book of Acts period, God had one order for the Jews that believed and another order for the Gentiles which believed. All during that period God's order was "to the Jew first", and the Gentiles rejoiced with Israel. Romans 15:10. It is true that near the close of that period Paul wrote to the Corinthians that both Jews and Greeks were baptized into the one body by the one Spirit, although it is not clear to all students, who would rightly divide the Word of truth, that the body of I Corinthians 12:13 is the same as the Body of Ephesians 1:19 to 22.

It is significant that the Lord waited until He was ready to make known the glorious truths revealed, for the first time, in the first three chapters of Ephesians, concerning the Mystery of the Body, and the Mystery of the glorious gospel of the blessed God, in the sixth chapter, before He instructed the members of the Body to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit.

The new truths revealed in Ephesians have to do with the believer's position and possessions in Christ, in the upperheavenlies, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and blessed with all spiritual blessings in the upperheavenlies in Christ. Because Christ's present place in glory far above principality and powers, Head over all things unto the Church, which is His Body, and the heavenly position of the members of His Body seated there with Him, was not the subject of Israel's prophets and was not made known by Christ to the Twelve Apostles when He commissioned them, it had to be made known by the risen Lord by special

revelation to and through Paul. “How that by revelation He made known to me.” Ephesians 3:3. The Epistle to the Ephesians was written after Paul reached Rome; and he wrote it as the prisoner of the Lord Jesus for Gentiles, for whom the Lord finally committed to Paul that Dispensation of the Grace of God, a ministry of pure grace, independent of any of Israel’s prophecies and covenants. Paul was commanded to preach among the Gentiles the untraceable riches of Christ, a message which was hid in God from the beginning of the world, not made known to the sons of men in other ages. Ephesians 3:9 and Ephesians 3:5 and Colossians 1:24 to 27. Paul was in chains for the Mystery. Ephesians 6:20, Colossians 4:4. In the Epistle to the Ephesians and in Second Timothy the Holy Spirit reveals the fact that God’s grace and purpose in Christ Jesus was given His members before the world began, and that this grace and purpose had to do with the one New Man, and the fact that Christ, the Head, and the members of His Body should be one flesh. II Timothy 1:9, Ephesians 3:11.

In making known God’s eternal purpose in Christ the Holy Spirit reveals to us, in Ephesians, that on the cross of Calvary the Lord Jesus made peace, and broke down the middle-wall of partition. Ephesians 2:12 to 19. It is quite significant that God withheld this written revelation until after he had declared, in the year 60 A. D., that He would send blindness upon His Nation Israel and had sent salvation to the Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy. Romans 11:7, 8, 11, 25 and 30. That judgment was pronounced definitely in Acts 28:25 to 28, about 62 A. D. A most radical change in the program of God took place with that pronouncement. Up to that time God’s Nation was favored with special privileges. They enjoyed priority rights for about thirty years after the death and resurrection of their Messiah, with a program of signs, visions, miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit. All of these suddenly ceased with the close of the “Book of Acts” period; and since that time have not been in the program of God, except in the counterfeit.

The Lord restrained the Apostle Paul from writing concerning the revelation of the Mystery until after the “Sign” age had ceased and the age of pure and unadulterated grace, without religion, for both Jew and Gentiles, was ushered in. Israel was removed from the place of special favor with God’s judgment declared in Acts 28:25 to 28. Then He brought the Gentiles to realize their place as fellow-heirs in the same Body, to share equally—if not in preferment—all spiritual blessings in the upper-heavenlies. “To you which were afar off and to them that were nigh.” Ephesians 2:17. Surely that was the end of the order, “to the Jew first.”

We refer to the “Book of Acts” period as the “Transition” period. That period began with the question of the Twelve, about 33 A. D., “wilt Thou at this time again restore the kingdom to Israel”, and closed with the statement of the Apostle Paul, about 30 years later, “the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles.” During that period the gospel of the circumcision was committed to the Twelve: the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed to Paul. Galatians 2:7 to 9. When this agreement was reached the record of Peter’s activities ceased, in about 46 A.D., and no more was heard of him until he afterwards wrote his two Epistles. Paul is mentioned more than one hundred times in the last half of the Book of Acts. Paul did not write any of his Epistles until the record of Peter’s activities ceased. During the “Transition” period Paul wrote Thessalonians, Galatians, Corinthians and Romans. In these six Epistles and in his ministry in the Book of Acts he referred to the Jewish Scriptures or used Jewish religious terms more than two hundred times: for Paul had a two-fold ministry, the ministry of confirmation and the ministry of revelation. With the close of the “Transition” period Paul’s ministry of “confirmation” ceased, and then he continued with the “revelation” ministry, with added revelation. Therefore, in Paul’s last seven Epistles, Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Titus, Philemon, Timothy, we observe a most

decided absence of references to Israel's Scriptures, covenants, ceremonies and religion. It was Israel that required signs, and therefore, while they were in the place of special favor, during the "Transition" period, signs, visions and miracles prevailed. After the "Transition" period not even the most faithful enjoyed "sign" healing. I Timothy 5:23, II Timothy 4:20. The "Transition" period was the "Sign" age.

During the "Transition" period, of about thirty years, there were gifts of the Holy Spirit, faith, wisdom, knowledge, prophecy, discerning of spirits, healing, tongues and interpretation of tongues and miracles. I Corinthians 12:6 to 12. Those gifts belonged to "that which is in part". They were to pass away when "that which is perfect" had come. I Corinthians 13:10. The ministry of "confirmation" and "that which is in part" and the "Corinthians" special gifts of the Spirit ceased together after Paul pronounced God's judgment upon the Nation Israel, in Acts 28:25 to 28, and then and there God removed His Nation from the place of special favor.

And is it not obvious to any student of the Word of God that, during the "Transition" period, members of the Body of Christ could not have endeavored to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace on the basis of one Baptism? Certainly two baptisms were proclaimed in Acts 2:38, and the water baptism there was for Israel only, and was unto repentance for the remission of sins. In Acts 8:5 to 15, Jews only were preached to in Samaria. Acts 11:19. They received the message of Phillip, the Jew, and believed and were baptized with water some days before they received the Holy Spirit. Up to that time no Gentiles had received the gospel. The first company of Gentiles to be granted repentance unto life were the members of the household of Cornelius. Acts 11:18. Even the twelve Apostles, eight years after Pentecost, were not well pleased with this, until Peter had told them how the Lord had made it lawful for him to preach to Cornelius. Acts 10:28 and Acts 11:18. After that they preached to no other Gentiles, during the "Transition" period, as far as there is, any Scriptural record.

The attitude of Peter, James and others toward the Gentile believers in Antioch, as recorded in Galatians 2:11 to 15, would show how utterly useless it would have been to instruct Jews that believed and Gentiles that believed to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit. The Jews continued with circumcision. Paul continued to be a Jew to the Jews and as one without the law to those who were without the law. I Corinthians 9:20 and Acts 16:3. While Paul was carrying on the two-fold, God-given ministry, he would not have written Ephesians 4:3. During the "Transition" period there were two baptisms, at least; Holy Spirit baptism and water baptism. Some of the water baptisms were unto repentance for the remission of sins, some of them were before the experience of Holy Spirit baptism; and some of them followed. So we see that there was not one baptism upon which the members of Christ's Body could have endeavored to keep the unity of the Spirit.

Water baptism was for Israel. John 1:31, Acts 13:24. It was carried over into the "Transition" period, during the period of Israel's special Divine favor, and then ceased with the signs; otherwise, the Apostle Paul would not have instructed believers in Christ's Body to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit on the basis of one baptism. Near the close of the "Book of Acts" period Paul plainly stated, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." I Corinthians 1:17.

With the One Baptism of Ephesians 4:3 we have certain gifts mentioned for the program of the Body of Christ for the perfecting of the saints. These gifts and this program were to supersede the gifts and program of the Lord Jesus on earth and some of the program of the Church during the "Transition" period. Some able Bible students believe that the "Body" Church of Ephesians was a different church from the Pentecostal church; and all able students know that

if it was the continuation of the same church, it was continued with a very much revised program.

Members of the Body of Christ in Ephesians, by the One Baptism of Ephesians 4:5, are identified with Christ in death, burial and resurrection; and are also seated in the upper-heavenlies. And all of us know that that could never be done by water baptism, that water baptism could not help to do it. Neither could the neglect of water baptism keep the believer from such an experience, the very moment he receives Christ and believes in the full efficacy of His redemptive work, apart from water baptism or any other religious act. Surely all of us must know that water baptism is religion and not compatible with the message of pure grace.

The believer seated in the upper-heavenlies is to know that his citizenship is in heaven and that he is to seek those things which are where Christ sits. Philippians 1:20, Colossians 3:1 to 4, Ephesians 2:5 and 6.

How different is the blessed heavenly position and hope from the hope for Israel expressed in Peter's message in Acts 3:19 to 21, in which that nation was offered the return of their Messiah from heaven on the condition of repentance.

The student of the Word of God should take up the study of the Book of Acts, not with his mind saturated with the traditions of the Church fathers, and not determined to make the Book of Acts agree with the teachings and practices of Historic Christianity, but with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures from Genesis to Malachi, as well as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, generally called "the Four Gospels".

There were several hundred silent years between Malachi and the birth of the Lord Jesus. But the student leaving Malachi, the last of the Old Testament Prophecies, begins the study of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John with the realization that God has made several covenants with Israel which are unfulfilled; the Abrahamic covenant, guaranteeing peaceful possession of all the land of Canaan, the Davidic covenant, guaranteeing a Divine King on David's throne and the New covenant guaranteeing Israel's redemption and all Israel indwelt by the Spirit of God. Genesis 17:5 to 9; II Samuel 7:10 to 17; Jeremiah 31:31 to 34; Amos 9:11 to 15; Ezekiel 36:24. to 34 and Ezekiel 37:24 to 34. The first verse of Matthew declares that Jesus Christ is the Son of David, the Son of Abraham. Therefore we are to expect, as we begin the study of Matthew, that there is to be the fulfillment of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants concerning Israel, their land, their King and their Kingdom and their national restitution. The same is true concerning Mark and Luke. In the first chapter of Mark the Lord Jesus announces, "the time is fulfilled . . . the Kingdom is at hand." Mark 1:15. That particular Kingdom was to be—and will be the fulfillment of the three covenants. In the first chapter of Luke the character and meaning of that Kingdom is described in Luke 1:67 to 77. According to that same chapter Jesus was to be born to take David's throne. Luke 1:27 to 33. Three years later the King tells of the mutual rejection of Israel and the Lord in the Parable of the Vineyard. Matthew 21:33 to 46. "The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you (Israel)." Matthew 21:43. But the Son of Man will come again in the midst of great trouble and again the Kingdom of God will be at hand for Israel. Luke 21:24 to 34. Then there will be the fulfillment of the three covenants, the Abrahamic, the Davidic and the New. When will He come? It may be before the Twelve shall have gone over the cities of Israel. It will be after the Gospel of the Kingdom has been preached as a witness among all nations. It may be before this generation shall have passed away. Matthew 10:23; Matthew 24:14 and 34.

Before the King was finally rejected and delivered to the Gentiles to be put to death He explained to Israel that that great sin would not be unpardonable. Matthew 12:31 and 32. They could be pardoned for sinning thus against the Son of Man, because they were going to do it

through ignorance and in fulfillment of Scriptures. This they did. Acts 3:14 to 18. They crucified the Son of Man, and on the third day He was raised again from the dead.

Thus ends the record of the Four Gospels. We leave the Four Gospels with the same three covenants to Israel unfulfilled. So when we approach the Book of Acts for an intelligent study we come to that Book remembering those three covenants, and know that Israel is awaiting their fulfillment. We must not come to that Book influenced by history and tradition, for if we open the Book of Acts, with the preconceived opinion that the Dispensation of Grace for Jew and Gentile alike is to be immediately ushered in, because the Nation has been set aside, and with the assurance that the Body of Christ is to immediately begin, we shall never understand the Book but shall rather reach the same state of confusion into which most students of the Word have now come.

For some reason the Lord did not immediately bring to pass the judgment predicted in Luke 21:24 and in Matthew 23:25 to 39. Divine action was deferred because of the Messiah's prayer on the cross, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34. Their temple was permitted to stand for more than thirty years thereafter. They carried on their religious ceremonies in that temple, unmolested, until the close of the "Book of Acts" period. Their city was not destroyed until nearly 70 A. D., in fulfillment of Matthew 22:7 and Luke 21:24. During all of those years the Twelve Apostles were ministers to Israel in the land. Galatians 2:7 to 9; Acts 8:1; Acts 21:18 to 28. Even the Apostle to the Gentiles was sent to them becoming a Jew to them, as one under the law. I Corinthians 9:20. The Jews were in the place of special Divine favor. with special Divine signs and miracles, during that 30 Year Transition period. Acts 3:26; Acts 13:46; Acts 18:6.

On the day of Pentecost Peter and the Eleven addressed devout Jews from every nation under heaven, not concerning the Body of Christ or the Gospel of the Grace of God, but concerning the Kingdom Prophecies of Joel and David, in Acts 2:5 to 31, and concerning the Kingdom prophecies of Moses, Samuel and all the others, in Acts 3:19 to 26. To Israel they continued to preach the message of John the Baptist, the Messiah and the Seventy, signs following "baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins." Acts 2:38. The Twelve were not preaching to individual Jews and Gentiles that they could be saved from perdition by the pure message of grace; by believing that Christ had died for their sins, according to the Scriptures, that He was buried and raised, and that they could be declared righteous without a cause. Romans 3:24 to 26. No, they were the children of the covenant and of the fathers, and to these fathers God had promised a kingdom, and Christ had been raised to take David's throne and establish this long-promised Kingdom, and now the Son of Man had prayed for their forgiveness and if they would repent He would be sent back. Acts 2:38; Acts 2:24; Acts 3:14 to 18. Always emphasize the "therefore" in Acts 3:19 and the "first" in Acts 3:26. Then carefully compare Acts 3:21 to 26 with Matthew 23:38 to 45. The only way in which they can be reconciled is in the light of the prayer of the Son of Man on the cross. Luke 23:34.

The offer of the Kingdom of God to Israel is to be renewed or continued. The Twelve were instructed to go to Israel only before Christ died. Matt. 10:5. The Twelve were instructed to go to Israel only after Christ died. Galatians 2:7 to 9. They had the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. They preached to one Jew-loving Gentile, and his household, the Word which God sent to Israel. Acts 10:34 to 38.

The Twelve preached repentance and restitution to a Nation—Paul preached justification and reconciliation. Most assuredly no intelligent student of the Word of God would bring over to the message of pure grace for Gentiles, in Ephesians, the message of Peter and the Eleven,

“repent and be baptized for the remission of sins.” And what teacher of the Word of God would say that the baptisms of Acts 2:38 are the “one baptism” of Ephesians 4:5? Which of the two baptisms of Acts 2:38 is the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5? Who has scriptural proof that either the water baptism or the Holy Spirit baptism on the day of Pentecost placed individual Israelites in the Body of Christ, made them members of that spiritual temple of believers mentioned in Ephesians 2:19 to 22?

As long as the Israelites had access to their Jerusalem temple and were permitted during the Acts transition period to continue their religious services there, they were not ready for truth concerning the temple described in Ephesians. How different is the Temple, mentioned in connection with the Mystery, from Israel’s temple of cedar, stone and precious metal.

Immediately following the description of this spiritual temple in the closing verses of the second chapter of Ephesians, we find Paul’s words, “For this cause.” What is their significance? Do we not confess with shame our ignorance of the Divine truth of Ephesians? We should do more than confess. We should make up for our neglect by beginning now a real Holy Spirit, prayerful and diligent study of that masterpiece of God, that glorious truth which transcends all other truth in the plan, purpose and program of God.

Surely we cannot hope to make all men see what is the fellowship, or dispensation, of the Mystery, in accordance with Ephesians 3:8 to 10, until we have permitted the Holy Spirit to make us see it. When we see that the Body of Ephesians is altogether different from the Kingdom of God that was at hand, in Mark 1:15, that was to be taken away from Israel, according to Matthew 21:43, and that is to be given to Israel when the Son of Man comes again, according to Luke 21:27 to 31, we will have learned a most important lesson toward the understanding of the truth of God in Ephesians and Colossians. This glorious truth was hid in God and from men from the beginning of the world until the risen Christ made it known to Paul. Ephesians 3:9 and Ephesians 3:3 and 5, Colossians 1:24 to 27. It has to do with the calling, the grace and purpose of God for us in Christ Jesus, given before the world began. II Timothy 1:9. Therefore, it is designated the eternal purpose of God in Christ. Ephesians 3:10 and 11.

We must carefully read and diligently study the first three chapters of the Epistle to the Ephesians before we are ready for the “Therefore” in Ephesians 4:1. We shall then be prepared for obedience to Ephesians 4:2 to 8. After reading these three chapters, among the many truths that we learn we know that Body truth was unknown to any of Israel’s prophets, was unknown to any of the Twelve until they learned it from Paul; and we should know the peculiar blessings of the heavenly people who make up that Body, seated with the risen Head in the upperheavenlies. The Prison Epistles of Paul so clearly set forth the believer’s heavenly position and possessions in Christ and the one heavenly hope of his calling. No member of the Body of Christ would contend for two hopes, any more than he would be foolish enough to contend for two Fathers, two Christs, or two Spirits, or two Bodies. In those messages of pure unadulterated grace, apart from Israel’s religion or covenants, the believer is taught concerning the One Faith that brings him into his position and possessions in Christ; and that faith satisfies him. Thus he learns what the Apostle Paul meant in I Corinthians 13:8 to 13, when he said, “when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” He declared that with that which is perfect, faith, hope and love would abide. The believer’s blessed hope, as a member of the Body, is like his calling, his citizenship, his position and his blessings; all heavenly.

Into all of these glorious, heavenly blessings the member of the One Body has been brought by the One Baptism. Scripturally speaking, this is not designated either “water” baptism or “Holy Spirit” baptism. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, with which water has nothing to do.

Water was a symbol given to Israel before the Dispensation of Grace began. It was a kingdom ceremony. But on the cross of Calvary the Lord Jesus Christ was baptized into death. Luke 12:49 to 52. By the eternal Spirit He there offered Himself to God. Hebrews 9:14. Likewise every member of the Body of Christ has been baptized into the death of Christ, by the same eternal Spirit. Romans 6:3. So there was the baptism of the Head of the Body into death, and there is a baptism of the members of the Body into His death; all by the Holy Spirit. All members of the Body of Christ have put on Christ, not by water baptism, but by the Spirit baptism into Christ's death. Galatians 3:26 to 28. Surely every intelligent Christian realizes that that cannot be done by water baptism.

Some Christians believe and teach that the One baptism of Ephesians 4:5 is water. Others say it means Holy Spirit and water. But that could not be, for one baptism is not two baptisms. Then others say that it is water only. But among themselves they differ as to the mode, formula and significance of the water, and hence it is impossible for them—although they are all members of the One Body—to keep the unity of the spirit, because they have more than one baptism.

LET THE CHILDREN FIRST BE FILLED

For an understanding of the Lord's message of salvation to Jews and Gentiles there is perhaps no more interesting, significant and instructive portion of the Scriptures than the story of the Lord Jesus and the Greek woman, recorded in Mark 7:24 to 30 and Matthew 15:21 to 28. Every student of the Word of God should carefully and prayerfully read those two accounts and diligently study them for the meaning which the Holy Spirit has in them for our instruction and edification.

We have in Mark 7:26 this statement, "the woman was a Greek". To that woman, the Lord Jesus said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel". Matthew 15:24. The Greek woman did not belong to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Therefore, to her the Lord Jesus was not sent. But some years later the Lord Jesus had gone back to heaven, and He called and appointed an apostle to go to the Gentiles. Acts 22:21. That apostle wrote, "I am debtor to the Greeks". Romans 1:14.

When the Lord Jesus was on earth He was Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved by God in the midst of Israel. He was a minister of the circumcision to confirm God's promises to Israel. He was born to take the throne of David. Acts 2:22; Romans 15:8; Luke 1:29 to 32. He rode into Jerusalem as King of Israel, but Israel would not receive Him as King. Certain Greeks, desired to see the King but He would not gratify their desire. To those Greeks He sent word that He must first be the corn of wheat to die and be raised. John 12:20 to 27.

To the Greek woman, the Lord Jesus said, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs". Here we see that the Lord Jesus referred to His own people, Israel, as "the children" and to the Greeks as "the dogs." At first thought it would seem to us that the Lord was rather unkind and unmerciful to the woman, but we can better understand His plain speech when we read the history of the Gentiles in the first chapter of Romans. According to that same Divine Record, the Gentiles were "no people", "a foolish nation", "the wild olive tree". Romans 10:19 and Romans 11:17. But in this same Divine Record there is recorded the glorious good news for the Gentiles. They obtained mercy because of the unbelief of the children. Romans 11:30. Therefore, we find in Romans 10:12 that the Gentiles' position, in the year 60 A. D., was entirely

different from the Gentiles' position when Jesus of Nazareth was on earth. When He was here they were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise; dead in trespasses and sins; without Christ, without God; and having no hope in the world. Ephesians 2:1 to 12. The Lord Jesus called Israel "children"; the Greeks "dogs". What a great difference there is between children and dogs. But about 20 years later, God declared, "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek". Romans 10:12. "Both Jew and Greek baptized by the same Spirit into the same body". I Corinthians 12:13. As we read these last two statements we should be sufficiently interested in the change and development of God's program and purpose to see what took place between the year of Christ's message to the Greek woman and the year Paul wrote, "there is no difference between the Jew and Greek". In this study let us emphasize these words of the Lord Jesus to the Greek woman

LET THE CHILDREN FIRST BE FILLED

What did the Lord mean by these words to the Greek, "let the children FIRST be filled"? Mark 7:27. I think we have a very definite answer to this question in Paul's message to a company of Jews, about the year 45 A. D., which was some 15 years after the Lord Jesus had met the Greek woman. After the Apostle Paul had faithfully presented Messiah's claims to Israel, the Jews opposed him and rejected the Lord Jesus once more. Whereupon the Apostle Paul uttered these words, recorded in Acts 13:46, which we quote: "It was necessary that the Word of God should FIRST have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles". Then followed the salvation of a multitude of Greeks. Acts 14:1.

Now let us carefully note the Lord's statement, by the mouth of Paul, in Acts 13:46. He said to the children, "It was necessary that the Word should first be spoken to you". We can see that that was in accordance with Mark 7:27. But it is rather difficult to understand such a statement if we are to believe the teaching of most of our Premillennial, Fundamentalist teachers. These brethren have tried to lead us to believe—and have succeeded with many of their students in the teaching—that Israel, or the children, were set aside when Christ in the closing verses of the 23rd chapter of Matthew said "your house is left unto you desolate". In those verses He called them "serpents and a generation of vipers". I presume we are all agreed that if we had to be called either "dogs" or "serpents", we would prefer to be called "dogs". And if we were to judge only by the bitter denunciation of the Lord Jesus, recorded in Matthew 23:31 to 39, we would most assuredly say that Israel's King and Messiah was done with that Nation. We would say that the children's opportunity to be filled had been forfeited. After reading Matthew 21:33 to 43 and Matthew 23:31 to 39 we would decide that the Kingdom had been taken from them and God had given them up.

But as we turn to Paul's message, recorded in Acts 13:46, we must decide that God had changed His mind. He had postponed His judgment, pronounced by the Lord Jesus, in the 23rd of Matthew. For in that "Acts" message the Apostle Paul plainly declared that the children must first be filled. And there we learn that Paul turned to the Gentiles, because Israel had again refused to be filled. Is it not rather difficult to reconcile the judgment of Christ, in the 23rd chapter of Matthew, with Paul's statement in Acts 13:46, unless we diligently search the Scriptures to see what caused the change in God's attitude toward Israel?

If we are willing to approach the Scriptures with open minds, without the prejudice or interference of our preconceived opinions and the interpretations of other men, we can

understand and reconcile the two messages in the light of Christ's prayer on the cross and His message by the mouth of Peter and the Eleven, recorded in Acts 3:14 to 26.

We have observed that in the 23rd chapter of Matthew, the Lord Jesus, rejected by His own Nation, called them "serpents" and pronounced the judgment of desolation upon them. But in the message of Peter, recorded in the closing verses of the 3rd chapter of Acts, the same serpents and vipers were addressed very affectionately and tenderly, in great mercy, "ye are the children of the prophets and of the covenant". Then the Lord added, "Unto you FIRST". Acts 3:25 and 26. Now it is easy to understand "Unto you first", in the light of Mark 7:27: "the children must first be filled". But it is not at all easy to understand, "Unto you first" in the light of the 23rd chapter of Matthew. In Mark 7:27, Israel were children. In Acts 3:25 they were children. In Matthew 23:33 they were a generation of vipers, serpents. Why should serpents have preference over dogs? The answer is the prayer of Christ on the cross, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do". Then followed that message of mercy in Acts 3:12 to 26. We quote the 17th verse and the 25th and 26th verses:

"And now, brethren I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers."

"Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers. saying unto Abraham, and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed."

"Unto you FIRST God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning every one of you from his iniquities."

Can we not say, therefore, that we could never understand the ministry of the Twelve Apostles and Paul to Israel, during the Book of Acts, if we accept the teachings of those who would have us believe that Israel was set aside when Christ was delivered to Pilate to be crucified? Surely the kingdom was not taken away from Israel until some years after Pentecost.

Let us read and compare Matthew 16:20 with. Acts 2:36, Acts 17:3 and Acts 18:5. In these Scriptures, quoted from Acts, we learn that the Twelve Apostles and Paul were doing just what the Lord forbade them to do in Matthew 16:20. They were testifying to Israel that Jesus was the Christ. What is the answer? The answer is, because of the prayer of Christ on the cross, God postponed judgment and made a new offer to His Nation Israel which was not the offer of the Body of Christ, which later began historically.

NATHANAEL AND BAR-JESUS

At the time the Lord Jesus began His public ministry He met an Israelite whom He very much admired. His name was "Nathaniel". About fifteen years later the Apostle Paul met an Israelite; but for him he had no admiration. His name was "Bar-jesus". Nathaniel means, "the gift of God". Bar-jesus means "the son of Jehovah-Saviour". So both of these Israelites had splendid and significant names.

I am sure if we study carefully the Bible stories of these two men, we shall learn that God has in them a lesson for us. The Lord's dealings with Nathanael are recorded in John 1:47 to 50, which we quote:

"Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and saith of him Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

Nathanael saith unto Him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

Nathanael answered and saith unto Him, Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel.”

Paul’s dealings with Bar-jesus are recorded in Acts 13:6 to 12, which we quote:

“And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus:

Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the Word of God.

But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

Then Saul, (who also is called Paul) filled with the Holy Spirit, set his eyes on him

And said, O full of all subtlety (guile) and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.”

Nathanael came from under the fig tree. The fig tree speaks of the Nation Israel. Nathaniel was an Israelite in whom there was no guile. We have learned that his name means “the gift of God.”

Inasmuch as we are to study these two Israelites in the light of Romans 11:25 and 26, let us read one of the verses that follow: “The gifts of God are without repentance”. Romans 11:29. We quote also the other two verses referred to.

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

And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”

Here we note that the Nation Israel is to be saved. That Nation is to be saved when the Deliverer, the Son of Man, comes. Luke 21:27 to 31. That Nation is to be saved, because the gifts of God are without repentance. God has promised the national deliverance and restoration of His chosen people, in several covenants. He promised them the land of Canaan. Genesis 17:5 to 15; Amos 9:11 to 15. He promised them a Kingdom and a King to reign over them in that land. II Samuel 7:11 to 15; Isaiah 9:6 and 7; Ezekiel 36:24 to 34 and Ezekiel 37:24 to 34. By the prophet Jeremiah, He promised to make a new covenant with them and to give them new hearts. Jeremiah 31:31 to 35. When the Lord fulfills these covenants and all Israel shall be saved, it will be because God has promised to give them all these blessings; and His gifts are without repentance. Redeemed Israel is to be “Nathaniel”, “The gift of God”. Then all Israel will be as Nathaniel was. Israel’s Messiah said; “behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile”. When the Lord fulfills the second covenant He will remove all the guile from Israel.

But where is Israel in the meantime? The answer is in the story of Bar-jesus. Barjesus had a good name, “the child of Jehovah Saviour”. Israel was the child of Jehovah-Saviour, created by Jehovah for His glory. They were to be the Lord’s messengers and witnesses to the nations and turn them to Him. But instead, they did what Bar-jesus endeavored to do with Sergius Paulus: he endeavored to turn him away from the Lord. What happened to Bar-jesus? The very same thing that has happened to the Nation Israel. Paul said to Bar-jesus, “thou child of

the devil, full of all subtlety". This word "subtlety" is the same Greek word as the word translated "guile". Thus we see the contrast between Nathaniel and Bar-jesus. In Bar-jesus all guile. In Nathaniel no guile. Bar-jesus represents Israel until the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings. They shall then say to that Sun of Righteousness, "Thou are the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel". Then in Israel will be no guile. Ezekiel 36:25.

In Matthew 8:1 to 12, we have the words of Jesus, in which He predicted that the children of the Kingdom would be cast into darkness; and the Gentiles would come in. That is what took place when Paul preached to Bar-jesus; Paulus came in. To Bar-jesus, Paul said, "thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season". Israel today is blind, in darkness; but it is only for a season. Jesus Christ is the Sun of Righteousness. When He comes Israel's blindness shall be removed. In the meantime, we are living in the day of Gentile favor while Israel is set aside. In Acts 13:46 the story is told. Paul said to Israel, "seeing ye have put it from you we turn to the Gentiles". The Gentiles obtained mercy because of Israel's unbelief. Romans 11:30. Israel is, in this age, "Bar-jesus" in the coming age Israel will be "Nathanael".

Israel was definitely and finally set aside, about 63 A.D. We quote God's judgment. Acts 28:25 to 28:

"And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word Well spake the Holy Spirit by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers

Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive;

For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

Be it known therefore, unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it".

Remember the words, "the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles." From that time it has been sent to the Gentiles in a manner and message never before sent the message of pure and unadulterated grace, by which believing sinners become members of the Body of Christ, which is God's purpose for His Son while Israel waits for their national redemption. God will yet have a new Israel. Isaiah 62:1 to 4 But not during this age. During this age God is making One New Man of sinners saved by grace. Ephesians 2:11 to 18.

SERPENTS AND DOGS

Whom did the Lord Jesus call "dogs"? Whom did the Lord Jesus call "serpents"? Whom did He call "a generation of vipers"? If you had to be called a "dog" or a "serpent" by the Lord, which would be your choice? Most people rather like dogs, although they would resent being called "dogs". But most people hate "serpents" and would feel injured and very much insulted if they should be called "serpents".

In Mark 7:26 to 28 we read that the Lord Jesus called Greeks, "dogs". In Matthew 23:32 to 39 we read that two years later, the Lord Jesus called His own people, the Jews, "serpents". At the time He called the Greeks, "dogs", He called the Jews, "children". He said to the Greek, "let the children first be filled". Mark 7:27. The "children" of Mark 7:27 are the "serpents" of Matthew 23:33. They again became the "children" of Acts 3:25. How strange; "children" changed to "serpents" and then back to "children". Herein is a most interesting study.

If a preacher should use for his text Romans 1:16, “for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek”, and should paraphrase the last phrase to read “to the serpent first and also to the “dog”, he would be accused of being sensational. But he most assuredly would be using the language of the Lord Jesus, whose gospel he would be preaching. If the preacher should thus call the Jews, “serpents”, and the Greeks, “dogs”, as the Lord Jesus did, and say, “to the serpents first”, and also “to the dogs”, he would raise the question in his own mind and in the minds of his hearers; “why should “serpents” have preference over “dogs”?”

After the Lord Jesus Christ called Israel “serpents” and a “generation of vipers”, because they hated Him without a cause and would not receive Him as King, they added to all of their offenses their greatest crime: they desired a murderer and they killed the Prince of Life: Acts 3:14 to 18. If they were “serpents” before the murder of their Messiah, what were they after that terrible crime? Were they worse than serpents? No indeed, they were “children” again. Acts 3:25. How strange! What grace! What mercy! How we have misinterpreted the Word of God!

Surely the study of these verses will convince us that Israel was not set aside, as the nation of God, when the Lord Jesus said unto them, “your house is left unto you desolate”. This study will instruct us as to why Peter said to the whole house of Israel, “unto you first”; why Paul said unto the Jews, “it was necessary that the Word be spoken unto you first”; why “unto the Jew first and also to the Greek”.

Acts 3:26—Acts 13:46—Romans 1:16. This comparative study will also tell us why Paul, until Israel was finally set aside, said, “unto the Jews I became a Jew”. I Corinthians 9:20. By it we should also learn why the Twelve Apostles, for years after the death of Israel’s Messiah, remained in Jerusalem; and why the Jerusalem temple remained standing for the worship of the Jews. Acts 8:1—Acts 21:18 to 28—Acts 22:17 to 21. And why the Son of man in heaven was standing in Acts 7:51 to 58.

Now for the several verses from which we have quoted and another very important verse, Luke 23:34.

MARK 7:26 TO 28 (year 32 A.D.)

The woman was a GREEK, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought Him that He would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

But Jesus said unto her, LET THE CHILDREN FIRST BE FILLED; for it is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it unto the DOGS.

And she answered and said unto Him, Yea, Lord; yet the dogs under the table eat of the children’s crumbs”.

MATTHEW 23:24—MATTHEW 23:33—MATTHEW 23:38 (33 A.D.)

“Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.”

“Ye SERPENTS, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?”

“Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”

LUKE 23:34

“Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

ACTS 2:36

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ”.

Acts 3:17—Acts 3:25—Acts 3:26 (33 A.D.)

“And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers”.

“Ye are the CHILDREN of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with our fathers saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed”.

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

ACTS 13:46 (year 46 A.D.)

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

Now after we have carefully read these verses, let us study them together with several other Scriptures which we quote

ROMANS 10:12 (year 60 A.D.)

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

ROMANS 11:6 TO 8—ROMANS 11:11—ROMANS 11:17—ROMANS 11:30

“What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day”.

“I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid; but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy”.

“And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree”.

“For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief”.

Acts 28:25 TO 28 (year 62 A.D.)

“And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Spirit by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,

Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive;

For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it”.

By carefully studying these Scriptures, which we have quoted, we learn several facts. First: Let us compare Mark 7:27, the words spoken by Jesus to the Greek woman, about 32 A.D. with Romans 10:12, the statement of the Apostle Paul, about 60 A.D. According to Paul’s statement, “there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek.” According to the statement of Jesus, there was quite a difference. The Jews were called “children” and the Greeks were called “dogs”.

Again we learn, in the year 32 A.D. the Lord called the Jews “children”, and in the year 33 A.D. He called them “serpents”. Then after His death and resurrection He instructed the Apostle Peter to again address them as “children”. Surely the question must arise in the mind of any thinking student of the Word of God, why the Jews were called “serpents”; and then, after they had added to their other sins, “killing the Prince of Life”, why they should be called “children”. The explanation is found in the words of Peter in Acts 3:17, “God wot that ye did it

through ignorance". Surely we have overlooked the importance and significance of the prayer of Christ on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do". That prayer was answered. This is why those who killed the "Prince of Life" are again called "children". As long as they are addressed as "children" they are first. Therefore, in Acts 3:26, Peter said "Unto you first". That was late in 33 A.D. About 46 A.D. Paul said to the Jews, "Unto you first". Acts 13:46.

The third fact that we learn from the Scriptures quoted is, that God did not leave the house of Israel desolate until after He pronounced the judgment of blindness upon them. This judgment is recorded in Romans 11:25 and 26. But the blindness was not sent until the year 62 A. D. according to Acts 28:25 to 28. Then Israel was set aside.

Thus we can see the great blunder of those who teach that the words of Jesus, "your house is left unto you desolate" meant that the judgment fell when Christ died, and that Israel was then and there set aside as a nation. If that were true, they would have remained "serpents" and they would not have been addressed as "children" in Acts 3:25. Neither would they have continued to enjoy priority rights, during the Book of Acts period, over the Gentiles; for "dogs" would have had equal rights with "serpents".

Although the Lord Jesus pronounced the judgment in Matthew 23:33 to 39, it was 27 years later that the Lord stated in Romans 11:17 that some of the branches were broken off. As long as God delayed the judgment pronounced by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 22:7, 23:38 and 21:43, as long as He permitted the Nation to remain in Jerusalem and have daily access to their temple there, as long as He witnessed to them by the Twelve Apostles in the land and permitted Paul to become a Jew to them as He witnessed out of the land, just so long was God dealing with the Nation Israel. Their house was not left unto them desolate when the Lord Jesus died; but some years later.

The "children of the kingdom" were to be cast into outer darkness, according to Matthew 8:12. The children of the kingdom were not cast into darkness in 33 A.D., but about 63 A.D. Romans 11:8, Acts 28:25 to 27. As long as the Jews were called "children of the kingdom", God was dealing with them as a nation. To that nation Christ had announced, "the kingdom is at hand", Mark 1:15; Matthew 4:17. He had also said, "the kingdom shall be taken away from you." Matthew 21:43. As long as God was dealing with Israel as a nation He was offering them the same kingdom that Christ announced "at hand" in Matthew, Mark and Luke. That kingdom was not the Body of Christ. The kingdom was not finally taken away from the nation until the nation was set aside. When we take the kingdom away from Israel on the day of Pentecost and begin the Body of Christ then, we do greatly err, not knowing the Scripture.

ACTS . . . THE BOOK BETWEEN

"THIS IS THAT"

The Book of Acts covers a period of about thirty years; from the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, about 33 A.D., until after Paul's arrival in Rome as the prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ on earth, was a minister of the circumcision; sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Romans 15:8, Matthew 15:24. Paul was the prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ for Gentiles. Ephesians 3:1. He was the Apostle to the Gentiles, sent to them by Christ, with the

Gospel of the glory of the blessed God? Galatians 1:11 to 13, I Timothy 1:11, I Timothy 2:7, II Timothy 1:11, Romans 11:13.

The Book of Acts is the “Book Between” the earthly ministry of the Son of God, which closed about 33 A. D., and those Epistles of the Apostle Paul, written after he had reached Rome; Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Timothy, Philemon, Titus and II Timothy. Inasmuch as “The Mystery “ is mentioned twelve times in those Epistles, we could refer to them as “The Mystery Epistles”, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians were written about 64 A.D. or about thirty-one years after the Lord Jesus had gone back to heaven.

Let us then study the Book of Acts as the “Book Between” Matthew, Mark and Luke, on the one side, and Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, on the other side. It is interesting to note that the Book of Matthew has twenty-eight chapters; and that the Book of Acts has twenty-eight chapters. That the Book of Matthew is decidedly Jewish, no student of the Word of God will deny; but many students of the Word of God will be surprised to know that the following words are found only 86 times in the Book of Matthew and just 250 times in the Book of Acts: Jews, Jerusalem, Sabbath, Moses, Law, Temple, Synagogue, Israel. How Jewish, then, is the Book of Acts?

In Matthew, Mark and Luke, the Son of God was on earth. He was born King of the Jews; He entered Jerusalem on the ass, as the King of Israel; He was crucified as King of the Jews. In Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, the Son of God is seated in the upper-heavenlies, as Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body. Ephesians 1:19 to 22. Now the question, if the Lord Jesus is the King of Israel in the first three Books and is the Head of the Body in the last three Books, just which of the two is He in the “Book Between”? Is He both?

That the Lord Jesus Christ, when an earth, offered to Israel a Kingdom which was different from the Body of Christ described in Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, no intelligent student of the Word of God will deny. The character of that Kingdom offered to Israel is described in the first chapter of Luke. Christ was born to take David’s throne. Luke 1:28 to 33. Christ was coming to deliver the Nation Israel. Luke 1:67 to 77. In His offer to establish His Kingdom in the midst of Israel, Christ was fulfilling the Word which God had spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. Luke 1:70. Luke was also the human author of the “Book Between”. Is it not significant that in the Book of Acts, Christ was raised from the dead to take David’s throne? Acts 2:25 to 31. Was there not also in the Book of Acts God’s offer to Israel, upon the condition of repentance, to establish the same Kingdom, promised by all of the holy prophets since the world began? Acts 3:21. Note the language of Luke 1:70 and Acts 3:21, and you must conclude that the same Israelitish Kingdom is referred to in both Scriptures.

Let us note three verses in the first three Books referred to; that is, one verse from Mark, one from Matthew and one from Luke; all concerning the Kingdom of God, or Kingdom of Heaven.

MARK 1:15

Jesus said; “THE TIME IS FULFILLED”; “THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND”.

MATTHEW 21:43

Jesus said; “THE KINGDOM OF GOD SHALL BE TAKEN FROM YOU”.

LUKE 21:31

Jesus said; “THE KINGDOM OF GOD WILL BE AT HAND”. (When the Son of man shall return in the clouds) Luke 21:27.

The Kingdom was at hand; in fulfillment of the Scriptures. The Kingdom was taken away; in fulfillment of the Scriptures. Matthew 21:42. The Kingdom of God will be at hand; in fulfillment of the Scriptures. The Lord Jesus Christ went to the cross, died and was raised the third day; in fulfillment of the Scriptures. Luke 24:25 and Luke 24:46.

When Peter and the Eleven preached concerning the two great events, on the day of Pentecost, the resurrection of Christ and the advent of the Holy Spirit, they said that both events were in fulfillment of the Scriptures; in fulfillment of prophecies that God had made concerning Israel's Kingdom, by Joel and David. Neither of these prophets had any word about the "The Mystery" of Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians. But both of them had much to say about the Kingdom of Acts which was the Kingdom of Matthew, Mark and Luke. So did Amos: Acts 15:13 to 18—Amos 9:11 to 15.

Concerning the advent of the Holy Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, Peter and the Eleven said, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." Acts 2:16. We can know the character of Joel's message, if we will read just one verse: Joel 2:18. Joel referred to the same Kingdom of God that Christ announced at hand; the same kingdom that Christ said would be taken away from Israel and that would be given back to Israel when the Son of man shall return. Joel's prophecy awaits complete fulfillment. Joel had not one word to say about the Body of Christ. Neither did any one of the holy prophets, who had spoken since the world began, refer to the Body of Christ. Concerning the "Body" message of Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, it could not be said, "this is that" which was spoken by Joel, Isaiah, Daniel, David, Ezekiel, Zechariah, Malachi, Jeremiah, Amos, Micah, or any other Old Testament prophet. We are so instructed in Ephesians 3:5 to 9 and Colossians 1:24 to 27. But all of them spoke of the Kingdom of Matthew, Mark and Luke and of the same Kingdom referred to in Acts 3:19 to 21. Read carefully Acts 3:24 concerning "these days". "These days" of Acts 3:19 to 25 differ from "these days" of Ephesians 2:11 to 17.

When the Lord Jesus proclaimed His Kingdom in Mark 1:15, "the Kingdom of God is at hand," He said, "the time is fulfilled." He could have well said; "This is That" which was spoken by the prophet Joel." Joel 2:15 to 18. He could have said, "this is that" which was spoken by Isaiah; in Isaiah 62:1 to 4, or in Isaiah 35:3 to 6. He could have said; "this is that" which was spoken by Zechariah, Daniel, David, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Micah, Amos, and so on. When the Son of man shall return in power and great glory to restore again the Kingdom to Israel, He can and will say: "this is that" which was spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began; for the same Kingdom that Christ proclaimed at hand shall then be at hand. This includes the prophets to whom Peter referred in the Book of Acts; Joel, David, Amos, (Acts 15:14 to 18), Moses, Samuel and all the prophets (Acts 3:22 and 3:24 and Acts 10:43).

It is of interest to note that there are about thirty-five quotations from Israel's Scriptures in the Book of Matthew, and about twenty-five quotations from Israel's Scriptures in the Book of Acts. The Old Testament prophecies are quoted in both Matthew and Acts. Surely they were Kingdom messages and not messages referring to the Body of Christ, which was "The Mystery" not made known to the sons of men in other ages. Ephesians 3:5. Colossians 1:25 and 26. Ephesians 3:9.

According to Matthew 4:17, the Lord said; "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." In Mark 1:15, we read; "the Kingdom of God is at hand." The Kingdom of Heaven of Matthew at hand and the Kingdom of God of Mark and Luke at hand were identical. The Kingdom of Heaven, or the Kingdom of God, foretold by Israel's prophets, was at hand, because the King was at hand. Every where the Kingdom message was for the Nation Israel, and the message was accompanied

by Kingdom signs. When John the Baptist sent word to know if Jesus was the One to come, the Lord sent word to John, that the healing miracles of Isaiah 35:4 and 5 were being performed by Him; therefore, He was Israel's God, Messiah and King, promised in Isaiah 35:1 to 4. When the Lord Jesus sent forth His twelve apostles to preach saying, "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand", He said; "Heal the sick, Cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, etc." Matthew 10:7 and 8. They went preaching the Gospel and healing everywhere. Luke 9:6. What Gospel were they preaching? The Gospel of the Kingdom. Matthew 4:23—Matthew 9:35—Matthew 24:14 and Mark 1:14. Included in the Lord's Kingdom program was not only the Kingdom signs, but the Kingdom parables, the Kingdom prayer, given to the Kingdom Nation. The instructions of the Lord to His apostles were: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles; go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matthew 10:5 and 6, Matthew 15:24. When the Lord shall come as the Son of man and establish His Kingdom on earth, the Twelve are to sit on twelve thrones and judge the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Matthew 19:28. For some reason, God instructed the Twelve to limit their ministry to the circumcision, after the conversion of Cornelius. Galatians 2:7 to 9.

All Premillennialists are agreed that the Kingdom of God was offered to Israel; that the Kingdom of God was taken away from Israel; and that the Kingdom of God shall yet be given to Israel. They are agreed that while the Kingdom is in abeyance the Body of Christ is being completed. They are agreed that, "All Israel shall be saved". Romans 11:25 and 26. They are agreed that the redeemed Nation shall yet have peaceful possession of their land under the reign of the true King David, in fulfillment of the Abrahamic, Davidic and the New Covenants; because the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. Romans 11:25 to 31. But the Premillennialists are by no means agreed as to just when the Kingdom of God was taken away from the Nation Israel. But they are agreed that the Body of Christ began historically after the death of Christ. Some say that the Kingdom of God was taken away from Israel, when the Lord Jesus pronounced that awful judgment upon that Nation, as recorded in Matthew 23:31 to 39: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers", "Your house is left unto you desolate". Others say that the Kingdom offer was not withdrawn until after Stephen saw the Son of man standing at the right hand of God and Peter was sent to Cornelius: Acts 7:54 to 56, Acts 10:34 to 46. Others say that the Kingdom of God was not taken from Israel until that Nation was set aside by the Lord after the words of rejection and judgment pronounced by the Apostle Paul, in Acts 28:25 to 28.

It is because of this division of opinion that we ask the question; is the Lord Jesus Christ, in the Book of Acts, in the "Book Between", the King of Israel or is He, in that Book, the Head of the Church, which is His Body? Of course, this is equivalent to asking, "Is the Church of God to which the three thousand were added on the day of Pentecost the same Church mentioned in Ephesians, the Body of Christ?" Or again this question; "Did the Church, which is His Body, begin historically on the day of Pentecost?" We know that we have no Scripture stating specifically that the Body of Christ did begin on the day of Pentecost; neither is there any Scripture stating that that Body did not begin on the day of Pentecost. We must study the scriptures diligently, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to answer this question, rather than follow some man's interpretation or accept the creeds of Historic Christianity. We seem to be agreed that Israel's seventh-day Sabbath is no longer binding on members of the Body of Christ. We learn that truth by the study of several Scriptures, in not one of which is the definite statement made that the member of the Body of Christ should regard the first day of the week, as a sanctified day, instead of the seventh day, which was given to Israel. Surely Sabbath-keeping, anointing with oil, signs and ceremonies continued to be practiced by Israelitish believers during the Acts period; and then for some reason they ceased to be God's order for the members of the

Body of Christ. We should be able to give an intelligent Scriptural explanation for their cessation, in accordance with II Timothy 2:15. We should be able to give an intelligent Scriptural explanation as to why the Body of Christ did or did not begin on the day of Pentecost. We should not believe it, simply because some leading Bible teacher has so declared. If it is not stated in any chapter of the Book of Acts that the risen Lord is the King of Israel and if it is not stated in that Book, that He is the Head of that Church which is His Body, how can we answer the question?

In Mark 16:14 to 18 we find recorded the instructions given to Peter and the other apostles by the risen Lord. They were to go preach the Gospel. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Certain signs were to follow them that believe. The Eleven went out preaching the Gospel that was given to them; and "signs following." Mark 16:20. Kingdom signs continued. Were they preaching the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God, to which Paul referred in I Timothy 1:11? In I Timothy 5:23, the Apostle Paul told that faithful saint to take a physical remedy for his physical disease. Therefore, Kingdom signs were not following the Gospel message which Timothy was preaching. The signs of Mark 16:17 and 18 followed Paul up to Acts 28:28. The signs of Mark 16:17 and 18 are not following the preaching of the Gospel by anyone today. Neither do Grace preachers preach, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." A radical change has taken place since the days of Mark 16:14 to 18. Is the change only in the signs, or in the Message?

Should the servant of the Lord today preach what Peter and the Eleven preached to Israel on the day of Pentecost, or what Peter preached eight years later to Cornelius? What messenger of the Grace of God is today preaching, with the approval of God, "repent and be baptized for the remission of sins?" What such messenger is preaching to individual Gentiles today what Peter preached to the Nation Israel, in Acts 3:19 to 26? Peter preached to Israel and to Cornelius concerning Jesus of Nazareth in the land of Israel. Acts 2:22. Acts 10:36 to 40 To be sure, in all of these messages there was the element of grace; but Israel's Kingdom was in view and saved Israelites continued with an Israelitish religious program throughout the "Acts" period. The "Book Between" is a book of signs, miracles and supernatural visitations. Should we, or should we not, earnestly endeavor to recover for the church today the signs, ceremonies and visions of the "Book Between"?

Does the "Sign" program of the Book of Acts correspond with the "Sign" program of Matthew, Mark and Luke, or with the "Signless" message of Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians?

After God has accomplished His purpose in this age. "to make of the twain One New Man," (Ephesians 2:15), the Son of man will return in the clouds in power and great glory, and then, for Israel, the Kingdom of God will be at hand. Luke 21:27 to 31. Then the Son of man will sit as a King on the throne of His glory. Matthew 25:31 to 35. He will be Wonderful, Mighty God, Prince of Peace, on David's throne. Isaiah 9:6 and 7. In the meantime the Lord Jesus is seated in the upper-heavenlies far above principality and power; and the members of the Church which is His Body are seated with Him in the upper-heavenlies; not blessed with millennium Kingdom blessings, but with all spiritual blessings in the upper-heavenlies. Ephesians 2:5 and 6. Ephesians 1:3.

In Acts 7:54 to 58, the Lord Jesus is seen as the "standing" Son of man. He is not the Son of man to the Church which is His Body, but in His Kingdom dealings with Israel, that Nation Stephen was addressing in the seventh chapter of Acts. Then the question; "In Acts 7:54 to 58,

was the Lord Jesus seated in the upper-heavens as Head of the Church which is His Body, as He was in Ephesians 1:19 to 22, and as He is now?

In Matthew, Mark and Luke there was one baptism, baptism for Israel unto repentance for the remission of sins; water baptism that Christ might be made manifest unto Israel. John 1:31. In Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians there was one baptism; that baptism by which the believer is identified with Christ in His death, burial, resurrection and heavenly seat. That is not water. In the "Book Between" there were two baptisms, water and Holy Spirit.

Why is it that true messengers of the Grace of God prefer to turn to the messages of Paul for the Gospel rather than go to Matthew, Mark and Luke? Because in those three Books we do not find the clear, unmixed Gospel of Grace for Gentiles, but rather Grace mixed with the Gospel of the Kingdom. We prefer to leave the "strive to enter in", or "he that endureth to the end shall be saved", or "bring forth fruit meet for repentance", or "they take the kingdom by violence", or "if thy right hand offend you cut it off" (all of which were the Lord's messages to Israel) and go on to the unmixed messages of Grace in Romans 3:24 to 28, or in Ephesians 2:8 and 9, or in Titus 3:5 and 6: "Being justified (declared righteous) without a cause by God's Grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"; "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast"; "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us".

As the Gospel of the Kingdom was a message different from Paul's unmixed Gospel of Grace, so did the messages of Peter and his associates, in the Book of Acts, differ from these pure Grace messages. The message of Peter on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2:38, differed very much from Paul's Grace of Christ Message to the Gentiles. What Gospel preacher today would preach to Gentiles the Message of Repentance and Restitution that Peter preached to Israel, according to Acts 3:19 to 21? There was much grace in that message. but it was not the Message of Reconciliation which the risen Lord later committed to Paul. Peter preached to Cornelius, "In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him". Acts 10:35 and 36. Compare this with Titus 3:5 and 6; Ephesians 2:8 and 9. What Gospel preacher of today would follow the order of Philip's ministry in the City of Samaria, recorded in Acts 8:5 to 15? Not one. It is agreed by all dispensational students of the Word of God, who preach the Gospel of Grace, that the order of Acts 19:3 to 12, in the year 54 A.D., is not God's order for today among the members of the Body of Christ.

Paul declared that he persecuted the Church of God. Galatians 1:13. There is no Scriptural proof that that Church of God began on the day of Pentecost. It was the Pentecost Church of God that he persecuted, and it either began on that day or before that day. There were no Gentiles in the Church of God which Paul persecuted, except the proselytes referred to in Acts 2:10. The first company of Gentiles to be brought in was the household of Cornelius. Acts 11:18. Up to that year, about 41 A.D., it was unlawful for the Jewish apostles to go to a Gentile. Acts 10:28.

Concerning this company of Gentiles, who were granted repentance unto life, Peter afterward said, "God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel and believe." Acts 15:17. The Lord's permission for Peter to preach to the Gentiles came with the vision of the sheet let down three times. Acts 10:8 to 18. In the light of the so-called Great Commission given to the Eleven, in which they were to disciple all nations, it is difficult to understand several facts; first, why was the housetop vision necessary to authorize Peter to preach to one family of religious, Godfearing Gentiles; second, why was it that it was by Peter's mouth, rather than by the mouths of all of the Eleven commissioned in Matthew 28:19

and 20, that the Gentiles were to hear the word of the gospel; third, why was it that after Peter's declaration in Acts 15:7 he was instructed to confine his ministry to the circumcision. then his name dropped from the Book of Acts and the responsibility of evangelizing the Gentiles was given exclusively to Paul and his associates? Galatians 2:7 to 9. This also leads us to ask why Paul declared that the Gentiles received mercy because of Israel's unbelief (Romans 11:30 and Romans 11:11 and Acts 13:46) instead of because of the terms of the so-called Great Commission?

When Peter declared that God had made choice that by his mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe, James added these words: "Simeon hath declared how for the first time God did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His Name." Acts 15:13. And the next verse: "To this agree the words of the prophets." Or, "this is that which was spoken by Amos." Acts 15:14 to 17. Amos 9:11 to 15. And even in his Epistle to the Romans Paul declared Gentile salvation, during the Acts period, was in fulfillment of Isaiah's Kingdom prophecy. Read carefully Romans 15:10 to 14.

Now it is of interest to study the declaration of Simeon and James, concerning the Gentile salvation, the outgathering from the nations, in fulfillment of Amos' prophecy, and the Gentile salvation, in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, in the light of Ephesians 3:5 and 6 and Ephesians 3:9. In Ephesians 3:9, the Apostle Paul declared that the risen Lord instructed him to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ among the Gentiles. The word "unsearchable" means "untraceable", or "not to be tracked". That message to which Paul was referring in Ephesians 3:9 was somewhat different from the message to which he referred in Romans 15:10 to 14, because that "Romans" message was traceable; it could be tracked through Isaiah. In Ephesians 3:6 the Apostle Paul mentioned Gentile salvation in a joint-Body; the Gentile jointheirs. He declared, in Ephesians 3:5, that this particular Gentile salvation and Position in the Body of Christ was not made known to the sons of men in other ages; in other words, "this is not that" to which Peter referred in Acts 2:16, in Acts 3:19 to 26. in Acts 10:43 and in Acts 15:13 to 17. The mystery among the Gentiles, "Christ in you the hope of glory," was not made known to other generations. Colossians 1:25 to 27. The "Ephesians" and "Colossians" Body truth was unknown to all of Israel's Prophets and was not the message of the Twelve to Israel before the death of Christ, or during the "Acts" period. For this reason it is called "The Mystery" or "The Secret." Paul received it by revelation. Ephesians 3:3. If the Church of God, which Paul persecuted, was the subject of prophecy and the Ephesians "Church which is His Body" was not the subject of prophecy, were they not different Churches? Ephesians 1:19 to 22 and Ephesians 2:5 and 6.

If Pentecost was the birthday of the Church which is His Body, surely that was the ideal Church for this age. Then the message and program of that Church must be considered the ideal message and program for the present-day Church; and we should join with the modern Pentecostal Church in their determination to recover for twentieth-century saints and sinners the message, program and order of Acts 2:38— Acts 3:19 to 26—Acts 8:5 to 15 and Acts 19:3 to 12. But the fact is that most Fundamentalist Grace preachers know that that first message and program of the Twelve is not God's order for today. Ask one of them why he does not preach Mark 16:16 or Acts 2:38? The Pentecost Church must not be the Body of Christ.

Let us summarize, in closing: "The Kingdom of God is at hand." Mark 1:15, "This is that". "The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you." Matthew 21:43. "This is that". "The Kingdom of God shall be at hand." Luke 21:31. "This is that." This Kingdom was promised by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began. Luke 1:70. Matthew 25:31 to 35: "When the day of Pentecost was fully come," "This is that" which was spoken by "Joel." Acts

2:1 and Acts 2:16. “Repent (Israel) and God will send Jesus Christ.” “This is that spoken by Moses, Samuel and all the prophets since the world began.” Acts 3:19 to 25. Send Jesus Christ to bring about the restitution of all things. “. . . God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name:” Acts 15:14. “This is that” which was spoken by Amos and others.

Then Ephesians 3:1 to 11: “This is not that”. In Colossians 1:24 to 27, “this is not that”.

Is Christ the Head of the Church which is His Body in the “Book Between”? If so, with what chapter did this Headship begin? Why did God permit Israel’s Jerusalem temple to stand and let them continue their religious activities and ceremonies in that temple during the years covered by the “Book Between”? Why did He instruct Paul to become a Jew to the Jews during those years? Why in the “Book Between” was God’s order “to the Jew first”? Acts 3:26—Acts 13:46—Acts 18:6. Was Israel’s house left desolate with Matthew 23:31 to 39 or thirty years later with Acts 28:25 to 28? The Nation was not set aside until Romans 11:25 and Acts 28:28.

PAUL’S ORDERS TO TIMOTHY

It is generally believed by all students of the Word of God that Paul’s Second Epistle to Timothy was his last written message. In our dated Bibles the year of that final message was 66 A.D. It is believed by some that Paul was in prison in Rome the second time, having been once freed. However, all Christians are not certain as to this fact. But all Christians do believe that Paul reached Rome before 63 A.D., or about four or five years before he died. Paul was taken to Rome as a prisoner, having been delivered to the Roman Government by the Jews who caught him in the temple in Jerusalem, about the year 60 A. D. Acts 21:27. He had just written his Epistle to the Romans. Romans 16:24 and 25. Acts 19:21. Before Paul wrote to the Romans he had written to the Thessalonians, to the Corinthians, and to the Galatians

After his arrest in Jerusalem he did not write again until after he had reached Rome. Then, according to our dated Bibles, in the year 64 A.D., he wrote to the Ephesians; in the year 64 A.D., he wrote to the Philippians; in the year 64 A.D., he wrote to the Colossians; in the year 64 A.D., he wrote to Philemon; in the year 65 A.D., he wrote to Titus; in the year 64 A.D., he wrote to Hebrews (neither date nor authorship fully established); in the year 65 A.D., he wrote to Timothy (his First Epistle); and finally in the year 66 A.D., he wrote his Second Epistle to Timothy.

According to Acts 19:22, Timothy ministered unto Paul and was with him, when “all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus both Jews and Greeks.” Acts 19:10. Paul’s mighty work, by the Holy Spirit, “was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus.” Acts 19:17. So it will prove profitable to read together Paul’s Epistles to Timothy with his Epistle to Ephesus. Timothy, who made his headquarters at Ephesus, could well understand the words of Paul, recorded in II Timothy 1:15, “This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me.” Timothy knew why they had turned away from Paul.

The Galatians had turned away from Paul. To them he said, “Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth,” Galatians 4:16. The Corinthians, who had received such rich blessings through Paul’s ministry afterward questioned his apostleship. They could not understand his twofold ministry. This he explained in the ninth chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians. And then he wrote to them, “be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” I Corinthians 11:1.

In Paul's last message he is instructing his son Timothy concerning the things which Timothy has heard of him. "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of (by) me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." II Timothy 2:1 and 2.

After we have diligently studied all of this Epistle, we can better understand this commission of Paul to Timothy. In the Epistle we learn that Paul used the words "I," "me" and "my" more than fifty times. Does he speak with Divine authority? Were his orders to Timothy the Lord's orders; or was he simply expressing some of his own ideas and opinions? If Paul's mind in that farewell message was not the mind of the Lord, he was more than egotistical or presumptuous. He was deluded.

When Christ was on earth, God was speaking in His Son. Hebrews 1:2. Therefore, the Father said, "Hear ye Him." Matthew 17:5. Why did not Paul say to Timothy "the things that thou has heard of the Lord?" Many Christians delight to give special emphasis to the words spoken by Jesus of Nazareth on earth; so they purchase a "Red-letter" New Testament. And they join in the song, "I would like to have been here when He was here among men." But they perhaps have forgotten to read several of the Saviour's "Red-lettered" statements: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel"; "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs"; "Go not in the way of the Gentiles." Matthew 15:24 and 26 and 10:5.

Would it not be better to turn to the Lord's messages through Paul? It seems as though Gentiles would prefer to turn to Paul's Epistles and in none of them is the Lord's messages to the Gentiles more clearly stated than in Paul's Epistles to Timothy, wherein we read: "Whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an apostle, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity"; and again "Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles."

The first reference is I Timothy 2:7, and immediately follows the statement, concerning Christ, "Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." The due time for the Gentiles was not while God was speaking in His Son, but after the Son went back to heaven. And even then the Gentiles had to wait. It was when Paul went out from Antioch of Syria and after some months returned that we read: "And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles." Acts 14:27. As Gentiles, we should not place our "due time" back in the days of Jesus of Nazareth or in the early ministry of the twelve apostles in the Book of Acts.

And concerning the second reference, II Timothy 1:11, let us carefully study the verses immediately preceding: "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." For his faithful, uncompromising, proclamation of that message to the Gentiles Paul was the prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ. II Timothy 1:8 and Ephesians 3:1.

While Jesus was on earth, with Israel under the Old Covenant, His message was concerning the Abrahamic Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, the New Covenant, in which Covenants God had guaranteed to Israel a King, a Kingdom and a Land. That ministry and message was confirmed to Israel by the twelve apostles, after the Lord Jesus had shed His precious blood that sinners might be saved. Hebrews 2:2 to 4. The Apostle Paul, in his early ministry, joined with the Twelve in the confirmation of that message. But Paul came to the "place where he had to say to that Nation, "your blood be upon your own heads: I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." Acts 18:6. That was about 20 years after the death of Christ. Shortly, thereafter the Lord, through Paul, pronounced his judgment upon that Nation;

blindness. Israel was temporarily set aside. Acts 28:25 to 28. Romans 11:11 . . . Romans 11:25 to 30. Gentiles then obtained mercy through Israel's unbelief. Romans 11:28 to 31.

After this pronouncement Paul's ministry and message was concerning the Dispensation of the Grace of God. Ephesians 3:2. He then preached the unsearchable (untraceable) riches of Christ. Ephesians 3:8. To whom? Among the Gentiles. He then proclaimed the mystery among the Gentiles, Christ within, the hope of glory. Colossians 1:27. "That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs of the same Body." Ephesians 3:6. This Mystery differed in some respects from the message and blessings of the Covenants. Paul's new message was received from the risen Christ by revelation. The Gospel that he preached was received by revelation. Galatians 1:11 and 12. The Mystery that he proclaimed, the unsearchable riches of Christ, was by revelation. This had been hid in God, not made known before to the sons of men. It was hid in God from the beginning of the world. Ephesians 3:9. Colossians 1:26. In connection with this new message Paul wrote that the members of the Body were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Ephesians 1:3.

In writing to his son Timothy, Paul referred to the Mystery, preached unto the Gentiles. I Timothy 3:16. In Ephesians 3:3, Paul stated that the Mystery was made known "to me." In Ephesians 3:5, Paul stated. "it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." In II Timothy 1:14, Paul thus instructed Timothy; "That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us."

By reading two or three verses of Scripture one might be led to believe that Paul was not the only apostle or prophet to whom the Mystery was made known by revelation. But after reading Paul's final message, II Timothy, and noting the more than fifty times he used "I," "Me" and "My," we must come to the conclusion that the revelation of the Mystery to others must have been through Paul. Others certainly learned by communication of Paul's Gospel. Galatians 2:1 to 5. We cannot think of Paul as having been proud, or egotistical, even though he had the right to be exalted above measure because of the abundance of the revelations from Christ. II Corinthians 12:1 to 12. His thorn was there to keep him humble; but it did not keep him from referring to "my doctrine," "my gospel," "my hands" in connection with "my chains," in writing to "my son." II Timothy 3:10 . . . II Timothy 2:8 . . . II Timothy 1:6 . . . II Timothy 1:16. "My chain" was because of "my doctrine." Colossians 4:3. Ephesians 6:19 and 20. Paul was in bonds. But God's Word, by Paul, was not bound. II Timothy 2:9.

Note the closing words of the Apostle, who was born out of due season, who magnified his office as Apostle to the Gentiles: "The Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully, known, and all the Gentiles might hear." II Timothy 4:17. I Corinthians 15:8 . . . Romans 11:13. Nearly twenty years before Paul wrote these closing words he went up to Jerusalem, by revelation, Galatians 2:1 to 6. He went up, by revelation, to communicate unto the apostles and teachers to the Jews at Jerusalem the Gospel that he had received from Christ, by revelation. Galatians 1:11 and 12. As the result of that conference, Peter and his associates agreed to confine their ministry, their gospel-preaching, to the circumcision; and leave with Paul the responsibility of evangelizing the Gentiles. Galatians 2:7 and 9. Acts 22:17 to 22. After that conference Peter's name was not again mentioned in the Book of Acts. After the fifteenth chapter of Acts, Paul was the chief human actor in that Book. But strange to say the Book of Acts closed before Paul's ministry closed, the close of the Book of Acts dividing his ministry. And for this reason Paul instructed Timothy to rightly divide the Word of truth. Paul's divided ministry divided brethren in his day; and it will continue to divide them in this day, even more and more as the Lord shall endeavor to recover for the members of His Body that

truth revealed through His prisoner for the Gentile, the Mystery and the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. I Timothy 1:11.

It is significant that it was in this farewell message that Paul's son was told to rightly divide the Word of truth. In the light of the context we may be sure that Paul meant that the student of the Word of God who did not know the difference between the Mystery and all other truth would be a workman that needeth to be ashamed. And how many such Christians there are today!

"From a child," Timothy had known the Scriptures. II Timothy 3:15. Those Scriptures were able to make Timothy wise unto salvation. But they were not able to make him wise unto the Mystery, which was not once named in the Scriptures with which Timothy was familiar, to which he had had access Timothy's knowledge of the Word and will of God was from two different sources; namely, "The Scriptures," and "the things that thou hast heard of me." II Timothy 2:2. Timothy had not received the things by inspiration or by revelation or by Bible study. He had heard "the things" from Paul. He could not have heard them from Peter and the Eleven, for although they were commissioned by Christ, with Divine authority, with the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, they were not the custodians of Body truth. Timothy was instructed to commit Paul's "my doctrine" and "my gospel" to faithful men, "who shall be able to teach others also." II Timothy 2:2.

This brings us to this question, "are teachers of the Word of God today to recognize the authority of Peter, and his keys, and perpetuate the message given forth by the Twelve during the Book of Acts period; or should they not recognize the boundary-line of the Dispensation of the Grace of God and the Mystery revealed through the Apostle to the Gentiles and labour under the final commission of Paul to Timothy?" Surely there is a difference between discipling all nations, teaching them to observe that which God spoke in His Son, and making a New Man out of Jew and Gentile, according to the Mystery of Ephesians. Ephesians 2:11 to 19.

However there is no higher standard of "Christ" living than in Paul's prison Epistles. Surely there is a difference between the declaration of Peter and James, taking believers out of the Gentiles, according to the Prophet Amos, as recorded in Acts 15:14 to 17, and the Gentiles being made fellowheirs of the same Body, about which Amos knew nothing." Ephesians 3:3 to 3:9.

Unless we divide Paul's ministry before and after the revelation of the Mystery, we might not understand why Paul, in writing to Timothy, instructed him to use wine for his sickness, when Timothy knew full well that Paul had healed men, who had far less faith than he, without the use of wine or medicine. Timothy was with Paul in Ephesus. II Timothy 1:18. Compare I Timothy 5:23 and Acts 19:11 and 12. Timothy, if he was the bishop of the Assembly at Ephesus, would have been most inconsistent, had he instructed the members of the Assembly to trust the Lord for healing, while he was taking wine. And we are not to be surprised that Paul did not include baptism in his commission to Timothy, be cause "Christ sent Paul not to baptize." I Corinthians 1:17. Moreover, with the revelation of the Mystery came the revelation of one baptism. This fact was written by Paul to Timothy's Assembly, if he was bishop of the Church at Ephesus. Ephesians 3:3 to 9. Ephesians 4:1 to 7.

The Lord's purpose in giving to Paul that marvelous revelation, that message wholly unknown to all apostles and prophets before him, was "to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God." Ephesians 3:9. If it had been hid in God, all men could not have seen it before God's appointed time. Paul was the first to see it. Now God wants every believer, including you, to see it. This

Mystery has reference to the Christ and the Church in the heavenlies, to be made known by the Church, and is “according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Ephesians 3:10 and 11. That this glorious truth might be known the Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians, “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened.” Ephesians 1:17 and 18. Have the eyes of your understanding been enlightened? You are one of the all whom the Lord would have to see the fellowship of the Mystery; that is, if you are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus. Have you been redeemed by God’s grace; by Christ’s blood? Any man who has not been born from above, cannot see the Kingdom of God, to say nothing of this Mystery. Surely the Lord would have every member of the Body of Christ know the difference between the Kingdom promised since the world began and the Grace and purpose given us in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, long before God made covenants with men.

Established creeds and doctrinal platforms have been largely responsible for the comparatively few Christians who have seen that glorious truth which God has wanted His children to see all down through the years since the risen Christ revealed it to Paul. Denominational leaders will excommunicate Christians for seeing it. Religion was responsible for the terrible persecution which Paul endured for proclaiming the Mystery in his days. Religious leaders today will scoff at this truth; will antagonize, boycott and persecute those who endeavor to recover this blessed and glorious truth. The Lord could truly say to them, “having eyes ye see not.” Sad to say, the most determined and aggressive opponents of this truth, which the Lord would have all men to see, are the leaders and teachers of Fundamental Church-organizations and Bible-Schools, where men and women are preparing to be preachers and teachers. They are such persecutors that many members of the Body of Christ who see the Mystery, or Secret, keep the fact a secret, instead of remembering the words of Paul expressed in Galatians 2:5 and 6. Read those words, and if you see, lead some other brother out of his blindness, suffering the persecution with Paul, for the sake of Christ and His truth.

ANOTHER INTERPRETATION OF THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

FIRST—CHRIST’S MESSAGE TO ISRAEL

“Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” Matthew 12:31 and 32.

SECOND—STEPHEN’S MESSAGE TO ISRAEL

“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye.” Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on

the right hand of God.” Acts 7:51 and 56. Stephen, “full of the Holy Spirit”: “Jesus standing.” Verse 55.

THIRD—PAUL’S MESSAGE TO ISRAEL (20 years later)

“Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. And when they opposed (resisted) themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads: I am clean: from HENCEFORTH I will go unto the Gentiles.” Acts 18:5 and 6.

At the time Jesus spoke to Israel concerning their sin against the Son of man, as well as later on when Stephen and Paul spoke to the same Nation, the Gentiles were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, alienated from the life of God, dead in trespasses and sins. Ephesians 2:11 and 12, Ephesians 4:18 and 2:1. All of their sins at that time were unpardoned. They had not sinned against the Son of man. They were far off, and by grace, they were brought nigh by the blood of Christ. Ephesians 2:7 to 16. A convicted Gentile might resist the Holy Spirit and refuse to be saved by grace through faith; but at the time Jesus warned Israel not to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matthew 15:24 and Matthew 10:5. The messages of Jesus, Stephen and Paul, quoted above, had no application to Gentiles; only to God’s Nation.

However, it is quite interesting to observe that Jesus’ warning to Israel, recorded in Matthew 12:31 and 32, was spoken in between His messages to two Gentiles; the centurion of the eighth chapter of Matthew and the Greek of the fifteenth chapter. To the centurion Jesus said, “Great Faith”; “The CHILDREN of the Kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness.” Matthew 8:11 and 12. To the Greek Jesus said, “Great Faith”; “Let the CHILDREN first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it unto the dogs.” Matthew 15:26 to 28. Mark 7:27.

So as we follow Israel’s history from the message of Christ, to the messages of Stephen and Paul, we shall learn that the CHILDREN (Israel) were first filled; then the CHILDREN were cast out; then the dogs received the CHILDREN’S bread. In the eleventh chapter of Romans, written about thirty years after Jesus warned Israel (Matthew 12:31 and 32), is recorded the “casting away” of Israel. Romans 11:15. Outer darkness is pictured in verse eight; “God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear” “Let their eyes be darkened.” (Romans 11:10) “Blindness in part is happened to Israel.” (Romans 11:25). “Through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles.” (Romans 11:11) “Gentiles have now obtained mercy through their (Israel’s) unbelief.” (Romans 11:30)

Let us also observe that following Jesus’ warning (Matthew 12:31 and 32) He spoke of Israel’s outer darkness and casting away in Matthew 13:14 and 15, quoting Isaiah 6:9 and 10: “Hearing, not understand; Seeing, not perceived . . . Their eyes they have closed.” Let us follow Israel’s history from Jesus’ warning in Matthew 12:31 and 32, to Paul’s “HENCEFORTH” of Acts 18:6, keeping in mind Matthew 13:14 and 15 (Quotation from Isaiah 6:9 and 10) and Paul’s final message to Israel in Acts 28:25 to 28 (Quotation from Isaiah 6:9 and 10). Acts 7:51, Acts 13:36, Acts 18:6, Romans 11:8 and 25 are very closely related to Acts 28:25 to 28 and to Isaiah 6:9 and 10.

After Jesus warned Israel in Matthew 12:31 and 32, and after He told the Gentile, “the CHILDREN must first be filled,” it seemed as though Israel, as a nation, had sinned away their last offer or privilege from God, and the time of their casting-away had arrived; for Jesus said in

Matthew 16:20, to His disciples, “that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ (Messiah).” But something happened, for Paul, more than twenty years later, was doing that very thing when he gave forth his “HENCEFORTH”; that is, he was testifying to Israel that Jesus was Christ (Messiah). Acts 18:5 and 6. What happened to cause the Lord to change His mind and the message of His disciples? Surely this is a very interesting question. In seeking for the answer it is interesting and instructive to go from the “HENCEFORTH” of Luke 12:50 to 52, and “FROM THAT TIME FORTH,” Matthew 16:20 and 21, to the “HENCEFORTH” of Acts 18:6 and the “HENCEFORTH” of II Corinthians 5:16; reading Acts 18:6 in connection with Romans 11:8 and 25 and Acts 28:25 to 28. The changes indicated by these “HENCEFORTHS are very suggestive.

Read first Matthew 16:20 and 21: “From that time forth.” What? The death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Hitherto, the disciples had been testifying that Jesus was Messiah. But no more. Matthew 16:20. Hitherto, “peace on earth”. Luke 2:14. Henceforth, “no peace on earth.” Luke 12:50 to 52. Peace on earth is in connection with Jesus as Israel’s Messiah, on the throne of David. Luke 1:31 and 32. Isaiah 9:6 and 7. But “HENCEFORTH”. What? “I have a baptism to be baptized with.” Luke 12:50 and 51. What baptism? The death baptism of Christ. Then in the last twelve chapters of Luke no more waterbaptism. Why? The answer is John 1:31 and Matthew 16:20. “That Jesus might be manifested unto Israel, came I with water baptism.” “That they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ.” If they are to resume that message, then they are to resume water baptism; but not before. “John (Baptist) did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.” Mark 1:4. That message was for Israel. Acts 13:24. It was to Israel that Christ was to be manifested. And He was manifested to Israel up to Matthew 16:20 and Luke 12:50 to 52. “From that time forth” the Son of Man must be delivered and be crucified. Matthew 17:12 . . . Matthew 20:18 and 28. Jesus spoke of His approaching death as His baptism.

Israel was going to sin against the Son of man. They were going to put Him to death, or have Him put to death. But Jesus had said that sin against the Son of Man would be forgiven. After He said that, He said, “The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” Matthew 21:43. When was that Kingdom taken away from Israel and to what nation has it been given? There are more than five hundred nations represented in the Body of Christ. Jesus had said, “Let the CHILDREN first be filled.” Now, that the Kingdom was to be taken away from them, had they been filled? Some months after the death of the Son of man, Peter, in the Name of the Lord, said to Israel, “Unto you first.” Acts 3:26. Some years later, Paul, in the Name of the Lord, said, “it was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you.” Acts 13:46. If the Kingdom of God was taken away from Israel, how are we to account for the fact that all of the three thousand of Acts 2:41, and the five thousand of Acts 4:4, received into the Kingdom of God, were Israelites? If the Kingdom of God was taken away from Israel, why did the disciples of Jesus preach to none but Jews only for seven or eight years after the baptism of Christ into death? Acts 11:19. Why did Paul say, in the year 60 A.D., “to the Jew first?” Romans 1:16.

The Nation Israel did sin against the Son of Man, and that great sin was forgiven them: and the Kingdom of God was not taken away until after they had for years sinned against the Holy Spirit resisting, opposing, and blaspheming Him. “A blindness judgment was then pronounced upon that nation. And is still there. But Israel will be saved.” Romans 11:26. Ezekiel 36:21 to 31 will be fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God will be given to a nation, bringing forth the fruits thereof. The Lord used very plain language in Matthew 21:43, “The Kingdom of God

shall be taken away from you (Israel).” What an unmerciful judgment He pronounced upon Israel in Matthew 23:33 to 38! But in Acts 3:17 what a message of mercy in the words of Peter, “And now brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it (killed the Prince of life), as did also your rulers.” What brought about such a change? And then what? A new offer to Israel. The Kingdom of God was offered them. Acts 3:19 to 21. “Repent Israel, and Jesus will be sent back for the restitution of all things.” That is the purpose for which He was born and for which He was raised. Read Luke 1:31 and 32, 67 to 77, and Acts 2:25 to 31. Luke 1:70. Again, the question, what changed the Lord’s mind, or caused Him to extend His offer of the Kingdom this side of Jesus’ death baptism? Surely it was the prayer of the Son of man in the hour of death; “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” Luke 23:34. The father forgave. Now the disciples could again testify to Israel that Jesus was Christ (Messiah); the Kingdom could again be offered to that Nation. So, the Twelve apostles, on the day of Pentecost, reminded Israel of the Prophecy of Joel concerning their Kingdom, and the Prophecy of David concerning their King, and closed by saying “Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ.” Acts 2:36. And then what? Water baptism unto repentance. For what? That Christ might be made manifest unto Israel, baptizing with water. John 1:31. And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38. Jesus had been exalted to be Israel’s Prince and Saviour; the Holy Spirit was the witness. Acts 5:32. Now, as long as the disciples were to testify to Israel that Jesus is the Christ, water-baptism was in order. Twenty years later Paul so testified. Acts 18:5. Then many Corinthians believed and were baptized. Acts 18:8.

Israel began their unpardonable sin, resisting, opposing, blaspheming the Holy Spirit, who was witnessing that God had made Jesus both Lord and Christ, had exalted Him to be Israel’s Prince and Saviour, shortly after the day of Pentecost. Stephen addressed that Nation and told them that Jesus was standing in heaven. How significant! Stephen saw the Son of man. How significant! While he saw that Son of man, against whom Israel had sinned, and had been forgiven, he said, “ye do always resist the Holy Spirit.” They had sinned against the Son of man; it had been forgiven them. Now, they were sinning against the Holy Spirit: it would not be forgiven them. Israel murdered the Holy Spirit messenger, Stephen, as they had murdered the Son of man. But he prayed very much the same prayer for God’s continued mercy, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” Acts 7:60. The Lord again heard, and extended His offer of the Kingdom, instructing all of His servants to observe the order, “to the Jew first.” Why? The CHILDREN must first be filled. Then the CHILDREN would be cast into outer darkness. And many would come from the east and the west and sit down in the Kingdom with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Matthew 8:10 to 12. When were the CHILDREN filled? When were the CHILDREN cast out? As one turning-point came with Matthew 16:20 and 21, Luke 12:50 to 52, another with Stephen’s message in Acts 7:51 to 60, so another came with Paul’s ministry in the thirteenth chapter of Acts, which opens with a judgment upon Bar-jesus (child of Jehovah), blindness for a season; the change of Saul’s name to Paul; and the words of Acts 13:46: “lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” Undoubtedly you have compared Stephen’s message, in the seventh chapter of Acts, with Paul’s, in the thirteenth chapter, to that company of Israelites in Asia. There’s a close connection. Then compare all of these turning-points with Paul’s “HENCEFORTH” in Europe, recorded in Acts 18:6. Israel blasphemed. According to Matthew 12:31 and 32, they were not to be forgiven. According to Matthew 8:10 to 12, they were to be cast out into outer darkness. According to Mark 7:27, Israel was to be filled. They had been filled; that is, “the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.” Romans 11:7.

At the time Paul wrote this message of Israel's rejection, he said, "so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God." Acts 20:24. What a difference! Paul had been testifying that Jesus was Christ (Messiah) But note after the significant "HENCEFORTH" of Acts 18:6, he was not "HENCEFORTH" to know Christ after the flesh. II Corinthians 5:16. He was now to testify of the Gospel of the Grace of God. Here we have most decidedly and most definitely the parallel of Matthew 16:20 and Luke 12:50 to 52, when Jesus was not to be made manifest to Israel any longer. Then they were sinning against the Son of man, and He announced His death baptism. The definite turning-point came with Acts 18:5 and 6 and Acts 20:24. The Nation Israel had sinned against the Holy Spirit. It was not forgiven them. They have been set aside as a nation; until the Son of man shall come, according to Luke 21:28 to 32. Then Israel shall be saved and restored to national life. Romans 11:26 and Ezekiel 37:21 to 31. That final setting-aside of the Nation was not announced until Acts 28:25 to 28. But the Epistle to the Romans is the Divine message of rejection and setting-aside. That Epistle is likewise the message of the Grace Gospel. And as there were no water-baptisms between the twelfth and twenty-fourth chapters of Luke, after the Lord had announced His death baptism, until Pentecost and Jesus was not to be manifested to Israel as Christ, so the baptism of the Grace Gospel is death baptism; the believer's death baptism with or into Jesus Christ. Romans 6:3. After that death baptism is announced, there were no more water-baptisms mentioned. Only the one, holy Spirit baptism, of Ephesians 4:4 to 6: for surely no one but Christ, by the Holy Spirit, could baptize any one into His death. By water baptism no one could be baptized into the death of Christ, or put on Christ, or be baptized into the one body. Galatians 3:27, I Corinthians 12:13. The only death baptisms in the Scriptures are the baptisms of Christ on the cross, Luke 12:51 (Matthew 20:22 and Mark 10:38 refer to same death baptism of Christ), and the baptism of the believer into the death of Christ. Romans 6:3. As Christ's death baptism was by the holy Spirit (Hebrews 9:14), so is also the believer's. Water-baptism passed with the manifestation of Christ to Israel. Believers now are in the upper-heavenlies with Christ, as members of His Body. Perhaps, water baptism shall be in order when Christ in the next age is manifested to Israel.

What sin today is unpardonable? Grace is greater than any or all of the sins of any Sinner, and any sinner, regardless of the quantity or duality of his sins, may be saved by grace on the condition of faith in the lord Jesus Christ and His redemptive work. His death and resurrection.

WHEN I WAS A CHILD

FOR HE IS A BABE—BE NO MORE CHILDREN

Let us carefully study the three Scriptures from which we have selected this three-fold heading,

First . . . I Corinthians 13:11: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things."

Second . . . Hebrews 5:13 and 14: "For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the Word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age (perfect)."

Third . . . Ephesians 4:14: "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine."

In the Scriptures which we leave quoted the same Greek word is translated “child,” “babe” and “children.” The word is “nepios.” All three scriptures have to do with progressive revelation of God’s truth; and the believer’s growth in the knowledge of God’s revealed Word. All three Scriptures exhort the believer to recognize a progress from “babyhood” truth to “manhood” truth, and to the understanding, appropriation and application of that perfect truth; which not only supplements “babyhood” truth, but in some cases supersedes it. “When I became a man, I put away childish things.” I Corinthians 13:11. “The knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man.” Ephesians 4:13. “But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age Let us go on unto perfection.” Hebrews 5:14 and 6:1.

In exhorting the Hebrews to go on unto perfection, the holy Spirit also instructed the believer in this language, “therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ.” Hebrews 6:1. This translation is not as clear as it might be. The better translation would be, “therefore leaving the word of beginning, or the first word of Christ.” In writing to the Corinthians, urging them to “manhood” progress in God’s revealed truth, the Holy Spirit declared that certain gifts would pass away, “prophecies,” “knowledge” and “tongues”; and that certain things would abide, “faith,” “hope” and “love.” I Corinthians 13:8 and 13. The writer referred to this transition in this language: “But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” I Corinthians 13:10. “That which is in part” is referred to as “childish”; that which is perfect as man.” Going on unto perfection is going on to that which is perfect, to that revelation from God that is for those of full age. Much of the truth that the risen Lord revealed through Paul, after the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, as to time, is truly, strong meat. But most believers, for some reason, either have no appetite for the strong meat, preferring to continue with the milk-diet, or they are unable to digest that which is perfect, the strong meat for those of full age.

CHRIST’S WORD OF BEGINNING

In considering the first words spoken by Christ, it is well to read the statement of His chief apostle in the land of the Jews. Peter declared to a Gentile, several years after Christ had died, concerning the first words of Christ: “The Word which God sent unto the children of Israel.” Acts 10:36. At that time the Gentiles were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. Ephesians 2:11 and 12. It was about fifteen years after the death of Christ that Paul returned to Antioch, from his first missionary journey, and the church heard what “God had done with them (Saul and Barnabas), and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.” Acts 14:27. Christ on earth was sent only to Israel. Matthew 15:24. While Christ was on earth He selected twelve Israelites to be His messengers to Israel. Matthew 10:5. These twelve understood some of the things spoken by Christ: very many of them they understood not Luke 18:33 and 34. For the things which they did understand Christ gave thanks to His Father in these words: “I thank Thee O Father Hast revealed them unto babes.” Luke 10:21. The Lord wants His children to ever have the spirit of a “babe”; but most assuredly he does not desire that they would continue to be “babes” in knowledge. As newborn babes they are to desire the sincere milk of the Word that they may grow thereby. I Peter 2:1. But when the believer remains a “babe” either because of conduct or lack of knowledge, it is anything but pleasing to the Father. Many of the Corinthian saints were carnal and years after they had been saved they had to be fed on milk. “as unto babes in Christ.” I Corinthians 3:1 to 3. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, Paul knew many things that the twelve apostles had never been taught by Christ when He was on earth. Likewise the

twelve apostles knew many things at the time Paul wrote to the Corinthians that they did not know when they were on earth with Jesus of Nazareth, the man approved by God in the midst of Israel. Acts 2:22. Many righteous men and prophets had desired to see and hear what the twelve saw and heard, but they did not have that blessed privilege. Matthew 13:17. Jesus was in their midst to fulfil (complete) the law and the prophets. Matthew 5:17. Shortly before His death on the cross he said to His apostles: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. However when He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth." John 16:12 and 13. Beginning with the day of Pentecost the twelve apostles gradually and continuously received new light from the Lord in the development of His program. They rejoiced some seven years after Pentecost because repentance unto life was granted unto the household of Cornelius. But their rejoicing did not exceed their astonishment. This added light came to Peter by means of his house-top vision. Acts 11:18. Then new revelation came from the risen Christ to Paul. Hear His testimony: Paul said the Lord spoke to him in these words: "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a Minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." Acts 26:16. The words that Christ spoke to and through Paul differed from His word of beginning, although the Lord appeared first to Saul, for his salvation as Jesus of Nazareth with a Kingdom message.

JESUS NOT COME TO DESTROY THE LAW OR THE PROPHETS BUT TO FULFIL
PAUL WAS GIVEN A DISPENSATION FOR GENTILES TO FULFIL THE WORD
OF GOD

Hear the testimony of Jesus Christ: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." Matthew 5:17. Hear the testimony of the Apostle Paul: "For His Body's sake, which is the Church, Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you (Gentiles) to fulfil the Word of God." Colossians 1:24 and 25. The word "fulfil" should be translated "complete" or "consummate" or "finish," that is, it was to "bring to an end." It was one thing for Jesus Christ to complete the law and the prophets by or in Himself: it was quite a different thing for the risen Christ to complete the Word of God by or in Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles. Jesus Christ was made under the law, and as a minister of the circumcision He came from heaven with God's Word to Israel, the Word of confirmation, Romans 15:8, Galatians 4:4, Acts 16:36, Acts 3:26, Acts 5:31. Concerning Christ's earthly ministry, the writer of Acts began his message with these words: "Of all that Jesus began both to do and teach until the day in which He was taken up." Acts 1:1 and 2. In the Four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, is recorded what Jesus began to teach until He was taken up. Paul's ministry was to give forth that which Christ continued to teach after that He was taken up. The Grace of Christ Gospel and the Mystery among the Gentiles came to Paul by revelation. Galatians 1:11 and 12. Ephesians 3:1 to 5 and Colossians 1:24 to 27. Paul wrote about one-half of the Books of the New Testament Scriptures. He did not write the first of these until after God had closed the record of the ministry of the twelve apostles to Israel in their land. Peter's name does not appear in the Book of Acts after the fifteenth chapter, or about 45 A. D. About nine years later Paul wrote his first Epistle to the Thessalonians, then his second Epistle to the Thessalonians, then to Galatians, then two Epistles to the Corinthians, then his Epistle to the Romans. He wrote these six Epistles between 52 A.D. and 60 A.D. He reached Rome, as the prisoner of Jesus Christ, about 63 A.D. Between 64 A.D. and 67 A.D. he wrote Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Titus, Philemon, I Timothy and II Timothy. In Paul's six Epistles written before he reached Rome the Lord revealed His "that which is in part" program. In these closing Epistles the Lord revealed His "that which is perfect"

program. In these closing Epistles Paul was the Lord's instrument to complete the Word of God. The workman who needeth not to be ashamed will diligently seek the mind of the Spirit, in going on unto perfection, learning how to eliminate from the program of the Body of Christ and retain for the Body of Christ all of the first words spoken by Christ and all of the order of the "Pre-Prison" epistles of Paul that should be eliminated or retained.

Any Bible teacher who claims that he, as a member of the Body of Christ, saved by pure grace, accepts and practices all of the program of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, stating that the program of Jesus of Nazareth is the program of Paul's Dispensation of the Grace of God, is either ignorant or dishonest. A spiritual, Spirit-taught student of the Word of God will neither eliminate one sentence of truth taught by Jesus on earth, from the program of the Church, that will fit into the Body truth of Paul's closing Epistles, nor carry over into that Body truth any of the program of Jesus of Nazareth which ceased with His death and resurrection. Likewise a spiritual, Spirit-filled student of the Word of God will observe the same principle of "rightly dividing the word of truth" in eliminating or carrying over truth from God's program as set forth in Paul's "Pre-Prison" Epistles. Much of the truth of Paul's first six Epistles fit perfectly into the Body truth of his "Prison Epistles", and therefore is carried over into that which is perfect. Likewise, much must be eliminated; remembering that that which is perfect has superseded that which is in part, and some things have passed away. We give this one definite example; all during the Four Gospels and during Paul's first six Epistles God's Nation Israel had either exclusive or prior rights; and, as the Jews required a sign, the Lord's Sign Age was from the proclamation of the Kingdom by Jesus in the year 29 A.D. until God set Israel aside, with the close of Acts, about 63 A.D. The close of Acts divides Paul's "Pre-Prison" and "Prison" Epistles. When Paul uttered the words recorded in Acts 28:25 to 28 the Sign age ceased. So signs do not belong to that which is perfect. The believer who includes signs in his program is not going on unto perfection: he has not put away "babyish" things and become a man. Most assuredly advancing with the Word from His truth in Corinthians to His truth in Ephesians is going on to perfection, from that which is in part to that which is perfect.

NO MORE CHILDREN TOSSED TO AND FRO; EPHESIANS 4:14

As to doctrine, the great majority of Christians are children, or babes. What a spectacle we behold today in Christendom, with the mixture of Ritualism, Modernism, and Fanaticism, to say nothing of the Satanic cults! The slogan of the Modernist is "back to Jesus." They prefer the religious program of Jesus among the Jews to the Dispensation of the Grace of God which the risen Christ committed to Paul for the Gentiles. Ephesians 3:1. The Ritualist knows nothing of Paul's Gospel and Body truth. Then there are multitudes of saved people, who love the Lord and His Book, who are following the traditions of men instead of rightly dividing the Word of truth. Their rule is to practice what the church organizations have been practicing for centuries instead of searching the Scriptures to see whether these things be true. Then there are many genuine Christians who, with courage and zeal, are trying to recover for the Church of today the miraculous healings, tongues and other signs, with their slogan "Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today and forever." Their program is one of disorder, discord and delusion. But they have at least dared to disregard the traditions of the elders in their earnest endeavor to bring back to the Church the signs and gifts of the Four Gospels, of the Book of Acts, of the Epistle of James, and of the first six Epistles of Paul. Because they have failed to obey the Word of the

Lord, in going on to perfection, from that which is in part to that which is perfect, they are “babes” tossed to and fro. They have not put away “babyish” things.

And how sad and deplorable it is that our outstanding Fundamental Bible teachers look on helplessly, having no Scriptural corrective, because they not only refuse to recognize the transition from the Four Gospels, through the Book of Acts, with the great change and new revelation in Paul’s final Epistles, but bitterly oppose the servants of the Lord who do. God will surely teach them their lesson with the rod of Fanaticism. Final Pauline truth is the curative for almost every heresy and delusion with which the Church today is troubled.