

# *Elements of Dispensational Truth*

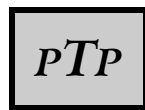
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*R. A. Huebner*

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## *Preface to First Edition*

This book contains numbers of chapters which have been taken from the magazine articles, "Elements of Dispensational Truth," in *Thy Precepts*. Part 1 has been added to these articles for two reasons:

1. How dispensational truth came to America is documented, showing the dependency on J. N. Darby's teaching.
2. It is shown that:
  - a) there are important distinctions between the teaching of Scofieldian dispensationalism and dispensational truth as taught by J. N. Darby;
  - b) that the contrast involves the point that C. I. Scofield's system is better described as an age-ism scheme -- with elements of truth borrowed from J. N. Darby's teaching, while at the same time omitting very important truths.

Several charts are included in the text in order to graphically summarize and present these conclusions.

In addition to the charts in the text, a chart, *Epochs of Scripture*, is found at the front cover, with a chart on the book of Acts.

In view of the recent rise of "Progressive Dispensationalism," with its denial that there is both a heavenly and an earthly people of God, and its denial that the Church and the Christian is heavenly, Part 7, "Is the Christian Heavenly and is the Church Heavenly" has also been taken from *Thy Precepts* and included. Also Part 8 has been added for the same reason. Besides that, "Progressive Dispensationalism" has also been noticed at various points in added comments to some of the articles.

"Progressive Dispensationalism" is a self-congratulatory name. Presently, the political climate in the U. S. A. is such that political "liberals," seeking to avoid the label of being "liberals," are starting to call themselves "progressives."

In reality, this self-styled "Progressive Dispensationalism" is neither progressive nor dispensationalism. Why accord its adherents the self-flattering, delusive label? I propose calling it ***Covenant Pretribulationism*** because it is a form of covenantism though its advocates still affirm belief in the pretribulation rapture. When they, and/or their students, jettison the pretribulation rapture, they will be covenant posttribulationists, sometimes called covenant premillennialists.

A Subject Index and a Scripture Index have been generated to make this book useful as a reference.

This is volume one of a response -- really, a restatement of long-taught truth -- to antidispenational systems, including covenant theology. In refuting these false views, much of Covenant Pretribulationism will have also been answered. This will be evident at various points in the book.

There are some books to which the reader is directed as complementary to the book in the reader's hands. They are available from Present Truth Publishers

1. There is a three volume set called *Precious Truths Revived and recovered Through J. N. Darby*. Volume 1 covers 1826-1845.
2. *J. N. Darby's Teachings regarding Dispensations, Ages, Administrations, and the Two Parentheses*, is and exposition of his teachings regarding these matters.
3. *Daniel's 70 Weeks and the Revival of the Roman Empire*.
4. *Future Events*

NOTE: Braces { } indicate material that I have added to something that has been quoted.

## *Preface to Second Edition*

The second edition is not a revision of the first edition. Rather, much additional material is incorporated; the material in chapters 3.4 - 3.8 is new as well as the two charts in color that just precede chapter 3.4. The chart, *The Three Administrations*, a representation of dispensational truth expounded by J. N. Darby, has been slightly modified. There is an indication that JND held that the Jews still had calling after the beginning of the times of the Gentiles until the cross. This is noted by the addition of a dashed line as well as a line drawn through the words **NO-CALLING**, like that. At any rate, I believe that the heavenly calling interposed the earthly calling of Israel.

*Part 1*

*The Mystery*  
*as to which*  
*Silence was Kept*

Chapter 1.1 briefly introduces us to some points regarding dispensational truth. Chapter 1.2 records the influence of J. N. Darby on the North American Prophetic Conferences. In Chapter 1.3 we shall observe that the Old Testament prophets did not speak about the mystery of Christ and the church. Then in Chapter 1.4 we will take note of the distinction between the heavenly and the earthly spheres, particularly the heavenly, concerning the purpose of God to glorify Himself in Christ in both these spheres. Thus, we will observe that there is an earthly people, and a heavenly people, and will notice our own place of blessedness as united to Christ in the *heavenly* sphere.



## Chapter 1.1

### *Dispensational Truth*

#### *Views on Dispensations*

##### THE HARMONY OF THE WORD OF GOD

Perhaps you have not heretofore thought about what it is that makes the Word of God one harmonious whole. It is not the salvation of the elect; rather, it is the manifestation of the glory of God in Christ. In 1836 J. N. Darby pointed that out:

If some, attaching everything to the final salvation of the elect, say, if this be not effected by it all the rest is immaterial and curious, and they do not know anything about dispensations; I answer, that the salvation of the elect is not the great end of any Christian's thoughts, but the divine glory; and that God has been pleased to glorify Himself and display His character in these dispensations for the instruction of the church; and that if the church casts it aside, they are casting aside the instruction which God has afforded of His ways. They are making themselves wise without God, and wiser than He, for He has thought fit for His glory to instruct us in these things.<sup>1</sup>

It is a sad commentary on their state of mind to read comments by opposers of dispensational truth to the effect that they learned it in Sunday School but when they came to maturity they cast it off. Others might have attended a seminary or other school where (some) dispensational truth was taught, but their teachers allegedly could not answer all their questions; and leaving the school they embraced "the reformed faith"! We wonder who the audience is, and what its caliber, for whom such slurs against those who hold dispensational truth are intended.

J. N. Darby, for example, believed dispensational truth, not because he was an ignorant man, or ignorant of "the reformed faith," or of "covenant theology," or because he learned it in Sunday School. The erudite W. Kelly said (letter dated Feb. 22, 1901):

The late Mr. Darby was a highly educated as he was an extremely able man, of rare attainments in almost all branches of knowledge, of preeminent logical power, of moral and metaphysical analysts hard to match, to say nothing of his linguistic skill ancient and modern. . . . But what characterized our honored brother as a saint and

servant was a deeper insight into God's mind in Scripture than any other I ever knew or heard of in any age since the apostles, approached: such was his spiritual power of bringing in Christ to decide questions great or small.

At any rate, dispensational truth is opposed by covenant theology, which teaches that there is an eternal covenant of grace (or, of redemption) and all other covenants are the unfolding or expression of it. The church is seen as under the new covenant of Jer. 31. Thus Scripture is unified under the idea of covenant. The system, in effect, therefore, centers upon the salvation of the elect (thus putting man at the center of God's activities, instead of His glory in Christ). This, it is thought, is what binds all of Scripture into a harmonious whole.

The charge made against dispensational truth is that it fragments the unfolding of redemption (because of the nature of the distinction made between Israel and the Church) and it makes the Bible a prophetic jigsaw puzzle. On the contrary, instead of the objectors' mythical "covenant of grace" being the unifying truth, dispensational truth shows that what unifies Scripture is the unfolding of the nature and glory of God in Christ, manifested in two spheres, the earthly and the heavenly. That is, the cross being the moral foundation of all, where God's nature was vindicated so that blessing could reach man, God's glory in Christ will be manifested in government in the earthly sphere, with Israel as its center; and God's glory in Christ will be manifested in blessing in the heavenly sphere with the Church as its center. Eph. 1:9, 10 tells us that the mystery of God's will is that in the dispensation of the fullness of times (i.e., the millennium) Christ will head up both the heavenly and earthly spheres.<sup>2</sup> He will unite all things under one headship, for God's glory.

2. It was not a secret that Christ would head up the earthly sphere, as Psa. 8 shows. But the heavenly sphere, with the Church's distinct place, and Christ's universal headship, was not revealed in the OT. Hence the headship, as denoted in Eph. 1:9, 10, is a mystery, a secret not spoken of in the OT. It is a secret now disclosed to the saints who are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ (Eph. 1:3), yea, seated there, in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6). Thus, the heading up of **all** is called the "mystery of His will."

1. *Collected Writings* 1:116.

His exaltation must include universal acknowledgment in the place where He humbled Himself to the lowest. This is the divine order (Matt. 23:12; Phil. 2:5-11).

The Assyrian of the OT prophets represents the opposition to the blessing of God's earthly people in 'earthly places,' so to speak, and thus to the manifestation of God's glory in Christ manifested in government in the earth. The putting down of this opposing policy, as embodied in the Assyrian (and in Gog who shares it) with the resultant establishment of Zion and Messiah's reign before His ancients in glory (Isa. 24:23), is the counsel that is purposed concerning the whole earth (Isa. 14:26).

### COVENANT THEOLOGY

The system of covenant theology incorporates a way of understanding the Old Testament prophets which results in those prophets speaking about the church. The process of interpreting the OT prophets is usually called "spiritual" interpretation. This they place in contrast to "literal" interpretation -- which indicates a future for Israel under the reign of Christ (the millennium), as the OT Prophets prophesied would occur. "Spiritual" interpretation transmutes what the OT prophets have said about Israel's future glories into church blessings now, a process which I might refer to as **spiritual alchemy**.

"Spiritual" interpretation, or "spiritualization," is not spiritual in the sense of 1 Cor. 2:13. Moreover, it may not even be the best term to describe the process. But what should the process be called? -- "figurative" interpretation? That does not help, but might add to the confusion since literal interpretation recognizes figures of speech and symbols used by the OT prophets.<sup>3</sup>

Let us consider the case of "Hymenaeus and Philetus; [men] who as to the truth have gone astray, saying that the resurrection has taken place already; and overthrow the faith of some" (2 Tim. 2:17, 18). They evidently applied a non-literal view to the resurrection. Perhaps they used truth we find in Eph. 2 -- our being raised up together with Christ. What would you call their view? They must have given a figurative meaning to the resurrection, spiritualizing it. Of course, they did this regarding a foundation, or fundamental, truth. We do not say that spiritualizing the OT prophets overthrows the faith, but it is very serious, affecting the truths that rest upon the foundation. At any rate, it is instructive that we have this example of a 'spiritualizing' of a truth in the Word.

Those we shall examine, who spiritualize the prophets, do not believe that the Christian is under the law for justification, but do place the Christian under the (moral) law as the rule of life. Since Saturday is the Jewish Sabbath, you

will understand why they transmute Sunday (the Lord's day) into being the Sabbath -- to be consistent with the keeping of the ten commandments which require the keeping of the Sabbath. Not only is this change of day an unacceptable alchemy in divine matters, it is doubtful that they keep it as Moses commanded. Such view the law as a transcript of the mind of God and Christ's righteous law-keeping as the righteousness which Christians are made (2 Cor 5:21). Of course Christ kept the law, but this system lowers His walk to that. It lowers what God is. It lowers the Christian's position. Actually it Judaizes. The end of "the first man" (1 Cor. 15:47) is not rightly apprehended, seeing that the law addressed man, in the persons of the favored people, in their Adamic responsibility. It is not surprising then that such regard the Christian as "a true Jew"<sup>4</sup> and as "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16), which are, really, the believing Jewish remnant of the present time (cf. Rom. 11:5). And so they regard the church as the spiritual continuator of Israel, transmuting the promises to Israel into spiritual blessings for the church as the alleged "spiritual Israel," (interestingly, they leave the curses for the natural Israel). All of this lowers the Christian to the level of a millennial saint (though millennial saints will have a place higher than an OT saint).

## *The Church is Not an Age*

### WHAT IS THE PRESENT AGE?

Most, if not all, except J. N. Darby and those who were helped by him, place the church in a scheme of ages, making a distinct church age among the ages of which Scripture speaks. That is true of most, if not all, Dispensational Age-ists also. But it quite incorrect, contradicting what Scripture says about "this age," and results in prohibiting one from apprehending and embracing numbers of truths that are really bound up together in dispensational truth.

The following references bear on the fact that there are two ages that concern us here regarding the place of the church with respect to the ages.

1. **This age:** Matt 12:32; 1 Cor. 2:8; 2 Cor. 4:4; Gal. 1:4; Eph 1:21; 1 Tim. 6:17; 2 Tim. 4:10.
2. **The completion of the age:** Matt. 13:39, 40, 49; 24:3; 28:20.
3. **The age to come:** Matt. 12:32; Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30; Eph. 1:21; Heb. 6:5.

3. See chapter 1 in my *Daniel's 70 Weeks and the Revival of the Roman Empire*, available from the publisher, for a discussion of interpretation.

4. A true Jew is one who is a Jew racially but whose heart is circumcised also (Rom. 2:28, 29). Both Jewish believers and Gentile believers answer to the meaning of circumcision (Phil. 3:3), but that does not transmute a Gentile believer into a "true Jew."



In Matt. 12:32 the Lord spoke of two ages, i.e., this age and the age to come. He was present in one of those two ages as He spoke those words. Concerning “this age,” J. N. Darby remarked that it was

a perfectly well-known phrase among the Jews who spoke of *olam-hazeh*, this world or age, and the *olam-havo*, the age to come, the latter being the time of Messiah’s reign.<sup>5</sup>

“This age,” of which the Lord spoke, is the Mosaic age, and it will be displaced by “the age to come,” i.e., the millennium. “The times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24) refers to the period depicted by the image of Dan. 2. This period was running its course during the time before our Lord was here, and continues on until the Lord comes as the smiting stone. The times of the Gentiles is not itself an age. It runs on during **the Mosaic age**. The times of the Gentiles has been called an earthly parenthesis of judgment on Israel, while they are Lo-Ami (not my people; see Chapter 8.3). It is the time during which government has passed from the throne of David to Nebuchadnezzar and the Gentile powers. Thus, government will be in the hands of the Gentiles until the smiting stone (Christ) smites the image (Dan. 2) at the appearing of Christ in glory.<sup>6</sup> “This age,” the Mosaic age, has to do with the earth (as all ages do), not with heaven, and runs on until the setting up of the millennial kingdom. The introduction of the times of the Gentiles did not change the age. Neither did the death of Christ change the age, nor did the formation of the church change the age. The rapture will not change the age either; but “the completion of the age” will follow after the rapture. The completion of what age? The church age? No, the church will be gone. It is **the completion of the Mosaic age**. The Mosaic age has not yet been completed. The church is not an age. God is now gathering a heavenly people, but that does not change “this age” any more than did His transferring governmental power from the throne of David to the Gentiles.

1 Cor. 2:8 refers to “the princes of this age.” The introduction of the times of the Gentiles did not terminate the Mosaic age (“this age”) but the government connected with the throne of David passed into the hands of “the princes of this age.” 1 Cor. 2:8 is speaking of the Mosaic age, which is presently running on.

With the rejection of Christ (the true God), Satan is recognized as the god of this world (age) in 2 Cor. 4:4. Satan is the called the god of “this age.” This is not ‘the age of grace.’ Sadly, Demas loved the present age (2 Tim. 4:10; cp. Titus 2:12 and J. N. Darby’s footnote thereto), characterized, not surprisingly, as this present evil world (age) in Gal. 1:4. Those “rich in the present age” are enjoined not to be high-minded (1 Tim. 6:17).

To say that *man* was under “the” law (while not accurate in that the Gentiles were never under the Mosaic law), but now he is under grace, is incorrect. The first man was under testing by the law in the persons of the Jews. The idea that there is now an age of grace and that man is being tested with respect to grace is false. The testing of the first man ended at the cross and that testing is not proceeding now. Meanwhile “this age” (the Mosaic age) runs on, and God is forming a heavenly company now. And when that formation is finished (at the rapture), the era of “the completion of the {Mosaic} age” will arrive, and that will be followed by “the age to come,” the millennium.

When the testing of the first man was completed by Christ’s crucifixion, the Second Man was established in resurrection. Though in His own Person, when here, Christ was “the Second Man” and the “last Adam” (1 Cor 15:45-47), He entered into the place, the sphere, of these titles, in resurrection, and now functions as such in the glory above. None of this changed the age:

. . . [in] which he wrought in the Christ [in] raising him from [the] dead, and he set him down at his right hand in the heavenlies, above every principality, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name named, not only in this age, but also in that to come . . . (Eph. 1:20, 21).

He has taken this place during the course of “this age,” the Mosaic age, the age of the law; i.e., the very same age that He spoke of in Matt 12:32. The introduction of various features and characteristics during the age of the law did not change that age. J. N. Darby often pointed out that important fact:

The age, or this age, very clearly relates, in the passages which thus speak of it, to an *earthly state* of things {being} closed, and another begun. Christianity may find its epoch in the prolonging of the age {of the law}; but it is not by it that it {the church} is begun, nor ended, as a precise date of time . . .<sup>7</sup>

He pointed this out in 1844 in his magisterial refutation of the futurist posttribulationism of B. W. Newton. Carefully take note of the fact that “the end of the age,” will occur after the rapture. Then of what age is it “the end of the age”? The church will be gone and so the alleged “church age” will be over. But the posttribulationist, B. W. Newton, wanted “the end of the age” to be part of the alleged Christian age in order to have the church in a Christian age that ran on up to the time when Christ will introduce the new age, “the age to come,” the millennium, in connection with His appearing in glory. That is, it was an effort to have the great tribulation to be part of the alleged church age. Here, then, is what you must decide if you hold the pretribulation teaching: **What age does “the end of the age” end?** The

5. *Collected Writings* 10:360; see also 24:12, 19, 45, 78; 25:244; 8:13, 14, 22; 13:155, 156.

6. These things are depicted on the chart on p. 49.

7. *Collected Writings* 8:14.

truth is that it is not the end of what persons (erroneously) call “the church age.” If you invent a new mini-age for this epoch, then you have to insert another dispensation into the age-ism scheme. Or, you could rightly see that “the end of the age” ends the Mosaic age, called “this age.” And then you will see that the church is not an age and that something is wrong with age-ism. You may gain increased light upon the subject of the heavenly character of the church. You might learn what it means that the testing of the first man was completed at the cross and that man is not now under testing, etc., etc. Nor is it sufficient to say that the church is heavenly but that we are in the age of the church. It is not even sufficient to rightly say, as J. B. Williams, that “*A dispensation is not a period of time*” and then make a church age in a scheme of ages anyway.<sup>8</sup> That would prevent right understanding. All ‘dispensational’ schemes that make the church part of the ages I shall call **Dispensational Age-ism**. The principle, present system is **Scofieldian Dispensational Age-ism**. Let me add that I intend no hostility by using such a description -- necessary to distinguish this quite different system from dispensational truth taught by J. N. Darby.

The church is above and outside ages. Thus, you will find that there is no *age (aion) of grace*. J. N. Darby remarked that:

Christianity is not properly an age at all. “This age” belongs to this world, not to the church.<sup>9</sup>

W. Kelly remarked:

Thus for us it is “this present evil age,” from which Christ’s death has delivered us (Gal. 1:4); the new age {the millennium} will be good, not evil, as surely as it is a future time.<sup>10</sup>

F. W. Grant stated:

The time of the display of God’s heavenly purpose is not reckoned among the ages of the world.<sup>11</sup>

*The Bible Treasury* contained a note pointing out that:

At present, all is in suspense as to the ages: we are heavenly.<sup>12</sup>

The last quotation is not well stated. The Mosaic age is running on. At any rate, see the illustration of these things in the chart on p. 49.

I am not aware that Walter Scott, to whom C. I. Scofield paid tribute in his *Scofield Reference Bible*,<sup>13</sup> held the above. His *Bible Handbook* (vol. 1) does not show this understanding. Moreover, his book, *The Course of Time: An Outline of Bible History and Events*, not only does not indicate this but rather his outline in the introduction suggests seven divisions before the eternal state, referring to them all as ages, including “the age of grace to the world.” That God is now showing grace to sinners is not in dispute, nor is that the issue here. It is not the intention to make a man an offender for a word, but as J. N. Darby sometimes said, I am not discussing language, but things, and the thing being noted here is what “this age” is. Finally, Walter Scott’s *At Hand or, Things Which Must Shortly Come to Pass*, has a section titled “The Ages; or, from Eternity to Eternity,” in which he outlines 11 epochs or eras plus eternity as a 12th item (as if aiming for 12 things).<sup>14</sup>

We are in a sphere that is outside and above ages. We are seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6) where

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13. See my *J. N. Darby’s Teaching Regarding Dispensations, Ages, Administrations and the Two Parentheses*, p. 97. Walter Scott supported C. E. Stuart in his teaching that Christ, in the disembodied state, took His blood to heaven and made propitiation there. W. Scott went further. Here is what W. Kelly said regarding W. Scott in 1890:

But I affirm that the author has abandoned the truth of God on propitiation in a way which the simplest believer in the most unenlightened sect, if orthodox, would denounce as false and evil . . . It is not merely (as in 1886) a fable supplanting the truth; it is since then an open contradiction of a most essential element of propitiation as revealed in all the scriptures of God, though presumably the last error flowed from the first. For if propitiation be only in heaven after death, there can be in it no abandonment of God, no suffering of Christ. Both errors make shipwreck of the faith; but the former is the parent of the latter, and necessarily involves it (*Bible Treasury* 18:60, 61).

W. Kelly referred to these teachings as “heterodoxy.” Concerning C. E. S.’ teaching, he referred to it as heaven (*Bible Treasury* 16:207) and “fundamental error” (*ibid.*, p. 190). In “*The Strange Doctrine on Propitiation*,” W. Kelly pointed out that several in fellowship with him were put away when they were discovered to hold C. E. S.’ doctrine of propitiation made in heaven. He wrote:

No person known to hold it has been, or would be, tolerated in fellowship.

Walter Scott went with the Open Brethren in 1907 and died in 1933.

In offering three explanations for our Lord’s words in John 20:17, “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father,” the *Scofield Reference Bible* says:

Jesus speaks to Mary as the High Priest fulfilling the day of atonement (Lev. 16). Having accomplished the sacrifice, He was on His way to present the sacred blood in heaven, and that, between meeting with Mary in the garden and the meeting of Mt. 28:9, He had so ascended and returned; a view in harmony with the types.

There was only one entry of Christ, when resurrected, into heaven (Heb. 9:12; see W. Kelly on *Hebrews*, *in loco*). The view is not in harmony with the fact that the veil was rent while Christ was on the cross. In Lev. 16 the blood was carried into the holy of holies when the veil was not rent.

14. Pages 204-210, London: Pickering and Inglis, fourth ed., n.d.

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8. *Biblical Dispensations*, Collingswood: The Bible for Today, pp. 7, 8, 10, etc. This writer has the following novelty: “The Dispensation of the Mosaic Law” “Ended with the Cross” {it did not, of course} and “The Dispensation of The First Advent,” which he invented, “Ended with the Ascension of Christ,” p. 14. He adjusts so as to have seven, which need not detain us.

9. *Collected Writings* 8:14. See also *Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:131, 132.

10. *Isaiah*, in note on ch. 13.

11. *Help and Food* 4:320. See his *Numerical Bible* on Matt. 24: “certainly not interposing a Christian or Gentile age between that present one {in which the disciples asked their questions} and His coming to set up the Kingdom, rather making it a protraction of the Jewish “age” itself.”

12. *The Bible Treasury* 9:272.

our blessings are (Eph. 1:3), as well as our warfare (Eph. 6:12) and where our citizenship, or commonwealth, is (Phil. 3:20). We are in union with the Head in heaven, by the power of the Holy Spirit sent down at Pentecost, constituting us as Heavenly (1 Cor. 15:48). Meanwhile, the present age, i.e., the Mosaic age, continues on until the inauguration of “the age to come,” i.e., the Messianic age, the millennium. The idea that the church is an age among the ages dies hard. But it is a blessed death because it opens the way for greater apprehension of the purpose, ways and glory of God. The fact is that the **Age-ism schemes reflect the age-ism that comes from covenant theology**, as we shall see below when considering the covenantism of Isaac Watts. J. N. Darby did not systematize a form of alleged dispensationalism that preceded him. He broke completely free of covenantism. The chart on p. 49 illustrates His teachings on dispensational truth. It is not denied that there are distinguishable ages in Scripture. Scripture uses the words age and ages. That is not the issue.

The reader should bear in mind that the Scripture does not state that the law died. It states, rather, that the Christian has died with Christ -- and the law of Moses does not apply to one who is dead (Rom. 6:7, 8). The Christian's position is on the other side of death (Eph. 2:5, 6; etc.). Positionally, he is not part of “this age.” Positionally he is seated in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6), and meanwhile he is an ambassador for Christ, the One in Whom he is there seated.

#### WHAT ABOUT HEB. 9:26 AND 1 COR. 10:11?

But now once in the consummation of the ages he has been manifested for [the] putting away of sin by his sacrifice (Heb. 9:26).

We saw that the millennial age is “the age to come.” Therefore this text is not telling us that when the Lord died there would be no more ages. Neither does it tell us that the Mosaic age ended. Heb. 9:26 has a moral force concerning the end of the testing of the first man, man positionally in the first Adam.

Why does He say that when the end is not come yet? It is because the breach is total at the cross between God and the world; as to the full history of man's probation the end *is* come; it was the end before God when once man had rejected God's own Son.<sup>15</sup>

The last Adam and second man displaced the first consequent upon the conclusion of the trial of the first. The world is not now under testing. That moral history is closed, ended. That is a fundamental truth of “dispensational truth.” We may now look at 1 Cor. 10:11:

Now all these things happened to them [as] types, and

have been written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come.

This text tells us that there is a divine intention that the ages be instructive to us. These are the ages that show what man is; what the flesh is, while fallen man is under trial. The trial proved man to be without strength (Romans) and dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians). J. N. Darby wrote:

The expression, “the ends of the ages,” which will be found in 1 Corinthians 10:11, is rather strange; but to preserve the sense of the Greek, we could not say, “the last times,” any more than “the end of the ages,” still less “the end of the world.” The end of the ages was not yet come; but all the different dispensations by which God put Himself in relation with man, so far as they were connected with man's responsibility, had come to one point, and were brought to an end in the death of the Lord Jesus. After that -- great as had been His long-suffering -- God established a new creation. We have therefore used the literal translation, “the ends of the ages.”<sup>16</sup>

The cross marked the end of the trial of the first man and the establishment of the Second Man, with the introduction of the new creation. The new creation began the moment Christ rose from the dead. He is “the beginning of the creation of God” (Rev. 3:14), i.e., the new creation of which the N T. speaks. It is too bad that Christians are taught that the trial of man has continued since the cross. That is necessarily bound up with a number of mistakes. I call the reader's attention to this as a very serious defect in understanding what God is doing for His glory in Christ.

#### BUT DOES NOT HEB. 1:2 SPEAK OF A CHURCH AGE?

God having spoken in many parts and in many ways formerly to the fathers in the prophets, at the end of these days has spoken to us in [the person of the] Son . . .

“The end of these days” refers to the time of the ending of “this age,” i.e., the end of the Mosaic age, the age of the law. In a footnote to this expression in his translation, J. N. Darby directs attention to the expression in Isa. 2:2:

And it shall come to pass at the end of days, [that] the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow unto it.

You can see that it would be an error to suppose that Heb. 1:2 indicates that the Mosaic age is not now continuing. How so? Why, to say so contradicts Isa. 2:2 which shows that Israel's restoration is bound up with the end of days, rightly understood by the Jews to mean the close of the Mosaic age of the law -- which will be replaced by the Messianic age, the Kingdom of Christ, i.e., the millennium. Thus, the prophetic scriptures of the OT show that the age of the law continues until “This age” is displaced by “the age

15. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 32:365. See also 10:275; 29:194; 33:340.

16. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 13:199.

to come.” In a footnote to the expression in Isa. 2:2, J. N. Darby’s translation says:

See Heb. 1:2. A Hebrew expression implying the end of the period of the law, when Messiah was to be introduced. It introduces the days of Messiah. It occurs Gen. 49:1; Num 24:14; Deut. 4:30; 31:29; Jer. 23:20; 30:24; 49:39; Ezek. 38:16; Dan 2:28; 10:14; Hos. 3:5; Mic. 4:1.

God had sent many (Matt. 21:33-37; Mark 12:1-6; Luke 20:9-13) and finally Messiah did come. John the Baptist, and He Himself, proclaimed the kingdom as at hand. It was offered in the Person of the meek and lowly One. He was not wanted on such a basis. The belly-minded would have a king on their own fleshly terms (John 6). The offer of the kingdom was, then, bound up with the acceptance of Himself in such a way that it brought out the moral state of the people. In the crowning act that exposed the total ruin of “the first man,” He was crucified. The kingdom had been presented to responsibility, which rejected it by rejecting Him. It *will* be brought in by sovereign grace acting in the Person of “the second man.” Meanwhile, none of this changed the age. The kingdom was ‘postponed’ and “the end of these days” (Heb. 1:2) simply runs on awaiting God’s time for the fulfillment of Isa. 2:2, etc., in connection with “the end of days,” God meanwhile forming a heavenly company. When that is completed, “the end of the {Mosaic} age” will occur and then God will displace it with “the age to come,” and will set His King upon His holy hill of Zion.

If the reader will divest himself of the idea that the church is the introduction of a new age among the ages, these things become clearer.

#### A DISPENSATION IS NOT AN AGE

Neither J. N. Darby or W. Kelly regarded “Innocency” and “Conscience” as dispensations, though when speaking conventionally they call things dispensations which they do not when being more exact. I am not aware if either ever used the word dispensation for “Innocency.” As to when dispensations began, J. N. Darby wrote, concerning Noah:

Here dispensations, properly speaking, begin. On the first, Noah . . . <sup>17</sup>

He wrote this in 1836. I call special attention to the date to show how early he understood this. W. Kelly agreed (see his discussion *in loco*):

It is a mistake to include the world before that event {the flood} in the time of dispensations. There was no dispensation, properly so called before it. <sup>18</sup>

It appears strange to think of an age of innocency. Was it not a matter of days, at most, before man fell? Is that even

an age? -- to say nothing of a dispensation. The above quoted writers, of course, believed that man was under testing. But an age being discernable between Adam and Noah, in which man was left to himself, to his conscience, if you will, does not constitute it a dispensation, properly speaking, though often we may, conventionally speaking, refer to the dispensation of conscience. But, after all, God did not dispense innocence or dispense conscience.

What dispensation or age was there here {in Eden}? And what followed after it? There was no longer trial in Paradise, because man was turned out. By what formal test was he proved outside? By none whatever. Man, the race, became simply outcasts morally -- nothing else -- from that day till after the flood. Not but that God wrought in His grace with individuals . . . But it is evident that dispensation, in the true sense of the word, there was none. <sup>19</sup>

That indicates that they would have rejected the C. I. Scofield definition of a dispensation, which begins, “A dispensation is a period of time during which . . . .” A dispensation is *not* a period of time. Of course, there are time periods that Christians commonly call dispensations which Scripture designates rather as ages (*aion*).<sup>20</sup> It is not purposed to make a man an offender for a word. And, we often use the word conventionally for an age, as did J. N. Darby in the next quotation, where “calling” might have been better. But we do want carefully to seek understanding because:

The life and spiritual energy of a saint depends on his faith in what is proper to His own dispensation. <sup>21</sup>

#### THE WORD DISPENSATION

Concerning the meaning of *oikonomia*, another remarked:

Let us now speak of the term “the dispensation or economy” in which some find a difficulty. The word is simple enough, and signifies, in the original, *the administration of a house*; by extension, it designates the entire order of anything arranged by God, as when we say “animal economy,” “vegetable economy.” The two words of which it is compounded are *oikos* house, and *nemo* to distribute, feed, etc.; and thus, in a house, there was an *economos* (steward) and an *economy*, *the administration* of the house. Thus, when God has established a certain order of things on the earth, one is wont to call it, accurately enough as it seems to me, an economy. In Eph. 1 the Spirit Himself uses it. It is possible that there is a slight shade between the Scripture and the conventional uses of this word; in general, the use of the word in Scripture is more closely connected with its original sense, and contains more the idea of an active administration. The word *dispensation* is often enough used in this sense, and has the same etymological

17. “The Apostasy of the Successive Dispensations,” *Collected Writings* 1:125 (1836).

18. *Lectures Introductory to the Study of the Pentateuch*, London: Broom, p. 46 (1871).

19. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

20. See *Collected Writings* 13:154,155.

21. *The Prospect* 2:89 (1850).

signification; God *dispenses* His gifts.<sup>22</sup>

Edward Dennett wrote:

The word before us, *οικονομία* -- (Eph. 3:2), and translated "dispensation" there -- is a compound word uniting two, which mean respectively "house" and "law"; so that to give its exact counterpart in English, it would stand thus -- "house-law"; and its obvious and primary meaning would be -- the law, rules, regulations or administration, of a household. The word itself is quite familiar to our English ears and tongues, in an Anglicised form -- "economy." This term (correctly used in such phrases as "political economy"), in current usage is mainly taken in the sense of carefulness in expenditure, or in the dispensing of means or substance; a portion undoubtedly, though far from being all, that pertains to proper household rule.

In Scripture we have it translated "stewardship," in Luke 16:2-4; the kindred word, *οικονόμος* (literally, an economist), being translated "steward" in Luke 12:42; 16:1, 3, 8; 1 Cor. 4:1, 2; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 4:10; "governors" in Gal. 4:2, and "chamberlain" in Rom. 16:23 -- while in 1 Cor. 9:17, Eph. 1:10, and Col. 1:25 we have it, as in the chapter under review, "dispensation."

As employed in these passages, and in the phrase "dispensational truth," it looks at the world as a great house-hold or stewardly, in which God is dispensing, or administering, according to rule of His own establishing, and in whose order He has from time to time introduced certain changes, the understanding of which is consequently needful, both to the intelligent interpretation of His word and to intelligent action under Him.

If we suppose a couple of households in any city, conducted on very different principles -- the one, the household of a godly man, of regular and orderly habits, who rules his house in the fear of God, ordering everything as under His eye and for Him; the other, that of a godless, dissipated man, in which everything is at sixes and sevens; and then imagine a domestic {servant} to pass from the latter into the former, and to proceed to regulate her conduct in her new place by the order or disorder with which she was familiar in the old, one can at once discern what a source of confusion she would be in the family. In order to her becoming a faithful and profitable servant in the godly household, she must first acquaint herself with its order or "economy," and then conform herself to that. Although there are certain general duties that may pertain alike to all households, the points of detail, even in well-ordered families, will of necessity vary with the varying circumstances, position in life, occupation, &c., of the inmates; so that, the "domestic economy" being different -- as meal hours and the like -- a servant has always to change or modify her action in each case as required. Even a change in the circumstances of the same household will necessitate sometimes a change in its rule, and demand therefore a corresponding change in the

conduct of its servants.

Now surely it is just as simple and plain, that if God has, from time to time, introduced changes into the order of His dealing with the world, and dispensing its affairs, the nature of these changes must be studied, understood, and acted on by His servants, if they would prove profitable servants, and co-operate intelligently in His plans. To import into one dispensation the directions or conduct prescribed for another must entail confusion and disorder, whether in the interpretation of the Scriptures relating to them, or in the regulation of action, individual or corporate, under them. Hence the necessity of what the apostle (2 Tim. 2:15) calls "rightly dividing the word of truth," the neglect of which has ever been and ever must be the source of unutterable confusion; in short, of most of the confusion we see around.<sup>23</sup>

W. Kelly remarked:

As the verse {Eph. 1:10} contains several words and clauses which are not generally understood, it may be added in this note that the word "dispensation" (*οικονομία*) has no reference to a particular period or age (which is in the New Testament expressed by *αιών*). It means "stewardship," or rather "administration," the particular form here meant being the summing, or heading (*ἀνακεφαλαιώσις*) up of all things, heavenly and earthy, under Christ. This will be in the age to come, when Christ shall be displayed as Head over all things, and the glorified saints shall reign with Him. It is neither this age, during which Satan is still permitted to reign as the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air; nor is it the eternal state, when all government is over, and Christ will have given up the kingdom, that God may be all in all. It is the intervening millennium. This will be the fulness of the times, previous periods having been the necessary preparation for it. Meanwhile, redemption through Christ's blood having been effected, the Holy Ghost seals the believer, and is the earnest of the inheritance.<sup>24</sup>

The Apostle Paul said:

... the dispensation of God which [is] given me toward you to complete the Word of God, the mystery (Col. 1:25).

The word dispensation does not mean age here. It was a responsibility dispensed to Paul. Using Col. 1:25 and Eph. 3:9 in an effort to make the church an age is quite incorrect. The reader should consult the book, *J. N. Darby's Teaching Regarding Dispensations, Ages, Administrations and the Two Parentheses*, pp. 9-14, for further discussion concerning what a dispensation is.<sup>25</sup>

23. *The Christian Friend*, pp. 67-69, 1876.

24. W. Kelly, *Lectures on the Epistle of Paul, the Apostle, to the Ephesians*, London: Morrish, p. 27, note, n.d.

25. Also see *The Mystery (Ephesians 3)*; and, *The Mystery and the Covenants*, available from the publisher. These two papers are by E. Dennett and W. Kelly respectively.

(continued...)

22. *The Present Testimony* 4:68 (1853). The reader might want to look under Dispensation . . . in the index to the *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* for more on this.

### IS THE CHURCH AN INTERCALATION?

There are Scofieldian Dispensational Age-ists who view “the church age” as an “intercalation,” an intercalary age in the Mosaic age, ending at the rapture -- thus having Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week as part of the Mosaic age. This attempts to rescue the Scofield system from having Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week as part of “the present age.” But this necessarily entails the reinstatement of the priesthood and sacrifices as sanctioned by God! The “intercalation” notion will be fully examined in Part 3, where also the subject of the end of the testing of the first man, at the cross, will be considered in some detail.

## Dispensational Schemes

### EXAMINATION OF ISAAC WATTS’ ALLEGED DISPENSATIONALISM

It is alleged by Scofieldian Dispensational Age-ists that J. N. Darby systematized dispensationalism and that some others before him had dispensational schemes. Now, I hope to show that this is based, not on a proper view of dispensational truth but, on schemes of ages -- which are not the same thing. The use of the words “ages” and “dispensations,” is certainly insufficient. Scripture uses those words. And commentators use those words. The issue is the meaning and application of those words and all that is consequently involved. Isaac Watts (1674-1748) is, allegedly, a “forerunner” of J. N. Darby. Since I found that the ideas of Isaac Watts are easily accessible I examined his “The Harmony of all the Religions Which God Ever Prescribed: Containing a Brief Survey of the Several Public DISPENSATIONS of God toward man, or His Appointment of different forms of RELIGION in successive Ages,” in *Works of Isaac Watts*, vol. 2, pp. 539-578. **He held to covenant theology and its ideas about the law.** Adam, he said, had the moral law (i.e., the 10 commandments) and was under a covenant of works. That dispensation was followed by five dispensations, each of which were an edition of the covenant of grace, he claimed, and during each of those five, the moral law was in effect:

The whole system of natural duties, or the whole moral law, is taken into every edition of the covenant of grace (p. 563).

25. (...continued)

The reader will be even more profited by reading the following books if he keeps in mind the points we have been reviewing regarding ages and dispensations:

- F. G. Patterson, *The Ways of God*, first published in 1865.
- F. W. Grant, *The Lessons of the Ages*, which appeared serially in *Help and Food*, vol. 4, 1886.
- J. A. Savage, *The Scroll of Time*, first published in 1893 (see comment by W. Kelly in the *Bible Treasury* 19:369).
- W. M. Sibthorpe, *The Ways of God with Man*, 1903.

The covenant of grace is the gospel, he says (p. 541). So, as to dispensations since Adam’s fall, they are:

different editions or manifestations of this covenant of grace to men in several ages of the world (p. 546).

More generally, dispensations are:

. . . the appointed moral rules of God’s dealing with mankind, considered as reasonable creatures, and as accountable to him for their behavior (p. 543).

Concerning the church he says, “In the household of Abraham and his posterity, God set up a visible church for himself” (p. 554), and a “national church” in the days of Moses (p. 554).

Nothing is said of the millennial reign in this paper. To him, the present is the kingdom of Christ, the last dispensation, to be followed by “The Last Judgment” (p. 576).

These statements and the following chart give us the character of his system. The reader is now in a better position to decide whether or not he thinks that J. N. Darby systematized what Isaac Watts wrote, or if the only similarity is merely in distinguishing ages. To put the question: do age distinctions within Isaac Watt’s covenant theology make him a forerunner of J. N. Darby’s dispensationalism? -- or has focusing on age-distinctions mislead Scofieldian dispensationalists? N. Giesler wrote:

But crucial for this study is Isaac Watts (1647-1748), who was not only premillennial but also a forerunner of dispensationalism. He outlined six dispensations plus a millennium which correspond exactly to those of the Scofield Bible <sup>26</sup>

Perhaps elsewhere Isaac Watts spoke of a millennium, but not in his outline paper on dispensations (ages). On p. 259, he referred to Isaac Watts as “an early dispensationalist.” <sup>27</sup> Here we see a person wholly steeped in covenant theology called “an early dispensationalist.” Isaac Watts was a covenant **age-ist**. N. Giesler has in mind ages, and the idea that a dispensation is an age, and looks at J. N. Darby as if he is in the flow of such ideas, whereas he is not. If Scofieldians see in Isaac Watts an affinity to the Scofield system, so be it. It has no real affinity to J. N. Darby’s teaching other than that both distinguished ages (while J. N. Darby stated that **a dispensation is not an age, that the church is not an age, and the first dispensation began with Noah**). I suggest that that is as flimsy a scaffolding as possible by which to erect the “forerunner” idea. But let us look at the chart of Isaac Watts’ age-scheme.

26. *The Best in Theology*, 1:254, Carol Stream: *Christianity Today*, 1987.  
27. *Ibid.*, p. 259.

### *Isaac Watt's Dispensational Scheme*

DISPENSATION	COVENANT	COMMENTS
The dispensation of innocency, or the religion of Adam at first	Covenant of works	"that original covenant of works, or law of innocency"
The Adamical dispensation of the covenant of grace, or the religion of Adam after the fall	First edition of the covenant of grace	"Three early dispensations of grace, are called the patriarchal dispensations"
The Noachical dispensation; or, the religion of Noah	Second edition of the covenant of grace	"
The Abrahamic dispensation; or, the religion of Abraham	Third edition of the covenant of grace	"
The Mosaic dispensation; or, the Jewish religion	Fourth edition of the covenant of grace (mixture with covenant of works)	The Sinai covenant is "not only an emblem, but was really a covenant of works"
The Christian dispensation	"This is the last edition of the covenant of grace, and is eminently called the gospel"	"Last and best of all the dispensations" "dispensation of Christ" "the Kingdom of <i>Christ</i> , therefore, or the Christian dispensation"

The Last Judgment

{Gray shading indicates editions of the covenant of grace.}

A few words about dispensational schemes may also be in order here. As far as schemes of seven or eight, there was a scheme of eight dispensations which appeared in *The Present Testimony*, vol. 6 (1854):

#### THE DISPENSATIONS

Genesis informs us that *Creation* was completed in *six* days, and that God rested on the *seventh*. This corresponds with the dispensations: the millennium forming the *seventh* period. The *eighth* day, in scripture, always has reference to the resurrection, or *new* state: so with the *eighth* or *eternal* period.

Observe this: we have

1. The *Adamic* dispensation. Man in innocency.
2. Man *fallen*. God's grace in giving *promise*.
3. Noahic. Government after the judgment of the flood.
4. Abrahamic or Patriarchal. Separation from idolatry.
5. Mosaic. The *Law*.
6. The Gospel. Heaven *opened to faith*. Heb.10:19-25.
7. The Millennial. Heaven *opened to sight*. John 1:51.
8. The *Eternal*. The New Heavens and New Earth. Rev.21:1-5.

W. C. B.

In 1863 a scheme of ages by John Cummings was published in the *Prophetic Times* 1:152-154 (1863):

1. "Adamic age"
2. "Antediluvian, patriarchal age"
3. "Noachian dispensation"
4. "Abrahamic dispensation"
5. "Mosaic economy"
6. "The sixth, in which we now live"
7. "The seventh age or dispensation comes, called the millennial rest"

In 1864, W. C. Bayne of McGill University, presented a scheme:<sup>28</sup>

1. "The Eden dispensation"
2. "The Antediluvian"
3. "The Patriarchal"
4. "The Mosaic"
5. "The Messianic, which extends from the birth of Christ to the ascension of Christ."

28. In James Inglis' periodical, *Waymarks in the Wilderness*, vol. 2.

6. "The dispensation of the Holy Ghost, or, as we sometimes call it, the Gospel dispensation"
7. "The Millennial"
8. "The eternal state"

James H. Brookes followed this scheme.<sup>29</sup> In 1897, C. I. Scofield wrote of J. H. Brookes, in memoriam of him, ". . . was my first and best teacher in the oracles of God."<sup>30</sup>

In 1883, J. R. Graves said that there were *seven* "ages or dispensations," "which is the sacred division of time" (p. 165).<sup>31</sup> These are:

1. Adamic
2. Antediluvian
3. Patriarchal
4. Legal or Jewish
5. Gospel
6. Messianic/Millennium
7. Consummation/Eternal Sabbath

He speaks of:

"The Tribulation Period," occasioned by the pouring out of the vials of the last plagues . . . Just preceding this event, Christ will come into the air (p. 391) . . . for his saints -- They are suddenly Caught up, Glorified and Receive their Rewards -- They remain in Paradise until the Tribulation Period has Passed (p. 406).

In 1895, George C. Needham published his *Plan of the Ages*.<sup>32</sup>

In 1898, G. Campbell Morgan published a book<sup>33</sup> with a "Chart of Events, Past, Present, and Future," showing these ages:

1. "Creation Order"
2. "The Fall to the Flood"
3. Flood to Abraham

4. Abraham to Moses
5. Moses to Christ
6. "The Present Age"
7. "Return of Christ to reign with his people"

He held a partial rapture.

In 1901, I. M. Haldeman published his *Friday Night Papers*<sup>34</sup> in which the following age-ism scheme appeared:

1. Edenic
2. Antediluvian
3. Patriarchal
4. Mosaic
5. Messianic ("begins at John 1:28, 29, with the Baptism of Jesus, and ends at John 19:31, with the Cross").
6. Holy Ghost Dispensation
7. Times of Restitution (millennium)
8. Eternal State

This appeared again in a 1904 book<sup>35</sup> and in 1915 he published *A Dispensational Key to the Holy Scriptures*,<sup>36</sup> which was extracted from his book, *How to Study the Scriptures*

#### SCOFIELDIAN DISPENSATIONAL AGE-ISM

C. I. Scofield's dispensational age-ism scheme is the best known through the many, many copies of the *Scofield Reference Bible* (SRB) that have been sold. We are thankful for every bit of divine truth that saints of God embrace, and many have been helped by the SRB -- by being kept from covenant theology -- and brought to wait for the any-moment coming of our Savior. On the other hand, there is much important truth that not only is not brought out in the SRB, but aspects of it tend to hinder apprehension of these truths.

**What is a Dispensation?** On p. 5 of the SRB we read:

A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some *specific* revelation of the will of God.

Next, the seven dispensations (ages) of his system are listed:

1. Innocency (Gen. 1:28)
2. Conscience (Gen. 3:23)
3. Human Government (Gen. 8:20)
4. Promise (Gen. 12:1)
5. Law (Ex. 19:8)
6. Grace (John 1:17)
7. Kingdom (Eph 1:10)

This definition of a dispensation really means that a dispensation is an age.<sup>37</sup> The rest of the definition does not

29. *Maranatha or the Lord Cometh*, St. Louis: Bedell, p. 285, fifth ed., 1878.

30. *The Truth: or Testimony for Christ* 22:312 (1896-1897).

31. *The Work of Christ Consummated in Seven Dispensations*, Texarkana: Bogard Press, 1971 [1883].

32. . New York: Revell. He tells us that having profited by "Believers' Meetings" in Ireland, he came to the USA in 1868 and met James Inglis and Charles Campbell, among others. I single out these two because they were spreading the books of "brethren" writers (and, indiscriminatingly, at least for a time, works by B. W. Newton and S. P. Tregelles. (See James Inglis' *Waymarks in the Wilderness*, for example.) He introduced the idea of "Believers' Meetings" and a small one was held in 1868. In Philadelphia, in 1869, J. H. Brookes attended. The next one, in 1870, was even better attended. The 1871 meeting was held in Canada; and then James Inglis and Charles Campbell died which resulted in an interruption of these meetings. He wrote:

Once again it took shape in 1875 under the leadership of D. W. Whittle, the late P. P. Bliss, and James H. Brookes. The stream has never since dried. On the contrary it has widened, deepened, and branched out into the Niagara Convention and many others.

*The Spiritual Life*, Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, pp. 18-20 (1895).

33. *God's Methods With Man: In Time: Past Present and Future*, New York: Revell, 1898.

34. New York: Audel (1901).

35. *How to Study the Bible*, New York: Cook, 1904.

36. New York: Cook, 1915.

37. C. C. Ryrie recently wrote:

. . . a dispensation is primarily a stewardship arrangement and not a period of time (though obviously the arrangement will exist during a period of time). . . .

(continued...)



negate that because the rest of the definition is the statement of a criterion by which to tell what the ages are. In 1918, James M. Gray, who then followed this scheme exactly, including citing the SRB definition, wrote:

. . . “age” is commonly used as synonymous with “dispensation” (Eph. 1:10) . . . .<sup>38</sup>

Of course, Eph. 1:10 does not prove it.

**The Church Age.** Now we must look at C. I. Scofield’s note on John 1:17 concerning the dispensation of grace:

As a dispensation, grace begins with the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 3:24-26; 4:24, 25). The point of testing is no longer legal obedience as the condition of salvation, but acceptance or rejection of Christ, with good works as the fruit of salvation (John 1:12, 13; 3:36; Matt 21:37; 22:42; John 15:22, 25; Heb. 1:2; 1 John 5:10-12). The *immediate result* of this testing was the rejection of Christ by the Jews, and His crucifixion by Jew and Gentile (Acts 4:27). The *predicted end* of the testing of man under grace is the apostasy of the professing church . . . And the resultant apocalyptic judgments (SRB, p. 1115).

- It is clear that his system violates the fact that the testing of “the first man” ended with the cross.
- That necessarily clouds apprehension of the establishment of “the second man.”
- In effect, it means that God was not finished with “the first Adam” and that he has not been completely displaced by “the last Adam.”<sup>39</sup>
- The scheme makes another age between the Mosaic age and the age to come. The only entry in the subject index under “Age” refers to Matt. 24:3 and in the note on p. 1033 we read:

Verses 4 to 14 have a double interpretation:

37. (...continued)

*A dispensation is a distinguishable economy in the outworking of God’s purpose.* If one were describing a dispensation, he would include other things, such as the ideas of distinctive revelation, responsibility, testing, failure and judgment.

(*Dispensationalism*, Chicago: Moody Press, p. 28, 1995.)

Note particularly the word **testing**. The testing of man ended at the cross. At bottom, this is still an age-ism scheme.

Recently, concerning Matt. 28:20, 13:40, 12:32 and Heb. 6:5, Roy L. Aldrich wrote:

In these passages the word “age” is used to designate this Gospel economy or a new age (“A New Look at Dispensationalism,” in R. B. Zuck, ed., *Vital Prophetic Issues*, p. 159 (1995).

In this book, chapter 6, by Jeffrey L. Townsend, is entitled, “Is the Present Age the Millennium?”

38. *A Text-Book on Prophecy*, New York: Revell, p. 137 (1918). He was at this time Dean of the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.

39. The reader will find help on these matters in my *J. N. Darby’s Teaching Regarding Dispensations, Ages, Administrations and the Two Parentheses*, Chapter 6: “The End of the Trial of the First Man at the Cross, and the Consequences for the Christian.”

They give (1) the character of the age -- wars, inter- national conflicts, famines, pestilences, per- secutions, and false Christs (cf. Dan. 9:26). This is not the description of a converted world. (2) But the same answer applies in a specific way to the *end* of the age, viz. Daniel’s seventieth week (Dan 9:24-27, *note 2*. All that has characterized the *age* gathers into awful intensity at the *end*.

1. The explanation marked (1) is incorrect. The events of Matt. 24:4-14 are called, by the Lord, “the beginning of throes,” and this is the first half of Daniel’s 70th week.
  2. He does not define what he means by “the age” but it seem clear to me that he does not regard what Scripture calls “this age” as the Mosaic age. No, he has inserted an age.
  3. It almost appears that he regards “the end of the age” as the end of that age that he has placed between the Mosaic age and the millennium. On the other hand, in the note on Dan. 9:24 he speaks of “this entire Church-age” intervening between the 69th week and the 70th week (p. 915).
- He begins the dispensation of grace after the cross, yet has made the rejection of Christ “the *immediate result* of this testing.” What causes confusion is not acknowledging that the testing of “the first man” ended with the cross and consequently man is not under testing now.
  - “Legal obedience as the condition of salvation” is quite wrong. (The NSRB, see below, has removed this.) If a man kept the law he would continue to live his natural life. And, I add, that is not what eternal life means.
  - And, finally, his definition of a dispensation is wrong. What we have here is Scofieldian Dispensational Age-ism.

**Borrowed Concepts.** Borrowing from J. N. Darby, there was added to the age-ism scheme:

- the distinction between the church as a heavenly people and Israel as an earthly people
- the pretribulation rapture
- the postponement of the kingdom
- the distinction between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven<sup>40</sup>

40. Craig A. Blaising erroneously credited C. I. Scofield with this distinction:

Scofield proposed what became the most common classical dispensational doctrine of the kingdom by distinguishing between the kingdom of God which concerned God’s moral and spiritual

(continued...)

■ the removal of covenantism

Without these things there would be no Scofieldian Dispensational Age-ism. Charles C. Ryrie has rightly concluded:

If Scofield parroted anybody's scheme it was Watts's, not Darby's.<sup>41</sup>

Except for the exclusion of the Millennium (he did not consider it a dispensation), this outline is exactly like that in the *Scofield Reference Bible*, and it is Watts's outline, not Darby's!<sup>42</sup>

Perhaps it was Isaac Watt's *covenant age-ism* scheme that formed the basis for C. I. Scofield's scheme, an age-ism scheme -- with teachings borrowed from J. N. Darby, clearing out the covenantism. What would you have without at least those teachings from J. N. Darby?

**The Synopsis and the Numerical Bible on C. I. Scofield's Desk.**

John Reid wrote:

Mr. P. Daniel Loizeaux related the following incident concerning Miss Emily Farmer, a well educated and deeply spiritual sister from England, who was in the employ of Loizeaux brothers and engaged in proofreading and correcting manuscripts at the depot. When Dr. C. I. Scofield started work on his reference Bible, he came to Loizeaux Brothers and asked, if possible, for a competent and spiritual helper, one who had intelligence in the Scriptures. Miss Farmer was assigned and worked with him throughout the first edition. She told us the two sets of reference books on Dr. Scofield's desk to which he referred constantly, were the *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible* by J. N. Darby and the *Numerical Bible* by F. W. Grant. This surely speaks volumes.<sup>43</sup>

And now the "Progressive Dispensationalists" (really Covenant Pretribulationists, at the moment) have retrogressed back into covenantism, necessarily jettisoning some of those teachings taken from J. N. Darby; teachings which were needed to form the SRB system clear of covenantism, while retaining a Watts-like, age-ism scheme.

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40. (...continued)

rule, and the kingdom of heaven, which was the political fulfillment of the Old Testament Davidic Kingdom . . . ("Contemporary Dispensationalism," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 36:7, Spring 1944).

The distinction as stated here is not altogether accurate if one thinks of J. N. Darby's view of it.

41. *Dispensationalism*, Chicago: Moody Press, p. 69, sec. ed., 1995.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

43. *F. W. Grant: His Life, Ministry and Legacy*, Plainfield: John Reid Book Fund, pp. 27, 28 (1995).

## Chapter 1.2

### *Did J. N. Darby's Teachings Influence The North American Prophetic Conferences and the Scofield Reference Bible?*

#### *The Influence of Persons Influenced by "Brethren" Writers*

There are several references that the reader interested in the history of the prophetic conferences held during the latter part of the 1800s and early 1900s can consult for details.<sup>44</sup> My purpose is not the recounting of this history, though it is necessary to refer to some of it, but to show how the truth of the pretribulation rapture came to North America and the instrumentalities by which this truth was spread, affecting the leaders in these conferences (and the consequent impact on the Scofield Reference Bible). It does not require much insight to realize that it was through J. N. Darby -- whether through his books, or the books of "brethren" who fully accepted the teachings associated with his name, or through his seven visits to North America. I am not aware that this has been done before. The acceptance of the truths of the pretribulation rapture and of the distinction between Israel (earthly) and the church (heavenly), by those who remained in their denominations, or sought a transdenominational ministry<sup>45</sup> was not, of course, accompanied by the acceptance of numerous other truths taught by J. N. Darby regarding the church and ministry, separation from evil, etc., and in particular I call attention to dispensational truth. The

difference will be shown subsequently. All truth has a practical bearing. We practice what we *really* believe. Doctrine forms behavior. Defect in practice may be a failure with respect to truth held; but more often it is the expression of defective doctrines held.

#### MINIMIZATION OF INFLUENCE

While I am thankful that Charles C. Ryrie is holding the line about Progressive Dispensationalism, I am dismayed at his minimization of the effect of J. N. Darby's teachings on North American dispensationalism. For example, in commenting on the famous premillennial prophetic conference held in New York in 1878, concerning which more will be found below, he wrote:

An "any moment" coming was linked to premillennialism. But there is little evidence that these men were borrowing from Darby, and the Plymouth Brethren were not prominent in the leadership of these conferences. The leaders were denominational men.<sup>46</sup>

Did "Plymouth Brethren" have to be there for these "denominational men" to have been influenced by J. N. Darby's "any moment" teaching? Is he implying that they saw this by themselves??? He also wrote:

Likewise, there was little, if any, connection between dispensationalism, and the earliest prophetic conferences in America (the first being in 1876). They were not called to promote dispensationalism<sup>47</sup> but to oppose post-millennialism, annihilationism, and perfectionism, and to promote premillennialism, the unity of the body of Christ, and Bible study.<sup>48</sup> The Bible studies were based on what some speakers themselves described as a grammatical-

44. David O. Beale, *In Search of Purity*, Greenville: Unusual Publications, 1986 (J. N. Darby's name does not appear in the copious index); E. R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism, British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930*, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1970; Larry D. Pettegrew, *The Historical and Theological Contributions of the Niagara Bible Conference to American Fundamentalism*, 1976, dissertation at Dallas Theological Seminary -- part of which was adapted to, and appeared serially in the *Central Bible Quarterly*, Winter 1976 through Winter 1977. Also see George W. Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, Greenville: Bob Jones University Press, 1973.

45. . Arno C. Gaebelein is an example.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

47. {Why they were called does not prove the lack of influence.}

48. {J. N. Darby had been doing this. See his *Collected Writings*.}

historical method of interpretation.<sup>49</sup> If dispensational ideas were presented, they were incidental to the main purpose of the gatherings.

Nevertheless, these conferences inevitably did promote dispensationalism because of the insistence on the absolute authority of the Scriptures, the literal fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, and the expectation of the imminent coming of Christ.<sup>50</sup> However, in the 1886 Chicago prophetic conference a speech was given that included a dispensational scheme, emphasis on the literalness of the characteristics of the millennial kingdom, the withdrawal by Jesus of the kingdom in the later part of His earthly ministry,<sup>51</sup> and the pretribulation rapture of the church . . .

In due time dispensationalism and a certain system of eschatology were wedded. But it was a system of Eschatology, not merely an outline of future events.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, it would be more accurate to call it a system of interpretation, for dispensational premillennialism not only includes a description of the future but also involves the meaning and significance of the entire Bible.<sup>53</sup>

#### **JAMES INGLIS (1813-1872) AND CHARLES CAMPBELL (DIED 1873?)**

James Inglis edited the periodical *Waymarks in the Wilderness*, 1864-1872, the year of his death. His friend Charles Campbell edited *The Scripture Testimony*, 1863, and speaks of having received books and tracts from England which:

with unusual Scripturalness, power and unction set forth the gospel of the grace of God, the coming and glory of His Kingdom, and the calling and hope of the Church of Christ. (p. 377).

He goes on to speak of distributing these and enlarging that distribution:

With this small beginning the Lord was pleased to grant his blessing. Soon both the demand and supply was increased (p. 378).

Indeed, the magazine carried some articles by C. H. Mackintosh. There were also a few by his friend James Inglis and one can see progress being made. When we come to the 1864 issuance of *Waymarks in the Wilderness*, the first article is "The Expectation of the Church," by James Inglis, in which we read:

Before the visions of judgment in the apocalypse, he assures the Church, "I will keep you from the hour of temptation that is coming upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Accordingly, in the visions of judgment, the Church is

seen, not on the earth, but under the symbol of twenty-four Elders seated around the throne, until under another symbol, she is seen as the armies of heaven following Him who goes forth on the white horse to complete his victory (p. 16).

We look for our gathering together unto him, when those who sleep in Jesus shall arise, and we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and there is not a single predicted event standing between us and the fulfillment of that hope (p. 16).<sup>54</sup>

In 1864 James Inglis began W. C. Bayne's paper, "The Dispensations, Prophetically and Doctrinally Considered." In various issues over the years he referred to and recommended the books of "brethren." In 1871 an article by James H. Brookes, of whom we have more to say below, appeared. Below, we shall note that J. H. Brookes says that he discovered premillennialism from the reading of the Word, but is silent concerning how he understood the pretribulation rapture. It may well be that James Inglis convinced him. At any rate, in the article James Inglis wrote, he said:

That surely is a hazardous theory which projects anything, even to the thickness of the thinnest tissue-paper, between the soul and the Savior; and precisely the same objection which can be brought with tremendous force against post-millennialists who separate the waiting bridegroom a thousand years from the expecting bride, may be urged against pre-millennialists who separate Him by the intervening events which they fancy must necessarily occur previous to His advent (p. 230).

Also, we shall see below that it was James Inglis who taught D. L. Moody the truth of the pretribulation rapture. Is it too much to say that through Charles Campbell and James Inglis truths that were being taught by "brethren,"<sup>55</sup> which really were brought out through J. N. Darby, were being disseminated in the U.S.A.? James Inglis also edited another magazine from 1864-1872, namely, *The Witness*. In this magazine "brethren" writers were quoted and their books advertised for sale. Of special interest is that the May 1867 issue included an advertisement for the five volumes of the *Synopsis* by J. N. Darby. In *Waymarks*, 1872, p. 187, the following disclaimer appeared, which also shows from where the pretribulation rapture was learned:

Only in justice to our contributors on the one hand and to

49. {J. N. Darby believed in "literal" interpretation before some of them were born.}

50. {J. N. Darby, and others, insisted on these things long before.}

51. {In other words, the "postponement" of the kingdom, taught by others long before.}

52. {If this sentence is supposed to mean that teachers like J. N. Darby and W. Kelly only had an "outline of future events," that would be stunning.}

53. *Ibid.*, p. 146.

54. *Waymarks* for 1872 carried some addresses by James Inglis delivered between 1852 and 1859, none of which indicated that he held the doctrine of the pretribulation rapture. I would think Charles Campbell, a joint editor, would have included one, if it existed. At any rate, the 1852 address showed that he was a premillennialist.

55. In 1866 there was a 25-page article favorably reviewing J. N. Darby's *The Irrationalism of Infidelity*. Significantly, J. Inglis wrote:

Mr. Darby's relations to a body of believer's known as the "Plymouth Brethren," are well known to many of our readers" (p. 1).

the Plymouth Brethren on the other, it is proper to say that no one connected with that sect ever wrote a line for its pages. {with the possible exception of W. C. Bayne.} Our contributors are chiefly "pastors of our Reformed churches," most of them well known, though they do not claim consideration on ecclesiastical grounds. So far from being "the doctrinal representatives of the Plymouth Brethren," while we gratefully own our indebtedness to them under God for the testimony they have borne to our standing in Christ and the hope of our calling {the pretribulation rapture}, we have been constrained to testify against nearly everything in their theology which distinguishes them from the other men of God named in the review which occasions this statement.

Here is E. R. Sandeen's assessment:

Although not willing to admit their affiliation {?} with his denominational views, Americans raided Darby's treasuries and carried off his teachings as their own.<sup>56</sup>

Before passing on I would note that many things appeared in *Waymarks* that I consider inconsistent with dispensational truth and church truth. Now we need to introduce George C. Needham.

### GEORGE C. NEEDHAM'S (1840-1902) ROLE

George C. Needham wrote that he introduced the idea of conferences to the U.S.A. He said that having profited by "Believers' Meetings" in Ireland, he came to the USA in 1868 and met James Inglis and Charles Campbell, among others. I single out these two because they were spreading the books of "brethren" writers (and, indiscriminatingly, at least for a time), works by the posttribulationists, B. W. Newton and S. P. Tregelles.<sup>57</sup> He introduced the idea of "Believers' Meetings" and a small one was held in 1868. In Philadelphia, in 1869, James H. Brookes attended.<sup>58</sup> The next one, in 1870, was even better attended. The 1871 meeting was held in Canada; and then James Inglis and Charles Campbell died which resulted in an interruption of these meetings. He came to see James Inglis die.<sup>59</sup> Concerning the recommencement of the meetings, G. C. Needham wrote:

Once again it took shape in 1875 under the leadership of D. W. Whittle, the late P. P. Bliss, and James H. Brookes.

56. *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, p. 102.

57. See James Inglis' *Waymarks in the Wilderness*, 1864-1872 and Charles Campbell, *The Scripture Testimony*, Philadelphia: Repository of Scripture Testimony, 1863.

58. In 1897, W. J. Erdman (an associate editor of the SRB) wrote in memorium of J. H. Brookes:

About 27 years ago {1897-27 = about 1870, note} I first met Dr. Brookes in a Christian Conference held in his church in St. Louis. Of those in attendance as speakers, three names have ever since been associated, in my mind, as inseparable from a peculiar testimony and defense of the faith in its primitive and apostolic form; James Inglis . . . Charles Campbell . . . and James H. Brookes . . . (*The Truth*, 22:397).

59. . *Waymarks in the Wilderness* 10:211 (1872).

The stream has never since dried. On the contrary it has widened, deepened, and branched out into the Niagara Convention and many others.<sup>60</sup>

In the "Introduction" to James Brookes' *Present Truth* (1877, p. 12) he spoke of how he and some others, saved in Ireland in 1861, came together for Bible study, and:

we investigated the word alone, being neither helped or hindered by traditional theology. The glorious coming of our Lord, as an event hastening near, became to our souls an inspiring, energizing hope (p.13).

But he did not say that they had then discovered the pretribulation rapture or the any-moment coming. However, on p. 15 he spoke of his ". . . living hope that at any moment our Lord may come . . ."

### BIBLE STUDY IN 1875-1880

A. C. Gaebelein noted this:

During the summer of 1875, a few brethren met by agreement in a cottage, not far from Chicago, to spend a week in Bible study. There were only six, among them Dr. Nathaniel West, Dr. James H. Brookes, Dr. W. J. Eerdman, and Dr. H. M. Parsons. The blessing they received during that week was so great they decided to meet again the next summer.

The same brethren, with several others, among them Dr. A. J. Gordon, of Clarendon Street Baptist Church, Boston, gathered in fellowship at Swampscott, Mass. They had difficulty in obtaining a suitable meeting place, but finally they secured the chapel of the Congregational church. This was during August, 1876. It became known that there were Bible study meetings going on in the chapel, and on the next day the chapel was crowded. Once more there was much blessing, and the brethren were greatly encouraged. The emphasis in these services was put on the return of our Lord, "looking for that blessed hope." As this great truth was but little known and preached, it attracted much attention.

The meetings during the summer of 1877 were held in Watkins Glen, N. Y., with far greater attendance. Then followed the meetings during the month of June in 1878, 1879, and 1880. They were held in Clifton Springs, N. Y., where a well-known sanitarium was located, under the leadership of Henry Foster, M. D., a Bible student. A commodious tent was pitched on the grounds. New teachers were heard, among them Evangelist George Needham. Year after year there was an increased attendance and corresponding blessing.<sup>61</sup>

### HELPS BY THE WAY & HELP AND FOOD

Volume 1 of the monthly "brethren" magazine, *Helps by the Way*, began in 1873 and was published in Toronto. It became *Helps by the Way*, New Series in 1879 and was followed by two volumes. In 1883, a new publisher in New

60. *The Spiritual Life*, Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, pp. 18-20 (1895).

61. *The History of the Scofield Reference Bible*, pp. 31, 32.

York, Loizeaux Brothers, began to publish *Help and Food*, under the editorship of F. W. Grant. This publication was issued well into the 20th century. This came about because:

In the year 1870 at a Bible conference in Guelph, Ontario, Paul Loizeaux first came in touch with the group known as Brethren. There he met Mr. J. N. Darby. The influence of this man, and many evangelists who had gathered from different parts of Canada, greatly affected his future life.<sup>62</sup>

A "Bible Truth Depot" had been started in 1876 in Iowa and was transferred to New York city in 1879, from which various publications went forth.

### THE 1878 PROPHETIC CONFERENCE<sup>63</sup>

Returning now to the first prophetic conference, Oct. 30-Nov. 1, 1878 (at the Holy Trinity Church -- Protestant Episcopal), the periodical, the *New Englander*, took umbrage about its premillennialism (that was the main thrust -- against postmillennialism), and particularly about the "any moment coming." The third resolution<sup>64</sup> passed by the conference, and found in the "Introduction" to the book, said:

III. This second coming of the Lord Jesus is everywhere in the Scriptures represented as imminent, and may occur at any moment; yet the precise day and hour thereof is unknown to man, and is only known to God (p.8).

Referring to this resolution, G. N. H. Peters wrote:

This was passed at the time without anyone protesting, and was thus publicly announced as *the belief* of the Conference.<sup>65</sup>

The *New Englander* article said this about resolution III.:

The distinctive significance of this resolution is in the word "imminent." As exemplifying the sense in which it is understood by the Conference, we quote from Dr. Brookes:

And now it seems to me that owing to the entire construction of the scheme of redemption as set forth in the Gospel, there is nothing to intervene between this passing moment and our gathering together unto Him. How often the thought has come to me as I have listened with delight to the instructions of these beloved brethren; it may be that before this Conference is over we shall hear the shout -- the kingly, conquering shout -- of our descending Lord, and in a moment what a strange stir! What rapture! What a hope! . . .

Dr. Craven says of the second coming that it "may be for

ought we know before the sun sets," it "may not be for centuries."

Rev. Rufus W. Clark . . . also affirms that Christ may come at any moment.<sup>66</sup>

The conference papers were published by Fleming H. Revell, Chicago, and the book advertised some books by "brethren" writers.<sup>67</sup>

Returning now to James H. Brookes, recall that he had been at early meetings begun by George C. Needham -- with James Inglis and Charles Campbell. After the interlude in these meetings they commenced again in 1875, the year he began to publish a periodical, *The Truth: or Testimony for Christ*. As did James Inglis and Charles Campbell, so did J. H. Brookes recommend the "brethren's" writings.<sup>68</sup>

One of his articles, "How I Became a Pre-millennialist," was also printed in E. W. Bullinger's periodical, *Things to Come* (3:68). Interestingly, he describes in some detail how he arrived at premillennialism but quietly passes over how he became a pretribulationist!<sup>69</sup>

### THE 1884 CLIFTON SPRINGS PROPHETIC CONFERENCE

Robert Cameron<sup>70</sup> claimed that he was:

appointed one of the committee of nine to take charge of subjects, speakers and other matters. At the 1884 Conference it became the "fashion" of every speaker to

62. *New Englander*, Jan. 1879, p. 133, 139.

63. *The coming of the Lord* -- collection of articles by Open Brethren.

*Eight Lectures on Prophecy* -- unnamed, but likely Trotter and Smith.

*Papers on the Lord's Coming*, C. H. Mackintosh.

*Things to Come*, J. R. Caldwell -- of Open Brethren.

*Plain Papers on Prophetic Subjects*, W. Trotter.

68. In the last year of his life he included a book notice regarding the failure of the "Brethren" in which he spoke of:

. . . the remarkable movement inaugurated by J. N. Darby, B. W. Newton, George Muller and others, has utterly failed "as a united testimony." It would be well if the "Brethren" should heed the suggestions and warnings he gives; but there is no hope of this amid a people, who are on the whole the soundest in faith, and most intelligent in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, "til He come" (*The Truth* 22:256).

B. W. Newton and G. Muller did not inaugurate the movement. In fact, B. W. Newton's worst offence was that he taught doctrine that involved Christ being at an "unspeakable circumstantial distance from God." G. Muller was a chief instrument in the beginning of Open Brethrenism. These things are fully documented in my books on J. N. Darby.

Concerning the history, it must be acknowledged that it is shameful. Many evils arose and caused divisions when faithful men resisted the evil. However, separation from evil is taught in Scripture. Moreover, the greater the truth professed, the more difficult the practice of it, and the greater the attacks of the Enemy.

So, evidently J. H. Brookes liked their ministry very much. But there was some reason for such jibes . . .

69. This paper is also found in D. R. Williams, *James H. Brookes, A Memoir*, St. Louis, pp.147-152.

70. See my *Precious Truths Revived and Defended Through J. N. Darby*, vol. 1 for this posttribulationist's calumny of J. N. Darby and others.

62. *A Century of Christian Publishing, Loizeaux Brothers 1876-1976*, Neptune: Loizeaux Brothers, p. 7 (1976).

63. For readers interested in a sympathetic and detailed treatment of these conferences and the development of American fundamentalism, see the articles by Larry L. Pettegrew in the *Central Bible Quarterly*, for the winter 1976 through the winter 1977, "The Niagara Bible Conferences and American Fundamentalism."

64. The resolutions were "passed by that conference in its closing session . . ." (*Prophetic Studies of the International Prophetic Conference* (Chicago, November, 1886), New York: Revell, 1886, preface).

65. "The Imminency of the Second Advent," in *The Truth* 21:207 (1895).

"ring the changes" on the possibility of Christ coming any moment . . . <sup>71</sup>

### THE 1886 CHICAGO PROPHETIC CONFERENCE

George C. Needham was the secretary and organizer of this conference. Fleming H. Revell published the conferences papers in 1886 under the title, *Prophetic Studies of the International Prophetic Conference (Chicago, November, 1886)*. Interestingly, this 1886 book advertised the following books:

*Eight Lectures on Prophecy*, by Trotter and Smith  
*Plain Papers on Prophetic Subjects*, by W. Trotter  
*Papers on the Lord's Coming*, C. H. M. {Mackintosh}  
*Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, by J. N. Darby  
*Notes on the Revelation*, by H. H. Snell  
*The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, by T. B. Baines  
*The Lord's Coming Israel and the Church*, by T. B. Baines  
*Discourses on the Book of Revelation*, by W. Lincoln (Open Brethren)  
*C. H. M.'s Notes on the Pentateuch* (six vols.)

This conference also adopted the resolutions of the 1878 conference (p. 165) -- see above. G. N. H. Peters said:

One leading object of the Conference was, to emphasize "*the near Coming of the Lord*." Hence in the formal declaration of principles, the Conference, without a protest, as the expression of *its belief*, passed the resolutions adopted by the New York Conference eight years before. The interval of eight years, with increased prophetic study, etc., led to the cordial reception and renewed adoption, without a change of a word, of the 3rd Resolution . . . <sup>72</sup>

The dispensational scheme presented at this conference (alluded to by C. C. Ryrie, above) was that of A. J. Frost (pp. 166, 167):

1. Referred to as the "paradisiacal dispensation" and "Eden dispensation"
2. "Antediluvian dispensation"
3. "Patriarchal dispensation"
4. "Mosaic dispensation"
5. "Christian dispensation"
6. The millennium is spoken of as "millennial glory"

A. J. Frost also mentioned the course dispensations take and that they teach us something (p. 166). He also used the phrase "Christ's heavenly people" (p. 177). A. T. Pierson pointed out seven features that he thought characterizes all dispensations (p. 32). The word dispensation is seen throughout this book. Here is an interesting example by George S. Bishop, and this particular statement has much to commend it. Perhaps he was profiting from reading expositions by the "brethren."

The times of the Gentiles includes the church dispensation, but the phrase does not include the thought of the church, which looked upon as heavenly, is outside of the scene altogether, and incognito, waits for her rapture (p. 49).

D. C. Marquis even spoke of the postponement of the kingdom, and the gospel of the kingdom going forth again in a future day:

. . . by that rejection the manifestation of the kingdom is postponed until the fullness of the gentiles is brought in -- that gospel shall then be heralded in the whole inhabited world in the certainty of the kingdom's near approach -- a witness to all nations -- and then (tote) the end will come (p. 87).

J. G. Princell spoke of the Lord's coming for us before the tribulation:

There will come "a time of trouble" unparalleled in all history . . . But the true church of Christ, especially that part of it living on earth at the time of Christ's coming, has the particular promise of being exempt from those awful calamities . . . (p. 297).

We have reviewed sufficiently. Where came these men by such teachings? No influence from the teachings of J. N. Darby?

### ADONIRAM JUDSON GORDON'S (1836-1895) TRIBUTE

Ernest B. Gordon, the son of A. J. Gordon, in the biography of his father, quoted the following from him:

But if we turn to the other party we see movement almost ultra-biblical, and a body of men almost ultra-apostolical in their style and manner of life and service. It gathered to itself a strong body of scholars, mostly from the pulpits of the Church of England, who began to pour out biblical literature in floods -- exposition and textual criticism, lexicons and dictionaries for aiding in the study of the Bible, synopses of Scripture, tract leaflets, etc. The Christian world has been fairly inundated with these issues, and it may be doubted if any body of Christians ever sent forth such a mass and such a variety of biblical literature in the same length of time.

If we were to describe in a word the theological complexion of these writings, we should say that here we have high Calvinism, preaching free grace with a fullness and plainness never surpassed; practicing believer's baptism, and writing treatises on its symbolism rarely equaled for deep spiritual insight; laying down a rule of life almost ascetic in its requirement of separation from the world and surrender of earthly possessions for Christ's sake; and holding with primitive apostolic fervor to the personal, literal, and ever-imminent coming of Christ as the hope of the church. It is our opinion that the best writings of this body have furnished the text-books of modern evangelism, and largely determined its type of doctrine and preaching. Let us specify briefly.

There is C. H. Mackintosh's "Notes on Genesis," "Exodus," etc., a work for which Mr. Spurgeon has expressed his high admiration, and which has had an immense circulation. We know of hardly any modern

71. *Scriptural Truth of the Lord's Return*, New York: Revell, p. 145 (1922).

72. *The Truth* 21:210 (1895).

treatise which is so full of the meat and marrow of the gospel as this, and which sets forth so clearly the fundamental doctrines of atonement and justification. There is "The Blood of Jesus," by William Reid, a small treatise, but one which has given to thousands of readers a new revelation of the simplicity of the gospel. There are the "C. S. Tracts," {Charles Stanley, of Rotherham} brief presentations of the gospel to the inquirer. They have been scattered far and wide, and have, in our opinion, never been surpassed as clear expositions of the way of life to the unconverted. Of less popular works, we might mention Darby's "Synopsis of the Bible," the expositions of Kelly, Newton, Tregelles, Soltau, Pridham, and Jukes. These books, especially those of the first three, have constituted the chief theological treasury of many of our evangelists. We can say for ourselves that, from the first time our eyes fell upon these treasures, we have nowhere else seen the gospel so luminously presented -- the gospel of the grace of God, disencumbered of legalism and mysticism and tradition. Considered theologically these are humble treatises. So was the "Theologia Germanica," out of which, through Luther, the German Reformation was born. So were the expositions of Peter Bohler, from which Wesley says he received his first true apprehension of saving faith. The springs of great reformations are often hidden and remote, but they rarely fail to be recognized in the end . . .

Such, we believe, after much thought and careful investigation and frequent conversations with those best qualified to judge, is the real spring of the present evangelistic movement. It demands a fearless candor to concede it, but we believe that truth requires us to confess that we owe a great debt, both in literature and in life, to the leaders of this ultra-Protestant movement. And we are glad to believe that the light which it has thrown out by its immense biblical study and research has been appropriated by many of the best preachers and evangelists in our Protestant churches.<sup>73</sup>

Note that he is saying that he spoke with **others** who

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73. Ernest B. Gordon, *Adoniram Judson Gordon, A Biography*, New York: Revell, pp. 86-88 (1896). C. Allyn Russell wrote:

It is clear that Gordon held many ideas of the brethren. These included biblical inerrancy; the "any moment" return of Jesus "for" and "with" his saints; the secret rapture of the church; the presence of the Spirit in the life of the believer leading to a "separation" from the world; a zeal for evangelism and prophetic studies, including dispensationalism; and, a firm opposition to ritualism and formalism in worship. At the same time, Gordon, who paid more attention to the Plymouth Brethren than to the Princeton theologians, also had his disagreements with the Brethren. He did not accept their conviction that the church "was in ruins." Instead, he chose to work within the denominational structure rather than outside of it. Gordon was also an historicalist in his understanding of the book of Revelation in contrast to the futurist posture of Darby. Gordon's change from a futurist to an historicalist interpretation occurred because he believed that the latter harmonized with fulfilled history and chronology, and, significantly, was truer to Scripture ("Adoniram Judson Gordon: Nineteenth-Century Fundamentalist," *American Baptist Quarterly*, p. 83, 1965).

concurred with his judgment.

**JAMES H. BROOKES (1830-1897)**

We have already indicated something of J. H. Brookes' recommendation of "brethren's" writings in his earlier career. In answer to a question, in 1892 he wrote:

There are many commentaries on the book of Revelation good, bad and indifferent. Most of them are trash. Among the best are Canon Fauset in the Critical and Experimental Commentary of Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, William Kelly, H. H. Snell, Newberry and William Lincoln.<sup>74</sup>

In 1895 he wrote:

Their books and tracts were largely circulated, bringing comfort and peace and joy to thousands of souls, quickening interest in the study of the Bible, and spreading like a wave of blessing through the Church of England and other religious bodies.<sup>75</sup>

He noted the death of C. H. Mackintosh in 1896:

As the editor of "Things New and Old" in twenty-two small volumes, and as the author of Notes on Genesis and other books of Moses, he has been an unspeakable blessing to many thousands of souls.<sup>76</sup>

H. A. Ironside claimed that J. N. Darby preached in J. H. Brookes' church. John Reid claims this:

His pulpit had often been open to them. J. N. Darby, Malachi Taylor, Paul J. Loizeaux and others had preached in his church in St. Louis at various times. Dr. Brooks {sic} broke bread with an assembly of Brethren one Lord's Day shortly before he was called up higher. His comments on Grant's *Numerical Bible* were the following:

There is nothing like it,<sup>77</sup> because there is nothing that so gets at the mind of the Holy Spirit as revealed in the inspired Scriptures. It must be most helpful to the believer, who delights to bow his intellect and reason to the authority of God's infallible and inerrant Word.<sup>78</sup>

We have J. H. Brookes' own statement about hearing J. N. Darby:

**Having often heard with great pleasure and profit Mr. Darby . . .**<sup>79</sup>

J. N. Darby visited the North American continent seven times from 1862-1877.

We have already commented on J. H. Brookes' learning

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74. *The Truth* 18:744 (1892).

75. Quoted from *The truth* 19:249 (1895) by L. D. Pettegrew, "The Niagara Bible Conference and American Fundamentalism," *Central Bible Quarterly* winter, 1976, p. 15.

76. . *The Truth* 22:130 (1896).

77. . I must state my disagreement with this assessment by J. H. Brookes. JND's *Synopsis* is ahead of the *Numerical Bible*. And, helpful as it is, it is a hindrance on the subject of *life in the Son*. I must add also that John Reid's comments on the Grant division, (particularly on A. P. Cecil, whose relevant papers I have) and on the early history of the "Brethren," leaves much to be desired.

78. *F. W. Grant: His Life, Ministry and Legacy*, p. 29.

79. *The Truth* 21:313 (1895).



premillennialism from his personal study of Scripture but also his silence as to how he learned the truth of the pretribulation rapture. It may well be that he was helped by James Inglis, if not by J. N. Darby directly, as was D. L. Moody.

In keeping with the minimization of credit to the influence of J. N. Darby, Larry L. Pettegrew wrote:

It ought not to be thought impossible that a Bible Student of Brookes' ability and earnestness could develop the essentials of dispensationalism from the direct study of the Bible.<sup>80</sup>

### D. L. MOODY

In an 1877 biography of D. L. Moody, he is recorded as saying:

Now, I can't find any place in the Bible where it tells me to wait for signs of the coming of the millennium, as the return of the Jews, and such like; but it tells me to look for the coming of the Lord . . . The trump of God may be sounded, for anything we know, before I finish this sermon . . .<sup>81</sup>

His biographers do not say where he learned so to speak.<sup>82</sup> However, *The Witness* for Sept. 1935, p. 228, cited this from the *Moody Monthly* for Feb. 1935:

He and others were beginning to get light on the Second Coming, and he asked {Henry} Moorhouse if he knew anyone well posted on that truth? Moorhouse<sup>83</sup> said there was a brother in New York, Richard Owens, a Dublin man . . . who could tell him all about it . . . Owens recommended him to Brother {James} Inglis, an old country teacher, then living in Philadelphia, and publishing a monthly paper {*Waymarks in the Wilderness*}. So Mr. Moody went to

Philadelphia and sat at the feet of Inglis. Later, he met Mr. Darby, who visited the United States and who became a great friend of Dr. James H. Brookes, of St. Louis. Mr. Owens himself told me about the trip of Mr. Moody to get light on the Second Coming (Dr. W. S. Manners).

And James Inglis was instrumental in spreading the "brethren's" writings. J. N. Darby made a number of references to D. L. Moody.<sup>84</sup>

### ARNO C. GAEBELEIN (1861-1945)

He was saved in late 1879 in his eighteenth year. It was at the 1898 Niagara Bible Conference, where numbers of leaders of the pretribulation/premillennial met together, that he made the acquaintance of F. E. Fitch of New York, of whom he wrote:

. . . he was one of the "brethren," commonly called "Plymouth Brethren," of whose existence I knew nothing till I met Mr. Fitch.<sup>85</sup>

That is very strange in view of the dissemination of their writings through, for example, Fleming H. Revell. In an 1888 book published by Revell there is an

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84. J. N. Darby had met D. L. Moody at Chicago and complained of his doctrine:

As to the work at Edinburgh, I dare say there may have been conversions, and one must bless God for that. But Moody before he came to England denied openly all work of grace in conversion, and denounced it as diabolical in his own pulpit. I hear he has got on in this subject, that M.'s tract did him good, which is in great measure a *resume* of brethren's teaching; the author not concealing in his intercourse with others where he learned it. But some of Moody's false doctrine was taught in his public ministrations in Edinburgh, according to R. and M.'s account, which no doubt is correct, for we discussed it at Chicago, and he held it there, namely, that no man is condemned for his sins, but for not coming to the refuge -- sins are all borne and put away for everybody (Letters 2:259).

He wrote:

But M.'s work, to say nothing of false doctrine in details, avowedly mixes up Christianity with the world and worldly influences, and uses them because it tells in favor of the work, and fosters worldliness and the evils of Christendom . . . M., I am told, has made progress; but when I knew him he denied openly all grace in conversion, denounced it publicly when fully discussed and held, and preached at Edinburgh that none were condemned for their sins, only for not believing . . . (Letters 2:327, 328, Feb. 15, 1875).

Activity is all right, but activity instead of Christ -- and that is Moodyism and United States religion -- is a most deadening and worldly-making principle. The stir gone, the worldliness remains, and the world despises it (p. 356, see pp. 358, 369, 375 also).

Later D. L. Moody had his attention directed to C. H. Mackintosh's Notes and secured all of C. H. M.'s writings, which he regarded as the "very key to the Scriptures," E. R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, p. 173.

85. *Half A Century*, New York: Our Hope, pp. 1, 83 (1930).

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80. *Op cit.*, Fall 1977, p. 24.

81. *Moody: His Words, Work, and Workers*, New York: Nelson and Phillips, p. 427 (1877).

82. . For example, W. H. Daniels, *D. L. Moody, His Earlier Life and Work*, London: Hodder and Stroughton, 1892; W. R. Moody (his son), *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, New York: Revell, 1900.; H. D. Northrop, *Life and Labors of Dwight L. Moody*, Philadelphia: Fidelity Publishing Co., 1899; J. Wilbur Chapman, *The Life and Work of Dwight L. Moody*, Chicago: Gray, 1900.

83. Henry Moorhouse died in 1880. He had much to do with Open Brethren (Geo. C. Needham, *Recollections of Henry Moorhouse, Evangelist*, Chicago: Revell, pp.13, 15, ch. 15, etc., 1885, reprint of 1881 ed.). On Lord's day morning, if he could not worship in an Open Brethren type setting, he would stay in his room and read and pray. The writer said:

The general name by which these "assemblies" are known is that of "Brethren;" not in itself objectionable or inappropriate. There are different families of "Brethren," just as there are several branches of Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Baptists, etc. One school, known as the Exclusive," Henry never entered; nor was the *exclusiveness* of some "open" assemblies very congenial to his warm sympathies . . . With such, who respected his convictions, he fraternized and labored. He adhered to his principles, they to theirs (*ibid.*, p. 199).

J. N. Darby, with whom, then, H. Moorhouse would not have fellowship in the assembly, would see this as putting fellowship in service ahead of, and above, fellowship in worship -- the reverse of what Scripture indicates. I suppose if H. M. had "warm sympathies," J. N. D. must have had cold sympathies!

advertisement for C. H. Mackintosh's *Notes*.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, J. H. Brookes knew of them, referred to them in his magazine, *The Truth*, and referred to their writings. Be that all as it may, in his magazine, *Our Hope*, for Dec. 1903, the "Book Reviews" recommended F. W. Grant's *The Lessons of the Ages*, which pointed out that Christianity is not an age. He either overlooked that or rejected it. He also thought very highly of F. W. Grant's *Numerical Bible*. *Our Hope* for Jan. 1905 carried an age-ism scheme by H. H. Parsons, "Dispensational Truth."

When the work on the Scofield Reference Bible had started, C. I. Scofield wrote to A. C. Gaebelein:

My beloved Brother: By all means follow your own views of prophetic analysis. I sit at your feet when it comes to prophecy and congratulate in advance the future readers of the Reference Bible on having in their hands a safe, clear, sane guide through what to most is a labyrinth.<sup>87</sup>

In conversations with Frank E. Gaebelein, the son of A. C. Gaebelein, he said to David A. Rausch:

My father was definitely a dispensationalist. I believe his dispensationalism came from his association with the Plymouth Brethren and through reading the writings of John Nelson Darby, William Kelly, C. H. Mackintosh, and F. W. Grant, and through knowing and also working with men like F. C. Jennings, W. J. Eerdman, A. T. Pierson, Nathaniel West and C. I. Scofield.<sup>88</sup>

The SRB was published in 1909.<sup>89</sup> In his magazine, *Our Hope*, April 1910, p. 671, he wrote:

John Nelson Darby was one of the most eminent scholars who ever lived and possessed insight in the Word of God, which made him one of the greatest gifts the Lord ever gave to His church. And yet he was a very humble man.

We shall limit ourselves to one more reference from his pen:

In the beginning of the nineteenth century long forgotten and obscured truths were recovered through the Spirit of God. Prophetic truths, so prominent in the beginning of the Church, were then brought to light and especially the midnight cry: "Behold the bridegroom cometh" was heralded. God's plan and purposes with Israel, their unfulfilled national promises, were also brought to light. Other truths like the character of the true Church as the Body and the Bride of Christ, the character of the present age and its end and related truths, are once more understood and preached.\*

\*We have special reference to the mighty men of God, real scholars and at the same time humble men who were used in the recovery of these truths over a hundred years ago in the beginning of the movement known later by the name of "Plymouth Brethren." The most outstanding was John Nelson Darby.<sup>90</sup>

He, too, had reviews of writings of "brethren" in *Our Hope*, and sold some of their books.

### C. I. SCOFIELD (1843-1921)

He was saved in 1879. In 1897, C. I. Scofield wrote of J. H. Brookes, in memorium of him, ". . . was my first and best teacher in the oracles of God."<sup>91</sup> A. C. Gaebelein wrote about him learning from J. H. Brookes, which seems to have taken place in 1879-1882:

At the feet of this choice servant of Christ, Scofield took his place. Here he learned what he could not have learned in any of the theological seminaries of that time. Being instructed by Dr. Brookes in Bible study, he soon mastered, with his fine analytical mind, the ABC's of right division of the Word of God, which he later embodied in a small brochure, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*. From Dr. Brookes' instructions he became acquainted with the high points of sacred prophecy relating to the Jews, the Gentiles and the Church of God.<sup>92</sup>

86. It even carries an advertisement for a paper by George Muller, of Bristol, England -- which, by the way is posttribulationist -- in L. W. Munhall, *The Lord's Return and Kindred Truth*, New York: Revell, 1888.

87. A. C. Gaebelein, *Half a Century, The Autobiography of a Servant*, New York: Our Hope, p. 94 (1930).

88. David A. Rausch, *Arno C. Gaebelein 1861-1945 Irenic Fundamentalist and Scholar*, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, p. 239 (1983).

89. The March 1909 issue of *Our Hope* announced the printing of the SRB. In the listing of the editors (p. 656), the title REV. is conspicuous by its absence in front of A. C. Gaebelein's name alone.

90. A. C. Gaebelein, *The Conflict of the Ages*, New York: Our Hope, p. 62 (1933).

91. *The Truth: or Testimony for Christ* 22:312 (1896-1897).

92. *The History of the Scofield Reference Bible*, New York: Our Hope, p. 22 (1943).

## *J. N. Darby's Work in America*

J. N. Darby was in North America seven times spanning 1862-1877.<sup>93</sup> Interestingly, this is the initial era of the progress made among North Americans regarding the pretribulation rapture, as we have seen above. In his *Letters*, he notes the terrible state of what professed the name of Christ (1:351, 460, 472, 514; 2:182, 189, 190, 201, 210, 341).

A few of his remarks regarding the effect of the truth are these:

The foundation of the truth as to the church's position, its hopes and its salvation, have been brought home to all classes of Christians, and the authority of Scriptures singularly exercised its power in their consciences (*Letters* 1:337, Hamilton, Ontario, 1862).

One who may be very useful, got his soul all cleared, or rather filled with truth, at our meetings. He told me he saw plainly that what brethren taught was the recovery of Paul's doctrine. So it really is. I am daily more convinced that evangelicalism with partial truth is the abandonment of what Paul taught (*Letters* 1:398, Toronto, 1865).

Tracts and books we cannot get enough of (*Letters* 1:459, Toronto, 1866).

Tracts and books of brethren go out very freely: the vast majority of what go out, go to the States . . . I think some steps will have to be taken to print in the states . . . All through the States the truths are drawing attention. Ministers come even here to see what it is. Alas, how feeble we are as a testimony (*Letters* 1:461, Toronto 1866).

But I feel the Lord has led me here, and I am in pretty full intercourse with those exercised, among whom are more than one official minister {James H. Brookes?} (*Letters* 2:180, St. Louis, 1872).

In the States there is some progress. They are going on happily in the east, some added, but no great progress in numbers; in the west a good many Presbyterians, several ministers among them, teach the Lord's coming {i.e., the pretribulation rapture}, the presence of the Holy Ghost, that all sects are wrong, but as yet few move from their place (*Letters* 2:182, 1872. See also pp. 190, 193 ).

The work of God is going on in the United States; the conviction is extending that we possess something that they do not possess. Preachers, elders, etc., have come to Boston for the daily Bible readings. They acknowledge also that we understand the scriptures better than they do; they often oppose, but often defend, so that in some aspects brethren are entering on a new phase of work (*Letters* 2:212, New

York, 1873).<sup>94</sup>

**The difficulty is that a diligent effort has been made to disseminate the truths we have been taught so as that people should have them, and not act on them -- remain where they are.** Eminent ministers preach the Lord's coming, the ruin of the church, liberty of ministry, and avowedly from brethren's books, and stay where they are, and there is a general deadening of conscience. Now people come, are interested, surprised at all the truth they find in scripture, but for the moment with most it ends there. This casts me on the Lord. It was so the last time out west; still the Lord called out some, and new gatherings were formed. It is His work, but the wide spread of brethren's truths alters the character of the work. At present it is sowing time. After all, **they spoil the truths where they do not act on them** (*Letters* 2:308, New York, 1874. See also pp. 329, 339).

The Lord's coming also is much before people's minds; the testimony as to it spreads considerably (*Letters* 2:391).

I have added the emphasis in the above quotation because that should touch each conscience as to how far we have engaged in such conduct. Trafficking in unacted-upon truth spoils it and is dangerous to the soul. We want to choose only what suits us and adapt it to the path of our choosing (for what is really fleshly motives). We cannot reject parts of interrelated truths without losing the full apprehension of what we have selected for ourselves. The rejection of truth, the refusal to practice it, results in improper apprehension of what we do accept. Practice is based on doctrine. Defective doctrine produces defect in personal and corporate walk. We are not here for the Lord's glory as we ought to be, though we may be singing, "I surrender all."

## *J. N. Darby Did Not "Systematize" Dispensational Truth*

Based on a stated reason why J. N. Darby left the Church of England, Charles C. Ryrie claims that:

It was not until several years after leaving the Church of England that Darby became interested in prophecy. His interest was piqued through conferences at Powerscourt House, out of which the Irvingian {Irvingite} movement grew. "Darbyism" was first a protest over the practice of the Established Church, not the propagating of a system of Eschatology.<sup>95</sup>

The statement contains a number of mistakes. J. N. Darby was studying prophecy during Dec. 1826 and Jan. 1827. We have his own statement that at that time he was led to see from Isa. 32 that there would be a change of dispensation. Moreover, a letter by J. G. Bellett, dated Jan. 31, 1927, following a visit to J. N. Darby, confirms that he was

93. Sept. 1862-Aug. 1863  
Dec. 1864-June 1865  
July 1866-May 1868  
July 1870-Aug. 1870  
June 1872-May 1873  
Sept. 1874-July 1875  
June 1876-May 1877

94. {It would be interesting to know if A. J. Gordon, of Boston, attended.}  
95. *Dispensationalism*, p. 145 (1995).

studying prophecy. Furthermore, besides his own testimony, we have the testimony of F. W. Newman that he heard from him that we ought to be waiting for Christ to come at any time and that the church was fallen (1827). All of this is documented in my *Precious Truths Revived and Defended Through J. N. Darby*, vol. 1 (1991). This book will also correct the statement regarding the rise of the Irvingites.

#### IMPORTANT TEACHINGS FOR DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

There are numbers of very important teachings necessary for a proper understanding of dispensational truth. Consider these in connection with the views of Isaac Watts given above.

- the church is not an age or a dispensation
- distinguishing dispensations from ages
- the development of God's ways in government in the earth
- the end of the testing of the first man consequent upon the rejection of Christ at the cross
- the distinction between the church (heavenly) and Israel (earthly)
- the church is not under a covenant (covenants are for the earth)
- the Christian is not under the law of Moses in any sense
- the pretribulation rapture
- difference between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven
- the postponement of the kingdom

On p. 25, bottom, is a chart illustrating the dispensational teaching of J. N. Darby. That chart is explained in *J. N. Darby's Teaching Regarding Dispensations, Ages, Administrations and the Two Parentheses*, and will not be explained in the book in the reader's hands, though what we shall consider is quite in keeping with the truth expounded in that book on JND's teachings from Scripture.

#### WHAT DID J. N. DARBY SYSTEMATIZE?

It is claimed that:

Dispensational concepts antedate Darby, although he played a large part in the systematizing and popularizing of dispensationalism.<sup>96</sup>

{J. N. Darby} had much to do with the systematizing and promoting of dispensationalism. But neither Darby nor the Brethren originated the concepts involved in the system . . .<sup>97</sup>

The writer did not state what "the concepts" were that he had in mind. However, these must be the concept of various ages

and the concept that God has changed His way of dealing with man. But take note that before J. N. Darby this was held by covenantists. It is age-ism, not the dispensational truth taught by J. N. Darby!

This *systematization* idea seems to be the case to those dispensationalists who claim this, *because they equate dispensations with ages*, (add mainly the pretribulation rapture, and the Israel church distinction, from J. N. Darby), then project their erroneous definition that a dispensation is an age on J. N. Darby, and claim that he systematized it.<sup>98</sup>

And so they continue to develop "dispensational theology." In reality, they are working on *Scofieldian age-ism*, which equates ages and dispensations, and omits very important teachings. A recent exposition of Scofieldian Dispensationalism Age-ism said this:

In the Bible an age is a dispensation.<sup>99</sup>

Before C. I. Scofield, J. R. Graves wrote:

But translate **aioon** as it should be, **age** or **dispensation**, and all the fog lifts . . .<sup>100</sup>

Below is a chart by Charles Caldwell Ryrie that wrongly places J. N. Darby in the Dispensational Age-ism scheme.<sup>101</sup> Just below his chart is a much more correct representation of J. N. Darby's teaching. That chart is followed with a chart by Larry V. Crutchfield,<sup>102</sup> which is somewhat of an improvement over some others in that he took note that J. N. Darby did not hold the idea of dispensations before Noah. However, he erroneously represents J. N. Darby's view as holding a dispensation from Abraham to the law, and also the church as a dispensation. Keep in mind that he is a Scofieldian age-ist and this colors the representation of J. N. Darby's thoughts. The author of that chart *is* somewhat aware of some things J. N. Darby taught, but, not surprisingly, he opted for the Scofield scheme.

The chart, "The Three Administrations," shows what the real value of the claims that J. N. Darby systematized dispensational truth are really worth.

98. See, for example, C. C. Ryrie, *Issues in Dispensationalism*, Chicago: Moody Press, p. 16, (1994).

99. In a book that rightly is opposed to progressive dispensationalism, *What on Earth is a Dispensation?*, Springfield: Tribune Publishers, p. 108 (1994).

100. *The Work of Christ in the Covenant of Redemption Developed in Seven Dispensations*, Texarkana: Bogard Press, p. 162, 1971 [1883, first ed.].

101. Perhaps Arnold D. Ehlert was the first one to place J. N. Darby in the way he appears in the chart. *The Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 101-103, Jan. 1944 - Jan. 1946 carried a series of articles by A. D. Ehlert, "A Bibliography of Dispensationalism." These articles were published as a 110 page pamphlet by Baker Book House in 1965, the same year that Charles C. Ryrie published *Dispensationalism Today*, in which the chart appears on p. 84, diagramming information in Arnold D. Ehlert's work.

102. *The Origins of Dispensationalism, The Darby Factor*, Lanham: University Press of America, p. 211 (1992).

96. C. C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, Chicago: Moody, p. 83, first ed., 1965.

97. *Dispensationalism*, Chicago: Moody, p. 67, 1995.

## REPRESENTATIVE DISPENSATIONAL SCHEMES

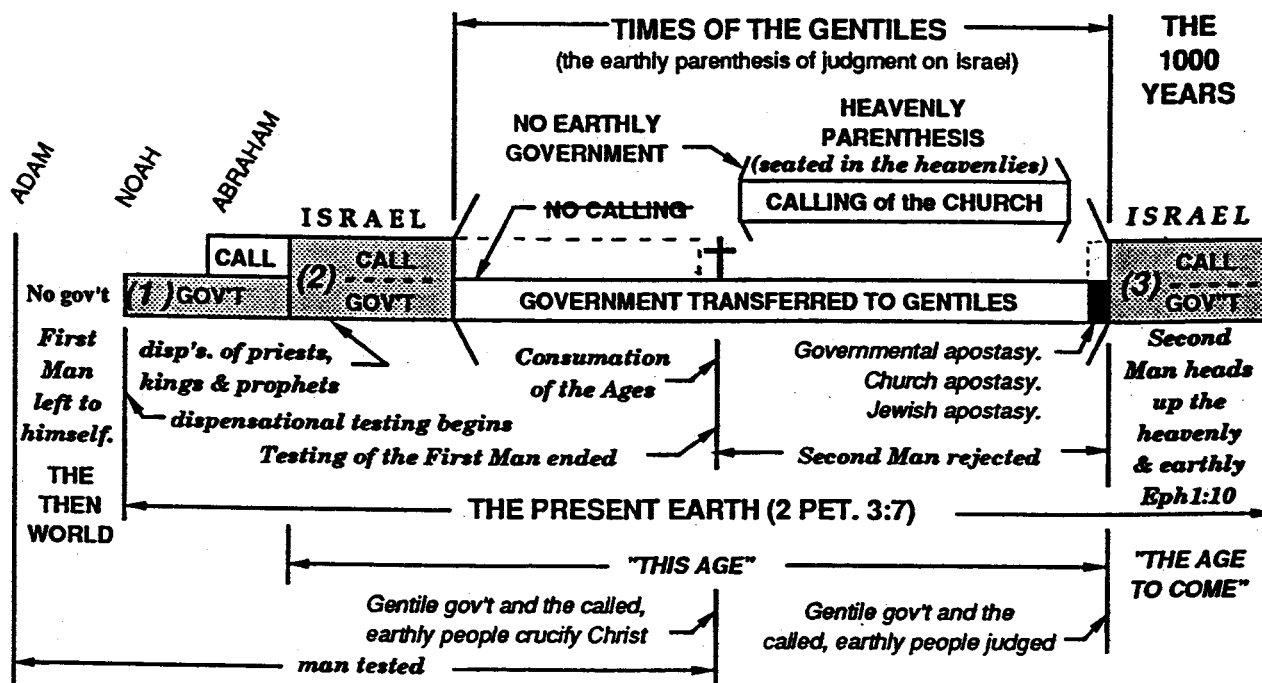
PIERRE POIRET 1646-1719	JOHN EDWARDS 1639-1716	ISAAC WATTS 1674-1748	J.N. DARBY 1800-1882	JAMES H. BROOKES 1830-1897	JAMES M. GRAY 1851-1935 (Pub. 1901)	C.I. SCOFIELD 1843-1921 (Pub. 1909)
Creation to the Deluge (Infancy)	Innocency	Innocency	Paradisaical state (to the Flood)	Eden	Edenic	Innocency
	Adam fallen Antediluvian	Adamical (after the Fall)		Antediluvian	Antediluvian	Conscience
Deluge to Moses (Childhood)	Noahical	Noahical	Noah	Patriarchal	Patriarchal	Human Government Promise
	Abrahamick	Abrahamical	Abraham			
Moses to Prophets (Adolescence)	Mosaical	Mosaical	Israel— under law under priesthood under kings	Mosaic	Mosaic	Law
Prophets to Christ (Youth)						
Manhood and Old Age	Christian	Christian	Gentiles	Messianic	Church	Grace
			Spirit	Holy Ghost		
Renovation of All Things			Millennium	Millennial	Millennial	Kingdom
					Fullness of times	
					Eternal	

This chart is from C. C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, p. 71, sec. ed., 1995, used by permission of Moody Press.

## The Three Administrations

or, The Development of God's Ways in Gov't in the Earth

(A representation of dispensational truth expounded by J. N. Darby)



## CHART FROM CRUTCHFIELD

A Comparative Chart of the Dispensational Systems  
of Poiret, Watts, Darby and Scofield

Pierre Poiret (1646-1719)	Isaac Watts (1674-1748)	J.N. Darby (1800-1882)	C.I. Scofield (1843-1921)
Infancy (Creation to Flood)	Innocency (Before the Fall)	<i>Paradisaical State to Fall</i> (Not a Dispensation)	Innocency (Creation to Fall)
	Adamic (After Fall to Noah)	<i>Conscience, Fall to Flood</i> (Not a Dispensation)	Conscience (Fall to Flood)
Childhood (Flood to Moses)	Noahical (Flood to Abraham)	Noah (Flood to Call of Abraham)	Human Gov't (Flood to Babel)
	Abrahamic (Call of Abraham to Moses)	Abraham (Call of Abraham to Law at Mt. Sinai)	Promise (Call of Abraham to Law at Mt. Sinai)
Adolescence (Moses to Prophets)	Mosaic (Mosaic Law to Christ)	Israel: Under Law, Priesthood, & Kings	Law (Law at Mt. Sinai to Calvary)
Youth (Prophets to Christ)		Gentiles	
Manhood	Christian (Christ to Millennium)	Spirit/Christian Gentile/Church	Grace (Calvary to Second Coming)
Old Age			
Renovation of All Things (Millennium)	<i>Millennium</i> (Not a Dispensation)	Millennium (Second Coming to End of Millennium)	Kingdom (Second Coming to End of Millennium)

■ Represents approximately equal dispensations on the horizontal spectra.

▨ Represents periods of Biblical history not considered to be dispensational in nature.

Poiret, Pierre. *The Divine Economy; or, An Universal System of the Works and Purposes of God Toward's Men, Demonstrated*. 6 vols. London, 1713.

Watts, Isaac. *The Works of the Reverend and Learned Isaac Watts, D.D.* 6 vols. Compiled by Rev. George Burder. London: J. Barfield, 1810. Vol. 4, pp. 1-40.

Darby, J. N. *The Collected Works of J. N. Darby*. Edited by William Kelly. 34 vols. Reprint ed. Sunbury, Penn.: Believers Bookshelf, 1971. Vol. 1, p. 124f; vol. 2, pp. 92, 98, 374f; vol. 5, p. 384f.

Scofield, C. I. *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*. Fincastle, Va.: Scripture Truth Book Co., n.d. pp. 12-16.

Of course J. N. Darby distinguished ages. Certainly he distinguished the age from Adam to Noah. But that was not what he called a dispensation, when *strictly* speaking.<sup>103</sup>

In an address in June 1839 at a gathering at Leamington, J. N. Darby stated:

Before the proper dispensation of God, we get the world before the flood; not exactly a dispensation, but a body of men left, in a certain sense, to themselves, Here there was testimony, as in Enoch and Noah, but no dispensed order or system by which God acted as governing the earth.<sup>104</sup>

The church is not, properly so called, a dispensation.<sup>105</sup>

These few examples show that the above charts do not rightly reflect what he taught.

**Let us be sure we understand what is going on.**

These are the steps taken in Scofieldian Dispensational Age-ism:

- observe that some before J. N. Darby distinguished ages
- explicitly, or in effect, define a dispensation as an age
- find that J. N. Darby distinguished ages also (which he did, of course)
- be unaware of, or ignore, the fact that he did not hold that a dispensation is an age
- borrow from him
  - the distinction between the church and Israel
  - the pretribulation rapture
- omit
  - the ending of the testing of the first man at the cross
  - the development of the ways of God in government in the earth
  - the ruin of the church on earth as seen in responsibility
- conclude that J. N. Darby systematized dispensational truth (as defined by the tenets of age-ism)
- and claim that Scofieldians are further developing "dispensationalism"

This, then, illustrates what I mean by "age-ism," the mistake at the root of looking for sorts of dispensational schemes (age-ism schemes, actually) before J. N. Darby and then

saying that he systematized dispensationalism. Age-ism is not the dispensational truth brought out through J. N. Darby, though the Scofieldian Age-ism would not exist without the distinction J. N. Darby brought out between Israel and the church, as well as the truth of pretribulation rapture, etc..

### *The New Scofield Reference Bible*

*The New Scofield Reference Bible* (NSRB) has the same definition of a dispensation as the original (p. 3). Interestingly, the sixth dispensation has been renamed:

"Church (Acts 2:1)" (p. 3).

Now we have a comment on the age:

*The sixth dispensation: the Church.* A new age was announced by our Lord Jesus Christ in Mt. 12:47-13:52 (p. 1162).

The Church Age . . . (p. 1162).

The comment about our Lord announcing a new age results from seeking to find a Scripture text by which to justify the idea of a "Church Age." While some notes have been improved, the NSRB carries on the Scofieldian Dispensational Age-ism.

### *Covenant Pretribulationism Alias "Progressive Dispensationalism"*

The proper name for "Progressive Dispensationalism" is **Covenant Pretribulationism**. This removes the self-congratulating fabrication about it being dispensational and places it as a variant of covenantism. **Covenant Pretribulationism** also keeps in view the move towards **Covenant Posttribulationism**.

In 1986 a group was formed within the Evangelical Theological Society for the study of dispensationalism. In reality, a drive toward rapprochement with covenant theology undergirded this. A number of books have recently been published which elaborate the new system, self-congratulatingly named by themselves "Progressive Dispensationalism." In *Christianity Today*, Sept. 12, 1994, a paper appeared written by Darrell L. Bock, entitled "Charting Dispensationalism." In "charting" the new course, the compass has reversed, and rather than making progress, the ship is on a high-speed course to the port of covenantism. They have lost their bearings altogether. In large letters under the article's title we read:

**A group of progressive scholars is mapping out a dispensational theology for a new era** (p. 26).

Well! Perhaps 10 or 20 years from now a group of even more progressive scholars may map out a dispensational theology for an even newer era! These may be their

103. We are lacking a word to designate the shaded areas in the chart on p. 25, The Three Administrations.

104. "The Dispensations and the Remnants," *Collectanea*, p. 42.

105. *Collected Writings* 5:15; see also 4:328; 25:24; 13:155.

students, who, realizing the full meaning of where the compass is pointing, will need only to throw the truth of the pretribulation rapture overboard and then immediately dock at covenant premillennialism. Following is a brief indication of these 'progressive' pretensions.

### PROGRESSIVE DISPENSATIONALISTS ARE COVENANT AGE-ISTS

The book, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, adds four more writers to those outlined by Arnold Ehlert who precede J. N. Darby. And since Progressive Dispensationalism is really a covenant scheme, the note explaining the reason for these additions<sup>106</sup> indicates this fact, as well as showing that in the minds of these writers a dispensation is an age. Their claim for why A. Ehlert omitted these four is this:

Compiled at a time when "dispensationalism" and "covenant theology" were polarizing through mutual criticism, Ehlert purposely{?} omitted the dispensational schemes of early covenant theologians. He did not omit all covenantalists {isn't that strange, in view of their first sentence? How do they know this to be a fact?}, as can be seen from some of his entries (e.g., Charles Hodge). However, dispensational distinctions made by theologians of the covenant tradition must be included as part of the general practice of dividing Scripture into a series of dispensations.<sup>107</sup>

In the last sentence in this quotation, "dispensational distinctions" is properly described as 'age distinctions.' Isaac Watts, reviewed above, was a covenantalist who was also among such included by A. Ehlert.

- These writers have in common with those covenantists that they also are, at bottom, covenantists.
- They also have in common with them that they are **Age-ists**. The "dispensational distinctions made by theologians of the covenant tradition" are age-ist distinctions. They had no real understanding of dispensational truth, wherein *dispensation* and *age* are not the same thing.
- Moreover, dispensationalism and covenantism polarized in J. N. Darby's day as anyone would know who has any idea of what he taught and the character attacks and odium heaped upon him.
- It is utterly absurd to put J. N. Darby in a series of these writers.<sup>108</sup>

### CHRIST ALLEGEDLY THE KING OF THE CHURCH

106. The four added are: Hugo Grotius (1583-1643); Johannes Cocceius (1603-1669); Herman Witsius (1636-1708); Francis Turretin (1623-1687).

107. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, p. 118.

108. They do take note that Larry Crutchfield, *The Origins of Dispensationalism*, pointed out that J. N. Darby did not hold that there were dispensations before the flood and also that the present is not a dispensation. Yet he is placed in their table of schemes. Such is the power of **age-ism** on the mind. It seems to hinder apprehension of the significance of this.

Their agenda is to deny that the church is heavenly and has an eternal, heavenly position, and assert that the present is a phase of the Davidic reign of Christ. Were I to attempt to show as concisely as possible how this lowers Christ's position and the Christian's place before God, I would select the following sentences from the book *Progressive Dispensationalism*,<sup>109</sup> by two who were teachers at Dallas Theological Seminary:

. . . the New Testament presents Jesus' present position and activity as a fulfilment of promises of the Davidic covenant (p. 179).

He is the descendent of David who has been anointed, enthroned, and given "all authority in heaven and *on earth*" (Matt. 28:18). When He acts, He acts as the divine *and Davidic king* (p. 186).

All the language describing the church in the New Testament is either directly drawn from or is compatible with the genres of covenant promise and the Messianic Kingdom (p. 206).

Christ presently rules the church from heaven by the Holy Spirit (p. 265).

. . . the community of the King, the church (p. 281).

It is an appalling lowering of Christ's present position, especially as Head of the body. Just think of Him when acting as the Head, that He is acting as the Davidic king! Consequently, it also lowers the Christian's position to that of a millennial saint. In a practical sense, they are "not holding fast the head" (Col. 2:19). Long ago J. N. Darby remarked:

Again, I find in one essay, "the body itself is a visible community -- a kingdom." This is mischievous confusion. The body of Christ is not His Kingdom . . . His body is Himself; His kingdom is what he rules over, apart from Himself, He being King over it. King of the church is a thing unknown in Scripture \* . . . We are His body, His bride -- of His flesh and of His bones; His kingdom is not that. He does not nourish and cherish His kingdom, He governs *it*, not His bride and His body.

\* Even "King of Saints" is recognized to be a false reading. It should be "King of nations."<sup>110</sup>

### THE CHURCH IS A WORLDLY THING

Let us put a few statements together which show that these writers regard the church as a worldly entity. Well, certainly so, since Christ allegedly rules the church, the community of the King, from heaven by the Holy Spirit.

A dispensation is an administrative or management arrangement. The Bible uses this term to describe God's relationship to the world. Not only is God's present relationship to the world described as a dispensation . . . (p. 127).

109. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, Wheaton: Victor Books, 1993.

110. *Collected Writings* 15:352.



The church is the new dispensation which God has organized . . . (p. 111).

. . . seeing the relationship between God and the world as a dispensation emphasizes *purpose and overall planning* (p. 109).

### COVENANTIZING THE CHURCH

. . . this new dispensation of the Spirit is precisely the inauguration of the new covenant (p. 111).

. . . Christ . . . opened the new dispensation of the new covenant (p. 198).

Our study of the history of the covenants shows them to be the structure by which the history of redemption is carried out (p. 199).

These dispensations can be described as ways of relating to biblical covenants. They can also be seen as progressive stages of salvation history which finds its fulfillment in the revelation of the eschatological kingdom of God (p. 127).

The millennial kingdom, in the view of these writers, will be a higher blessing than the church has. What we have here is covenant theology at work. Dispensations, accordingly, are the unfolding of covenants. Dispensations are seen as progressive stages of salvation history. So thought Isaac Watts. The church is one of the dispensations and so it is a stage in the unfolding of covenants and a stage in the progress of salvation history. So thought Isaac Watts (and others, of course, who held, and hold, to covenant theology). Only, these writers believe in a millennial kingdom and still (inconsistently) believe in a pretribulation rapture.

### NEW COVENANT LAW AND SPIRITUAL ALCHEMY

The progressive dispensationalism of New Testament theology is not antinomian. For while it teaches that Mosaic covenant law has ended dispensationally, it also teaches that it has been replaced by new covenant law . . . (p. 199).

These writers do not explicate the implications of us being under "new covenant law." However, Kenneth L. Barker is more specific:

Even if the Old Testament moral law had not received the approbation of the New Testament, it would still have been binding on us today because of its very nature.<sup>111</sup>

"New covenant law," then, is the 10 commandments. This is what Christianity is reduced to in covenantism. Observe that in the millennium, the Sabbath will be observed on the seventh day (Ezek. 46:1; see 44:24; 45:17). One of the 10 commandments has to do with the Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11; the seventh day, based on Gen. 1). Covenant theology has transmuted the Sabbath into Sunday -- because if you are under the 10 commandments, you are to observe the Sabbath. This transmutation is a theological cheat, of

course. At any rate, Christians are supposed to be under the "new covenant law," but transmute the day from Saturday to Sunday, while Israel in the millennium will be under the new covenant law but observe Saturday! No doubt theology has great flexibility, but I doubt God's new covenant law shares that theological flexibility. By the way, *law* means a **fixed principle of operation** -- but theology is shift. The Christian is not under "the moral law," nor has the law died. The Christian is dead and the law does not apply to the Christian who has died with Christ (Rom. 6). But that is not our subject here.

Not only is the **spiritual alchemy** seen in transmuting the seventh day Sabbath into Sunday, it is also **seen in bringing Gentiles, now, under the new covenant law**. Scripture expresses that the new covenant is with Israel. What I want to point out by this is that the spiritualization process of covenant theology is at work in this system and we may expect it to enlarge in this "mapping out a dispensational theology for a new era."

### FINDS THE CHURCH SPOKEN OF IN THE OT

"Progressive Dispensationalism" is a Judaizing system rapidly approaching Posttribulation Covenantism. Already having removed the proper distinction between Israel and the church, denying that the church is heavenly as well as eternally distinct, and that it is "the community of the King" and is ruled from heaven by Christ, regarding the church as under a covenant and under the law, it remains to jettison the pretribulation rapture, so landing in covenant premillennialism. Possibly these teachers will not do that -- but will their students maintain this illogical and unstable position?

It follows from the character of what we have already observed that they would be one with those who find the church in the OT. Thus, contradicting the Scriptures, a leader of the retrograde, Judaizing dispensationalists, who teaches at Biola, R. L. Saucy, aligns himself with the antidispen-sationalists in their treatment of the texts we will examine in Chapter 1.3, saying:

Thus we agree with the non-dispensationalists that Paul's teaching concerning the mystery of the church in the union of Jew and Gentile in Christ is a fulfillment of Old Testament predictions.<sup>112</sup>

Charles C. Ryrie, who, with others, is holding the line against this new system, quoting from a 1991 taped proceedings of the Evangelical Theological Society, cites Darrell L. Bock, a leader of this retrogression, who "acknowledged that {G. E.} Ladd 'would not disagree with' the fundamental thrust of the structure of progressive

111. In Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, eds., *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 302 (1992).

112. *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 163, 1993.

dispensationalism.”<sup>113</sup> George Ladd is recognized as a covenant premillennialist (posttribulationist).

In still maintaining a few things that distinguish themselves from “non-dispensationalists,” the position of the retrograde dispensationalists (who do not deserve the word dispensational) is, indeed, as the amillennialist, V. Pothress said, “inherently unstable. I do not think that they will find it possible in the long run to create a safe haven theologically between classic dispensationalism and covenantal Premillennialism.”<sup>114</sup> This remark assumes that they would hold on to the idea of a millennial kingdom. Another adherent of covenant theology, Keith A. Matheison, rightly concluded that it is not dispensationalism:

Progressive dispensationalism is not dispensationalism. But neither is it Reformed. Still unchanged are a number of its doctrines of salvation. For now, “progressive dispensationalism” is a generic form of premillennial, modified Arminianism. Its proponents are moving in the right direction in regard to the church and the end times. But honesty calls for us all to recognize that while they are not yet Reformed, either can they any longer be rightly called “dispensational.”<sup>115</sup>

Bruce K. Waltke wrote:

This new perestroika within dispensationalism augers well for the future of dispensational schools, especially for Dallas Theological Seminary, with which most of them are related as former students and/or faculty members . . . These younger dispensationalists, having come under the impact of realized eschatology, especially in renowned universities, know that careful exegesis must lead at least to this restructuring of the historic model.<sup>116</sup>

The properly descriptive name, then, for this system is *Covenant Pretribulationism*.

## *Surrendering Dispensational Truth*

When souls surrender dispensational truth, they have committed themselves to the ocean of feelings and demands without a compass. If dispensational truth be not God's present revelation, what is it? And if it be, can I expect to walk in the present scene according to His mind, without the light which He in His grace has supplied me? Man knows nothing of God, except through revelation; how inconsistent then for a child of God to admit that he cannot see the necessity of adhering to that which is the revelation for this present time; for, as a Christian, he must own that, if it were not for revelation, he must have sunk into eternal darkness; and he has no right to reject or

be indifferent to one part of the revelation, because it does not immediately bear on the question of his salvation.

God's revelation, in its full sense, and comprising all His arrangements on earth, is a structure of many stories, if I may say so. All the stories were not lighted up at once, but according to the need of those who would make use of the light. At one time it might have been sufficient to light up one story; but as the darkness increased (for in spite of what rationalists say, men are getting, in the spirit of their minds, every day further from God), there was of necessity a need for increase of light, which God, in His grace, vouchsafed for the use of those who would use it. Prophecy contained a suited and inexhaustible supply of the needed light; but this light could not act serviceably on any one who did not apprehend the order of God's counsels on earth. Such an one neither occupied the right story, nor did he (from not understanding his calling) seek or receive that knowledge from God which would have made him, not only know his proper place before God, but would also have furnished him with grace and power to act therein according to God's pleasure. How can God give a soul light to see the future of His purposes, if he be ignorant of or indifferent to the present? He who knows dispensational truth imperfectly, can never know prophetic truth rightly. If I disregard the manner of God's arrangements -- the position of His people now according to His mind -- how can I expect Him to unfold to me more distant things? “To him that hath shall more be given.” It is no excuse to say that the Church is in ruins {and it is}; for if I cared for God's counsel in the Church, the more inexpressive of that counsel I found the materials to be, the more should I seek to maintain it.

God will not swerve from His own counsel; and surely it is marvelous grace that He should allow us to learn it; and still more, that according as we know and submit ourselves to it, He should entrust us with further purposes of His mind. The more difficult the times become, the more do I need dispensational truth. What other chart have I? How can I solve any of the incongruities that encompass me, or discover a clue to my right course in them, if I do not know the order and intention of God, and how that has been counteracted and disturbed by the wickedness of man? From the smallest remnant of the Church I ought to be able to put together what the Church should be in God's counsels, and therefore to serve it according to His thoughts and love. In this relation to it I should most truly estimate what damage it had suffered, and what had inflicted the damage.<sup>117</sup>

113. In *Issues in Dispensationalism*, Chicago: Moody, p. 22 (1994).

114. *Understanding Dispensationalists*, p. 137, sec. ed.

115. *Dispensationalism: Rightly Dividing the People of God?*, p. 137.

116. In Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, p.350.

117. *The Present Testimony* 13:443, 444, title modified.

## Chapter 1.3

### *Did the OT Prophets Speak About the Church?*

I distinguish entirely between the *church* and prophecy. I do not believe the church is the subject, though it is the recipient and depositary of prophecy, as Abraham was of what should happen to Lot (*Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:131).

#### *‘Literal’ or ‘Spiritual’ Interpretation?*

Students of prophecy are aware that there is a long-standing dispute regarding whether or not the prophets should be interpreted ‘spiritually’ or ‘literally,’ whatever the merits or demerits of these two terms may be. The spiritualizers say that the prophets spoke about the church. They are now joined in this claim by certain ‘dispensationalists’ who flatteringly call themselves “progressive dispensationalists.” In reality they are retrograding into covenant theology, having already embraced this and other notions, e.g., that the church is not heavenly. However, Scripture *expressly* contradicts the notion that the O. T. prophets spoke of the church which is Christ’s body.

Moreover, ‘literalists’ believe that the kingdom prophesied by the OT prophets was offered to Israel. But it is most important to observe the form in which the offer was made. It was offered, really, *in the Person of the Lowly One, so as to be a test of the moral state*) and, Christ being rejected, it is postponed. This coming kingdom, of 1000 years’ duration, is called the millennium.

Many literalists erroneously believe that the first question to be settled is whether or not the prophets are to be interpreted literally. That is, they begin with a discussion of ‘literal’ versus ‘spiritual’ interpretation of the prophets. Often they point out all the prophecies concerning Christ’s coming into the world that were literally fulfilled and go on from there to show that prophecy must be generally understood this way. While I believe there is validity to such arguments, the denial of the force of these Scriptures simply shows that the denier does not understand in his soul the mystery. If silence concerning this mystery was kept in OT times, it follows that the prophets did not speak about it. It then follows that the

prophets must be understood literally because their prophecies did concern an earthly kingdom under Messiah’s reign before His ancients, in glory. Hence these Scriptures are flatly contradicted by those who ‘spiritualize’ the prophets in order to maintain a theological system, using various methods, a few of which we shall examine further on.

I believe that the place to begin is to have *God tell us* how to understand; and He has done so in several Scriptures that tell us that silence was kept in the OT regarding the mystery. This tells us that the spiritualization of the OT prophets by those who hold to covenant theology flies in the face of what God has expressly stated. Thus, being so guided, and submitting thereto, we are on the ground of *faith* -- which comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. This is “*the obedience of faith*” (Rom. 16:25, 26), regarding the mystery (not the gospel -- cp. Rom. 1:1-5), to which we will return below. We have the Scriptures that are written to Christians, as such, and turn to them **first** for guidance. The *first* thing to be settled is not ‘literal’ versus ‘spiritual’ interpretation.<sup>118</sup> Listen to what the Apostle to the Gentiles wrote:

Now, I rejoice in sufferings for you, and I fill up that which is behind of the tribulations of Christ in my flesh, for his body, which is the assembly; of which *I* became minister, according to the dispensation of God which [is] given me towards you to complete the word of God, the mystery which [has been] hidden from ages and from generations, but has now been made manifest to his saints . . . (Col. 1:24-26).

118. This is not to say that discussion of that matter is unimportant. I am speaking of priority from having the Christian Scriptures before us. The subject of interpretation is discussed in my *Daniel’s 70 Weeks and the Revival of the Roman Empire*. The reader will also be helped in reading *The Mystery and The Mystery and the Covenants*, available from Present Truth Publishers.

The great secret that had been “hidden throughout the ages in God” (Eph. 3:9), which completes the Word of God, ought surely to be before our hearts, providing light and guidance in our understanding of the purpose of God for His own glory, and how to rightly understand what He formerly did. How this bears on the subject of the coming kingdom predicted in the O. T. is this: since the prophets did not speak of the mystery, they are to be understood literally (with due allowance for figures of speech and symbols), and there is no fulfillment of the prophesied kingdom during the present period. In order to have these prophecies fulfilled now, it is necessary to ‘spiritualize’ the statements of the prophets so that no literal kingdom is meant. Among other things, appeal is made to the fact that the prophets do use obvious figures of speech and symbols and so it is claimed that when they prophesied about Jerusalem, Israel and Judah, the new covenant, etc., the church was meant. This involves two things:

- the mystery is defined to be something that it really is not, so as to have the OT prophets speak of it
- contradict the Word when it says silence was kept concerning the mystery

Any sensible literalist allows, of course, for the use of figures of speech and symbols.<sup>119</sup> But, he rightly says, Judah, Jerusalem and Israel mean just that and not the church. Accordingly, the new covenant (Jer. 31; Heb. 8) is for the future nation of Israel during the millennium.

Let us now look at those Scriptures which show that the O. T. prophets did not speak about the church. It is claimed by spiritualizers of the OT prophets that the OT quotations found in Acts and the Epistles show that the prophets spoke of the church. Lord willing, numbers of these will be examined later. Suffice it to say here that while those quoted texts will be fulfilled in the coming 1000 year reign of Christ, they are cited by the NT writers as having some bearing or application *in principle* meanwhile, and designate neither a complete nor partial fulfillment

### *The Bearing of the Mystery of Christ on the Question of Prophetic Interpretation*

#### THREE SCRIPTURES CONCERNING THIS MYSTERY

We are going to look at three Scriptures concerning the mystery of Christ and the church. Received into the soul, via the conscience, which is the inlet of truth, we will see that the OT

prophets did not speak about the church. These three Scriptures are:

#### Rom. 16:25

silence  
kept in  
the times of  
the ages

#### Col. 1:26

hidden  
from  
ages &  
generations

#### Eph. 3:9

hidden  
throughout  
the ages  
in God

Something can be learned by weighing the various emphases in the above diagram.

#### LISTENING TO WHAT SCRIPTURE SAYS

Once I was asked to visit an Arminian and we came to Heb. 6:1-6, where it is said that if a person falls away it is “*impossible*” to renew him again unto repentance. That is not good for the lost-again saved-again notion. But he had a triumphant reply. He said that “impossible” meant “almost impossible.” Well, that brought the discussion to an end. That was the sign of a determined agenda, not of subjection to the Word of God.

On another occasion I wrote to someone who had written statements subversive of the holiness due God’s house. I asked him what a “*partaker*” of his wicked works (2 John 11) meant. He replied that it meant a “partial partaker.” He could not embolden himself to flatly deny it to entirely get rid of what was distasteful to his unholy view so he did his best to water it down by qualifying it as “partial.” He too had an agenda.

The same is true with the fact that God’s Word expressly declares that silence was kept about the mystery. The opposition amounts to this: that the mystery was *almost* secret, that it was *partially* hidden. We see here the same phenomenon as in the above two cases. There is an agenda -- and that agenda is to find the church in the OT; to find that the prophets did speak of the mystery. It is a fact that different opposers of this silence use different explanations, but the agenda is that the mystery was not unknown in the O. T.

If we will receive into our souls, through our consciences, that in Heb. 6 impossible means just that, and in 2 John 11 partaker means just that, and that silence in Rom. 16:25 means just that, we will have light from God instead of the darkness of a human agenda. The mystery is “made known for obedience of faith” (Rom. 16:26). When God says that silence was kept, the obedience of faith believes.

#### THE MYSTERY IS NOT THE GOSPEL

To repeat, from our vantage point of having the completed Scriptures, the *first* thing to be settled is not ‘literal’ versus ‘spiritual’ interpretation. What needs to be done first is to settle within one’s soul the force of Rom. 16:25, 26 and several other Scriptures.

119. See W. Kelly’s “Language of Prophecy” in *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 13:49-54; and the first chapter in my *Daniel’s 70 Weeks and the Revival of the Roman Empire*, obtainable from Present Truth Publishers.

Now to him that is able to establish you, according to my glad tidings and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to [the] revelation of [the] mystery, as to which silence has been kept in [the] times of the ages, but [which] has now been made manifest, and by prophetic scriptures, according to commandment of the eternal God, made known for obedience of faith to all the nations . . . . (Rom. 16:25, 26).<sup>120</sup>

W. Kelly's translation of the passage is this:

Now to him that is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to [the] revelation of [the] mystery kept in silence in times of the ages but now manifested and by prophetic scriptures according to commandment of the everlasting God made known for obedience of faith unto all the Gentiles, to God only wise, through Jesus Christ, to whom [be] the glory unto the ages of the ages (or, for ever), Amen. (Rom. 16:25-27).<sup>121</sup>

We are going to discover that opposers of dispensational truth undermine the word "secret," as they must necessarily do, since their object is to find reference in the OT to this mystery, concerning which silence was kept in the times of the ages. We take note here that Arndt and Gingrich's Lexicon says:

μυστήριον χρόνοις αἰώνιους σεσιγημένον a secret that was concealed for long ages Ro 16:25.<sup>122</sup>

Notice from this quotation that not only was it a secret and concealed, but concealed for long ages. Some say that "The most natural reference, however, is to 'eternity past' . . .,"<sup>123</sup> This would allow for it to be in the OT. Many objectors to dispensational truth regard the time reference to the OT as is evidenced by their claim that there was not a total silence in O. T. times, and that it was only partially hidden, as we shall see below.

It is clear that the OT spoke of future salvation for the Gentiles. That is not the mystery. The OT had witnessed to the manifestation of the righteousness of God (Rom. 3:21) and many other things concerning Christ (Luke 24:44-46). These things are not the mystery. When anti-dispensationalists say that these things are the mystery, I ask: are they doing even the slightest justice to the statement, "as to which silence has been kept in [the] times of the ages"?

Why not forthrightly state, "No, silence was not kept. I can find the mystery in many places in the OT – it is easy to find predictions of salvation for the Gentiles"? Is not this what the erroneous notion that the mystery is salvation for the Gentiles, equally with the Jews, really amounts to? You will say that I am caricaturizing the opponents. We shall see below.

Now, not only does the fact that silence was kept concerning the mystery tell us that the predicted salvation for Gentiles is not the mystery,<sup>124</sup> but Rom. 16:25 makes an instructive distinction. "Now to him that is able to establish you, according to":

- "my glad tidings  
and
- the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to [the] revelation of [the] mystery."

Clearly, there are two things here, not one. We do not read, 'according to my glad tidings, the revelation of the mystery.' But I suggest that this is the way, in effect, that anti-dispensationalists take the passage.

The loss in not seeing this is great. Look at the words, "Now to him that is able to **establish** you." This verse tells us that **two** things are necessary for establishment. The glad tidings only does part of this. A right apprehension of the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery (and, of course, a corresponding Christian walk in this truth -- not mere profession about it), is necessary for establishment. Oh, you object, just because I do not accept 'dispensationalism' with its distinction between Israel and the church, etc., I am not established? Well, I did not say it, the text says it.

It is the same concerning the gospel. What is needed is a right apprehension of the glad tidings concerning "that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he was raised the third day, according to the scriptures," etc. (1 Cor. 15:34) (and of course, a corresponding Christian walk in this truth -- not mere profession about it -- is necessary for establishment). Oh, you object, 'just because I do not accept your dispensational distinction between the way of approach to God in Israel, and what you say about approach to God *now*, I am

120. Scripture quotations are from the translation by J. N. Darby, unless otherwise indicated.

121. See his *Notes on Romans, in loco*.

122. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, sec. ed., p. 749.

The interested reader may consult the NT use of *sigao* in *The Englishman's Greek Concordance*, p. 685 (#4601 in the cross reference to Strong's Concordance).

123. . Everett F. Harrison on Romans in F. E. Gaebelin, ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, vol. 10, p. 170, 1976.

124. I am aware that there is some variation from this idea. That should not be surprising in view of how blatantly contradictory to the expressions "silence" and "hidden" the notion is, as we saw in the case of W. Hendrickson. Observe, then, Charles Hodge:

. . . In all these places the mystery spoken of is God's purpose of redemption, formed in the counsels of eternity, impenetrably hidden from the view of men until revealed in his own time. It was this plan of redemption thus formed, thus long concealed, but now made known through the Gospel, that Paul was sent to bear as a guiding and saving light to all men (*A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, Grand Rapids: Baker, p. 170, 1856, 1980 reprint).

not established? Well, I think we still need priests today who can offer a sacrifice -- the mass.'

### THE MYSTERY

At this point it would be well to have a few introductory remarks concerning what a New Testament mystery is and what this particular mystery entails. W. Kelly wrote,

We must, however, guard against the notion that "the mystery" or secret means the gospel. The gospel in itself does not and never can mean a mystery. It was that which in its foundations always was before the mind of God's people in the form of promise, or of a revelation of grace not yet accomplished. But nowhere in Scripture is the gospel called a mystery. It may be connected with the mystery, but it is not itself a mystery. It was no mystery that a Savior was to be given; it was the very first revelation of grace after man became a sinner. The Seed of the woman was to bruise the serpent's head. A mystery is something that was not revealed of old, and which could not be known otherwise. Again, you have in the prophets a full declaration that the righteousness of God was near to come; the plainest possible statement that God was going to show Himself a Savior-God. So again you have His making an end of sins and bringing in reconciliation and everlasting righteousness. All these things were in no sense the mystery. The mystery means that which was kept secret, not that which could not be understood, which is a human notion of mystery; but an unrevealed secret, -- a secret not yet divulged in the OT but brought out fully in the New. What, then, is this mystery? It is, first, that Christ, instead of taking the kingdom, predicted by the prophets, should completely disappear from the scene of this world, and that God should set Him up in heaven at His own right hand as the Head of all glory, heavenly and earthly, and that He should give the whole universe into the hands of Christ to administer the kingdom and maintain the glory of God the Father in it. This is the first and most essential part of the mystery, the second, or Church's part, being but the consequence of it. Christ's universal headship is not the theme spoken of in the OT. You have Him as Son of David, Son of man, Son of God, the King; but nowhere is the whole universe of God (but rather the kingdom under the whole heavens) put under Him. In this headship over all things, Christ will share all with His bride. Christ will have His Church the partner of His own unlimited dominion, when that day of glory dawns upon the world.

Hence, then, as we know, the mystery consists of two great parts, which we have summed up in Ephesians 5:32: "This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church." Thus the mystery means neither Christ nor the Church alone, but Christ and the Church united in heavenly blessedness and dominion over everything that God has made. Hence, as we saw from chapter 1, when He was raised from the dead, God set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, "and put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church." It is not said, "over the church,"

which would overthrow, not teach, the mystery. He will be over Israel and over the Gentiles, but nowhere is He said to reign over the Church. The Church is His body. I admit it is a figure, but a figure that conveys an intense degree of intimacy, full of the richest comfort and the most exalted hope. The saints who are now being called are to share all things along with Christ in that day of glory. Hence it becomes of the greatest interest to know what the nature of the Church is. When did its calling begin, and what is the character of that calling, what the responsibilities that flow from it? <sup>125</sup>

The following from J. N. Darby might provoke further thought:

... The mystery formed no part of revelation, no subject of promise. It was hid in God. I have already remarked that an historical type does not reveal a thing at all till the antitype comes. It is a simple history. Romans 16:25 does not simply relate to the preaching of the gospel, as is said. It speaks of a mystery kept secret since the world began, but not made manifest.

The bringing in of the Gentiles was not an unrevealed mystery. It is referred to in many scriptures; but Romans 16:25 speaks of a mystery kept secret since the world began, and to say that this is what is plainly taught in the Old Testament scriptures referred to is a bold defiance of scripture, and that is all. To say that "Rejoice ye Gentiles with his people," and "I will set thee for a light to the Gentiles," is a matter kept secret since the world began, is to trifle with the word of God. The only thing it proves is that the writer is ignorant of the mystery, now it is revealed, and knows nothing beyond the passages quoted. The Lord, it is said, expounded after His resurrection the things concerning Himself. It is scarcely conceivable that He should have left out the calling of the Gentiles in His exposition. Concerning Himself is not concerning the Church, but as to His own person. The Spirit was to come to guide them into all the truth. It is expressly stated, that He was showing them "that Christ must suffer and enter into his glory" (Luke 24:26, 44-46). A person must be singularly hard driven up to quote such scripture as this, and in the face of positive scriptures that it is *now* revealed by the Spirit, and had been kept secret since the world began -- hid in God. The calling of the Gentiles is not in itself the formation of the Church. "Rejoice ye Gentiles with his people" is a different thought. It justifies blessing to the Gentiles which the Jews would not hear of, "forbidding to preach to the Gentiles that they might be saved." But it treats the Jews as God's people, whereas in the Church there is neither Jew nor Gentile at all

... No one denies that Christ spoke prophetically of the Church, though the Church itself was not yet revealed; but John 10:16 does not even do this. Gathering individuals into a flock does show the calling of the Gentiles, which had always been revealed, and approaches the outward state of things here. But the

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125. *Lectures on . . . the Ephesians*, ch. 3.

doctrine of the Church is not in it at all (that is, of the body of Christ). All this still only proves (what indeed makes all plain, as to the whole of these teachers), that they have not the scriptural doctrine of the Church at all. John *never* speaks of the Church -- once of a local church -- but never of *the* Church, but of Christ and individuals. None of the apostles speaks of the Church, nor uses the word of Christians as a whole, but Paul. It was a dispensation committed to him, as he tells us. Christ prophesies of it; the Acts relate historically its being founded; but no one speaks of it as a teacher, or doctrinally, but Paul. The nearest approach is an allusion in 1 Peter 2 to the temple: "We are built up a spiritual house." T. M. {Mansell?} is forced to admit that this purpose of God in gathering the saints into one was revealed in a manifested form and visible unity, never known or seen before. It is easy to say, never known or seen. When did it *exist* before? Where was the head to which the body was to be united? or did it subsist without any head at all?<sup>126</sup>

If Rom. 16:25, 26 were simply received into the soul, one would understand that the OT does not speak of the mystery of Christ and the Church, which is His body. It expressly states that "silence has been kept in [the] times of the ages." Why not bow to the fact? But that would mean acknowledging that the prophets did not prophesy concerning the church. *Types* are not prophecies; nor is a type the uttering of something about the church, nor the uttering of anything else. "Silence" is the word. The truth of Christ and the Church "has now been made manifest, and by prophetic scriptures." These prophetic Scriptures are New Testament writings, and in particular, Paul's writings. These things are now made manifest by this instrumentality "according to the commandment of the eternal God." All has unfolded as it has because He is sovereign and has commanded it to be thus.

### THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH

And what are we to do? Obey. "... made known for obedience of faith to all the nations." What was made known? The mystery. Rom. 1:5 speaks of "obedience of faith among all the nations." I believe all Christians, sealed with the Spirit (Eph. 1:13), have participated in what Rom. 1:1-5 refers to concerning "obedience of faith." But at the end of Romans we find something further made known for the "obedience of faith." Here, the mystery is mentioned.<sup>127</sup> In Rom. 1 it is a matter of our calling: in Rom. 16:25, 26 it is a matter of the mystery. There are many who have "obedience of faith" regarding their calling, but not "obedience of faith" regarding the mystery. I hardly think there is "obedience of faith" regarding the mystery when Scripture says *silence* was kept concerning it and a Christian labors to prove that silence was not kept in the OT concerning

it. The force of Rom. 16:25, 26 is resisted because to receive what it expressly states means that some highly developed theological systems will collapse.

In direct opposition to the express statements of Scripture, covenant theology (now joined by retrograde dispensationalists) says that the mystery can be found in the O. T. prophets but not to the degree "as it has now been revealed" (Eph. 3:5). That is the use made of the word *as*. So instead of understanding *as* in the light of Rom. 16:25, 26, theology attempts to force Rom. 16:25, 26 into conformity with this false construction put upon *as*, and in effect turning the word "silence was kept" (Rom. 16:25, 26) into "talk was made." Eph. 3:5 indicates, not a comparison, but a fact, a contrast.

### WHEN, AND FROM WHOM, WAS THE MYSTERY HIDDEN?

The fact that Scripture declares when, and from whom, the mystery was hidden is consistent with Rom. 16:25, 26, in affirming silence in OT ages. Col. 1:26 speaks of it also:

... the mystery which [has been] hidden from ages and from generations, but has now been made manifest to his saints.

This means that the mystery was hidden both from past time-periods and from persons. I suggest, therefore, that "obedience of faith" in respect of the mystery will acknowledge that these Scriptures declare that the OT was silent about it. Thus the issue of 'literal' versus 'spiritual' interpretation of the OT prophets to see if they spoke about the church or not is settled by the *express* statements of Scripture itself. (Of course, the use of figures of speech and symbols is a subject of inquiry, but in no way affects the issue.) What this means is that the O. T. prophets really meant Judah, Israel and Jerusalem (not the Church), and thus they have to be understood that there will be a future for national Israel. Also, the Church is not the continuator of Israel, nor the spiritual Israel. And in that day of Israel's glory, when she is purged of every rebel (Ezek. 20) and all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 11:26), Israel will not be part of the church.

### WHERE WAS THE MYSTERY HIDDEN?

We have seen that silence was kept in the times of the ages, that it was hidden from those ages and the peoples. *Where*, then, was it hidden? We should have thought that it was not hidden in the OT without even God telling us so. But He has told us where it was hidden.

To me, less than the least of all saints, has this grace been given, to announce among the nations the glad tidings of the unsearchable riches of the Christ, and to enlighten all [with the knowledge of] what is the administration of the mystery hidden throughout the ages in God, who has created all things ... (Eph. 3:8, 9).

Here we learn that the mystery was "hidden throughout the ages in God." It was not hidden in the OT. During the O. T. ages it was hidden in God. *Types* have nothing to do, really, with the issue. Moreover, there are no types of a Head in

126. *Collected Writings* 10:248, 249.

127. The mystery is not developed in Romans, though something to do with it is touched on in Rom. 16. It is developed in Col. but fully so in Eph.

heaven united to a body on earth. Types are history, incidents or persons, not prophecy or revelation. The issue is that the OT prophets did not speak of the mystery. There was “*silence*” about it; it was hidden from ages and from generations; it was *hidden in God*, not in the OT, not in the prophetic utterances. How is God to say it, if this does not mean what these texts are stating? Ah, it is written in such a manner as to call for “*the obedience of faith*.”

### *Objections Based on the Three Texts*

What this also means is that the expectation of a literal kingdom over which Messiah would reign was, and is, a valid expectation. Spiritualizers vehemently denounce this expectation, some even claiming it led to the crucifixion. Lord willing, we shall address the subject of the validity of that expectation, shared by the remnant that received the Lord Jesus, though their timing, not the expectation itself, was wrong.

It is admitted by opponents of a future kingdom for Israel that if the OT prophets are to be understood literally, they do indeed prophesy such a kingdom.

#### **ROMANS 16:25, 26**

The importance of Rom. 16:25, 26 to this matter is too great for us to fail to take notice of how those opposers who are spiritualizers of the prophets attempt to nullify the force of the statement that “silence has been kept in [the] times of the ages.” Now, either silence was kept or it was not. Spiritualizers of the prophets are compelled by their theological systems to say that silence was not kept. Consider how the amillennialist John Murray, commenting on Rom. 16:25, thought he was doing justice to the OT revelation (meaning that he finds the mystery in the OT):

The clause “now is manifested”, when taken in conjunction with the emphases on “silence” and “revelation” in verse 25, might create the impression that there had been no revelation whatsoever of this mystery in the OT Scriptures. This impression, however, is decisively excluded or corrected by the words “by the scriptures of the prophets.” These are the Scriptures to which Paul appeals repeatedly in this epistle for confirmation of the gospel he preached (cf. especially in this connection 1:2; 3:21; 11:25,26). Hence the OT was not silent on this mystery; it was the medium of revelation concerned with this subject.<sup>128</sup>

Another amillennialist, W. Hendriksen, wrote:

It was this mystery that had been hidden for long ages past, for though the decision had been made in God’s eternal plan and though even during the old dispensation there had been foreshadowings of the realization of God’s promise of salvation for both Gentile and Jew, the period of fulfillment on any large scale had not been reached until now. But

now, the new dispensation having arrived, and the gospel being proclaimed far and wide, this mystery was being made manifest, was becoming abundantly clear. It was being manifested in *the fulfillment of prophecy*. Think of Gen. 12:3; 22:18.<sup>129</sup>

These Scripture references, and others similarly cited, will be fulfilled in the millennial reign of Christ. Note well that this quotation shows that his thought concerning the mystery is that there would be salvation for both Jew and Gentile. Well, of course the OT prophesied that fact. But instead of learning from the three texts we are considering, and concluding that salvation prophesied for Jew and Gentile is not the mystery, he rather *defined* the mystery to be salvation for Jew and Gentile, and then has to work on the three texts to force them to conform. And this method of dealing with God’s word is at the heart of covenant theology. Salvation for Jew and Gentile is not the same thing as the union of Jew and Gentile in one body formed by the Spirit sent from the glorified head in heaven and they being seated in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus. (Cp. Eph. 3.)

John Murray virtually (erroneously) equates Paul’s gospel and the mystery. That appears, at first sight, to help the system because there are OT Scriptures that speak of Gentile salvation (it is millennial) and they say that was a prediction concerning Gentile salvation now. Thus by virtually equating Paul’s gospel and the mystery, they think that they can find the mystery in the OT predictions of Gentile salvation.<sup>130</sup>

Note well that John Murray attempts to circumvent the force of “silence” by stating that “by the scriptures of the prophets” is meant the OT prophets. And having done *that*, he boldly contradicts the text and says, “Hence the OT was not silent on this mystery; it was the medium of revelation concerned with this subject.” Such is theology; it can make black white and white black; it can make “silence” be talk.<sup>131</sup> If commentators so handle Scripture, of what use is

129. *Exposition of Paul’s Epistle to the Romans*, Baker Book House: Grand Rapids, 1981, v. 2, p. 517.

13. Paul’s gospel and the mystery, though connected, are not the same thing. Additionally Paul’s gospel has *aspects* that are not the subject of OT prophecy. The reader may obtain the pamphlet, *Paul’s Gospel*, from Present Truth Publishers.

131. Something analogous to treating “silence” this way is *necessary* also in the case of Eph. 3:5. Commenting on this, E. K. Simpson, (*Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians*, London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott (1957), p. 72), boldly says: “Hebrew prophecy had not been silent respecting this divine secret (cf. Isa. 56:5).” This shows that he does not understand the mystery. So J. Eadie, *A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians*, Baker: Grand Rapids (1979 reprint of 1883 ed.), p. 219:

The general sense of the verse is evident. The apostle does not seem to deny all knowledge of the mystery to the ancient world, but he only compares their knowledge of it, which at best was a species of perplexed *clairvoyance*, with the fuller revelation of its terms and contents given to modern apostles and prophets.

(continued...)

128. *The Epistle to the Romans*, Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1968, pp. 241, 242. Used by permission.



it to begin by discussing ‘literal’ versus ‘spiritual’ interpretation? But there it stands: “as to which silence was kept.” John Murray, in effect, says that silence was not kept about the mystery in the times of the ages. The reader has come to a decision point. Will you believe that silence was kept about the mystery in the times of the ages or will you disbelieve it?

W. Kelly expressly addressed the matter of the prophets:

. . . Carefully remark that the true word and thought is “prophetic scriptures,” that is, not “the scriptures of the prophets” or OT, but those of the NT, for we are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Paul’s writings, for instance, are prophetic scriptures, and in some of these the mystery of Christ and the church is fully made known, not merely touched on as in Romans 12:5.<sup>132</sup>

Another said:

Accordingly there is no article with “prophetic scriptures,” as would be correct if “the prophets” had been meant; whereas the anarthrous form was requisite, if new scriptures were intended, written by those who had prophetic gift, whether by apostles who had that gift also or by such as Mark and Luke, who were prophets inspired to write though not apostles.<sup>133</sup>

A. Marshall’s *Interlinear* has “through writings prophetic.” J. N. Darby and W. Kelly read “by prophetic scriptures.”

Daniel P. Fuller, a professor, and former dean of the faculty at Fuller Theological seminary, in effect disbelieves this Scripture, choosing this way to make it sound as if it was the gospel:

[The] gospel [is] . . . according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him.<sup>134</sup>

Then, of course, he is able to find some OT hints. C. E. B. Cranfield wrote:

. . . a manifestation which is properly understood in its true spiritual significance only in light of its OT foreshadowing and attestation.<sup>135</sup>

This assumes that the word “manifestation” refers to the manifestation of something in the OT. But it was not *there*. Where was it? Scripture explicitly tells us: it was *hid in God*

(Eph. 3:9) and now it is manifested. Is that too difficult for theologians, exegetes and expositors to understand? I doubt it. Then an agenda is at work.

The covenantizing pretribulationist, Darrell Bock, having quoted C. E. B. Cranfield, claims:

What is crucial in this passage is the explicit declaration that the gospel preaching about Jesus Christ and the nations’ obedience of faith is tied to what the OT revealed.<sup>136</sup>

Here, as in C. E. B. Cranfield’s case, all is lowered to the gospel. The distinction between the mystery and the gospel, made in this very text itself, is obliterated. Why should covenantizing dispensationalists be regarded as dispensationalists? Merely because they have not yet jettisoned the truth of the pretribulation rapture?

### COLOSSIANS 1:26

If one wishes to circumvent Col. 1:26, one might try the approach of N. T. Wright:

This is confirmed by Paul’s further definition of ‘the word of God’ as *the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations but is now disclosed to the saints* . . . (namely) *Christ in you, the hope of Glory*.<sup>137</sup>

The mystery is not the word of God. Scripture says:

Now, I rejoice in sufferings for you, and I fill up that which is behind of the tribulations of Christ in my flesh, for his body, which is the assembly; of which *I* became minister, according to the dispensation of God which [is] given me towards you to complete the word of God, the mystery which [has been] hidden from ages and from generations, but has now been made manifest to his saints . . . (Col. 1:24-26).

It is clear that the mystery involves the body of Christ, which is the church (v. 24), not merely Christ in you, the hope of glory. To help see this, read vv. 24 and 26 together, omitting v. 25:

. . . for his body, which is the assembly . . . the mystery which [has been] hidden from ages and from generations.

There are other methods by which to contradict Scripture. For example, L. B. Radford wrote:

The phrase ‘from ages and generations’ means not ‘hidden from the knowledge of men’ but ‘hidden since the beginning of history’. The emphasis is not on the withholding of truth from mankind, but on its contemplation in the mind of the Creator, e. g., Eph. 3:9. Cp. Rom. 16:25, ‘kept in silence through times eternal’. The silence was not absolute; glimpses of the mystery

131. (...continued)

As to “hid in God,” he says, “not concealed from the ages, in the sense of Macknight, but hid from of old.” Thus are the words of God contradicted to sustain a theological system.

132. *Notes on . . . Romans, in loco*. So he says in his critique of the Revised Version in *The Bible Treasury* 13:352. See also New Series 3:31, 4:127 and 6:12; and *The Present Testimony* 10:103.

133. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 4:128.

134. *The Unity of the Bible*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 421, 1991.

135. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark 2:812 (1979).

136. “Current Messianic Activity and OT Davidic Promise: Dispensationalism, Hermeneutics, and NT Fulfillment,” *Trinity Journal* 15NS (1994), p. 84.

137. *Colossians and Ephesians*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, p. 91 (1986).

were given to psalmist and prophet, e.g., in various phases and forms of the Messianic hope, cp. Heb. 1:1, where these partial divine intimations are contrasted with the full revelation given in Christ.<sup>138</sup>

Rom 16:25 is evacuated of its meaning by claiming that it refers to silence in eternity, whereas the text really says, "silence has been kept in [the] times of the ages." Then after informing his reader that silence was kept in eternity, he says the silence was not absolute, and shifts from eternity into time. Next he equates the mystery with the Messianic hope. Well, with such a handling of Scripture, one may prove any absurdity. Hidden from ages means that it was hidden from the time periods between Adam and Paul. Hidden from generations means that it was hidden from the people that lived in those time periods. Is that so difficult to understand? -- unless we have a theological system with which the facts and statements of Scripture conflict. Heb. 1:1 has nothing to do with the point at issue, nor does the Messianic hope. The learned J. B. Lightfoot claimed that:

But the one special 'mystery' which absorbs St. Paul's thoughts in the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians is the free admission of the Gentiles on equal terms to the privileges of the covenant.<sup>139</sup>

He has set aside the words of God and has imported his notions about covenant theology into this matter. Now, observe that by doing this, he is then able to acknowledge what is really the force of these Scriptures that the mystery was, as he erroneously defined it, completely unknown:

Not only was this mystery unknown in remote periods of antiquity, but even in recent generations. It came upon the world as a surprise. The moment of its revelation was the moment of its fulfillment.<sup>140</sup>

One way or another, covenant theology must be maintained in the face of the Scriptures which plainly contradict it.

The covenant pretribulationist, R. L. Saucy, joins in with the more general view of those who espouse covenant theology by saying:

A mystery may be hidden in the sense that its truth has not been realized.<sup>141</sup>

He retrogradingly speaks like those who hold covenant theology while pretending to progress. Compare his comment with that of the amillennialist commentator, W. Hendriksen:

The mystery of which the apostle is thinking here in Col. 1:26, 27 had been "hidden"; that is, for ages and generations (lit. "since the ages and the generations") it

had not been historically realized.<sup>142</sup>

The NT mysteries were hidden in the sense that they were not *manifested*.

#### EPHESIANS 3:5, 9

Some opposers will point to Eph. 3:5:

. . . which in other generations has not been made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets in [the power of the] Spirit . . .

It was "not made known to the sons of men" -- no, not even to Abraham. The mystery was revealed to "his holy apostles and prophets," meaning, of course, persons of the church; which adds weight to the rendering, "and by prophetic writings" (Rom. 16:26). However, it was Paul who wrote about the mystery.

Note the comma separating the words "men" and "as." W. Kelly translated likewise and with the same comma there. It shows that these Greek scholars understood the word "as" to denote a complete contrast: it was not heretofore made known -- as now is the time when it is made known. It is not a matter of degree but of absolute contrast.

W. Kelly translated Eph. 3:9 thus:

and to enlighten all as to what [is] the administration of the mystery which hath been hidden from the ages in God that created all things.

Concerning the word translated "hidden" in Eph. 3:9, it is the same word in Col. 1:26, regarding which we saw that the Lexicon of Arndt and Gingrich says:

hidden, kept secret . . . Col. 1:26.<sup>143</sup>

Paul said of it, "which in other generations has not been made known to the sons of men" (Eph. 3:5). Of course, it was not made known before the world began, but that is not the point. It is the period that has elapsed until revealed after Christ was in glory to be the Head of a body.

Now, the once professor at Westminster Theological Seminary, OT Allis, whose well-known anti-dispensational polemic, *Prophecy and the Church*, which does not even list Eph. 3:9 in the Scripture index, takes the word "as" in Eph 3:5 to be merely a comparison between the way the mystery was spoken of in the OT and the way Paul spoke of it. Stunningly misusing the thrust of Acts 26:22, and referring to it in a way which labels others "lame and arbitrary" for not seeing it his way, only serves as a splendid example of how anti-dispensationalists find references to the mystery in the OT, in spite of Scripture assuring us that it is not there:

Paul . . . declares emphatically that he has been preaching nothing which Moses and the prophets had not

138. *The Epistle to the Colossians and the Epistle to Philemon* . . ., London: Methuen, p. 203 (1931).

139. *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon* . . ., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 168, reprint of the 1879 ed., n. d.

140. *Ibid.*

141. In C. A. Blaising and D. L. Bock, eds., *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, p. 144.

142. *New Testament Commentary, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon*, Grand Rapids: Baker, in Coalescence, p. 88, 1990.

143. *Op. Cit.*, p. 93.

foretold. What clearer illustration could be found of the need of giving heed to Paul's words, "as it has now been revealed" (Eph. 3:5), when he speaks of the mystery? In commenting on this passage in Acts, all Darby has to say is this: "He speaks not of the assembly [the church] -- that was a doctrine for instruction, and not a part of his history" {see *Synopsis, in loco*}. That a man of Darby's mentality should have offered so lame and arbitrary an explanation is convincing proof that Paul's words on this memorable occasion cannot be made to square with the doctrine of the Pauline mystery Church as it is held by dispensationalists.<sup>144</sup>

We must conclude that his view of the matter is that the mystery is found all over the OT (Moses and the prophets, he believes). Thus he empties the Scriptures we are examining of any real meaning. They may as well not have been in Scripture at all. This springs from the want of "*the obedience of faith*" regarding what God has said in the three (or more) Scriptures that we are considering. Now note that Acts 26:23 explains what Paul meant in v. 22:

[namely,] whether Christ should suffer; whether he first, through resurrection of [the] dead, should announce light both to the people and to the nations (Acts 26:23).

That, of course, is not the mystery; but OT Allis thinks it is. Once again we see the erroneous equating of salvation with the mystery; and then, lo, there it is in the OT – and in spite of J. N. Darby's extraordinary mentality, the poor man did not see what to OT Allis is so plain in Acts 26:22, 23! At any rate, J. N. Darby was altogether correct in the above statement. Acts 26:22, 23 does not speak of the church, which is Christ's body.

As an example of where this false view of making the mystery to be the gospel leads, and how far astray the anti-dispensationalists are, consider the words of V. Poythress, who teaches at Westminster Theological Seminary:

No dispensationalist has shown a way to maneuver around the fundamental dilemma: the one way of salvation is through union with Christ.

He is imagining a necessity to maneuver because of his own false view about *union* with Christ. First of all, we confine the words "union with Christ" to the union of the members of the body to the Head in heaven. The fact is there never was union with Christ as members of His body until He took manhood into glory. We are united to Him in connection with His risen and glorified humanity, a thing impossible until He had died, risen and been glorified above. Secondly, John, who speaks of oneness of life in the Son, directly contradicts the allegation because the Lord abode alone before He died on the cross.

Except the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it abides alone; but if it die, it bears much fruit (John 12:24).

Thus, before His resurrection He abode alone; no one was in oneness, or in unity, with Him. He Himself taught this fact. Correctly speaking, we would do well to use the word "oneness" regarding what John teaches, and keep the word "union" for what Paul teaches, in order to describe the differences in what they teach, though the truths are, of course, complementary. It was, then, consequent upon Christ's resurrection that we form, as it were, grains upon the risen stalk, His resurrection-life being our life, forming one plant with Him. Before His death, the saints had divine life, but not in the character of forming one plant with the risen stalk of wheat, as *oneness in life in Him* is presented in John. It is "life in abundance" (John 10:10). In resurrection, taking the place of the Last Adam, the risen One breathed on them (John 20:22), bringing them into this new connection with Him, communicating the Spirit, not as the Pentecostal gift for union with Him in heaven as Head of the body, but as the power of *life in the Son*, as it is presented in John. The OT saints had life, but neither *oneness of life in Him* (John), nor **union with the Head in Heaven as members of one body** (Paul).<sup>145</sup> Subsequently, as a consequence of His being there in heavenly glory, the Spirit was sent (John 7:39; Acts 2:32, 33) that those who were waiting might be baptized into one body (1 Cor. 12:13), uniting them as members to the Head. The two things were separated in time, God graciously helping us thus to discern differences and to understand and appreciate, in our feeble measure, the immense range of blessings that we have.

Moreover, V. Poythress' notion that OT Saints had salvation through union with Christ<sup>146</sup> is vitiated on another basis. Christ is the eternal Son united to holy manhood. Thus, while the eternal Son always was such in the Godhead, *the Christ* did not exist in OT times, for the incarnation had not taken place. The talk about "maneuvering" is altogether inappropriate, to say the least. The "maneuvering" is seen to be entirely on his part; "maneuvering" around the great and distinctive facts of Christianity. Such charge "dispensationalists" with Judaizing but the truth it is such as

145. Even when John is speaking of profession, he uses a plant to represent the point (John 15), not the figure of the body and the Head. C.C. Ryrie's reference to John 10:16 and John 14:20, while rightly refuting ultradispensationalism, in order to show that the Lord spoke of the mystery and say that "The Body Church relationship was thus revealed by the Lord before His death," is incorrect; *Dispensationalism Today*, p. 203. Paul alone speaks of it.

146. We have the blessings we are speaking of (not the new birth) in connection with Christ's risen manhood. The idea of OT saints having union with Christ results, unwittingly, perhaps, in union with deity, since the Son was not incarnate then. So it follows that the union was with the non-incarnate Son, i.e., with deity. This is the real meaning of V. Poythress' criticism.

144. O.T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, p. 151, 1945.

themselves who are Judaistic, as is patently inherent in his very complaint.

All saints in all ages are saved by the grace of God, which does not mean, or imply, union with Christ for all.

The fact is that the anti-dispensationalists, now being assisted by those pretending to be progressive dispensationalists, lower the Christian position to that of a **millennial saint** at best; and though that is higher than the position of an OT saint, it is not proper Christian position presented in Scripture. But we cannot enlarge on this here.

Above, we noted that O. T. Allis can find the secret mystery, which was hidden from ages and generations, hidden in God, in Moses and the prophets. The amillennialist commentator, W. Hendrickson, illustrates the idea that the mystery can be found wide-spread in the OT. Of course, what he does is equate the mystery with OT predictions of the future blessing in which Gentiles would share; and then, of course, finds this everywhere in the OT. Commenting on Eph. 3:5, he wrote:

The Old Testament writers, in fact, did know about it and referred to it again and again (Gen. 12:3; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; Ps. 72; 87; Isa. 11:10; 49:6; 54:1-3; 60:1-3; Hos. 1:10; Amos 9:11ff; Mal. 1:11, to mention only a few references).<sup>147</sup>

"To mention only a few references"! Look how easy it is to find what Scripture says was hidden from ages and generations! This is a mystery as to which silence was kept? or, as the Lexicon of Arndt and Gingrich said: "a secret that was concealed for long ages"? Is this not, in reality, a mockery of God's word, whether intended or not? -- and I doubt not that no disrespect for God's word was willfully intended -- it is the exigency of a false theological system clouding the mind.

The fact is that OT prophecies of Gentile salvation will be fulfilled in the millennium, the coming kingdom which so many deny will come to pass; meanwhile there is an *application* of those prophecies at the present time. The prophecies concerning the death, resurrection and exaltation to Jehovah's right hand have been fulfilled. The consequences of these things as they affect Christ and His body were not prophesied. The other prophecies will yet be fulfilled when God's present work is completed. The other quotations from the OT in the NT are for the use of a principle contained in them, or to illustrate a point, or to show that Gentiles being saved now is not inconsistent with

the OT. Moreover, the fact that the OT prophets spoke of Gentile blessing of salvation in the coming (millennial) kingdom helps us understand such a passage as, for example, Eph. 1:12:

that we should be to [the] praise of his glory who have pre-trusted in the Christ.

We have "pre-trusted"; i.e., we have trusted in Christ before the predicted (millennial) time of Gentile salvation. Christ has died and been raised from among the dead. The work on which the prophesied millennial salvation for Gentiles is based is already accomplished and the fulfillment of the predicted salvation for the Gentiles awaits that day. Meanwhile, the work being done, God has saved some Gentiles now ("pre-trusted" before the millennium) **and, additionally**, has brought them into the blessed place occupied by those who are seated in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6). All of this escapes the anti-dispensationalists.

As another example, let us hear Vern S. Poythress explain it away:

This passage says that the way in which Gentiles were to receive blessing, namely by being incorporated into Christ on an equal basis with Jews (v. 6), was never made clear in the Old Testament. The claim that the mystery in Ephesians 3:3-5 was not previously revealed need mean no more than that.<sup>148</sup>

His notion is that *the way* to accomplish it was (not unknown, but) not made clear. He does not mean *the fact* was not known. And then *The Geneva Study Bible, Bringing the Light of the Reformation to Scripture*, omitting comment on Eph. 3:9, says, concerning v. 5:

**3.5 as it has now been revealed** The Old Testament's silence about Paul's mystery -- the union of Jews and Gentiles in the church (v. 6) -- was relative, not absolute. It was anticipated by the prophets. (Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance," Is. 19:25). If the idea had been altogether absent from the Old Testament, Paul could not have said, as he did in Rom. 4, that the Abrahamic covenant included all who were of like faith with Abraham, including Gentiles. Paul told Agrippa that his proclamation of light to both Jews and Gentiles did not go beyond what had been promised by Moses and the prophets (Acts 26:22, 23).<sup>149</sup>

We will consider this misuse of Acts 26:22, 23 in Part 4. It is very instructive that the best that is offered is Isa. 25, which they think is a statement that Jews and Gentiles would be united in the church! It is good to have these 'proofs' of covenant theology before us so that its true poverty can be seen. Does it not tell us what the character of the concept

147. *New Testament Commentary: Galatians and Ephesians*, Grand Rapids: Baker, p. 154, 1990. He remarked that there was something not made clear in the OT: "... the old theocracy would be completely abolished and in its place would arise a new organism in which the Gentiles and the Jews would be placed on a footing of perfect equality," *ibid.* "Not made clear"? There is not the slightest hint about it. At any rate, what we see here is that some of the mystery is found all over the OT and some was not made clear.

148. *Understanding Dispensationalists*, p. 26, sec. ed.

149. Nelson: Nashville, p. 1887 (1995).

concerning union must be? There is no sense of the heavenly character of the church. The church is nothing but a better Israel in this scheme.

Contradicting the Scriptures, a leader of the retrograde dispensationalists, R. L. Saucy, aligns himself with the anti-dispensationalists in their treatment of the texts we are considering, saying:

Thus we agree with the non-dispensationalists that Paul's teaching concerning the mystery of the church in the union of Jew and Gentile in Christ is a fulfilment of Old Testament predictions.<sup>150</sup>

In still maintaining a few things that distinguish themselves from "non-dispensationalists," the position of the retrograde dispensationalists (who do not deserve the word dispensational) is, indeed, as V. Pothress said, "inherently unstable. I do not think that they will find it possible in the long run to create a safe haven theologically between classic dispensationalism and covenantal Premillennialism."<sup>151</sup> This remark assumes that they would hold on to the idea of a millennial kingdom, while embracing a covenant position.

We have had before us this:

- as to which silence has been kept in [the] times of the ages (Rom. 16:26).
- which [has been] hidden from ages and from generations (Col. 1:26).
- which in other generations has not been made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed (Eph. 3:5).
- hidden throughout the ages in God (Eph. 3:9).

The attempted circumventions of these Scriptures by some of the above cited writers (numbers of them being amillennial Calvinists) remind me of a conversation I had with an Arminian involving the word "*impossible* to renew again to repentance" in Heb 6. He coolly stated that "impossible" meant "nearly impossible." Apparently, "hidden from ages and from generations," and, "hidden throughout the ages in God," means to those who find the church prophesied in the OT that it was "nearly hidden"; and "silence" means "nearly silent"; and "not previously revealed" "need mean no more than" "never made clear in the Old Testament."

It is the blessed path for the Christian to exercise the **obedience of faith**, first with respect to the gospel (Rom. 1:1-5), upon which salvation occurs; and also for the **obedience of faith** regarding the mystery (Rom 16:25, 26), which leads to understanding, according to our respective measures, of God's glory in Christ, in the heavenly sphere, where the Christian is (positionally) seated in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6). He will be eternally seated there as he is now,

but soon he will be there bodily also. His position will never change:

But to him that is able to do far exceedingly above all which we ask or think, according to the power which works in us, to him be the glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus unto all generations of the age of ages. Amen (Eph. 3:20, 21).

If the above cited Scriptures make it clear to you that the prophets did not speak of the Church; if you see that the mystery was "hid in God" and not 'hid' under terms like Judah, Israel and Jerusalem;<sup>152</sup> then you will also easily see what the nature of the kingdom is that was announced by John the Baptist and our Lord. It is that literal kingdom over which Messiah would reign, about which the prophets did indeed prophesy. You should also see that the way of interpreting the prophets has also been essentially settled.

Since the church is part of the mystery concerning which silence was kept in the OT, the prophecies of the coming kingdom are not about the church, and these prophecies are left to Israel's future. The church, then, is distinct from Israel. As distinct from Israel, is the church another earthly people? -- resulting in two earthly peoples. Not so. The church is a heavenly people, as is obvious particularly from Ephesians -- obvious, I say, unless you have a theological system that clouds the truth about it. So, while there are anti-dispensationalists that charge that dispensationalism Judaizes, the truth is that those who make the charge are the ones who Judaize -- by bringing the church down to being an earthly people.

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152. How would the Jews know it was hid under such terms, if indeed it was? V. S. Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987, has a chapter, "Interpretive Viewpoint in Old Testament Israel", wherein he seeks to address this matter. One tack he took is to cite passages of figurative language and state that the readers "would not know exactly to what extent a metaphorical expression of truth was at work" (p. 99). If such a tack is used, then it seems to follow that the O.T. readers would not know whether or not to spiritualize the prophecies; and thus this reasoning would leave them in a quandary. The Psalms are full of figures. Did that leave the O.T. reader in a quandary? At any rate, we shall see that our Lord and the remnant in His time here understood the prophets literally.

We cannot review V. Poythress' chapter here but just call attention to his remarks on Ezek. 44-46. He wrote, "Was the Old Testament hearer obliged to say that the passage must be interpreted in the most obvious way?" (p. 105). Note well that this **admits** that *the most obvious way* to understand Ezek. 44-46 is literally. Of course, and there was no basis for an Israelite to understand it otherwise. Subsequently we shall see that the well known amillennialist, OT Allis, stated that if the prophets are understood literally, then those prophecies cannot be fulfilled now. This **admits** that the prophets can be understood literally. In spite of the efforts that have been made to explain why an OT Jew should not have expected a literal kingdom, the question at the beginning of this note has not really been answered.

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150. *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 163, 1993.

151. *Understanding Dispensationalists*, p. 137, sec. ed.



## Chapter 1.4

### *The Heavenly and the Earthly*

The Church, properly speaking, the body of Christ, is not a dispensation, it does not belong to the earth; but there is an order of things connected with it during its sojourning here below -- an order of things whose existence is linked with the Church's responsibility.

(*Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 4:328).

#### *Introduction*

We have seen that the mystery of Christ and the church is not a subject of OT prophecy, but was kept secret, hidden from ages and generations, hidden in God (Rom. 16:25, 26; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:9). Thus, the work God is presently doing bears upon God's ways with, and purpose for Israel. Israel was the OT people of God (Ex. 3:7, 10; 6:7; 7:4; etc.; Deut. 7:6; 9:12 with 29; 21:8; 2 Sam. 7:10, 23; Psalms 78:71, etc.). They were declared to be Lo-Ammi (not my people) in Hos. 1:9, 10. God had taken away government from that people and gave it to the Gentiles, for the period depicted by the image of Dan. 2, namely, *the times of the Gentiles* (Luke 21:24). When the smiting stone of Dan. 2 (Christ) smites the image, Christ will set up the kingdom on earth and Israel will again be acknowledged as the people of God. They were, and will be during the millennium, an earthly people. Presently, another company of saints is acknowledged as God's people; not an earthly people, but a people called to sit in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6).

#### *The Purpose of God*

In his 1839 paper, "The Purpose of God," <sup>153</sup> J. N. Darby sketched these matters and I will quote several parts.

**CHRIST EXALTED IN THE HEAVENS PREPARES  
A PLACE FOR THE CHURCH, AND CAN FULFIL  
THE PROMISES MADE TO ISRAEL --  
MEANWHILE THE CHURCH IS CALLED.**

The resurrection of the Savior had the double result of accomplishing the redemption of the church, and of putting Christ in a place where He could secure the sure mercies of David (Acts 13:34), that is to say, confirm in His own name all the promises made to Israel. Moreover, it was needful also that He should take possession of the heavenly places, in order to establish the kingdom of heaven and to fill all things (Eph. 4:10); <sup>154</sup> as well as to associate the church with that glory -- new, and yet eternal -- prepared before the foundation of the world, and yet hidden from the former ages, but the manifestation of which had been determined according to the wisdom of God by the rejection of the Messiah by the Jewish people.

We must here distinguish two things: Christ preparing a place, a heavenly habitation; and Christ gathering from among all nations those who are to be His joint-heirs, calling the bride who is to enter into possession with Himself. Thus, in John 14:2, 3 the Lord says, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." In John 17:24: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

In Romans 8:29, it is written: "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." <sup>155</sup>

The work of Christ has provided for blessing in two spheres, the earthly and the heavenly. Observe the fact that Gentiles will be blessed on earth, but the center of earthly glory is in Israel. Also, all of "the just" of the first resurrection, as

<sup>153</sup>. *Collected Writings* 2:266-277.

<sup>154</sup>. Compare with John 20:17.

<sup>155</sup>. *Collected Writings* 2:273, 274.

well as the raptured saints, are heavenly, but the center of heavenly glory is Christ and the church.

**THE CHURCH AND THE JEWS THE RESPECTIVE  
CENTERS OF THE HEAVENLY GLORY AND  
OF THE EARTHLY GLORY IN CHRIST.**

Two great objects are presented to our contemplation by the prophecies and testimonies of the Scriptures, which refer to the millennium: on one hand, the church and its glory in Christ; on the other, the Jews and the glory which they are to possess as a nation redeemed by Christ. It is the heavenly people and the earthly people. The Son Himself, who is the image and glory of God, will be their common center, and the sun which will enlighten them both; and although the place where His glory dwells in the church be the heavens, where He has "set a tabernacle for the sun" (Psa. 19:4), the nations will walk in the light thereof. It will be manifested on the earth, and the earth will enjoy its blessings. When all is accomplished God will be all in all. The tabernacle of God will be with men, not coming down, so to speak, but come down from heaven.

All these things, and the way in which they will have their accomplishment, are revealed in detail in the Scriptures. Although the church and the people of Israel are each respectively the centers of the heavenly glory and of the earthly glory, in their connection with Christ, and although they cast on each other a mutual brightness of blessedness and joy, yet each of them has a sphere which is proper to itself, and in which all things are subordinate to it. With respect to the church, angels, principalities, and powers, with all that belongs to heaven -- the domain of its glory; with respect to the people of Israel, the nations of the earth.<sup>156</sup>

A few of the details follow:

. . . We have remarked that, when the fall of the Jewish nation was complete, God transferred the right of government to the Gentiles; but with this difference, that this right was separated from the calling and the promise of God.<sup>157</sup> In the Jews, the two things were united, namely, the calling of God, and government upon the earth, which became distinct things from the moment that Israel was put aside. In Noah and Abraham we had them distinct; government in the one, calling in the other.

With the Jews these principles were united; but Israel failed, and ceased thenceforward to be capable of manifesting the principle of the government of God, because God in Israel acted in righteousness; and unrighteous Israel could no longer be the depository of the power of God. God, then, quitted his terrestrial throne in

Israel. Notwithstanding this, as to the earthly calling, Israel continued to be the called people: "for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." As to government, God transports it where He will; and it went to the Gentiles. There are, indeed, the called from among the nations (namely, the church), but it is for the heavens they are called. The calling of God for the earth is never transferred to the nations; it remains with the Jews. If I want an earthly religion, I ought to be a Jew. From the instant that the church loses sight of its heavenly calling, it loses, humanly speaking, all.

What has happened to the nations by their having had government given over to them? They have become "beasts": so the four great monarchies are called. Once the government is transferred to the Gentiles, they become the oppressors of the people of God: first, the Babylonians; secondly, the Medes and Persians; thirdly, the Greeks; then, the Romans. The fourth monarchy consummated its crime at the same instant that the Jews consummated theirs, in being accessory, in the person of Pontius Pilate, to the will of a rebellious nation, by killing Him who was at once the Son of God and King of Israel. Gentile power is in a fallen state, even as the called people, the Jews, are. Judgment is written upon power and calling, as in man's hand.

In the meanwhile, what happens? First, the salvation of the church. The iniquity of Jacob, the crime of the nations, the judgment of the world, and that of the Jews -- all this becomes salvation to the church. It was accomplished all in the death of Jesus. Secondly, all that has passed since that stupendous event has no other object than the gathering together of the children of God. The Jews, the called people, have become rebellious, and are driven away from the presence of God; the nations are become equally rebellious; but government is always there -- in a state of ruin indeed; but the patience of God is always there, also waiting until the end. Then what takes place? The church goes to join the Lord in the heavenly places.<sup>158</sup>

Prophecy applies itself properly to the earth; its object is not heaven. It was about things that were to happen on the earth; and the not seeing this has misled the church. We have thought that we ourselves had within us the accomplishment of these earthly blessings, whereas we are called to enjoy heavenly blessings.<sup>159</sup> The privilege of the church is to have its portion in the heavenly places; and later blessings will be shed forth upon the earthly people. The church is something altogether apart -- a kind of heavenly economy, during the rejection of the earthly people, who are put aside on account of their sins, and driven out among the nations, out of the midst of which nations God chooses a people for the enjoyment of heavenly glory with Jesus Himself. The Lord, having been rejected by the Jewish people, is become wholly a

156. *Collected Writings* 2:266, 267.

157. These matters are discussed in J. N. Darby's *Teaching Regarding Dispensations, Ages, Administrations and the Two Parentheses*, obtainable from the publisher.

158. *Collected Writings* 2:377, 378.

159. {This is more precisely stated in his *Letters* 1:188: "the church called for heavenly places."}



heavenly person. This is the doctrine which we peculiarly find in the writings of the apostle Paul. It is no longer the Messiah of the Jews, but a Christ exalted, glorified; and it is for want of taking hold of this exhilarating truth, that the church has become so weak. <sup>160</sup>

### *The Church was Formed at Pentecost*

Acts 9 position ultradispensationalists like to point out that they distinguish between prophecy and the church and that is why they take a position for the subsequent formation of the church after Acts 2. In 1848, J. N. Darby wrote:

I distinguish entirely between the *church* and prophecy. <sup>161</sup>

He held to the truth of the formation of the church, the body of Christ, in Acts 2, upholding the connection with Christ's exaltation and consequent sending of the Spirit. <sup>162</sup>

The Lord Jesus had said that both He and the Father would send the Spirit (John 14:26; 16:7; Acts 1:4). This awaited His glorification in heaven. There could be no church, the body of Christ until He was in the glory to become, as man, the Head of that body (Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18). Thus, He being there, we read in Acts 2:32, 33:

This Jesus has God raised up, whereof all *we* are witnesses. Having therefore been exalted by the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which ye behold and hear.

So as the glorified man He received from the Father the Spirit and the Lord sent the Spirit down for a special function:

For also in [the power of] one Spirit we have all been baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bondmen or free, and have all been given to drink of one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13).

the Lord Himself being the baptizer (Matt. 3:11). Thus, the awaiting saints on earth were united together in one body, to the Head in heaven.

### *The Heavenly Calling and Seated in the Heavens in Christ Jesus*

#### THE HEAVENLY CALLING

160. *Collected Writings* 2:376.

161. *Letters* 1:131.

162. These matters are dealt with in J. N. Darby's *Teaching Regarding Dispensation, Ages, Administration and the Two Parentheses*. Appendix two refutes the ultradispensationalist view. This book also contains a chart on Acts.

First of all, let us beware of lumping things together, merging them, regarding them as the same thing because of a word. W. Kelly sounded this warning:

It surely does not follow that because "city" occurs in Heb. and in Rev., it necessarily symbolizes the same truth in both places. We had not yet learnt that because we read of an "ark" in Gen. 6 and Ex. 2 and in Ex. 25 of the ark of the covenant, the ark of bulrushes and Noah's ark were synonymous terms. . .

In Heb. 11 the word is used to portray that established and permanent abode in heaven for which the Old Testament saints looked in contrast with their temporary and uncertain residence upon earth. Abraham awaited the time when he should exchange his tent for a city, and so did the other patriarchs. But in Rev. 21 the city symbolizes the saints themselves, just as in Rev. 17, 18 another city, Babylon, sets forth corrupt Christendom <sup>163</sup> in the last days. Here then the *Bride is the city*: <sup>164</sup> while the Jewish saints hoped to be *in a city*, that is, a glorious dwelling place on high. But the holy Jerusalem which John sees seems emblematical rather of a seat of government than a habitation. <sup>165</sup>

And it has always been a great question among theologians whether the future state of blessedness is to be on the earth which is to be metamorphosed or sublimated into a heavenly state, or whether the people of God in their risen condition are to be in heaven.

Now, I say both are true -- not exactly that the earth will ever become heaven, but that all the saints that have suffered from the beginning of the world till the Lord returns, from Abel downward, will be a heavenly people. And therefore it is quite a mistake to suppose that because now the Church is heavenly in its calling, therefore the saints that are departed will not be heavenly too. *It was true, the heavenly calling was not revealed to them*; and they were not blest, as we are, with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ. But they are the saints of the high places; they are the saints of the heavens too. They shall judge the world; they shall judge angels, just as truly as we. They will be caught up to meet the Lord, and we shall be with them, and they with us, in the presence of God. I do not mean to say that there will be no distinctions. That, again, is another mistake; but I maintain that this is the truth of Scripture most plainly. <sup>166</sup>

That brings us more directly to the heavenly calling spoken of in Hebrews as distinct from being seated in the heavens

163. {This is the professing church minus the raptured saints, really.}

164. {Neither city is a literal city. Not to see that, leads to mistakes. Concerning the holy city Jerusalem, the text distinctly tells us that the angel showed John the Bride, and that he saw the city (Rev. 21:9, 10). This city is symbolic.

Also, the heavenly Jerusalem is distinct from the assembly of the first born ones (Heb. 12:22), though the heavenly Jerusalem is the (figurative) home of all heavenly saints; it is the Jerusalem above (Gal. 4:26).}

165. *Bible Treasury, New Series*, vol. 1, p. 126.

166. W. Kelly, *Lessons [sic] on the Books of Chronicles*, p. 60, 61.

in Christ Jesus, in Ephesians. W. Kelly wrote:

### THE HEAVENLY CALLING -- Hebrews 3

It is of no small moment to bear in mind that, while the "heavenly calling," as a developed system, depends on the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into heaven, the faith of Old Testament believers was far in advance of their calling and circumstances. Thus, the Lord called Abram from his country and kindred and father's house to a land that He would show him; and it was certainly by faith that he obeyed and went out, not knowing whither he went. But Heb. 11:9, shows us the further action of faith; for when he got to the land he sojourned in it as in a strange country, because a ray of the distant heavenly glory had dawned on his soul. "He looked for a city which hath foundations," &c. Thus he and the other patriarchs died, as they lived, in faith, not in actual possession. Nevertheless, such strangership as this neither amounts to nor implies the "heavenly calling." Doubtless, the "heavenly calling" now produces and enjoins strangership also; but this in no way proves that itself was published and enjoyed of old.

For the "heavenly calling," brought before us in Hebrews, grew out of the position of the Lord as having appeared, and when He had by himself purged our sins, as having sat down on the right-hand of the Majesty on high. Hence the earthly tabernacle and the rest in the land, and the Levitical priesthood and sacrifices entirely disappear, for the partakers of the heavenly calling who are addressed in the epistle. This state of things was not true either of the fathers or the children of Israel. Their hope was intimately bound up with the land (no doubt, under the Messiah and a glorified condition, but still their land and people as the medium of blessing for all others); but the "heavenly calling" was not revealed, nor could be till He came whose rejection led to it and whose redemption and consequent glorification in heaven became its basis. Hence Abram had his earthly altar. Hence he sacrificed, as did his descendants, in due season, of the flock, or the herd, or the appointed clean birds. Then comes the worldly sanctuary and its most instructive furniture and rites, that spoke of better things looming in the future. Nobody that I know disputes that individual saints saw beyond these shadows, dimly perhaps but really, to a coming Savior and a heavenly country. Still the land to which the patriarchs were called was an earthly land, and the entire polity of Israel was that of a nation governed under the eye of a God who displayed himself on earth in their midst -- in contrast with "the heavenly calling," of which not the least it furnished striking types, *mutatis mutandis*. Accordingly, in Heb. 11, after having traced the precious individual traits of the Spirit in the Old Testament saints, not only from Abraham but from Abel downwards, we are guarded against the error that would merge all in one lump, by the incidental statement of the last verse (See also Heb. 12:23). The elders have not received the promise; they are waiting till the resurrection for that. Meanwhile God has provided unforeseen some better thing for us. He has given us not promise only but

accomplishment in Christ. He has made us worshipers once purged, having no more conscience of sins. He calls us boldly to enter into the holiest by a new and living way consecrated for us. None of these things could be so predicated of them, and yet these things are but a part of the heavenly calling. Truly, then, has God provided some better thing for us, even if we only look at what is now made known through the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. It is also true that they without us shall not be made perfect. They and we shall enter on our respective portion in resurrection glory at the coming of Christ. Meanwhile we have no earthly calling, nothing but an heavenly one.

So far is it from being true that the early ecclesiastical writers erred by distinguishing too sharply between the dispensations, that their main characteristic is Judaizing the Church by denying the real differences. Jerome did this no less than others, even to the confounding of Christ's ministry with Jewish priesthood.<sup>167</sup>

### SEATED IN THE HEAVENLIES

Another wrote:

The relation in which Christ is presented to His people as "the Apostle and High Priest of their profession," in Hebrews; and Christ as Lord and "Head of His body, the church," of which we are the members, in the Ephesians, might of itself explain what the difference is, and determine it. There are, however, other considerations of interest to which the Scriptures guide us.

We are looked at in the Hebrews as a collective number of persons, on their way into the rest that remaineth, and therefore pilgrims and strangers, in virtue of our heavenly calling. Another and a very important point is, that "the time of need" measures the provision made for our supply by "the throne of grace," to which we are exhorted to come boldly, in order "to obtain mercy and find grace to help" us. Moreover, we have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one who is able to succor them that are tempted, for that "He himself hath suffered, being tempted." It is evident, from such provisions as these, and others of a similar character, that the people are not contemplated as in Canaan, or in the rest, but on their way to it: "we who believe are entering into rest;" and again, "let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest." Further, "the heirs of *promise*" are encouraged to lay hold on *the hope* "set before them, within the veil, whither the *forerunner* is for us entered, even Jesus," &c.

In brief, we see in all these instances that Christ is separated off from His people -- a High Priest passed into the heavens, and He alone "set down" on the right hand of the Majesty on High -- though there on behalf of His people, but a people as yet on the earth, with a heavenly calling, and on their way to the rest. So as to "the

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167. *The Christian Annotator*, p. 87, 1857.

Forerunner" -- He is within the veil, but alone -- though He has entered there for us; and "to them that look for Him shall He appear" a "second time," &c. What can be plainer than that the character and provisions made by God, in the Hebrews, to suit Himself in the Holiest, and a people whom He has called into His rest, recognize distance, and infirmities, and a time of need. In short, the necessities of a people *on their way* are met by the resources of the heavens above their heads, and ministered by the great High Priest of their profession.

In the Ephesians, we are viewed as members of Christ's body; of His flesh and of His bones -- which He nourishes and cherishes. Besides this, the power which wrought in Christ to place Him where He is, at the right hand of God, is likewise to usward who believe -- God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us hath quickened us *together with Christ*, and hath raised us up *together*, and made us *sit together*, in heavenly places *in Christ Jesus*. This epistle is just the opposite of the Hebrews; for there, as we saw, the Lord was *alone*, and set down as a Priest -- or entered in alone as a Forerunner (and very precious these relations of Christ are to us); but here, in the Ephesians, He is not *alone*, for we are in Him, as the members of His Body, *seated in Him* in the heavenlies, because He is the Head of the Church -- not in *an office*, which priesthood is, but as Head of His Body -- not as a forerunner, but we are quickened together, and raised up together, and *seated* . . . Moreover, our infirmities are not the question, but a direct and different ministration from the Lord, in love to the members, "till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

There is *no* corporate body in the Hebrews, but a collective number of people, with a pilgrimage and the rest of God in view -- whereas in the Ephesians there is nothing of this kind, but a "unity" -- "a habitation of God through the Spirit" -- and "a body" upon the earth -- not units, tens, hundreds, and thousands (numerically considered), like the children of Israel, who were "six hundred thousand, and a thousand seven hundred and thirty," when numbered on the plains of Moab, before their entrance into Canaan -- on their way into rest -- but "one new man."

The saints of God, in this dispensation, stand in the relation of God of a people on earth, "begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away," &c., of which Peter's epistles give the description. Till we enter into this inheritance by our own resurrection, or translation, we are addressed as "pilgrims and strangers," and exhorted "to pass the time of our sojourning here in fear," calling upon the Father, &c.

But the saints of God have another relation to Christ, as "the beginning, the first-born from the dead," and "Head of the body, the church" -- and in which relation we are *not on our way*, but *seated* in the heavenly places in Christ; for as members of Christ, and of His Body, we should be denying our relation to both, if we do not allow

that we are seated, as our Head, and in our Head. A Christian can therefore say in his *Church* relation that he is quickened, raised up, and seated in the heavenlies in Christ -- because he is a member of His body -- whereas, if viewed in another relation (as in the Hebrews) he is one of the holy brethren, and a partaker of the heavenly calling -- moreover called to consider Christ, not as Head of the Body, but in *an office*, as the Apostle and High Priest of His profession -- who appears in the presence of God *for us*, and lives to *make intercession* for us. Does the Lord do *this* for the Church, the Body, of which *He* is the Head? On the contrary, one of the prayers in the Ephesians is, that the members "may know *the love* of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." How different *this love* to the intercession of the great High Priest -- though that is the fruit of grace, too.

A Christian is therefore one of the holy brethren, with a heavenly calling, on his way into the rest that remaineth, with a promise of entering in, but in the meanwhile obtaining mercy, and finding from the throne of grace in the heavens, the help that is suited for the time of need, or the pilgrimage journey. A Christian is also "joined to the Lord," and "one Spirit;" and as such "baptized (with all his fellow-members) by one Spirit into one body;" and "made to drink into one Spirit" -- and this body is *Christ*. To introduce "a calling," or a "pilgrimage," or "intercession," where all is vital, and existing in the unity of a Body, would be to disturb these relations with Christ, and put all into distance again, and reduce the Body to mere units, tens, hundreds, and thousands. A Christian, as a *Church-man*, is already raised up, and *seated* in heavenly places.

I trust these remarks will make plain the difference between the "heavenly calling" of the Hebrews, and "seated in heavenly places" in the Ephesians. I trust also that we shall be able to hold our duplex character of "holy brethren," on our way to the rest, and laboring to enter in -- yet quietly take our places, as knowing no distance, nor difference in this respect, between Christ as Head of the Body, and ourselves as of His flesh, and of His bones, seated with Him in the heavenlies! It is thus we are contemplated and addressed in these two epistles, and *faith* accepts it in communion with the Father and the Son, through the Holy Ghost.<sup>168</sup>

#### CHRIST'S PLACE IS OUR PLACE

The revelation of all that was entailed in the coming of the Spirit, from the man in the glory, however, awaited God's time through the apostle Paul. His appointment to the apostolic position came from that man as glorified above, following the rejection of Stephen's testimony to His presence there. Paul is the apostle appointed to unfold the truths of the heavenlies (Ephesians) and tell us that we are seated in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6). This

168. The reference has escaped me.

tells us our position before God.<sup>169</sup> We are not seated in earthly places, as the redeemed nation of Israel (Ezek. 20:33-38; Rom. 11:26; Isa. 60:21) will be when Christ reigns before His ancients in glory (Isa. 24:23).

Now, all saints who ever lived, or will live, are born again and children of God (Rom. 9:7, 8; John 11:52). This we have in common with all saints. All saints who have died up to the millennium are part of the first resurrection (Rev. 20:5), part of the resurrection of the just (Luke 14:14). All, in common, are saints, and are just (cp. Heb. 11:40). But while there are things that are common to all saints, those seated in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus, have a distinct and heavenly place. The recognition of this distinction is meant to be conveyed by referring to Israel as an earthly people and the church as a heavenly people.

Let us pause to observe that it does not follow that OT saints who are in heaven are therefore seated in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus. They have their blessedness, but it can never rise to the unique place that “members of Christ” (1 Cor. 6:15) have, and will have eternally (Eph. 3:21; Rev. 21:1-3).

As part of the blessedness of saints in heaven who are not part of the church, the bride, we read:

Blessed [are] they who are called to the supper of the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9).

But they are not part of the bride -- who is also figured by a city (Rev. 21:9, 10) -- still distinct in the eternal state (Rev. 21:1-3; cp. Eph. 3:21).

All of these arrangements are appointments of God for glorifying Himself in Christ, both in the earthly and in the heavenly spheres. These several glories must neither be merged nor separated. God has *one* purpose -- to glorify Himself in Christ; but this is manifested in two spheres, the earthly and the heavenly. And as in the earthly, both Israel and the nations are blessed, with the highest blessing on earth for Israel (during the millennial kingdom); so in heaven shall all saints be blessed, but the church has the highest blessing. Indeed, it is so high a blessedness that it involves our being accepted in the Beloved (Eph. 1:6); i.e., God has brought us into His favor *in the Beloved*. He has done this after our Beloved was received up *in glory* (1 Tim. 3:16) and Himself seated there above all heavens that He might fill all things (Eph. 4:10). He fills the infinite heart of God with all the blessedness of His Person and His work of glorifying the Father. And the Father says, I must have other sons in the glory who are like my Beloved. I want them to have fellowship with Me in My appreciation of Him. And I will

make them morally like Him. I will put upon them all that is possible for me to do, except deity itself. I will bless them with *every* spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Him (Eph. 1:3). I will have them holy and blameless before Me in love (Eph. 1:4). Mighty as was the power put forth in creation, that surpassing greatness of My power that I displayed in raising My Beloved from among the dead, setting Him down at My right hand in the heavenlies, above all, and put all under My Beloved's feet (Eph. 1:19-22); that surpassing power, I say, I will extend to those whom I will accept in My Beloved (Eph. 1:19). And I will make them be “his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all (Eph. 1:23). And as I have displayed the *surpassing* greatness of My power towards them (Eph 1:19), I intend to show in those whom I have chosen to be favored *in my Beloved*, in the coming ages, the *surpassing* riches of my grace in kindness towards them, in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:7).

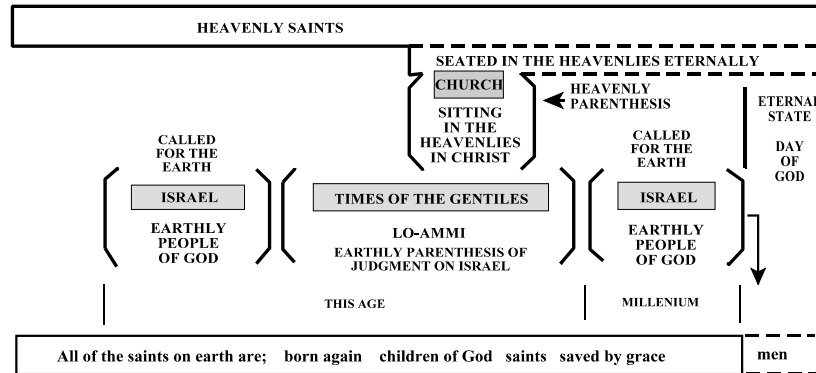
But to him that is able to do far exceedingly above all which we ask or think, according to the power which works in us, to him be glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus unto all generations of the age of ages. Amen (Eph. 3:20, 21).

There is, then, an earthly people (by calling) and *a people sitting in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus* (Eph. 2:6). The denial of this lowers the heavenly people to an earthly people. This necessarily Judaizes. And this is what the new, so-called “Progressive Dispensationalism is about.”

The chart below summarizes graphically what we have been considering, as well as the remainder of this chapter.

169. It is so obvious that this is not a physical seating that it is a wonder that it is necessary to point out that it has no bearing on the physical movements of the saints after the rapture. It is a *spiritual position* before God that never will change no matter where those thus seated are.

*Israel is Called for the Earth and the Church  
is Seated in the the  
Heavenlies in Christ Jesus*



### *Only One People of God?*

#### ISRAEL IS LO-AMMI

In the OT the designation “people of God” is specially used to describe Israel in relationship to God. Seth and Noah, for example, were not included in the term, my people. A check on this with the use of a concordance will confirm the fact. It is a false theological construct to range all saints under the designation, my people. At the time of the Babylonian captivity Israel became Lo-ammi (not my people) (Hos. 1:9). In the following centuries there were, of course, saints, but they were not called “my people.” The mere presence of believers in the midst of those declared Lo-ammi did not undo or negate the divine disowning of that people of God. The presence of believers among the unbelieving nation is not what constituted them the people of God -- else other nations among whom there were believers would likewise be the people of God. There is no such thing in Scripture as designating all saints from Adam on by the term “my people.” In millennial times Israel will again be “my people” (Hos. 2:23).

A chapter is devoted to the state of Israel as Lo-ammi in Part 8.

#### 1 PETER 2:9

In the time during which the church is called, Peter, addressing the elect saints of the Jewish dispersion (1 Peter 1:1), tells them that are “a people for a possession,” as J. N. Darby translated (1 Peter 2:9). Those addressed were believing Jews while the nation has rejected the Messiah. We noted above that after the nation was declared Lo-ammi, the believers were not designated as “my people.” However, consequent on the work, resurrection, glorification of Christ and the baptism in the power of one Spirit, into one body, of

the waiting believers, a new entity was formed: the body of Christ. The Jewish believers thus became members of Christ’s body. And they became God’s people, “a people for a possession.” W. Kelly remarked:

“Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” Here again we have a scripture of the Old Testament applied; and this has often been, and still is to this day, exceedingly misunderstood; as if the persons here spoken of must be Gentiles because they are called the strangers of the dispersion. It means Jews, and none but Jews, who believe in the Lord Jesus. What he refers to is the loss of their title to be the people of God, which Israel sustained at the time of the Babylonish captivity. They then ceased to be manifestly God’s people. Accordingly their land became the possession of the Gentiles; and so it has gone on to this day. As we know, from that day to this there has never been a real recovery, but only the return of a remnant for special purposes for a season. The times of the Gentiles are still in course of accomplishment. They are not yet finished; and they must be punctually fulfilled. Hence it is evident that, as long as the times of the Gentiles proceed, the Jews cannot regain their ancient title, nor become the real owners of Emmanuel’s land. Indeed, it is too plain a fact for any one to dispute. All this time they are not a people; they are dependent on the will of their Gentile masters. But even now grace gives the believer (here believing Jews) to enter that place; we are now God’s people. We do not wait for times and seasons. Israel must wait; but we do not.

This is just the difference between the Christian and the Jew. The Christian does not belong to the world, and consequently is not bound by accidents of time. He has everlasting life now, and is a heavenly person even while upon the earth. This is Christianity. Thus he says to the Jews addressed that they were not a people (that is, in the

days of their unbelief), but are now. So far was their believing in Christ from taking them out of the people, it is then alone that they became a people. They “were not a people, but now are the people of God;” they “had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” It is a quotation from Hosea 2.

And this is exceedingly interesting, because if the prophet be compared, it will be seen to illustrate what has been remarked before -- the difference between the present accomplishment made good in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, and the future fulfilment of the prophecies. If persons take the actual application as the fulfilment of the prophecies, it in fact not only nullifies the future of scripture, but destroys the beauty and point of the present; for what the apostle intimates is, that they had obtained mercy now, though none were yet sown in the earth. These Christian Jews were not sown in the earth. The earth will be sown with the seed of God when the Jewish nation, as such, obtains mercy. They will be the greatest people on the face of the earth, and all the Gentiles shall own it. They will have everything at their command, and worthily use all for God. Not only are they to be set publicly at the head of the nations, but God himself will link His own glory from above with them as His earthly people here below, and nothing but peace, righteousness, and plenty will be found all over the earth in that day of glory. Such will be “that day,” and of that day Hosea prophesies. You can easily judge whether that day is come now. It is only a theologian who finds a difficulty. His traditions wrap him up in fog.<sup>170</sup>

J. N. Darby has some excellent observations about this Scripture regarding the relationship of the blessing Peter spoke of and the heavenly character of blessing, thus bearing on our subject of two peoples of God:

It does not say that they were appointed to sin nor to condemnation, but these unbelieving and disobedient sinners, the Jewish race -- long rebellious, and continually exalting themselves against God -- were destined to find in the Lord of grace Himself a rock of offence; and to stumble and fall upon that which was to faith the precious stone of salvation. It was to this particular fall that their unbelief was destined.

Believers, on the contrary, entered into the enjoyment of the promises made to Israel, and that in the most excellent way. Grace -- and the very faithfulness of God -- had brought the fulfilment of the promise in the Person of Jesus, the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to fulfil the promises made to the fathers. And, although the nation had rejected Him, God would not deprive of the blessings those who -- in spite of all this difficulty to faith and to the heart -- had submitted to the obedience of faith, and attached themselves to Him who was the despised of the nation. They could not have the blessing of Israel with the nation on earth, because the nation had rejected Him; but they were brought fully into

the relationship with God of a people accepted of Him. The heavenly character which the blessing now assumed did not destroy their acceptance according to the promise; only they entered into it according to grace. For the nation, as a nation, had lost it; not only long ago by disobedience, but now by rejecting Him who came in grace to impart to them the effect of the promise.

The apostle, therefore, applies the character of “holy nation” to the elect remnant, investing them in the main with the titles bestowed in Exodus 19 on condition of obedience, but here in connection with the Messiah, their enjoyment of these titles being founded on *His* obedience and rights acquired by their faith in Him.

But, the privileges of the believing remnant being founded on the Messiah, the apostle goes farther, and applies to them the declarations of Hosea, which relate to Israel and Judah when re-established in the fulness of blessing in the last days, enjoying those relationships with God into which grace will bring them at that time.

“Ye are,” he says, “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a purchased people.” These are almost the words of Exodus 19. He goes on: “Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God; who formerly had not obtained mercy, but have now obtained it.” These are the words of Hosea 2. This sets before us, in the most interesting way, the principle on which the blessing is founded. In Exodus the people were to have this blessing if they exactly obeyed the voice of God. But Israel had not obeyed, had been rebellious and stiff-necked, had gone after strange gods, and rejected the testimony of the Spirit; yet, after their unfaithfulness, God Himself has laid in Zion a Stone, a chief corner-stone, and whosoever believed in Him should not be confounded. It is grace that, when Israel had failed in every respect, and on the ground of obedience had lost everything, God should bestow on them by Jesus, through grace, that which was promised them at first on condition of obedience. In this way all was secured to them.

The question of obedience was settled -- on Israel’s disobedience -- by grace, and by the obedience of Christ, the foundation laid by God in Zion. But this principle of grace abounding over sin -- by which is shown the inability of disobedience to frustrate the purposes of God, for this grace came after the completion of disobedience -- this principle, so glorious and so comforting to the convinced sinner, is confirmed in a striking way by the quotation from Hosea. In this passage from the prophet, Israel is presented, not merely as guilty, but as having already undergone judgment. God had declared that He would no more have mercy (with regard to His patience toward the ten tribes); and that Israel was no longer His people (in His judgment on unfaithful Judah). But afterwards, when the judgment had been executed, He returns to His irrevocable purposes of grace, and allures Israel as a forsaken wife, and gives her the valley of Achor -- the valley of trouble, in which Achan was stoned, the first judgment on unfaithful Israel after their entrance into the promised land -- for a door of hope.

170. *Lectures Introductory to the Study of Acts, the Catholic Epistles and the Revelation*, London: Broom, pp. 254-256 (1870).

For judgment is changed into grace, and God begins all afresh upon a new principle. It was as though Israel had again come up out of Egypt, but upon an entirely new principle. He betroths her to Him for ever, in righteousness, in judgment, in grace, in mercy, and all is blessing. Then He calls her “Ruhama,” or, “the object of mercy”; and “Ammi,” “my people.”

These, then, are the expressions which the apostle uses, applying them to the remnant who believed in Jesus, the stumbling-stone to the nation, but the chief corner-stone from God to the believer. Thus the condition is taken away, and instead of a condition we have blessing after disobedience, and after judgment the full and assured grace of God, founded (in its application to believers) on the Person, the obedience, and the work of Christ.<sup>171</sup>

#### ACTS 15:14

While there is a remnant of grace of Israelites in the church, it is chiefly and characteristically composed of Gentile believers. Peter related at Jerusalem “how God first visited to take out of [the] nations a people for his name” (Acts 15:14). We shall, if God wills, treat this passage more fully when we consider the Acts. Let us but observe here that James did not say that Amos 9:11, 12 was being fulfilled or that the church is the tabernacle of David. He cited for the fact that there will be such a thing as God owning Gentiles (millennial) apart from circumcision, and that His ways with Gentiles now cannot, therefore, be objected to. God is not inconsistent.

#### THE CROSS PROVIDES FOR ISRAEL TO BE THE PEOPLE OF GOD

God’s calling a people now out of all nations does not set aside the future re-establishment of Israel as the people of God for the earth. The work of Christ on the cross made provision for the nation of Israel, as such (John 11:52, 53) providing the righteous basis for the salvation of them (Rom. 11:26), the rebels having been purged (Ezek. 20); and they will be brought into the bond of the covenant (Ezek. 20:37), even the new covenant (Heb. 8:8-13) -- and meanwhile we minister the truths of it, as well as the Mediator of it (2 Cor. 3:6), though under no covenant ourselves, for we stand on far higher ground before God. We are pronounced to be heavenly (1 Cor. 15:48). This must necessarily be so because of the peculiar and special place we have in that Heavenly One, before the Father, taken into favor in the Beloved (Eph. 1). And while OT saints will be in the general heavenly company, none were said to be heavenly while on earth. But more; we saints are sitting down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6). This is our position, outside and above this creation. It is a position that will never, ever, change -- ours eternally, and distinguishes us from all other saints in the heavenly sphere. OT saints could not have been seated in the heavenlies in

Christ Jesus. The notion is absurd. Moreover, no Scripture says that they shall ever be so seated.

#### THE SLIDE TOWARDS COVENANTISM DISGUISED AS “PROGRESSIVE DISPENSATIONALISM”

R. L. Saucy, Professor of Systematic Theology at Talbot Theological Seminary, and a leader in this new view, said:

In the final sense it is perhaps best to say that “the people of God” is one people, since all will be related to him through the same covenant salvation.<sup>172</sup>

In order to have the expression “the people of God” include Gentiles, he begins the retrograde effort<sup>173</sup> with reference to Zech. 2:11, which reads in J. N. Darby:

And many nations shall join themselves to Jehovah in that day, and shall be unto me for a people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee. . . .

Then, citing Isa. 19:24, and trying to make it appear that “the concept of ‘God’s people’” is extended to the Gentile nations in the Old Testament and then follows his desired conclusion, “Thus, even before the New Testament was written, the concept of “the people of God” embraced both Israel and those outside of that nation” (p. 189). Observe how, right in the teeth of Hos. 1:9 and 2:23, he puts forth his attempt to water down the expression, his ultimate goal being to lower the church into ‘the one people of God.’

After God declared Israel Lo-Ammi (not-my-people; see Appendix 1), does he think the O.T. Gentiles, outside Israel, allegedly embraced by the concept of “the people of God,” still remained “the people of God”?

Thinking he has proven his point of a dual application of “the people of God” in the OT, he proceeds to the NT; and, not at all surprisingly, finds it in the Gospels (?) and elsewhere. Referring to Rom. 11:1, 2 he says:

The continued use of this designation for the natural people of Israel during the church age is seen in Paul’s description of Israelites as “his [God’s] people” (Rom. 11:1-2).<sup>174</sup>

And does that mean that when Paul wrote this Scripture, Israel was “the people of God” as they were before pronounced Lo-Ammi? Of course not; they were no longer that people of God. So the phrase “his people” in Rom. 11 shows that the word people may be used to refer to those who are not a distinctive people as Israel was before the Lo-Ammi period. And so may the word “people” be used of Gentiles, in the millennium (Zech. 2:11). But when Israel is declared to be Ammi (my people) in that day, the distinction will be maintained. But all this is useless to show that there is no such thing as a distinctive people sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, as there was an ancient called people

171. *Synopsis, in loco.*

172. The reference has escaped me.

173. *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism*, p. 188.

174. The reference has escaped me.

for the earth. We are not interested in word manipulations but rather seek God's mind concerning things that differ. Maintain the distinction and you will be helped not to move to covenant theology, as the covenant dispensationalists are doing. You will avoid notions like one people of God related to God "through the same covenant salvation."

All saints are, and will be, related to God by Christ's work on the cross. So is it with, say, Abel and Enoch, all are saved by grace. But that did not make Abel and Enoch part of the OT people of God.<sup>175</sup> What is going on with the covenantizing dispensationalists is similar to the anti-dispensationalist making Israel the OT church. What then about Abel and Enoch? Well, somehow they have to incorporate them also. Theological error requires it. All is merged in the idea of the 'unity of the redeemed.' Thus, the distinctions made in God's Word are blotted out. Progressive Dispensationalism is engaged in this also as seen in the assertion of 'one people of God.' It is a movement into covenantism.

This misnamed Progressive Dispensationalism rejects the earthly/heavenly distinction. R. L. Saucy, wrote:

The earlier dispensational teaching that divided the people of God into an earthly and heavenly people (i.e., the church and Israel), with fundamentally no continuity in the plan of God on the historical plain, must be rejected.<sup>176</sup>

God has one purpose, to glorify Himself in Christ, manifested in two spheres, the earthly and the heavenly, all to be headed up in Christ in the millennium (Eph. 1:10). As to all saints, past, present and future, all are born of God, all are saints, all are children of God, all are just men. Continuity lies in those things while there is discontinuity altogether between the called people for the earth and the people sitting in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.

We are related to Christ as members of His body. OT saints were not. All saints in all ages are saved by grace, but that does not make them members of Christ or make them taken into favor in the Beloved (Eph. 1), nor does it make them all "the (one) people of God." The writer continued:

But the affirmation of the fundamental unity in a relation to God through Christ does not eliminate the distinctiveness of Israel as a special nation. . .<sup>177</sup>

The fact that all saints are related to God by new birth, by salvation by grace, based on the work of Christ, does not set aside the distinction between the called, earthly people and the people sitting in the heavenlies in Christ. These distinctions depend on other things than salvation; I do not

say, than "covenant salvation," which is a figment of the theological mind as so used. We shall notice some points about this leveling system later. But even where something new for the present is noticed, it often contains error. For example, the above writer speaks of:

. . . the saving work of Christ at the cross which brought both Jew and Gentile into a new union with God and therefore with each other.<sup>178</sup>

We do not enter into "union with God." We are united to Christ in one body (Col. 1:18; Eph. 4:15, 16) by the Spirit sent down when He was in glory (John 7:38, 39; Acts 2:32, 33; 1 Cor. 12:13). We participate in this blessedness in connection with *His risen manhood* (John 12:24; 20:22).

Moreover, persons before Abraham were not in the olive tree of Rom. 11; nor will believing Gentiles in the millennium be in it, since the Gentile branches will be broken out. Such things as the olive tree and the seed of Abraham (the saints before Abraham were not the seed of Abraham in any sense) do not show that all saints of all ages form one people of God, except in the mind of those who have an agenda to prove it. The subject of the seed of Abraham is considered in Part 5. Also, the olive tree and the heavenly/earthly distinction is examined in Chapter 8.4.

## Conclusion

What we have been reviewing is not part of the subject of OT prophecy. The prophets did not speak about the church. It is only by contradicting the express statements of Scripture and then by a process of spiritual alchemy operating on the OT prophecies that the church is read into them.

So the preaching of John the Baptist regarding the kingdom was not about the church, nor was such preaching by our Lord. Moreover, the remnant that was waiting for the consolation of Israel were awaiting the kingdom prophesied by the OT prophets. We will now examine the Jewish expectation, the expectation of the godly remnant (and confirmed by our Lord) and then the postponement of the kingdom to a future time.

175. Of course, they were not in the Olive Tree of Rom. 11, either, which began with Abraham.

176. "Israel and the Church: A Case for Continuity," in John S. Feinberg, ed., *Continuity and Discontinuity, Perspectives on the Relationship Between the Old and New Testaments*, Wheaton: Crossway, p. 23, 1988.

177. *Ibid.*

178. *Ibid.*, p. 254.



***Addendum:***  
***The Coming Seventieth***  
***Week of Dan. 9***

There are six passages which name the coming period of tribulation, though many other passages speak of events occurring therein. In 1 Cor. 10:32 we see that God sees mankind as presently composed of three groups which are listed below and to which the six passages apply.

<b>Jew</b>	<b>Gentile</b>	<b>Church</b>
Jer. 30:7 Dan. 12:1-3 Matt. 24:21 Mark 13:19	Rev. 7:14 (cp. Matt. 25:31ff)	Rev. 3:10

Rev. 3:10 says “kept out of the *hour* of trial.” The church will not be in the *hour*, the *time*, of it, having been removed at the pretribulation rapture. If it be objected that the passage has no such application because it applied in the past to the Philadelphian believers, I reply that that trivializes Scripture. Because, what it would then mean is that there was some *hour* of trial that they were *kept out of* by gradually dying off.



## *Part 2*

### *The Expected Kingdom*

The kingdom that the Jews expected was a literal kingdom on earth, under Messiah. They had no basis upon which to expect otherwise if they believed the words of the prophets. But while that understanding of the prophets was correct, it left out a part of what the prophets had said; namely, that the Messiah would first suffer before the glory (Luke 24:25, 26).

John the Baptist and our Lord proclaimed that Kingdom and the godly remnant that accepted Christ expected that Kingdom. The offer of the Kingdom took, however, a form determined by God to bring out the state of the people. It was presented as embodied in the Person of the meek and lowly One. The people would have Him be king on the basis of His power to feed them (John 6) but that expressed and exposed their state of belly-mindedness, which is not the basis for the Kingdom. That ended in His death.

It was the purpose of God that Christ die on the cross, giving His life a ransom for many, and provide the basis for all the display of His glory. The result was, as divinely, sovereignly determined, that the Kingdom was postponed, or delayed; and meanwhile the great secret hidden in Him be unfolded. Thus, meanwhile, a heavenly people was to be formed to be at the center with His Son of the heavenly glory.

When that work is completed, then God will again take up His ways in government in the earth for the display of His glory in Christ in the earthly sphere wherein an earthly people (Israel) will be at the center of it.



## Chapter 2.1

### *What Should the Jews Have Expected?*

#### *Introduction*

The word “millennium” refers to the 1000-year reign of Christ. This reign is often spoken of in the prophets. Revelation 20 tells us its duration -- 1000 years. Premillennialists believe that Christ will come before the 1000 years.

The 1000-year reign will be preceded by a period a little longer than seven years. A premillennialist who believes Christ will come for us at the end of the seven-year period (involving the great tribulation) is called a posttribulationist. A premillennialist who believes Christ’s coming is one coming but in two aspects (a pretribulation rapture and an appearance in glory after the tribulation) is generally called a pretribulationist <sup>1</sup> and a dispensationalist.

There are postmillennialists. They believe a golden age will be brought in by the preaching of the gospel and Christianity permeating the world until it is more or less Christianized. They hold that the millennium need not be a literal 1000 years.

Then there are amillennialists, those who believe the 1000 years is a symbolic number referring to the present period from the cross until Christ comes and introduces the eternal state.

These last two groups in particular deny a future, distinct, political kingdom of which national Israel is the center and over which Christ will reign. This necessitates a denial that John the Baptist and our Lord announced the kingdom as those who hold dispensational truth (in some measure) understand this announcement. By ‘spiritual’ interpretation they alchemize the prophetic declarations in the O. T. into prophecies concerning the church -- hence it follows, not only for amillennialists but for postmillennialists also, that the announcement of the kingdom by John and our Lord had to be the announcement of a spiritual kingdom, not a literal one. This literal kingdom we shall call, as others

have done, a temporal kingdom; though as we shall see elsewhere those composing the nation of Israel under Messiah’s reign will all be saved (Rom 11:26, etc.) and this will entail much spiritual blessing for Israel. Thus the nation, which will experience a national adoption under the new covenant (Rom. 9:3-5), will also enjoy spiritual blessings of the new covenant (Heb. 8:8-13).

#### *A Jew Had to Expect a Temporal Kingdom*

To speak of the “postponement” of the kingdom, implies that the temporal kingdom was announced by John and our Lord in accordance with the prophecies of the O. T., literally understood. This view of the matter is consistent with what we have seen in Rom. 16:25, 26, Col. 1:26, and Eph. 3:9. Both John the baptist and our Lord announced the kingdom predicted by the prophets.

It is obvious that the prophets used the terms Judah, Israel, Jerusalem, etc.; and it is alleged that this means the church. *How was a Jewish reader of the prophets supposed to know that?*

The well-known amillennialist, O. T. Allis, in his polemic against dispensational truth, stated this:

The Old Testament prophecies if literally interpreted cannot be regarded as having been fulfilled or as being capable of fulfillment in this present age. <sup>2</sup> ♦

What here concerns us is the phrase “thy people.” From the Old Testament standpoint this passage like Jeremiah’s [Jer. 30:7] might be regarded as referring exclusively to Israel. But we have seen that the New Testament gives a larger meaning and scope to Old Testament prophecies which seem to be restricted to Israel . . . <sup>3</sup> ♦

So the OT prophecies could, as a matter of fact, be “literally interpreted” and they “seem to be restricted to Israel.” The

1. There are other variations, such as partial rapturists and mid-tribulation rapturists.

2. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 238.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

godly Jew really had no other choice. It is the New Testament, he alleges, gives a larger meaning and scope. Old Testament prophecies might be regarded as referring exclusively to Israel. And how was the godly Jew to know that it only *seems* that way and there was going to be a New Testament that would give a “larger meaning and scope”?

- If the meaning and scope were enlarged, what was the meaning and scope in the Old Testament before it was enlarged in the New Testament?
- What was Daniel to understand by “thy people” (Dan. 9:24) before this term was allegedly enlarged?

This raises the question -- was God deceiving Daniel and the Jews? So, after all, God did tell the Old Testament Jews that there would be a literal kingdom, and the expectation of it was right.

V. S. Poythress, in seeking to show that a Jew did not need to take the prophets literally, cited passages of figurative language and stated that the readers “would not know exactly to what extent a metaphorical expression of truth was at work.”<sup>4</sup> Concerning Ezek. 44-46, he wrote:

Was the Old Testament hearer obliged to say that the passage must be interpreted in the most obvious way?<sup>5</sup>

Well, of course there is an “obvious” way to understand Ezek. 44-46 and that is in a literal way -- which he admits, observe, is the obvious way.

Why should the Jew of, say, A. D. 25 have understood the prophets other than literally (allowing for figures of speech, of course)? There is no valid reason whatsoever. This is an interesting fact in view of the vehement denunciations, regarding the expectation of a temporal kingdom, made by opposers of dispensational truth. Their language is quite intemperate, especially considering the obvious truth in the quotation just given from O. T. Allis, coupled with the fact that a Jew could not do other than understand that the prophets meant Judah, Israel, Jerusalem, etc. by such terms. Let us hear a few of these denunciations of the Jews who understood these terms literally.

The amillennialist P. Mauro wrote,

There are also prophecies concerning the “remnant of Israel” that would return *to the Lord* in the latter days. Now it is not surprising that the utterly degenerate and carnally minded Jewish teachers of the times of Christ should have interpreted prophecies of that class as foretelling the restoration of the nation and its earthly grandeur; but for Christian teachers to make that mistake is surely inexcusable, seeing that, as has been shown in Chapter II of the present volume, the Holy Spirit, by the apostle Paul, has made known that such prophecies and promises have their fulfillment in *God’s new covenant*

*people, the true “Israel of God.”*<sup>6 7</sup>

Paul, of course, taught no such thing. But even supposing he had, the “utterly degenerate and carnally minded Jewish teachers” did not have Paul’s writings when the Lord was here. There was no reason for them to ‘spiritualize’ away the prophecies, the actual words of which speak of a temporal kingdom. P. Mauro, however, appears to blame their degenerate, carnal mindedness -- which means they ought to have spiritualized the prophecies. Why, he does not say.

We come now to a seemingly worse charge, namely, that the expectation of the earthly kingdom led to the crucifixion. R. Zorn asked:

Should we then continue to recognize a view that originated with the exegetical compromises of Judaism whose efforts, not only resulted in the violent wresting of Scripture along the erroneous byways of carnalistic notion and materialistic misunderstanding, but tragically led to the rejection of the Savior Himself at the time of His first advent?<sup>8</sup>

If these claims are true, it follows that John the Baptist and our Lord did not confirm the expectation of a temporal kingdom and so O. T. Allis asserted that:

The Kingdom announced by John and by Jesus was primarily and essentially a moral and spiritual kingdom.

Again,

. . . from the very outset Jesus not merely gave no encouragement to, but quite definitely opposed, the expectation of the Jews that an earthly, Jewish kingdom of glory, such as David had established centuries before, was about to be set up.<sup>10</sup>

In the next chapter, when we see that our Lord spoke to the disciples about the kingdom, and even during 40 days after the crucifixion, keep in mind this allegation that our Lord “quite definitely opposed the expectation . . .” Actually, it is this assertion which is “quite definitely opposed” to the facts of the matter.

Notice that there is an implicit pretension to spirituality if one denies a coming, temporal kingdom with Israel ascendant. The truth is that the denial is *unspiritual and judaizing* for two reasons:

1. It transmutes the prophecies of the kingdom into “spiritual” blessings for the church, thus substituting something else for the true, distinctive blessings of the church.

6. {By “God’s new covenant people” he means the church, the church allegedly being under the new covenant (cp. Jer. 31:31-34 and Heb. 8:8-13).}

7. *The Hope of Israel*, Swengel: Reiner, n.d., p. 84.

8. *Church and Kingdom*, p. 124.

9. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 70.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

4. *Understanding Dispensationalists*, p. 99.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

2. It substitutes for the truth their particular notion of a unified view of Scripture. In practical result, the post-millennial/amillennial scheme, and covenant theology, find the locus of Scripture to be in the salvation of the elect in all ages and in the idea of covenant. The ages are thus viewed as the unfolding of God's salvation and covenant. There is indeed truth in the thought that the ages display the unfolding of God's salvation, but it is a serious distortion to make this central. Doing so results, practically, in substituting benefits to man and results produced by man, for God's purpose and power. This may be done unwittingly and by Calvinists no less.

The truth is that God's self-revelation and His glory in Christ is the purpose of creation and the theme of Scripture. This glory is manifested in two spheres, the heavenly and earthly, .

1. There is Christ's glory in the church as one body in heavenly places as the principal (but not only) exhibition of grace.
2. There will be Christ's glory in government in the earth with Israel as the center, where He humbled Himself to the death of the cross.

We shall now turn directly to the quoted objections and consider first the allegation that the Jewish expectation of a temporal kingdom is an "exegetical compromise of Judaism." This means that the Jews should not have understood the prophets literally. The Jews really had no basis for doing anything else than understanding the prophets literally. I remind you again of what the amillennialist, O. T. Allis, rightly said:

The Old Testament prophecies if literally interpreted cannot be regarded as having been fulfilled or as being capable of fulfillment in this present age.<sup>11</sup>

A question that should be pondered is this: **What would have made John the Baptist understand them any other way?**

It is obvious that the prophecies are so written that, as a matter of fact, they do speak of a coming temporal kingdom. It is only by a process of 'spiritual alchemy' that these prophecies are transmuted into what they are not. The question is: what right did any Jew have NOT to understand the prophets literally? The answer is: they had no right, no Scripture, no word from Jehovah not to understand their prophets literally. They had no grounds for understanding Judah, Jerusalem and the house of Israel to refer to anything but Jewish things, not the church. Our brethren have castigated their understanding the prophets literally on this particular matter, but give no solid Scriptural reason for this. Could anyone dream for a moment that there is something in the prophets that told the Jews to envision the kingdom as the

amillennialists and postmillennialists envision it? Could our brethren even for one moment seriously mean for us to believe that when God spoke to the Jews about a new covenant with Judah and Israel, they should have known that what He really meant was the church? They had no knowledge of the church (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:26).

The following quotation ought to speak to our CONSCIENCES about these things:

. . . Amongst the hearers were two Jews. A discussion took place, in the vestry, between them and the preacher, on the subject of a psalm which contained a prophecy referring to the restoration of the Jewish people. The pastor maintained that it could not be understood in the sense of a national restoration. The Jew who spoke answered him: "How then can you be surprised that we should deny what you call the incarnation?" "What!" said the clergyman, taking a Bible, "is it not written: 'And, behold, thou shalt conceive, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end'?" The Israelite then asked the minister to take up with him again the different parts of this passage, which he did accordingly, and after having read the two or three first sentences, the Jews were convinced that they were to be interpreted literally; but, when they came to these words, 'And the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob,' etc., the pastor said, This signifies that He 'shall reign in the hearts of His people.' "If it is thus," replied the Jew, "if it is not in Jerusalem, where David had his throne, where he reigned, then I deny that Mary had a son. I affirm, for my part, that what is said on this subject signifies nothing else, save that the Messiah was to be pure from His birth, and that this is the true meaning of these words 'a virgin having a son'. You see I only follow your mode of interpreting the end of this passage. I apply it to the beginning, and by this means I deny the incarnation." "But," replied the minister, "we admit the literal interpretation of this part of the passage, because the event has proved that it was to be understood thus." I shall never forget with what an air of disdain and contempt the Jew then said: "Oh! you believe this, because it has happened, -- as for us, we believe what is written, because God has said it." We ought therefore to take heed in what manner we interpret prophecies; for, you see, if we deny the privileges promised to the Jewish nation, we shake thereby even the foundation of our faith. I take occasion here to observe that there is a great difference between figurative language and a system of spiritual interpretation, still too much in vogue. There are facts foretold in figurative language which have been or which will be fulfilled literally. . . . Prophecies, describing the future glory of the Jewish people under the emblem of a mountain, raised above the hills, and to which all the nations shall

11. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 238.

resort, are quoted in all Catholic catechisms, as proofs of the infallibility of the Church of Rome, whose authority, they say, is to extend over the whole world. They say, moreover, that the geographical position of Rome proves that these promises really apply to her. And truly, if Jerusalem in the prophets signifies the Christian Church, it seems that these promises concern the church of Rome, which, alone on the earth, has raised these pretensions to infallibility, universality and dominion. Whilst robbing the Jewish nation of those prophecies which belong to her, to apply them to the Christian Church, Christian controversialists can with difficulty contest the pretensions of the Church of Rome. But Jerusalem never means the Christian Church -- it means Jerusalem; Judah means Judah; Ephraim means Ephraim, and not France or England. Let us call everything by its proper name. Thus we shall understand better the grand but yet unfinished work of our glorious God, that work which, relatively to the Jews, among others, is not yet fulfilled. It is for divine reasons that the Jews have been preserved in the midst of the nations, as a separate people, waiting for the King. This King, the last King of Israel, is still alive.<sup>12</sup>

Neither is it true that though the Jews should have understood the prophets literally, yet they forfeited the kingdom and *now* we should spiritualize the prophets. "The gifts and calling of God [are] not subject to repentance" (Rom. 11:29). Furthermore, such a notion is self-defeating if one regards the church as the continuator of Israel. It is necessary to the system to find *prophecies* of the church in the prophets (in defiance of Rom. 16:25, 26, Col. 1:26 and Eph. 3:9), not merely a totally new meaning attached afterwards.

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12. O. *The Prospect* 1:29.



## Chapter 2.2

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### *What Did The Godly Remnant Expect?*

#### *The Expectation of the Remnant and Our Lord*

##### WHY OUR LORD WAS REJECTED?

Having seen that it was not only proper, but incumbent, too, for a Jew to understand the prophets literally, we shall now see that the godly remnant in our Lord's time on earth, and He Himself also, understood the prophets literally. In reply to R. Zorn we point out that this expectation of the remnant concerning a temporal kingdom, this alleged "exegetical compromise of Judaism," did not cause **the godly remnant** to reject Christ. Thus the allegation that this expectation led to His rejection and crucifixion is false and is mere dust that clouds discernment.

The reason for the rejection of the Lord was because the sovereign God, to Whom are known all His works, *offered the kingdom in the Person of the meek and lowly One*. This was a test to bring out the moral state of the people. The first man (1 Cor. 15:47)<sup>13</sup> was still being tested and now the greatest and final test, while the first man was not yet judged and set aside in the cross, was being conducted. So the first man, tested in the persons of the favored people, was put to the final moral test (see Matt. 23:33-46). This test was the final test of the heart of man; and so the first man's standing was judicially terminated in the death of Christ. Hence a Christian can say, "I am crucified with Christ."

It has been asked, if Christ came to offer an earthly, Messianic kingdom, why did He not accept the desire expressed in John 6 that He be king? The answer is found in John 6:26: "Ye seek me not because ye have seen signs, but because ye have eaten of the loaves and been filled." It was a false basis. Their god was their belly. The kingdom was presented in the Person of the Lowly One and they really were not interested in Himself as His searching words soon brought out (cp. vv. 42, 64-66). Their moral state was at issue. They were unfit for the kingdom. Thus God

sovereignly brought about, through the utilization of that awful moral state, the crucifixion of Christ. Then there could be brought out that aspect of glorifying Himself in Christ in the heavenlies (Eph. 2:6): the saints are now a heavenly company, seated in Christ in the heavenlies. This was a secret, hid in God, concerning which silence had been kept. This left the ancient promises and prophecies in force; but the work on the cross effected the moral basis upon which God will yet, sovereignly, bless His ancient people. (We shall consider this again when looking at John 11:47-53.)

And meanwhile, there has been brought out another mystery -- something hidden from the O. T. prophets and saints. There has been introduced a *mystery* aspect of the kingdom. The Lord's rejection is especially marked in Matt. 12; and then the Lord began speaking (Matt. 13) of the mysteries of the kingdom. The reader would do well to read W. Kelly's exposition of Matthew on chapters 12 and 13.

The temporal kingdom is therefore **postponed** until God has completed His work with the church. After the saints have been brought above to the Father's house (John 14:1-3), the judgments against the apostates will commence. And during that time a Jewish remnant will be formed, by sovereign grace, of course, and be made ready for the King. The moral character of this remnant is given in Psalm 1. Psalm 2 speaks of the establishment of the King. We must now leave this brief sketch and examine the expectation of the Jewish remnant when our Lord was here.

##### THE EXPECTATION

**Zacharias.** "And Zacharias his father was filled with [the] Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying . . ." (Luke 1:67). Now, surely we do not expect the Holy Spirit to put forth a carnal, rabbinical, degenerate idea concerning the kingdom, do we? What did Zacharias prophesy? "Deliverance from our enemies and out of the hand of all who hate us; to fulfil mercy with our fathers and remember his holy covenant . . ." (Luke 1:72,73). It is clear that he was referring to national deliverance and the temporal kingdom.

**Mary, Our Lord's Mother.** Mary was told this: "He shall be great, and shall be called Son of [the] Highest; and

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13. 1 Cor. 15:47 shows us that there are two men. "The first man" had a standing before God until the crucifixion. "The first man" denotes man in his Adamic standing and responsibility.

[the] Lord God shall give him the throne of David his father; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for the ages, and of his kingdom there shall not be an end.” Do you really, seriously, think that Mary understood and/or God meant that this was a promise that her Son would reign in heaven over the church? And if the prophets were to be understood literally, can you think of better words to confirm the promises? If God intended to confirm that the O. T. prophecies were to be understood as applying to Israel, how else should he have said it before you will believe it? Indeed our Lord became a minister of the *circumcision* to confirm the promises made to the fathers (Rom. 15:8).

**Simeon.** “This man was just and pious, awaiting the consolation of Israel” (Luke 2:25). It is idle to think he was waiting for a spiritual kingdom. His attitude is put before us in Scripture as commendatory.

**Anna.** She “spoke of him to all those who waited for redemption in Jerusalem” (Luke 2:38; cp. Luke 24:21). Is it even necessary to say that she wasn’t waiting for the work of redemption on the cross, but, as others, was waiting for Messiah to deliver Israel?

**The Disciples.** Do you think the disciples were thinking about who would be greatest in a spiritual kingdom (Matt. 18:1)?

**The Mother of James and John.** She wanted her sons to sit on the right and left hand of our Lord in His kingdom. She couldn’t have had in mind the present period (Matt. 20:21). The Lord sanctioned the expectation of such a kingdom.

**James and John.** They had the same request as their mother (Mark 10:37). They wanted to sit on His right and His left “in Thy glory.” Could anyone think they meant in heaven now, or in the eternal state?

**The Disciples Again.** Just shortly before going to the cross the Lord told them a parable because they thought the kingdom was going to be manifested immediately (Luke 19:11-27). What kingdom was it that they thought was going to be manifested immediately? This was after three years of listening to our Lord. *Note well that this expectation just before He was going to the cross shows what the expectation was regarding those saints cited above.* Well, it was not going to be manifested immediately. The man in the parable went away to get a kingdom and return. He is waiting now until the appointed time.

**Joseph of Arimathaea.** He is another one “who also himself was awaiting the kingdom of God” (Mark 15:48). Was he not awaiting the temporal kingdom? The way the Spirit seems to commend these saints in such an expectation ought to concern the opposers of the temporal kingdom.

**The Dying Thief** also did not spiritualize away the earthly reign of the Son of Man. He requested that the Lord remember him when He came into His kingdom. But,

rather, he would be in paradise that very day and not wait for blessing until Christ appears to set up the kingdom in power and glory.

**Peter**, too, would not spiritualize away the earthly reign of the Son of Man. He was an eye-witness of His majesty, in the mount (2 Pet. 1:16-18). And this explains, simply, Matt. 16:28. Those on the mountain (Matt. 17:1-9) saw a preview of the Son of Man coming in His kingdom. Was that the so-called spiritual kingdom? Not at all. Matt. 16:24-28 shows the Lord addressing His disciples. *Some* would not taste of death till they saw Him coming in His kingdom. These were the three who were with Him on the mountain and saw Him transfigured. It is plain that *some* tasted of death who did not see Him coming in His kingdom. So Pentecost was not the coming of the Son of Man, since *all* the apostles were there, except the son of perdition. At any rate, Peter, James and John did see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom, on the mount of transfiguration, -- where, by the way, we have a mixture of heavenly and earthly things so objectionable to the opposers of dispensational truth.

**John the Baptist.** Our brethren who do not believe that John and our Lord offered a temporal kingdom have rightly said that the Jewish leaders believed in a coming, literal kingdom. We have been seeing that the Jewish remnant, in the time when our Lord was here, shared this view. The magi expected this also (Matt. 2:2), and it worried Herod (Matt. 2:3) as well as all Jerusalem (Matt. 2:3). There were many who had a stake in the status quo. There was a great crowd, too, who shouted “Hosanna to the King of Israel” (a few days before they turned on Him). They hardly meant ‘King of the Church’ (which He is not now either, theology notwithstanding). They, too, were expecting “the coming kingdom of our father David” (Mark 11:10). And well they might, for Daniel’s 69 weeks (Dan. 9) was just expiring. But they grasped not the meaning of what Dan. 9:26 said of the Messiah: “And shall have nothing.” Messiah would not actually have that kingdom at His first coming.

The fact is, then, that the Gospels depict the expectation of a coming, temporal kingdom as a general expectation of leaders and led. **Had John come announcing a spiritual kingdom, he would not have been regarded as a prophet:** because, that would have been opposed to the general belief concerning what the Old Testament prophets had said. He came preaching, “Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh” (Matt. 3:1). Is it not clear that this was an announcement of the literal kingdom predicted by the prophets?

The fact that it is so explains Matt. 11:3. His difficulty was that he, the forerunner of this King, was in prison. Perhaps then, He was not the coming One?! No doubt, as with many others of the faithful remnant, he did not harmonize the Lamb and the Lion aspects of Christ’s two comings correctly. How could he, the forerunner, be in

prison when the deliverer of Israel (Luke 1:71-75) was there, especially considering John's father's inspired declaration (Luke 1:67)? So it is evident that he was expecting the restoration of the kingdom. Was he a carnally minded Jew too? His preaching concerning the kingdom was therefore understood by himself to refer to the restored kingdom of Israel.

**Our Lord.** Our Lord preached this message also, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh" (Matt. 3:17). We maintain, then, that our Lord preached the coming of a literal kingdom besides subsequently introducing a mystery form of the kingdom, a form that exists now. Furthermore, we maintain that our Lord never corrected the expectation of the earthly kingdom; He never told anyone that there was never going to be such a kingdom. He did this neither before His death nor after it. What had our Lord taught the disciples to pray? "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done *on earth* as it is in heaven." It is plain that this prayer refers to earth, and a kingdom on earth. Why pray for it to come if it came already when He came? It refers to the manifested kingdom, the restored kingdom of Israel through which Christ will administer His reign, and which, not having yet been fulfilled, is yet future.

Luke 17:21 does not contradict what has been said. The kingdom of God was in the midst of them as embodied within His Person. The offer of the kingdom entailed the acceptance of His Person and was a moral test meant by God to manifest the moral state of the nation of Israel and its leaders. They rejected Him and thus rejected the manifestation of the temporal kingdom.

**The Disciples Once Again.** Our Lord had sent out the disciples to preach: "saying, The kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh" (Matt. 10:7). What do you think they proclaimed was drawing nigh? the church? a spiritual kingdom? that there would be no kingdom such as the prophets literally prophesied? Keep in mind that our Lord sent them to preach.

Moreover, our Lord told the apostles that they would sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel (Luke 22:29-30). Does that sound like He was "spiritualizing" the prophets? I hope no one thinks that the 12 apostles are going to judge the 12 tribes of Israel during the eternal state or are doing so now: or that they are judging the church now.

**Our Lord and the Two Disciples.** In considering the case of the two disciples to whom our Lord spoke on the way to Emmaus, we shall observe something that bears on the matter of why the Jews rejected our Lord. It was not, it has been pointed out, because they erroneously expected a temporal kingdom. It is clear that these two disciples shared this expectation, the redemption of Jerusalem (cp. Luke 2:38). "But we had hoped that he was [the one] who is about to redeem Israel. But then, besides all these things, it is

now, today, the third day since these things took place" (Luke 24:21). Their hope was dashed. They had expected a national deliverance and now He was dead. What was their trouble -- that they interpreted the prophets literally? Obviously not. They looked at the Scriptures *selectively* (as those do who spiritually alchemize the Old Testament blessings into church blessings and leave the curses to Israel). Our Lord pointed this out to them: "O senseless and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory? And having begun from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:25-27).

Recall that the amillennialist, O. T. Allis, had claimed that ". . . from the very outset Jesus not merely gave no encouragement to, but quite definitely opposed, the expectation of the Jews that an earthly Jewish kingdom of glory, such as David had established centuries before, was about to be set up." We have already indicated that a change came about in the ministry of Christ regarding the introduction of the subject of the mystery aspect of the kingdom -- so our Lord after that no longer spoke of the kingdom *as at hand*. However, our Lord **never** opposed the thought that a temporal kingdom would be set up. Notice that He actually affirmed that expectation to these two disciples. He told them that they were "slow of heart to believe in *all* that the prophets had spoken." He did not tell them that the part they had believed was wrongly understood by them. What had they believed? --the part about the temporal kingdom! Wherein lay the trouble? -- in not believing about the sufferings of Christ.

**We claim that our Lord did here actually confirm their understanding that there would be a temporal kingdom.**

In view of the expectation of a national kingdom by the remnant, and our Lord's confirmation of the validity of this expectation, consider the following remark:

. . . that doctrine was the very cornerstone of the creed of apostate Judaism in its last stage, and the prime cause of their rejection and crucifixion of Christ . . . <sup>14</sup>

So in effect this means that the godly remnant held to the "cornerstone of the creed of apostate Judaism."

**After the 40 Days.** It is remarkable, too, to consider that the Lord spoke to the disciples for *40 days* after the resurrection "speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). Is it not strange if there was not going to be any national restoration of the kingdom that after all of that they still ask the Lord, "Is it at this time that thou restorest the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). What! Forty days on things pertaining to the kingdom and they still didn't

14. P. Mauro, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, p. 34.

find out that they were all wrong, that there was not to be any such kingdom, that those prophecies weren't meant literally? -- that that doctrine was not only carnal but the cornerstone of apostate Judaism? One would have thought that was sufficient time to disabuse their minds of that grossly carnal, rabbinical, ruinous, <sup>15</sup> literalistic expectation? And NOW does the Lord at last tell them they have a wrong expectation? No, He points out that it is *not yet the time for it*, thus once again confirming that expectation.

It is very plain that the disciples were still expecting the kingdom in power. Did the Lord tell them that their expectation was wrong? Will any man produce a Scripture that says so? He told them that it wasn't for them to know the times and the seasons. Their expectation, then, was correct; their time was wrong.

O. T. Allis says that the disciples apparently expected an Israelitish kingdom. Why *apparently*? The words are extremely plain, their expectation very transparent. But he refuses to have it that way; namely, that their expectation was right though the Lord corrected them as to the time, or he wouldn't have held his views.

But what is so interesting about his reply is this: he criticizes C. I. Scofield for saying that Jesus gave *one* answer to the disciples' question, that "the *time* was God's secret." O. T. Allis says the Lord gave "two" answers and it is the second one which is important in this discussion, and it is found in v. 8. That is, the kingdom was not an Israelitish one, but world-embracing. This is O. T. Allis' answer concerning the temporal kingdom. <sup>16</sup> Did our brother forget the "other" reply? He said there were "two": why did he by-pass the first (if there are two)? This is tantamount to allowing the first to stand and trying to get around it by getting the eyes on something else and making the second reply contradict the first.

Philip Mauro understood their words correctly. In another connection he says:

We are not inquiring whether or not Jesus of Nazareth was and is the true King of Israel; but whether or not He *at His first coming* offered or proposed 'to restore again the kingdom to Israel'. <sup>17</sup>

He quoted these words from Acts 1 and this indicates that he understood well enough the disciples' question. Implicit in his statement is that after three years of our Lord's ministry they were still expecting a temporal kingdom.

R. Zorn claimed:

. . . [Acts] 1:6 where the last flicker on the apostles' part of the hope that national Israel once again be a political

theocracy is mentioned. <sup>18</sup>

These remarks implicitly admit what has been pointed out in detail above; namely, that the remnant expected a temporal kingdom and even did so 40 days after the Lord's death, 40 days while He, in resurrection, had spoken to them things concerning the kingdom of God. Our brethren expect us to believe their incredible notion that our Lord ". . . from the very outset . . . not merely gave no encouragement to, but quite definitely opposed" the expectation of a temporal kingdom. I suggest that such statements plainly illustrate the power that an unscriptural theological system has upon the mind.

After the ascension of the Lord the disciples had to wait the promise of the Father (Acts 1:4) and of Christ also (Acts 1:8; John 15:26), i.e. the coming of the Spirit. The Spirit would lead them into all truth (John 16:13), bring things to their remembrance (John 14:26), show them things to come (John 16:13), and communicate the deeps of God (1 Cor. 2:10). They had to wait on God and His time concerning what might occur now that the Son of Man ascended up where He was before (John 6:62) and before He returned to set up the kingdom. Now we must see that provision was made in the death of Christ for the nation of Israel, as such.

### *The Death of Christ Provides Specifically for Israel's National Future*

The chief priests, therefore, and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said, What do we? for this man does many signs. If we let him thus alone, all will believe on him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation. But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, Ye know nothing nor consider that it is profitable for you that one die for the people, and not that the whole nation perish. But this he did not say of himself; but, being high priest that year, prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation; and not for the nation only, but that he should also gather together into one the children of God who were scattered abroad. From that day therefore they took counsel that they might kill him (John 11:47-53).

Here the heart, the state, is exposed. The self-interest, the place they had, was at stake. The motive for killing our Lord is clear. The human heart is depraved.

Note well that Caiaphas prophesied, -- "but this he did not say of himself." No. It was the Spirit of God Who made what was in the heart come out of the mouth. The purpose to kill our Lord, uttered by the high priest, is seen

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 77,79.

16. O. T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 312, note 1.

17. *More Than a Prophet*, p. 33.

18. *Church and Kingdom*, p. 49.

by the Spirit to be a prophecy of the death of the Lord Jesus *for the nation*. But it is added by John, “and not for the nation only, but that he should gather in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.” Thus two of the results of the death of Christ are brought out here. One is the gathering together into one of the children of God that were scattered abroad. The work of Christ on the cross laid the basis for this and it was realized at Pentecost.

The other result is for the nation of Israel. Our Lord was a minister of the circumcision to confirm the promises made to the fathers (Rom. 15:8). His death included dying for that nation. His work has laid the righteous basis for God to form a nation of saved persons (Rom. 11:26; Isa. 60:21). When the kingdom is established by divine power all the rebel Israelites will have been purged and the righteous remain to form the nation. Thus the nation will be composed of a spiritual people.

[As] I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, verily with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, will I reign over you. And I will bring you out from the peoples, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out; and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there will I enter into judgment with you face to face. Like as I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I enter into judgment with you, saith the Lord Jehovah. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me; I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, but they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I [am] Jehovah (Ezek. 20:33-38).

Besides those brought out of the countries, God will do a purging work in Palestine wherein two thirds shall perish (Zech. 13:8). Thus shall the Deliverer turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

For I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, of this mystery, that ye may not be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the nations be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved. According as it is written, The deliverer shall come out of Zion; he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is the covenant from me to them, when I shall have taken away their sins. As regards the glad tidings, [they are] enemies on your account; but as regards election, beloved on account of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God [are] not subject to repentance (Rom. 11:25-29).

. . . and I will remove the iniquity of this land in one day (Zech. 3:9).

Thy people also shall be all righteous (Isa. 60:21; see also 59:20, 21; 65:9; 66:7-9; 4:4; Zech. 3:9; 12:10; and Psalm 22:31).

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power (Psalm

110:3).

This is God acting sovereignly to bring to pass that which was uttered in the power of the Spirit by the mouth of the O. T. prophets. Meanwhile, through the work on the cross, the righteous basis upon which to deal with the nation has been laid. In that coming day they will be under a new covenant.

Behold, days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day of my taking them by the hand, to lead them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they broke, although I was a husband unto them, saith Jehovah. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and will write it in their heart; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will pardon their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more (Jer. 31:31-34).

. . . and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant (Ezek. 20:38).

. . . who are Israelites; whose [is] the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the lawgiving, and the service, and the promises; whose [are] the fathers; and of whom, as according to flesh, [is] the Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen (Rom. 9:4, 5).

In Rom. 9:3 Paul says that these Israelites are “my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” And to whom does he say the covenants belong? Yes, to them. But in that day when Christ reigns on His own throne they will not only be kinsmen according to the flesh; they will all be righteous. They will all be Israelites indeed. They will be true Jews and a spiritual Israel. They will all be the “*Israel of God*” in that day. They will experience the blessedness of the covenant with Abraham and David, and of the New Covenant. Christ died for that nation and it is based upon that work that God can righteously do all those things and make good the ancient promises. This is His moral way.

I would conclude by calling your attention to Rev. 3:21 which indicates that the Lord is not yet seated on His own throne (the throne of David), but on the Father’s throne (cp. Matt. 25:31). The reign of Christ predicted by the O. T. prophets has not yet commenced. Now, may the Lord direct our hearts and understanding to know more of the mystery of Christ and the church, and give us to walk in accordance with *our* calling.



## Chapter 2.3

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### *The Postponement of the Kingdom*

#### *Introduction*

In chapter 2.1 we reviewed the expectation of the kingdom by John the Baptist, our Lord, the apostles and the remnant, and found that they all believed in a literal kingdom. We saw also that the death of Christ provides for Israel's national future. The literal kingdom was not, of course, inaugurated and thus it is postponed, so to speak. We shall now specifically consider this postponement; first considering why the offer of the kingdom, in the Person of the Lowly One, was rejected by Israel, and then reviewing God's use of Israel's stubbornness. In concluding Part 2 we shall answer the charge that our view of the offer of the kingdom makes God guilty of making an immoral offer.

By the "postponement" of the literal kingdom I do not say or imply that it was God's intention to inaugurate that kingdom when our Lord was here, though there may be some who think that. Nor does it imply that the cross was unforeseen and an accident -- a foolish notion indeed. It does mean that the kingdom will be inaugurated *after* God's present work of forming that company which will be displayed in heavenly glory when Christ Who is our life is manifested (Col. 3:4). God has arranged all. In the meantime a mystery form of the kingdom has been inaugurated, a form unforeseen by the Old Testament prophets. Also in the meantime, Christ is seated with "my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21). He is not yet upon His own throne; but the present overcomer is promised co-enthronement with Christ when Christ does sit on His own throne (Rev. 3:21). It is not now the kingdom and power, but the kingdom and patience (Rev. 1:9).

#### *Why Was the Moral Presentation of the Kingdom Refused?*

Opposers of dispensational truth suppose that, since the Jews did expect a literal kingdom (they did, we saw -- based on the Old Testament prophets), they would have accepted it had it actually been offered to them. Since a literal kingdom was not inaugurated, they conclude that the preaching of John and our Lord never referred to a literal kingdom but referred to a

spiritual kingdom. (However, the nation did not accept any spiritual kingdom). We have already seen that they preached about a temporal kingdom. Such objectors fail to see the purpose of God, fail to come to grips with the ruin of the first man, and fail to see that God presented the kingdom in such a moral way so as to test and reveal the state of the first man even in the persons composing the favored nation, this test receiving its fullest expression in the rejection of Jehovah-Jesus.

Both John and the Lord Jesus preached "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh" (Matt. 3:2; 4:17). The Lord preached "the glad tidings of the kingdom" (Matt. 4:23) -- the good news that the kingdom was coming. It seems that the phrase "the kingdom of the heavens" derives from Dan. 4:26. As used by John and our Lord in this preaching, it refers to the reign of the heavens as manifested on earth under Messiah's rule before His ancients in glory (Isa. 24:23).

The key word in connection with John's and our Lord's preaching the kingdom had drawn nigh is the word *repent*. So that while the kingdom was promised to Israel, there were suitable moral conditions for its inauguration. The fact is that the offer of the kingdom came in the Person of the lowly One Who called for repentance. The offer thus was a test of the moral state of Israel as a people. The Jews needed to repent and submit to the Lord Jesus. Only a very small company received the Lord Jesus.<sup>19</sup> In a previous chapter it was pointed out that even after our Lord's resurrection, after the 40 days, the disciples asked, "Lord, is it at this time that thou restorest the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). This expectation was correct, but the time was not yet. If they were expecting a restoration of the kingdom to Israel at that point, what do you think they were preaching about when the Lord sent the twelve and told them: "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh" (Matt. 10:7)? Do

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19. When Christ comes again, there will be a remnant of Israel which will form the nation consequent upon the destruction of all the rebels (cp. Ezek. 20, for example; Zech. 3:9; Isa. 60:21; Rom. 11:25-29; etc.). Thus God will bless Israel in accordance with His holiness and moral ways.

you think the Lord was directing them to preach about a kingdom such as we are in now? And when the twelve preached, do you think that is what they meant by their words? There is no absurdity, no difficulty, when we see that the preaching of John and the early preaching of the Lord and the twelve referred to the promised reign of the Son of David over Israel. The fact is, then, that the literal kingdom was preached, but there was no turning to God by the nation. The lowly and meek One was not to their liking. *They would have the kingdom, but not on God's terms -- repentance, and acceptance of the Lord Jesus.*<sup>20</sup> It was part of God's testing of the first man, the object of which was to demonstrate the total ruin of man.<sup>21</sup> Only those whom God sovereignly caused to be born again received the Lord Jesus.

Thus was the state of the first man brought into bold relief. Instead of their accepting Him, they crucified Him -- but this was how many Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled. And that very work accomplished on the cross made provision for the national blessing of the nation, as such, as John 11:52, 53 declares. No man can be saved, past, present or future, apart from the work on the cross -- and even the future, national blessing of Israel is founded on that work, as all blessing must be.

It does not follow, however, that "the next thing in order" concerning 'God's program' was the national restoration of Israel. The unfolding of the ways of God was:

- (1) The presentation of the kingdom in the Person of Christ on the grounds of their repentance and acceptance of Him,
- (2) The rejection of Himself and His crucifixion,
- (3) The abeyance of the gospel of the kingdom and the postponement, or delay, of the kingdom, and
- (4) The unfolding of the secret, the mystery, hid from ages

20. Referring to John 6:15, G. Murray remarks, "The truth is that instead of offering the Jews an earthly kingdom, the Jews offered the kingdom to Jesus" (*Millennial Studies*, p. 69). See how he misses the simple, grand truth! They wanted Him as king on *their* terms. They refused Him on *His* terms. Their terms involved no repentance, no moral judgment on their ways, as well as no obedience to the will of God as expressed in the Lowly One. Their terms were -- bread in the stomach. Their god was their belly. There were spiritual requirements which they were not prepared to realize in their lives. Whenever man is tested, he proves the heart is deceitful and incurable. So instead of seeing this remarkable contrast, non-millennarians stumble on it.

21. John Gerstner cites John 5:15 as "particularly problematical" for those who speak of the offer of the kingdom:

The problem for dispensationalists is that here the Jews are recorded as asking Christ to accept the very temporal kingship which dispensationalists say the Jews were always refusing. As we see in this text, however, it was Christ who rejected the offer of a temporal kingdom (*Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*, p. 174).

The problem for those of covenant theology is that they are not able to see that Christ rejected kingship based on the fleshly motives of those occupied with their bellies.

and generations, hid in God, a mystery as to which silence had been kept.

### *God's Use of Israel's Stubbornness*

As God used Pharaoh, as He used Balaam, or Judas in our Lord's case, as He in His sovereign disposition pleased, so He used the rejection of the kingdom in the Person of Christ. God indeed means to bless Israel nationally (Rom. 11:25-29) and He will do so. But there was a secret undisclosed to the prophets that God meant to reveal after the great foundation for all blessing was laid in the work upon the cross, where God's nature was displayed and Himself glorified and vindicated with respect to the question of sin, a matter entirely necessary and essential. We turn now to help from W. Trotter on the subject of how God used Israel's stubbornness.

A vineyard let out to husbandmen is the figure employed by our Lord, to set forth their privileges and responsibilities, and to describe their guilt (Matt. 21:33, etc.). It is not, as in Isaiah 5, the fertility of the vineyard that is in question, but the honesty of the husbandmen, and the consequent productiveness to their lord, of the grounds entrusted to their care. "When the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits." Thus had the prophets been sent to Israel. With what result? "The husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another." Thus had Israel dealt with the prophets who had been sent to them. But great is the divine longsuffering. The owner of the vineyard had patience with the husbandmen, and "sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise." Was there no hope remaining? Could no further means be tried? Yes: "last of all, he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son." Such, therefore, is one aspect in which the mission of Jesus is to be viewed. No doubt He came to reveal the Father, and to accomplish redemption by the sacrifice of Himself; but He also came seeking fruit on God's behalf from those who were responsible for rendering it. Before He became the sacrifice for human guilt upon the cross, He was presented as the final test of man's condition before God. Israel was the theater in which the experiment was made: but it was human nature itself -- man, as such -- that was put to the test. With God in the distance, or behind the veil, man had, with every lesser advantage of laws, messengers, prophecies, warnings, promises, made no return to God for the pains bestowed; would he, now that God was revealed in the person of His Son, be more submissive or obedient? Alas! "when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him." The last astounding proof of God's forbearing love, of patience which nothing yet



had sufficed to exhaust, drew forth from man -- from Israel -- the expression of intense and complete hatred. They cast Him out of the vineyard and slew him!

The application of this parable was left by the Savior to the Jews themselves. He asks them what might be expected to be done by the lord of the vineyard to these husbandmen, and they are obliged to reply, "He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto others." He then reminds them of the Stone rejected by the builders, and of its high destiny to be the Head of the corner, and adds, "Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

But it was not only as the representative of God's *claims* -- as seeking fruit -- that the Jews rejected their Messiah: -- it was also as the revealer and expression of God's perfect grace. A certain king makes a marriage for his son, and sends his servants to call the invited guests -- such as were bidden: "but they would not come" (Matt. 22:1-14). Nothing is *claimed* of the guests at a marriage feast; everything is *provided*, and the guests partake freely of the bounty of their host. But the grace which thus provides all for man, and makes him welcome to the whole, is as unwelcome to his heart as those righteous claims of God's holy law with which he refuses to comply. "They would not come." But what cannot grace do? The death of Christ is itself made the ground of new invitations! "Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are now ready: come unto the marriage." What can be represented here, but the ministry of the apostles to Israel after the death and resurrection of their Lord? Alas! it was with the same result; save where sovereign grace imparted a new life and thus subdued the opposition of man's will, these further invitations met with no better reception than the former. "They made light of it . . . and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully and slew them." It was for this rejection of the gospel of an ascended Christ, proclaimed by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, that judgment was executed on Jerusalem and the Jews. "But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." Nor was it till they had thus rejected mercy, offered to them in every form, and pressed on their acceptance in every way, that the proclamation of heavenly mercy went forth universally: -- all being now indiscriminately bidden to the feast. "Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage."

If we turn now to the early chapters of the Acts . . . we shall find that what they present is, this lingering of divine mercy over Israel, before the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles. They had indeed committed an unparalleled crime in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, and in a certain sense filled up the measure of their iniquity. But the vine-dresser had interceded for the

barren fig tree (Luke 13:8); Jesus, on the cross, had cried, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do:" this, their ignorance, thus pleaded by the Redeemer on the cross, is precisely what the Holy Ghost admits by Peter in Acts 3:17; "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." So far were they, in answer to the intercession of Jesus, conditionally forgiven, that instead of judgment being instantly executed, full, free, absolute forgiveness was proclaimed to them, on condition of their repentance. Observe too, that it is national forgiveness of which the apostle treats, and the restoration of their forfeited national blessings, even including the return of Jesus Himself. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that (see the Greek <sup>22</sup>) the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord: and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." Forgiveness of sins, and the time of refreshing, or restitution, of which all the prophets had witnessed, as well as the return of the Lord they had rejected, are here proposed to the Jews on condition of their repentance. This was the only condition on which Old Testament prophecy had suspended the arrival of these bright and happy days for Israel; and on this condition they are still held out by the apostle. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." He well knew that they who had rejected and crucified a humbled Messiah on earth would still reject this Holy Ghost-testimony to an ascended and returning Christ; and everything which ensued was arranged of God accordingly. But if Jesus Himself, looking down upon Jerusalem and weeping over it, could say, "If thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!" we need not, in the unchangeableness of God's purposes, find any difficulty as to vast and wondrous results depending on Israel's repentance, as taught in Acts 3, even though it was surely foreknown of God that they would persist in their sin, and that wrath would come upon them to the uttermost. We may well understand that what was long afterwards said by Paul to the Jews of a certain locality was true of the whole nation: "*It was necessary* that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46). The martyrdom of Stephen terminated for the present all hopes of Jerusalem's repentance, or of Israel's reception of the Lord whom they had crucified; and seeing that every Old Testament prediction of the kingdom, or the millennium, treated of its establishment as dependent on Israel's conversion, that also was indefinitely postponed; and thus was the way prepared for the revelation of the

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22. The Greek word *οπως* occurs upwards of fifty times in the New Testament, and is never, save in this instance, rendered "when." Its ordinary rendering, and simple obvious import, are as given above.

mystery, till then necessarily concealed, that the period of Christ's rejection by Israel and the earth, should be occupied in the calling and formation by the Holy Ghost of "the church" -- the elect body or bride of Christ -- to be the vessel of His sympathies and sharer of His rejection while He sits on the Father's throne on high; and also to be the sharer of His glory when He shall "take to him his great power and reign" upon the earth.<sup>23</sup>

We may conclude, with W. Trotter, that God used Israel's stubbornness:

1. As the occasion of giving the kingdom to "a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof,"
2. As the occasion to turn to the Gentiles,
3. As the occasion to send forth the gospel of the glory (2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Tim. 1:11) universally,
4. As the occasion for the revelation of the mystery of Christ and the church.

### *An Objection to the Offer of the Kingdom by an Authentic Calvinist*

Among many other objections to dispensational truth John Gerstner raises is the morality issue regarding the offer of the kingdom to the nation of Israel. He alleges that the offer, as described by dispensational truth, would be an immoral one for God to make. The objection is that God could not make the nation an offer that He had no intention that they should accept. Before coming to that point, I desire to connect that issue with his Calvinistic view regarding the gospel, compare that view with Acts 17:30, 31, the giving of the law, and the presentation of Messiah to his own. Then we will consider the matter of the kingdom offer. My purpose in doing this is twofold. We will observe that this morality-of-God issue involves not only the offer of the kingdom, but also these other actions of God. This will also illustrate the contrast between Calvinism as a *system of man's devising* and **the balance of truth** brought out in the unfolding of dispensational truth. First, then, consider what J. Gerstner says about the offer of the gospel:

The dispensationalist asks the authentic Calvinist whether, supposing a non-elect person had actually chosen to believe, God would have accepted that person's faith. God knows who and who will not accept it, yet He offers the gospel to everybody. If everybody actually did accept it, then God could not actually save everybody because He had already declared that everyone would not be saved. If He saved everybody, He would prove Himself to be ignorant of what was going to happen and frustrated in all of His counsels and purposes. So what difference, the

dispensationalist asks, is there between the dispensational idea of a kingdom offer and the Calvinist saying that the gospel is *offered* to all while God designs the Atonement only for the elect and hence could save only the elect.

This might be a compelling argument except that the dispensational representation of Reformed theology is a caricature at this point. We do *not* teach that God invites reprobates to believe and be saved knowing full well that He will not give them a heart of faith. In fact, God does not call reprobates! He calls persons who recognize and admit themselves to be sinners. Those who confess themselves to be sinners, and they only, are called. Any one of them who comes will be saved. God *never* invited anyone who, if he responded, would be refused. God would never be embarrassed, even hypothetically, by someone coming and being rejected because he was not predestinated and foreknown. Every convicted sinner who has come, would come, will come, has been, would be, or will be accepted.<sup>24</sup>

We are told here that God does not "invite reprobates to believe and be saved knowing full well that He will not give them a heart of faith." Here is the crux of the argument -- which he will apply to the offer of the kingdom also. In regards to the invitation of "reprobates," we might notice that "a certain man made a great supper and invited many" (Luke 14:16), but *all* made excuse, yet the servant (indicating the Spirit) is told, "Go out into the ways and fences and *compel* to come in . . ." (Luke 14:23). Obviously, an invitation is not enough. Not one that was invited came. But were they invited to the supper? Why, yes, they were. What if they had all come? But that was not possible, because man is totally ruined, and so those ridiculous excuses not to come to the supper were made. Something more is needed: "compel to come in." Many are invited, but the house will be filled with those compelled by sovereign grace. This is the grace of God in effecting a sinner's salvation. Why deny that those who did not come were not invited? -- unless you have a troublesome theological notion to maintain. Many Calvinists and Arminians do not properly understand the responsibility of man and the sovereignty of God. The invitation addresses the responsibility of man and puts into bold relief his total ruin.

It is obvious that the apostles preached the gospel to all. But the authentic Calvinist retorts that God does not 'invite reprobates to believe and be saved.' The Word of God says:

God therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, now enjoins men that they shall all everywhere repent, because he has set a day in which he is going to judge the habitable earth in righteousness by [the] man whom he has appointed, giving the proof [of it] to all [in] having raised him from among [the] dead (Acts 17:30,31.).

23. *The Bible Treasury* 1:40,41.

24. *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*, p. 177.

See also Acts 3:18,19; 8:22; 26:20, 21.

God does sovereignly quicken whom He will (James 1:18; John 1:13; Rom. 9:16; Luke 14:18-23; Rom. 8:7; John 6:44; 3:27); but that God therefore does not command *all everywhere* to repent is a caricature of the Word of God. If God had meant to say that all everywhere should repent, how would he have said it? If God had enjoined that all the elect everywhere should repent, how should He have said it? Are we going to be told that God does not enjoin “reprobates” to repent? -- as if they are not responsible to repent? Inability to pay does not relieve one of responsibility to pay.

Of course the flesh cannot repent. We know that, not by constructing a system, the (supposed) logic of which we can rejoice in, but by the Word of God:

Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God; for neither indeed can it be” (Rom. 8:7).

Man is totally ruined. He needs to be born again (John 3:3) and this is accomplished by a sovereign act of God (James 1:18; John 1:12,13, etc.) in communicating a new nature (1 John 3:9). This is not the flesh improved. That is totally and unalterably corrupt. God’s seed abides in a Christian (1 John 3:9). When God views the Christian in a certain way, He says of him, “and cannot sin” (1 John 3:9). This is not “sinless perfection” on earth but God predicating of the believer, viewed as in Christ, what is true of the new nature. Positionally, God looks at the believer as “in Christ” and says of believers, “even as *he* is, *we* are in this world” (1 John 4:17). “The mind of the flesh” cannot repent. The person who receives the new nature, sovereignly communicated by God, repents because, as having that new nature, he can repent.<sup>25</sup> This does not relieve the sinner of his responsibility.

In order to indicate the connection of this issue with other great facts of Scripture, we might ask the following questions:

- ❖ How could God “invite” a “reprobate” to His supper (Luke 14:17) or wedding feast (Matt. 22:1-6) who He has no intention shall attend, while He has others *compelled* (Luke 14:23) to come?
- ❖ How could God offer Israel a promise of life and blessing if they would keep the law (Lev. 18:1, 5; Deut. 30:19, 20) when He knew no man could keep it (Rom. 8:7)?
- ❖ How can God enjoin all everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30, 31), when He has no intention that all everywhere shall repent?
- ❖ How could God “offer” the kingdom to the nation of Israel (Matt. 21:4, 5) if He had no intention for them to

accept it?

J. Gerstner, and others of the same theological system, raise the issue of how an insincere offer could be compatible with the morality of God. *The issue raised* means that God is dishonest in doing these things that He actually has done.

Of course, I can easily imagine that a response would be that the words “all everywhere” do not mean “all everywhere”; but rather they mean only those who actually repent. That is, God would be enjoining only the elect to repent. In other words God

. . . now enjoins all everywhere, except reprobates, to repent.

If “the authentic Calvinist” accepts such a view of Acts 17:31, 32, it should be obvious to the reader where this objection leads: *systematic* distortion of the words of God for the support of a false theological system. On the other hand, the authentic Calvinist says that “all everywhere” means exactly that, then the insincerity/morality issue he has raised is turned against himself because then he is a person who condemns God for what he has, in actuality, done.

As indicated in a question above, this issue also involves the law:

And Jehovah spoke to Moses saying, Speak unto the children of Israel . . . And ye shall observe my statutes and my judgments, by which the man that doeth them shall live: I am Jehovah (Lev. 18:1, 5).

I call heaven and earth to witness this day against you: life and death have I set before you, blessing and cursing: choose then life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed, in loving Jehovah thy God, in hearkening to his voice, and in cleaving to him -- for this is thy life and the length of thy days -- that thou mayest dwell in the land which Jehovah swore unto thy fathers (Deut. 30:19, 20).

This was addressed to all Israel -- and surely there must have been some “reprobates”<sup>26</sup> among them. How could God do such a thing when he knew not one man could keep the law:

Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God; for neither indeed can it be (Rom 8:7).

So here is God doing the very thing that “the authentic Calvinist” says that God cannot do, because that would be immoral. I suggest that the problem is with those who wrongly say such things about God. It is reasoning from man to God. It is limiting God by what man ought not to do in his own affairs. The objection has man, not God, at the center.

*The law*, which addressed the first man in the persons of the favored nation of Israel, *addressed the first man as responsible*, and it exposed the total ruin of the first man. Because a debtor cannot pay his debt he is not therefore absolved from responsibility. Everyone insists on that fact

25. I am not unaware of denials that the believer has two natures. J. Gerstner refers to the idea of two natures as “psychical schizophrenia,” *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*, p. 213.

26. I am using his word, but do not accept the Calvinistic theory of an election to reprobation.

when his own wallet is involved, but, interestingly, some may say that if a man cannot pay God then he is absolved from responsibility.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, he says, in effect or explicitly, that God may not expose man's inability and ruin by offering him something he cannot accept; or, by commanding him to do something he cannot perform. But it is clear to those who are neither Calvinists or Arminians that God has done exactly that in displaying his own sovereignty and man's ruin, in His purpose to glorify himself in Christ.

The presentation of Messiah to Israel is also involved in this issue. The Lord Jesus came; to whom?

He came to his own, and his own received him not (John 1:11; cp. 19:15).

But all this came to pass, that that might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet, saying, Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, . . . (Matt. 21:4, 5).

Are we going to be told that He only came to the elect? The fact is that *the whole* of what is meant by the phrase "his own received him not"<sup>28</sup> was placed into responsibility to receive Him -- though God knew that totally ruined man would not. What? His own were not responsible to receive Him? Excuse me, but the idea is absurd and exposes this system. Inability to pay does not relieve from responsibility to pay; and God addresses that responsibility to expose man's total ruin.

Let us now turn to the subject of the offer of the kingdom to the nation of Israel. There is an argument against the offer of a temporal kingdom to Israel: that if Israel had accepted such an offer, then the prophecies of Christ's death, etc., would have been false. This argument has been reversed upon those who believe that the offer was about a spiritual kingdom: if the Jews had accepted the offer of a spiritual kingdom that would have set aside the prophecies of Christ's death, etc. How does an authentic Calvinist respond to such a turn of the argument? To this J. Gerstner replied:

. . . Christ never offered His true spiritual kingdom to *all* Jews but only to Jews who acknowledged that they were sinners. All those Jews did accept the kingdom offer. In other words, all those Jews to whom Christ offered His kingdom did accept it and those who did not were never offered it. The later could and did account for the cross.<sup>29</sup>

We see here the same argument applied to the offer of the kingdom as we saw, above, applied to the offer of the gospel. God, he believes, only addressed the elect. Concerning the kingdom, he wrote:

This "kingdom offer" is surely an appalling notion . . .

The primary objection is a moral one. A clear implication

of the dispensational view is that God was offering Israel a very wicked option. According to Dispensationalism, the Lord Jesus Christ was offering something to the Jews in good faith which, had they accepted, would have destroyed the only way of man's salvation. God is an honest God. He is a sincere God. He, therefore, truly offered to the Jews the setting up of a kingdom which would have made the Cross impossible. *Obviously, if God did offer a kingdom which He could not have permitted to be established, He could be neither honest nor sincere.*

We know the way the dispensationalists themselves account for such a concept. They feel that they are absolved from guilt by their view of divine sovereignty. Because they believe in divine foreknowledge, they say that God knew from all eternity that, when the Jews were presented with the kingdom by Christ, they would refuse it. Consequently there was no possibility of Christ setting up His kingdom at that time and making the Cross unnecessary. But this knowledge of God does not make Him honest and sincere. He is doing it safely, as it were, because He knows that this dishonest and insincere offer will never be accepted.

The fact of the matter is He could not possibly have redeemed His promise. If the Jews had embraced Christ's offer, God would have had to say, "I am sorry, Christ cannot be elevated to the throne at this time. He must die on a cross." If the Jews expostulated and said, "But you offered us this," He would have had to say that it was not a sincere offer. I thought that you would never accept it. Of course, the dispensationalist in the background is saying, "No, that would never happen because God knew it would never happen."

We are granting that it never could have happened. Still, such a divine offer would have been insincere. God was making an offer that He could never have redeemed though He dishonestly said that He would if it were accepted. It is as if I safely offered a million dollars (which I do not have) to a debt-ridden relative who detested me because I knew, his hatred of me being what it was, he would never accept it.<sup>30</sup>

But what of the fact that John and our Lord preached the kingdom to all the Jews as also did the disciples (Luke 9:1-6)? The "authentic Calvinist" retorts that "Christ never offered" the kingdom to those who did not accept it.<sup>31</sup>

This is meant to 'save' the character of God from 'offering' something it was not His intention to give them. It is quite correct that the Calvinist should not do this in his own affairs -- but he therefore reasons upon the prerogatives of God and limits His sovereign action. This is the solution of this theological system to what they have called a moral issue regarding God's character. It parallels the notion that God

27. God holds man responsible, though he cannot pay, and we ought to learn from this that it is right to hold man responsible though he cannot pay. Grace and mercy is another matter.

28. I suppose these would be "reprobates" to an authentic Calvinist.

29. *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*, p. 178.

30. *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*, pp. 172, 173.

31. It follows, for example, that the disciples in Acts 1:6 did not know they had accepted the spiritual kingdom that allegedly the Lord proclaimed. They were still looking for the kingdom for Israel.

does not “invite” those who do not respond to the gospel to believe and be saved. Truly “the authentic Calvinist” view is “an appalling notion,” “a moral one,” that falsifies God’s dealings with sinners. The solution of these questions lies in rightly applying to the issues the sovereignty of God and the total ruin of man -- with an understanding of the testing of the first man.

Concerning this, John Calvin (the most authentic Calvinist, I suppose) wrote:

*Now he willeth all men.* In these words Paul teacheth that we must give ear to God so soon as he speaketh, as it is written, “To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts,” (Psalm 95:7, 8.) For the stubbornness of those men is without excuse, who foreslow [neglect] this opportunity when God doth gently call them unto him.<sup>32</sup>

Concerning *whosoever* in John 3:16, John Calvin wrote:

And he has employed the universal term *whosoever*, both to invite all indiscriminately to partake of life, and cut off every excuse from unbelievers.<sup>33</sup>

Since John Calvin did not believe that any of the indiscriminately invited sinners could partake of life except the elect, does that mean, according to J. Gerstner’s reasoning on the offer of the kingdom, that John Calvin believed in an immoral, or insincere, invitation on God’s part? -- and that John Calvin was not an “authentic Calvinist”? We agree with John Calvin’s quoted statements and regard J. Gerstner’s objection as deficient in understanding God’s addressing man’s responsibility.

J. N. Darby pointed out that what is at the bottom of the Arminian/Calvinist dispute is *responsibility*. Both systems view man’s responsibility wrongly. And I suggest that this is what is at the bottom of the issue of the morality of the offer of the kingdom and the other points discussed above. Keep in mind that the morality issue really is involved also in the giving of the law as well as the coming of Christ to His own. Now, it so happens that in a reply to B. W. Newton, J. N. Darby addressed one of his errors, the reply to which meets the issue under discussion here. It is as if he were replying to John Gerstner. J. N. Darby wrote:

I believe that the author has not known how to distinguish responsibility and the purposes of God. I believe that Christ came seeking fruit on Israel and found none -- that He was presented to their responsibility. He piped to them and they would not dance.

But the reasoning of the author proceeds from his not seeing that, *had* He been received, it would have proved that there was good in man -- that man was not in an absolutely lost state, just as his keeping the law would. Whereas his rejecting Christ proved, not only that man’s flesh would not keep the law, but that even the goodness of God, and sending Messiah, and sending His Son, and

light into the world, and love in the world, their king in the world, yea, God, Himself in power and goodness in the world, would not lead the flesh to repentance. And until this trial was put to it [the flesh], and (specially as regard’s the Jews) coming according to promise and prophecy, man was not, in the dealings of God with Him, pronounced absolutely and finally bad. “If I had come and spoken unto them they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father.” God never purposed to save by the old man, any more than he expected the law to be kept by the old man. But He did present His Son to man in his former state, and viewed as Israel after the flesh, to show the hopelessly sinful state of it [the flesh]. and, till He had done this, He did not pronounce upon it as the subject of nothing at all but judgment.

Now the testimony starts from this ground that all are entirely lost, the world is convicted of sin, because they have not believed in Christ.<sup>34</sup>

J. Gerstner complained that it is assumed “that a sincere offer is compatible with the foreknowledge of God rather than demonstrating how it is compatible.”<sup>35</sup> What does ‘demonstration’ mean to authentic Calvinists who, when God says “all everywhere,” pretend that means all everywhere except “reprobates,” etc. etc. If you say to such, ‘I will show you a Scripture where God commands all everywhere to repent,’ he will tell you that you have not demonstrated it, nor are you able to do so -- because God does not command “reprobates” to repent. Do you see how *he* “demonstrates” *that*?

I suggest that the ‘moral issue’ is a bogus one, resulting from reasoning upward from what a *finite* Calvinist should and should not do in his own affairs to what the *sovereign* God can and cannot do. It is the mind of the flesh intruding itself into the sovereign God’s using his exposure of the total ruin of man in the accomplishment of His eternal purpose in Christ. Moreover, the trial of the first man, and the end of that trial in the cross, is not understood.

It is of the same character as the Arminian who says that God cannot violate man’s (alleged) freewill; who says that God looked down the avenue of time, saw that I would choose Christ, and therefore chose me.<sup>36</sup> A Calvinist who raises such a moral issue thinks God is at the center of his thinking about the issue, but it is man that is really at the center, limiting God by what man should and should not do. The difference with the Arminian is that in the Arminian’s case the man centered reasoning is more obvious.

34. *Collected Writings* 8:359, 360.

35. *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*, p. 175.

36. See my *Free-Will; or, Not of Him that Willeth*, to be had from the publisher.

32. *Calvin’s Commentaries* 19:175, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989.

33. *Ibid.*, 17:125.

## *Does the Amillennial View Make God a Liar?*

Let us consider several statements by the amillennialist, O. T. Allis:

The Old Testament prophecies if literally interpreted cannot be regarded as having been fulfilled or as being capable of fulfillment in this present age.<sup>37</sup>

What here concerns us is the phrase “thy people.” From the Old Testament standpoint this passage like Jeremiah’s [Jer. 30:7] might be regarded as referring exclusively to Israel. But we have seen that the New Testament gives a larger meaning and scope to Old Testament prophecies which seem to be restricted to Israel . . . .<sup>38</sup>

Observe that the first quotation grants that the prophets could be understood literally. The godly Jew really had no other choice than to understand the prophets literally. It is the New Testament which allegedly gives a larger meaning and scope. Old Testament prophecies might be regarded as referring exclusively to Israel. And how was the godly Jew to know that it only *seems* that way and there was going to be a New Testament that would give a “larger meaning and scope”? If the meaning and scope were enlarged, what was the meaning and scope in the Old Testament before it was enlarged in the New Testament? Tell us the meaning, and the validity, that the O. T. unenlarged scope had? What was Daniel to understand by “thy people” (Dan. 9) before this term was allegedly enlarged? This raises the question -- was God deceiving Daniel and the Jews?

So, after all, God did tell the Old Testament Jews that there would be a literal kingdom, and the expectation of it was right. We have seen in a previous chapter that the Lord and the remnant believed in such a kingdom. They had the Old Testament prophecies about it. Recall the preaching of the twelve concerning the kingdom (Matt. 10:7) which was discussed earlier in that chapter. Would it not be immoral to have the twelve preaching about a literal kingdom when the Lord knew it was a spiritual kingdom? If, and since, as we have seen, they expected a literal kingdom, it follows they preached a literal kingdom. If, then, there is a question of the morality of God involved, the problem is with those who deny that there will be a kingdom such as the prophets did, in fact, prophesy. This raises a morality of God issue, based on the arguments we have been reviewing. The O. T. prophets did prophesy in terms of a literal kingdom and thus God deceived the people of Israel into thinking there would be a literal reign of Messiah, when He had no such intention that there would be such a reign. Moreover, Christ Himself sent His disciples to preach a kingdom that was the wrong kingdom!

Enough. I suggest that those who have complained about the morality issue have not solved it. Their issue is a false one that involves themselves in the very objection they have raised. It is they themselves who are in the position of making God a liar. It is particularly sad that those who speak so much about the sovereignty of God and the “total depravity” of man cannot find therein the answer to their own objections.

God knew men would break the law; yet He gave it, that what was in man’s heart might be manifest. God knew that Israel would, by their sins, forfeit the land of Canaan, and have to be scattered, as at present. He told them that He knew this before He brought them in (see Deut. 31:16-21). Still, He brought them in. He knew that they would reject the prophets and messengers by whom He spake to them, and offered them forgiveness and mercy, if they would but repent (see Ezek. 3:7-9). Nevertheless, He sent them, rising up betimes and sending. Was their responsibility diminished by God’s foreknowledge of the manner in which they would treat the messengers of His mercy? Surely not. So when, last of all, He sent His Son, sent Him as the One born to be King of the Jews, He knew all that they would do unto Him. From the slaughter of the innocents by Herod, to the last taunt that was addressed to the holy Sufferer on the cross, God foreknew all.

Why should this hinder Him from presenting the kingdom to them, and offering them its felicities and its glories on condition of their repentance, any more than the foresight of their failure under any former test should have hindered Him from applying it? God would make manifest what man, what Israel, was, and so appealed to them in the most affecting way, through the medium of the hopes which, for so many generations, had been indulged by them as a nation -- hopes based on the prophecies . . . . And they understood that Jesus claimed to be the One Whose coming was the object and center of their natural hopes. The superscription in Latin and Greek and Hebrew, placed over the cross by Pilate, told plainly enough that it was as King of the Jews He was rejected by the nation. Thank God, He did foreknow what they in the hatred of their hearts would do. Their sin has thus been overruled to our salvation: their fall has become our riches. In due time, when the church has been formed and perfected, and caught up to meet its Head in the air, when all the “mysteries of the kingdom” have had their accomplishment, Israel, as we have seen, humbled and broken-hearted, shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Jehovah; and the kingdom shall be established manifestly and in power. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!”<sup>39</sup>

37. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 238.

38. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 209.

39. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 3:24.

### *What if Israel Had Accepted?*

It is best to avoid “what if” inquiries for the purpose of figuring out what might have occurred. Why waste time on what if Adam hadn’t sinned; or, what if he had eaten of the tree of life; or, what if Satan had not fallen; or, what if Abraham had not left Ur; or, what if Israel had kept the law; or, what if the Lord had not been crucified; etc. etc. God utilizes a Pharaoh, a Balaam or a Judas. He is sovereign and works His own pleasure. He sends a judicial blindness, too (Isa. 6:9-12; Rom. 11:25), always in His own moral way, consistent with what He is in His nature. The Judge of all the earth does right and known unto Him from the beginning are all His works.

### *Conclusion for Part 2*

The main points that we have established from Scripture are these:

1. We saw that several texts of Scripture expressly inform us that the mystery involves the body of Christ, the church, and that silence was kept in the past concerning the mystery.
2. We reviewed some truths concerning the church and saw its distinct character as called to sit in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.
3. According to the way the OT prophets spoke, their words indicated that there would be a temporal kingdom under Messiah. Thus, the Jews were led, and rightly so, to expect a literal kingdom.
4. We saw from the record in the Gospels that the remnant expected a literal kingdom. The preaching of John the Baptist and of our Lord confirmed this expectation.
5. The presentation of the kingdom was bound up with the acceptance of Christ and with repentance. Thus the presentation of the kingdom, as bound up with His Person, constituted a moral test of the state of the Jews, the result of which was to bring into relief the total ruin of man. It was part of God’s sovereign ways to glorify Himself in Christ, utilizing that very ruin of man, to unfold His purpose in the cross.
6. The proclamation of the kingdom as at hand is meanwhile in suspension, while Christ has taken His place in glory, as man, and become Head of one body.

\* \* \* \* \*

We will now turn to the subject of the earthly parenthesis of judgment in Israel’s history, and the heavenly parenthesis regarding the church.



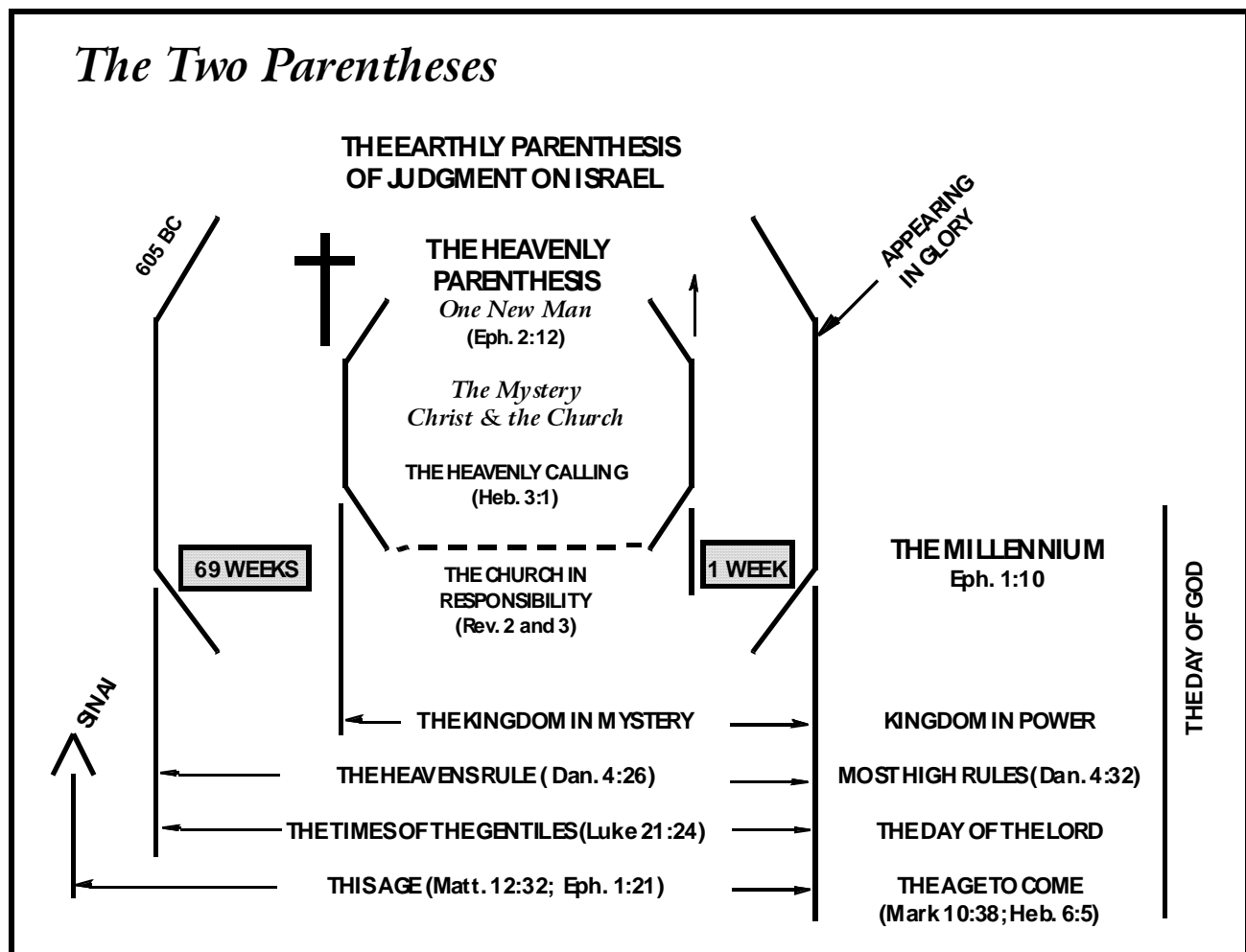


## *Part 3:*

### *The Two Parentheses*

In Part 3 we will examine the subject of the two parentheses, which we touched on previously. These two parentheses, the earthly, Gentile parenthesis of judgment on Israel and the heavenly parenthesis of saints seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, are illustrated on the chart below.

In Part 3 we will also examine L. S. Chafer's idea that there is a "church age" intercalated in the Mosaic age. This will entail an examination of his claim that the law is presently gone. All of this raises the matter of the violation of the basic truth that the testing/probation of the first man, man in Adam fallen, in his standing before God, ended at the cross. The end of the testing will be discussed in some detail. The Scofieldian age-ism system is not Scriptural. Dispensational truth is illustrated on the several charts in Part 3, as well as in the previous charts.



## Chapter 3.1

### *The Gentile Parenthesis of Judgment*

#### *Introduction*

A parenthesis “( )” takes place in a sequence (just as this parenthesis does) without otherwise affecting it. The word “parenthesis” was used in the early 1800's in connection with the unfolding of dispensational truth, to indicate something that God has brought about in connection with a sequence of His dealings. There are two of these parentheses. One has to do with the heavenly sphere of God's glory in Christ; and the other is connected with the earthly sphere of God's glory in Christ. Recall that God has ONE purpose: to glorify Himself in Christ -- and this glory will be displayed in two spheres, the earthly and the heavenly (Eph. 1:10).

#### *The Earthly, Gentile Parenthesis of Judgment*

In this chapter we will consider the wider of the two parentheses,<sup>1</sup> namely, the earthly one, the Gentile parenthesis of judgment upon Israel.<sup>2</sup> Israel will be at the center of God's display of His glory in Christ in the ‘earthly places’ during the millennium. The setting aside of Israel and the removal of God's throne from Jerusalem is an interruption in the development of God's ways in government in the earth. Of course, this interruption is part of God's ways with man for His own glory.

This period has been called a “parenthesis” because it is a period of time during which God's “reign” in Israel is in abeyance. Though government was introduced with Noah, the administration of God's direct government in the earth through kingship began with David. Saul's reign was *provisional*. By that I mean that it was something provided by God, in response to the people's request for a king, in

order to bring out the state of the people.<sup>3</sup> His choice was Zion and David (Psalm 78:65-72). The throne of David (B.C. 1011) and Solomon (B.C. 971) was called the throne of Jehovah (1 Chron. 29:23). This was the seat of God's direct government in the earth. David and Solomon together are a type of the Lord Jesus as coming from heaven (Rev. 19) to conduct the war of the great day of God the Almighty (Rev. 16:14) and then to reign as the Prince of peace.

But Solomon, who sat on the throne of Jehovah (1 Chron. 29:23), was unfaithful (1 Kings 11). So God chastised the nation through the division under Jeroboam (B.C. 931) and the kingdom split in two (1 Kings 12). Still, the throne of Jehovah remained at Jerusalem. After a while the 10 northern tribes (often called “the house of Israel” and sometimes “Ephraim”) were taken captive by the Assyrians (B.C. 722). And finally rebellious Judah was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar (B.C. 605/604). A 70 year captivity of Judah then commenced (Jer. 25:1-14; 29:10), a year for each sabbath year not kept for 490 years (2 Chron. 36:21). The end of this 70 year period did not, however, restore the kingdom to the house of David in Jerusalem.

The capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar was used by God to bring to an end God's *direct* government in the earth through Israel for much more than 70 years. The removal of this direct government is reflected in Scripture in several ways:

1. Notice that in the book of Daniel God is referred to as “the God of the heavens”; notice also the statement, “the heavens do rule” (Dan. 4:26).
2. In a vision, Ezekiel saw the Shekinah remove (Ezek. 10:18; 11:22). The time will come when it will return (Ezek. 43:1-7; 44:1). During the interval of its absence, the heavens rule rather than God exercising *direct* government in the earth in Israel.

1. As can be seen in the chart above, there is a parenthesis within a parenthesis.

2. W. Kelly, *An Exposition of Isaiah*, London: Hammond, 1947 reprint, p. 155. In *Lectures Introductory to . . . the Minor Prophets*, London: Broom, 1874, he called it “the parenthesis of Gentile empire.” See also *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 2:53 (1830); *The Bible Treasury* 11:180,181; 12:8; 9:344; *The Prospect* 1:148.

3. There is something analogous to this concerning Shiloh, where the tent of meeting (the tabernacle) was located, until God's choice of Jerusalem was manifested (1 Chron. 20:18-22:1; Psalm 78:65-72). Shiloh was *provisional*, to bring out the state of the people.

3. God pronounced Israel to be Lo-Ami, meaning “not my people” (Hosea 1:9). They are not outwardly owned as His people from then until a coming day when they will be called Ammi, meaning “my people” (Hosea 2:1).
4. Nebuchadnezzar had a dream (Dan. 2) in which an image depicted four Gentile empires. This image depicts Gentile rule from Nebuchadnezzar until the smiting stone falls upon the feet of the image and smashes it. Christ is the smiting stone and when He comes from heaven (Rev. 19) to conduct the war of that great day of God the Almighty (Rev. 16:14), He will bring Gentile dominion to an end and reign before His ancients in glory (Isa. 24:23).
5. Daniel had a dream (Dan. 7) in which these four empires are depicted in their beastly character.
6. Our Lord called this period the times of the Gentiles (i.e., of the nations; Luke 21:24).

These conditions exist during the time designated by “the Gentile parenthesis of judgment.” It is a time of Gentile dominion brought as a chastisement, a judgment, upon Israel, but it will come to an end when God establishes His King upon His holy hill of Zion (Psa. 2). This will end the period when God is not directly exercising government in the earth in Israel.

### *Failure Made Good by Christ*

The failure of kingship in Israel led to this parenthesis of universal Gentile dominion. Behind this failure was God’s purpose to have the people of Israel representatively in the land (though under Gentile dominion) when Christ came the first time, in order that Christ might be universally rejected by Jew and Gentile.<sup>4</sup> Thus, at the end of the 70 years captivity, a remnant returned to the land (Ezra). Though not outwardly owned as before, as when the throne of Jehovah was in Jerusalem, God continued to work with this people (see Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi) in view of the great test He would bring to pass connected with the Son come in holy manhood. This test, meant to bring out the state of the people and the state of the Gentile power -- brought out the irremedial state of the first man (1 Cor. 15:47). The rejection and crucifixion of Christ led to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (Matt. 22:7; Dan. 9:26). Meanwhile, there is now “a remnant [of Jews] according to election of grace” (Rom. 11:5). These are part of the body of Christ, looking at them in one relationship, and are also called “the Israel of God” when distinguished from believing

Gentiles (Gal. 6:16).

All wherein man has failed will be made good for God’s glory in the second Man. Even the failure in kingship will be made good; for Christ will reign, reign perfectly, during the millennium, and *deliver up* the kingdom to God (1 Cor. 15:24). All others had to have rule *taken away* from them. He, the Servant-Son, will glorify God in government in the earth, perfectly so, and then deliver up the kingdom to God. What a wonderful Person He is!

So the earthly, Gentile parenthesis of judgment, which is the times of the Gentiles, began with the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and will end with the deliverance of Jerusalem when our Beloved, our Lord Jesus Christ, comes to set up God’s direct government in the earth in Israel. The smiting stone will come from heaven and grind to powder he on whomsoever He falls. The image will be smashed and that smiting stone will fill the earth (Dan. 2). Then shall the knowledge of Jehovah cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

When the Christ is manifested who [is] our life, then shall ye also be manifested with him in glory (Col. 3:4).

Oh, to walk here in the little remaining time so as to please Him! Think of Him Who is our life, and Him with Whom we are joint heirs. We shall be manifested in glory with Himself when He comes in the clouds of heaven with all His holy myriads to reign before His ancients in glory. Then shall our Beloved have His rightful place here where He humbled Himself to the lowest. Rich in glory, He stooped to the unspeakable depths of the three hours when the Holy One Who knew no sin not only bore our sins in His own body on the tree, but what was far deeper, was *made sin* for us. Everyone that humbles himself shall be exalted in due time -- and who so, and justly so, as our great Exemplar.

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4. Government was in the hands of the Gentile at this point in time and thus the rejection of Christ involved rejection by the Gentile power, the governmental power depicted by the image of Daniel 2. In the middle of Daniel’s 70th week governmental apostasy will take place along with the Jewish apostasy and the apostasy of Christendom.



## Chapter 3.2

### *The Heavenly Parenthesis*

#### *The Designation “The Heavenly Parenthesis”*

Those who hold dispensational truth are often accused of teaching that God has two purposes. Perhaps some have said such a thing, but the fact is that God has one purpose: to glorify Himself in Christ. But the display of His glory in Christ involves two spheres: the earthly and the heavenly. Israel especially is connected with the manifestation of God's glory in Christ in the ‘earthly places,’ while the body of Christ is especially connected with the manifestation of His glory in Christ in the ‘heavenly places.’ Psa. 8 speaks of the Son of Man having dominion in the earthly sphere. Thus that is not one of the N. T. mysteries. But Eph. 1:10 tells us that Christ will head up *all* things, both the earthly and the heavenly. That Christ should head up the heavenly sphere was not revealed in the O. T.

The calling of the saints *now* is not part of the development of the ways of God in government in the ‘earthly places.’ Israel was, and will be, connected with that government in a special way. The body of Christ has not replaced Israel, nor is it the (spiritual) continuator of Israel. The body of Christ is not an earthly people as Israel was, and will be, but rather a heavenly people with a heavenly hope.

The Lord Jesus was “a minister of [the] circumcision for [the] truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers; and that the nations should glorify God for mercy . . .” (Rom. 15:9). So both Israel and the nations will be blessed. Note well, though, that Israel -- the nation, as such -- will be blessed. Why, Scripture expressly declares, and does so after Christ was exalted above, that the covenants belong to Israel, Paul's kinsmen according to flesh! (Rom. 9:4, 5). Yet, right in the face of the express words of God, antidispenationalists will affirm that the New Covenant is for the church (and that is why they transmute the church into ‘the spiritual Israel’). The death of Christ specifically provided for the future of Israel as a saved nation (John 11:51, 52). The rebels having been purged (Ezek. 20), all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 11:26; Isa. 60:21).

And so, under Messiah the millennium will be a great upward step and advance regarding God's ways in ‘earthly

places.’ Concerning salvation, Israel will stand under the new covenant, with the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:10-13). Concerning government, the One Whose precious blood is the basis of their blessing under the new covenant, will reign. God will be glorified in Him in direct government in ‘earthly places’ in Israel. Christ will reign before His ancients in glory (Isa. 24:23) and so Israel will be the head while the nations will be the tail (Deut. 28:13, 44).

Viewed, then, from the standpoint of the development of God's ways in government in the earth and of Israel's knowledge of salvation (Heb. 8:10-13), when all Israel is saved (Rom. 11:26) and stands before God in national adoption (Rom. 9:4), when the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9), when the Lord alone is exalted (Isa. 2:11), etc., etc., the millennial reign of Christ is an immense advance, a great upward step, compared to Israel's and the Gentiles' positions in the O. T. times. This is easily apprehended by those not given to spiritually alchemizing the statements of the prophets. Leave out the body of Christ (as connected with the heavenly parenthesis) and the **immense upward step** is quite clear.

Non-millennarians think of the millennium, as understood by us, as a retrograde, a downward, step -- because it is lower than Christian privileges. But this argument is based on refusing the truth that the body of Christ is connected with a heavenly parenthesis in the development of the ways of God in government in the earthly sphere. Such think of the church as the “spiritual Israel” and so there will be nothing after the church. But **this is what Judaizes** -- not dispensational truth.

We now come to the matter of designating the time during which the heavenly company is being formed. How shall we designate the present period?

We want to speak of it in some way; just as we speak of the Trinity, though the word Trinity is not found in Scripture, yet the truth of it is.

W. Kelly called it “a heavenly parenthesis.”<sup>5</sup> This designation nicely contrasts it with the wider, Gentile parenthesis of judgment which has to do with the earth and with Israel. He also called it “the Gentile parenthesis of mercy”<sup>6</sup> and “church parenthesis.”<sup>7</sup> I suggest that the best is “the heavenly parenthesis.” During the Millennium mercy will go out to the Gentiles also and so “the heavenly parenthesis” distinguishes more sharply; moreover, “church parenthesis” does not directly address the fact that the body of Christ is heavenly. However, the description, “a heavenly parenthesis,” contrasts well with the earthly hopes of the nation of Israel, and denotes that there is a special, heavenly people now being formed for His glory in Christ in the heavens.

We have noted previously that the period from B.C. 605/604, when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem until the time of the appearing of Christ to smite the Gentiles is the period our Lord called “the times of the nations” (Luke 21:24). It is depicted by the image in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2). This was called *the Gentiles parenthesis of judgment* because this is a period during which God’s direct reign in Israel is in abeyance. We noted that after B.C. 605/604, God continued to work with Israel, though they were not owned outwardly as His people, being under the sentence Lo-ami, until that work ceased in connection with the rejection of Christ. This brought about another parenthesis, the heavenly parenthesis, from Pentecost to the rapture. After the rapture, God will commence dealing with Israel again, though they still will not be outwardly owned, the heavenly parenthesis that interrupted such dealing with Israel having been terminated at the rapture. Thus there is a parenthesis within a parenthesis; a heavenly parenthesis within a wider earthly parenthesis.

The heavenly parenthesis is not a subject of the O.T. prophecies. The O.T. prophecies about Gentile blessing will find their fulfillment in the millennium, the 1000 year reign of Christ. Except for the citations concerning the birth, life, death, resurrection and session of Christ at Jehovah’s right hand (Psa. 110:1, etc.), the texts quoted from the prophets by the N. T. writers are millennial in fulfillment, but are used by the N. T. writers for a principle or partial application meanwhile concerning the ways of God.

## *The OT Prophecies Allow Room For The Heavenly Parenthesis*

**Daniel 9:24-27.** This Scripture has been considered in detail in *Daniel’s 70 weeks and the Revival of the Roman Empire*.<sup>8</sup> It is one of those signpost Scriptures, so to speak, that, properly understood, point the reader to a premillennial understanding of prophecy; i.e., that there will be an earthly kingdom, preceded by the advent of the King. Briefly, 69 weeks of years (483 years) have passed from the decree to restore and build Jerusalem (i.e., the walls would be rebuilt), given in Neh. 2., until the Sunday on which the King rode into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:5). The last week (7 years) is yet future and will just precede the second advent of the king. The heavenly parenthesis occurs during this interval between the first 69 weeks and the last week.

**Psalms 110:1.** Here we see that Jehovah said to Adonai (our blessed Lord Jesus) that He should sit on His right hand until He makes Adonai’s enemies His footstool. This allows room for the heavenly parenthesis to occur. During this heavenly parenthesis Adonai (cp. Matt. 22:41-46) is not on His own throne but sitting at Jehovah’s right hand, as Psalm 110:1 says. Rev. 3:21 states: “He that overcomes, to him will I give to sit with me in my throne; as I also have overcome, and have sat down with my Father in his throne.” The Lord Jesus is not yet on His own throne -- though opposers of dispensational truth seek to assure us otherwise. But the time will come when He will sit on His own throne (a figure of speech for His reign). “But when the Son of man comes [or ‘shall have come’] in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit down upon his throne of glory . . .” (Matt. 25:31). If there were a Scripture that **stated** Christ was on His own throne of glory now, it would have long ago been produced. The Scriptures are clear: He is not on His own throne now. Meanwhile we are part of the heavenly parenthesis -- waiting for, and with Him.

**Daniel 7.** The four beasts of Dan. 7 parallel the four sections of the image of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar as found in Dan. 2. In his dream, Daniel “beheld till thrones were set, and the Ancient of days did sit.” Christ is not sitting on His throne now (Rev. 3:21). The time seen in the vision has not yet arrived. But there is room left for the heavenly parenthesis. After the close of this parenthesis these thrones will be set.

**Amos 9:9-11 and Acts 15:13-18.** Amillennialists and postmillennialists believe that the “tabernacle of David” is set up now and that Christ is on His throne now. But the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David will occur in the millennium. In Acts 15, James cited the passage against Jewish bias; to show that God intended to bless the nations. And, of course, He will do so according to many prophecies. But James saw that this prophecy had a bearing meanwhile on

5. *The Bible Treasury* 11:182.

6. *An Exposition of Isaiah*, London: Hammond, p. 155, 1927 reprint.

7. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 3:28.

8. Obtainable from the publisher.

the Jewish prejudice against Gentile blessing. What was happening in James' day was not inconsistent with God's purpose, which included Gentile blessing. He cited the passage in order to show this. He did not cite it as if it was fulfilled, or fulfilling, in his day. Note that this is a general character of many citations from the prophets in Acts and the Epistles. What is cited is millennial in fulfillment, but has a bearing on some matter meanwhile. Acts 15:13-18 will be taken up in some detail in Chapter 4.6. Here we merely note that before the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David there is room for the heavenly parenthesis.

**Hosea 3:4-5.** "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without statue, and without ephod and teraphim. Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king; and shall turn with fear toward Jehovah and toward his goodness, at the end of days." It certainly seems clear that Israel has been in this condition for a very long time. Nothing is said about the forming of one body, formed by the Holy Spirit and linked to a glorified Head in heaven. But it is clear that room is left for the heavenly parenthesis.

**Isaiah 61:1-2 and Luke 4:16-20.** Isa. 61:2 says: "to proclaim the acceptable year of Jehovah, *and the day of vengeance of our God.* . . ." Our blessed Lord Jesus read from this passage and did not read the emphasized phrase. It was not the time for Him to then proclaim "the day of vengeance of our God" (Luke 4:19). But He will do so in its own due season when He comes forth from sitting at Jehovah's right hand (Psalm 110:1-3; Rev. 19:11-21) to conduct "the war of [that] great day of God the Almighty" (Rev. 16:14). Between these two proclamations there is room for the heavenly parenthesis.

**Zechariah 11:12-17.** The 30 silver pieces foreshadow the price of the true Shepherd of Israel, Who was slain by the nation -- through the instrumentality of the Gentile power. But God will give them another, "a foolish shepherd," even the Lawless One who will do his own will. "Little children, it is [the] last hour, and according as ye have heard that antichrist comes, even now there have come many antichrists, whence we know that it is [the] last hour" (1 John 2:18). This is the final Antichrist of prophecy. Between the murder of the true Shepherd of Israel and the manifestation of the "foolish shepherd" there is room left for the heavenly parenthesis.

**Daniel 11:35-45.** Dan. 11:1-35 speaks of things historically accomplished. Not so Dan. 11:36-45. The king of Dan. 11:36 is one against whom the king of the south (Egypt) will push (v.40); and against whom the King of the North (Assyria, at least) will come as a whirlwind and overflow. The wilful king, whose territory lies between Egypt and Syria, is the (false) king of Israel. The Lord had warned that another would come in his own name and he would be received. This wilful king is the foolish shepherd, the Lawless One, the final Antichrist. Between verses 35 and 36 there is room for the heavenly

parenthesis.

**Daniel 8:22, 23.** We have just seen that "at the time of the end" (Dan. 11:40) the wilful king (the Antichrist) will be attacked by Egypt and overrun by the king of the North (Assyria). Dan. 8 shows us the he-goat (Greece) with a great horn (Alexander the Great) suddenly broken off and four horns, representing four kingdoms (v. 22) replacing the one horn. Alexander's empire was divided among his four generals. One held Egypt and is the king of the South. Another held Assyria and he is the king of the North. The geographical notices are referenced with respect to the location of Israel. There is an immense gap of time between verses 22 and 23. In v. 23 the prophecy speaks of "the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressor shall have come to the full, a king of bold countenance," etc., will arise, who will be broken by the Prince of princes. This king is not the Antichrist. He is the final king of the North. At any rate, there is a gap of time between verses 22 and 23 that leaves room for the heavenly parenthesis.

**Hosea 5:15.** "I will go away, I will return to my place, till they acknowledge their trespass, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early." Jehovah came down, came in holy manhood. Jehovah-Jesus came to save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21), and surely the day will come when by the working of sovereign grace He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob, and so all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 11:26, etc.). Meanwhile the Son of man has ascended up where He was before (John 6:62), until that people acknowledge their greatest trespass of all and seek His face, that face in which the creature dared to spit. It was the only sinless face this fallen world has ever seen. They dared to pull the hair from His face. Yet the day will come when they will know that "His cheeks are as a bed of spices, raised beds of sweet plants; His lips lilies, dropping liquid myrrh" (S. of S. 5:13). Oh, how they will acknowledge that great trespass (Zech. 12:10-14)! It is God Who will act sovereignly from Himself (Ezek. 20:37, 38), to bring about a repentance suitable to His own glory and moral ways and to bless them under the new covenant. Meanwhile, there is room for the heavenly parenthesis.

**Other Scriptures.** The reader will also find, if he is willing to find, a gap in Luke 17 between verses 21 and 22. Also he would find this in Matt. 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. Even the feasts of Jehovah (Lev. 23) allow room for the heavenly parenthesis. The first four feasts have been fulfilled but the last three will yet occur. The first four feasts occurred in the first and second months of the year and the last three in the seventh month. The seventh month foreshadows the summing up of the ways of God. The period between Pentecost and the summing of God's ways leaves room for the heavenly parenthesis.





## Chapter 3.3

### "This Age" and The Heavenly Parenthesis

#### Introduction

We saw that the O. T. prophets prophesied an earthly kingdom under Messiah and that this is the kind of kingdom a Jew had rightly to expect. We have also seen that the Jews and the remnant expected a literal kingdom as the O. T. prophets had prophesied; and that our Lord endorsed that expectation. We also found that this kingdom was presented in the Person of the lowly and meek One Whom the remnant received but the mass did not. God offered the kingdom in the form of a moral test of the people at large, knowing, of course, the depravity of the human heart and that His Son would be rejected. We considered the moral implications of such an offer, too. The temporal kingdom is therefore postponed, in accordance with God's purpose of glorifying Himself in Christ. Meanwhile, during the Gentile parenthesis of judgment upon Israel, while they are Lo-Ammi, God is doing another work: namely, the forming of a heavenly company blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ -- during a period we call "the heavenly parenthesis."<sup>9</sup>

God's purpose is to glorify Himself in Christ in two spheres: the heavenly and the earthly. When the kingdom is manifested in power Christ shall head up both the heavenly and the earthly (Eph. 1:10). The accusation that dispensational truth teaches that God has two different purposes is a figment manufactured in the minds of opposers.

#### This Age

We considered this in Part 1, but will recapitulate here concerning three expressions found in Scripture concerning the word age:

1. *This age*: Matt. 12:32; Eph. 1:21; 1 Cor. 2:8; 2 Cor. 4:4; Gal. 1:4; 1 Tim. 6:17; 2 Tim. 4:10.
2. *The completion of the age*: Matt. 13:39, 40, 49; 24:3;

28:20.

3. *The age to come*: Matt. 12:32; Eph. 1:21; Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30; Heb. 6:5.

Previously we considered the Gentile parenthesis of judgment upon Israel (i.e., the times of the Gentiles). Our Lord lived here during that parenthesis and spoke of "this age." It was the Mosaic age preceding the introduction of the earthly kingdom.<sup>10</sup> Note, then, that the Gentile parenthesis of judgment upon Israel did not change the age!

But more, the introduction of the heavenly parenthesis also did not change the age. Several epistles refer to it as "this age" after the introduction of the heavenly parenthesis. Observe, then, that "this age" (the age introduced by the giving of the law) is still in progress. It will come to an end, of course, when "the age to come" (i.e., the millennial age -- the dispensation, or administration of the fullness of times (Eph. 1:10) is introduced. There is a short period just preceding the introduction of that administration which brings to an end "this age." It is called "the completion of the age." This work does not alter the fact that "this age," which has to do with the earth, existed before the Lord came, was in progress when He was here, is in progress now, and will be completed after the rapture; and when this age is ended, the earthly parenthesis of judgment will close. But if this is all true, and it is, what about the change introduced with John the Baptist?

#### The Announcement by John the Baptist

Verily I say to you, that there is not arisen among [the] born of women a greater than John the Baptist. But he who is a little one in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than he. But from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of the heavens is taken by violence, and [the] violent seize on it. For all the

9. Someone called my attention to an article in the Baltimore Evening Sun (May 8, 1989), "Israeli Rabbis Prepare for Return of Temple," in which it was said, "'All Jewish history as far as we're concerned is one big parenthesis until the Temple is returned,' says Rabbi Nahman Kahane of the Temple Institute."

10. Concerning "this age" J. N. Darby remarked that it was "a perfectly well-known phrase among the Jews who spoke of *olam-hazeh*, this world or age, and the *olam-havo*, the age to come, the latter being the time of Messiah's reign" (*Collected Writings* 10:360). See also *Collected Writings* 24:12, 19, 45, 78; 25:244; 8:13,14, 22; 13:155, 156.

prophets and the law have prophesied unto John (Matt. 11:11-13).

The Law and the prophets [were] until John: from that time the glad tidings of the kingdom of God are announced, and everyone forces his way into it (Luke 16:16).

These texts do not mean that prophecy had no further fulfillment after John came preaching. There were, for example, prophecies of Christ's death and resurrection that were fulfilled after John was dead. And so it is in the case of the law. There were types in the law that Christ fulfilled in His death. "For all the prophets and the law" indicates the whole of what we call the O. T. I suggest that the point is that the law and the prophets *pointed toward* the coming kingdom; John *announced* it. Thus, these passages do not mean that the end of the prophets and the law arrived at the point in time that John began preaching. But this does mean that a change was impending. This was a period of transition. The kingdom had not yet commenced, of course (else John would have been in it and not compared with the least in it).

In Matt. the rejection of Christ is marked in chapter 12 when the religious leaders said that He wrought by the prince of demons -- thus committing the sin against the Holy Ghost, Who was the true power that wrought in Christ.<sup>11</sup> In Matt. 13, the parabolic form of teaching about the kingdom began -- but the form of the kingdom to be introduced was changed. It would take a mystery form (Matt. 13:11), i.e., a form unforeseen by the prophets and the law. This, in the development of God's ways, was consequent upon Christ's rejection by the leadership from Jerusalem committing the sin against the Holy Spirit.

The preaching of the kingdom up to this point of rejection was not about the mystery form but about the kingdom in power. This includes Matt. 11:11-13. "A little one in the kingdom of the heavens" refers to one in the kingdom in power, what we call the millennial reign of Christ. As J. N. Darby remarked:

The introduction in testimony, of the kingdom, made the difference between that which preceded and that which followed. Among all that are born of women there had been none greater than John the Baptist, none who had been so near Jehovah, sent before His face, none who had rendered Him a more exact and complete testimony, who had been so separate from all evil by the power of the Spirit of God -- a separation proper to the fulfillment of such a mission among the people of God. Still he had not been in the kingdom: it was not yet established; and to be in the presence of Christ in His kingdom, enjoying the result of the establishment of His glory, was a greater thing than all testimony to the coming of the kingdom.<sup>12</sup>

The moral state suitable to the kingdom (Matt. 5-7)<sup>13</sup> was quite at variance with the state of the people generally and especially

the leaders (with a few exceptions). The "violent" are those who break through all that which spiritually opposed entry into the kingdom. This does not refer to physical violence, but to those who at all personal cost would lay hold of that kingdom with its blessedness under Messiah's reign before His ancients in glory.

To return; my point is that John's announcement of the coming kingdom did not put an end to the law and the prophets (cp. Matt. 5:17 and J. N. Darby's footnote in his translation). There yet remains the kingdom in power "to fulfil." John had announced it as at hand; and so had our Lord likewise. But the kingdom in power is "postponed," but not because God did not know Christ would be rejected.

God presented the kingdom in the Person of the meek and lowly Lord Jesus -- One Whom lost man would certainly reject. And through this rejection, and consequent upon His exaltation in glory at the Father's right hand, He has taken the position of Head of the body formed at Pentecost by the Spirit sent down upon those who had received Him (Acts 2:32, 33; 1 Cor. 12:13, etc.). This unity of the saints with the Head in heaven is the great mystery of Christ and the church -- unforeseen by the prophets (Rom. 16:25, 26; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:9). The kingdom pointed to by the law and the prophets will yet be established by the crushing power of the stone of Daniel 2 after God's present work of forming a heavenly people is completed.

Concerning the law, we do not read that it has died. But the Christian is dead with Christ (Rom. 6:8). The law does not apply to a dead man (cp. Rom. 6:7) but, "Now we know that the law [is] good if anyone uses it lawfully, knowing this, that law has not its application to a righteous person . . ." (1 Tim. 1:9).

Still, the law as a dispensation does not appear to be in force since the law-giver, Jehovah, having come down here in holy manhood, was crucified. At any rate, Scripture shows that the Christian is not under the law of Moses in any way whatever, a subject on which a few further remarks are in order at this point. The system that puts the Christian under the ten commandments as the rule of life finds it necessary to transmute the seventh day sabbath into the Lord's day sabbath -- else how have all ten? You see how spiritual alchemy is an amazing thing.

Galatians does, in spite of all contradiction, oppose putting the Christian under law for any purpose; and speaks, not of fulfilling the law of Moses, but of "the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). The law of Christ is not the law of Moses. *The law of Christ is the rule of the new creation:*

For [in Christ Jesus] neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision; but new creation. As many as shall walk by this rule,<sup>14</sup> peace upon them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God (Gal. 6:15, 16).

11. The sin against the Holy Spirit was the sin that these men committed in saying that the power that wrought in Christ was of Beelzebub.

12. *Synopsis* 3:59.

13. There are moral features brought before us in Matt. 5-7 suitable for those in the kingdom in mystery now; but not all is suitable for the Christian.

14. "κανων (kanon), rule, standard, norm," *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* 3:339.

Here, believing Gentiles and believing Israelites <sup>15</sup> ("the Israel of God") are directed to the law of Christ, namely, the rule, the norm, the standard, of the new creation of which Christ in resurrection is the Head. The law-of-Moses-minded do not seem to comprehend this and call us antinomians (i.e., without law). The rule of the new creation is for those who ought to be here in this world to give expression to the will of the Head of the new creation, Christ Himself. This rule of the new creation is the law of Christ. The law of Moses was addressed to those who stood in Adamic responsibility. Our standing is "in Christ."

### *New Characteristics of this Age*

During "this age" the Lord Jesus was rejected. His crucifixion marked the end of the testing of the first man (man in the lost, Adamic standing of responsibility). Since His rejection, Satan is called the god of this age (2 Cor. 4:4). The true God has been rejected. And "this age" is now for the Christian "this present evil age" (Gal. 1:4). Demas forsook Paul, "having loved the present age" (2 Tim. 4:10). How well it is for us to "love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8) which will display the rights and glory of Christ in "the age to come," i.e., the millennium.

### *What Is 'The Present Dispensation?'*

In many, many places J. N. Darby (and others) spoke of the present period as a dispensation, *speaking conventionally*. However, I commend to your meditation the following.

The church is not, properly so called, a dispensation. It is the assembling together the co-heirs in unity, whilst the kingdom is in mystery. When the law ends as a dispensation, the kingdom is not yet established in power, and all is in transition. Here the saints are seen above, and the throne of God is in relation with the earth.<sup>16</sup>

The Church, properly speaking, the body of Christ, is not a dispensation, it does not belong to the earth; but there is an order of things connected with it during its sojourning here below -- an order of things whose existence is linked with the Church's responsibility.<sup>17</sup>

Notice that in both cases he used the word "properly," as in the next citation below. And we are seeking at this point to be more exact so as to enlarge our understanding, not merely gliding along on a scheme that regards a dispensation as "a period of time during which . . ." and sets up a neat scheme of *seven* while leaving out the essential subject of the development of the ways of God in government in the earth, not apprehending the true meaning of the heavenly parenthesis and other concomitant truths. Besides that, man (the first man) is

no longer under probation (under testing) since the death of Christ. Why do some, then, speak of man being tested now with respect to "grace" since the first man is no longer under testing since the cross? It is because of erroneous notions about the character of dispensations accompanied by defective views regarding the end of testing the first man, who no longer has a standing before God, and the consequences of this great change.

At any rate, dispensations have to do with the earth, not with a heavenly company.

I pass over the time before the flood, whose general character offers a sad contrast to the time when righteousness dwells in the new heavens and the new earth, without a government to maintain it and make it good against the opposition of an adverse nation or the weakness of a failing one. Neither one nor the other can properly be called dispensation. They are both another world from that in which we live.

With Noah we begin the course of dispensation, or of the manifestations of the ways of God for the final bringing out the full glory of Christ. These ways regard the earth, and are founded, so far as they are conferred blessing, on the sacrifice of Christ.<sup>18</sup>

Really, this is not a dispensation. The Jews had a "this world" and "a world to come," "this age" and an "age to come." Messiah was to bring in the "age to come." The age of the law went on and Messiah did come, but they would not have Him, and the whole thing stopped: then comes the church between that and His second coming; and this is why I said this is not strictly a dispensation, but when Messiah comes again, it will close this time, and then will be the last day of this age.

The times of the Gentiles in Daniel, and the parenthesis of the church, are not at all contemporaneous; for the times of the Gentiles began in Babylon, being the times of the four Gentile beasts in Daniel. The times of the Gentiles will not end at the same time with the church, but go on a little after we are caught up. The temple of Jehovah on earth was set aside when the people were carried to Babylon, and they never got the ark again, but a remnant of them was spared to present to them Messiah.

I know what a person means by "the dispensation of the kingdom of heaven," but we belong to a heavenly thing in an interval, and there are no dispensations in heaven. The kingdom of heaven is a dispensation, the dispensation of the gospel is an administration.<sup>19</sup>

The fact that "this age" is still proceeding does have a bearing on the way we should think of the period we are in.

And hence it is also that this present time is called (not I judge a dispensation, but) a parenthesis, because the Lord Jesus speaks of "this age" when He was upon earth, as the same as that which will close by judgment at the end; but this was a period connected with His relationship with

15. The expression, "the Israel of God," refers to believing Jews. Theology has transmuted the Israel of God into the church. If the Lord will, this will be examined in Part 4.

16. *Collected Writings* 5:15, (1842).

17. *Collected Writings* 4:328.

18. *Collected Writings* 5:384.

19. *Collected Writings* 25:244.

Jews, and which will not be closed till He again is present in person; whereas, in the interval, the Church of the first-born has been gathered for heaven.<sup>20</sup>

To me the world now is not under any dispensation, but the whole course of God's dealings with it are over until He comes to judgment.<sup>21</sup>

The dispensation of the law will be followed by the administration of the fullness of times (Eph. 1:10), the millennial reign of Him Whose right it is to reign. Observe that the covenant of the law will be followed by the New Covenant. The blood of the New Covenant has already been shed, but it will be made with the house of Israel and Judah (Jer. 31:31; Heb. 8:7-13),<sup>22</sup> not the church. There are certain blessings for Israel under the new covenant that we share. We already have the blood and the forgiveness of sins as our own, *on the basis of our oneness with Christ*, not by covenant.<sup>23</sup> And thus we are able ministers of the New Covenant (2 Cor. 3) without being under it. These things are sovereignly given of God. The Law demanded; the New Covenant gives, and gives by grace. To contrast the two covenants, may we not say that the law and law-works go together, and the new covenant and grace go together?<sup>24</sup>

It is true that Paul received an "administration of the grace of God which has been given to me towards you" (Eph. 3:2). Call it a dispensation of the grace of God, if you will. That does not change the fact that Paul was not given "a time period during which man is tested . . . ." Properly speaking, we are not in a dispensation; not in "the dispensation of grace." Paul had an administration to discharge and he did discharge it. This involved the mystery, which is beyond the grace that Israel will experience in the millennium, of course. But none-the-less, grace<sup>25</sup> will characterize God's dealings with Israel in the millennium; and a blessed Israelite may say, this is indeed the dispensation of grace (having a position greater than John the

Baptist). And as far as God's dealings with an earthly people are concerned, that is true.

Observe again J. N. Darby's remark: "To me the world is not under any dispensation, but the whole course of God's dealings with it [with the world; with the earth] are over until He comes to judgment."<sup>26</sup> Dispensations have to do with the earth, not with a heavenly people. No, the administration committed to Paul does not contradict this. This was toward those composing a heavenly company during the heavenly parenthesis, while "this age," begun in the time of Moses, continues on. We are not part of this age, though "there is an order of things connected with it [the church] during its sojourning here below -- an order of things whose existence is linked with the Church's responsibility."

Dispensations began with the introduction of government in the earth after the flood. A distinguishable time period is not necessarily, strictly speaking, a dispensation. Abraham to Moses is such a time period when *calling* was introduced but I doubt that, strictly speaking, that is a dispensation. There is the Mosaic dispensation and also the millennial dispensation.

At any rate, speaking conventionally, 'dispensation of the Church' would at least distinguish from Israel's blessings, by grace, in the kingdom under the New Covenant in contrast to the covenant of law.

So there has not been a change in the age; and it continues while God's formation of the heavenly company is in progress. The kingdom as Messiah's reign has not been inaugurated; but rather, in God's ways, consequent upon the rejection of Christ, the manifested kingdom has been "postponed" and the mystery form of the kingdom introduced, during the time of which, God is forming the heavenly company.<sup>27</sup>

20. *Collected Writings* 13:155 (1850).

21. *Collected Writings* 26:248.

22. Rom. 9:1-5 declares that the covenants belong to Israel and this is complemented by the statement that Gentiles are strangers to the covenants of promise (Eph. 2:11-12). Zacharias, filled by the Holy Spirit, prophesied, and his prophesying shows that the Abrahamic covenant (the promises to the fathers) was not yet fulfilled and that it applied literally to Israel (Luke 1:67ff). Scriptures such as Ezek. 20:33 ff, Isa. 66:8 and Rom. 11:26, Rom. 15:8 all point to the same thing.

23. Just as dispensations have to do with the development of the ways of God in government in the earth, so covenants have to do with the earth, not with a heavenly company now being formed. Indeed the Noahic covenant involved the introduction of government in the earth and marks the first dispensation.

24. Good works are formed by, and flow from grace. Thus they are life-works, not dead-works.

25. . The grace experienced now is poured forth from a Man in the glory of God (Acts 7:56), shining out from His face, so that it is "the radiancy of the glad tidings of the glory of the Christ" (2 Cor. 4:4). The grace experienced by Israel in the millennium will be of a much lesser order, but vastly greater than what O.T. Israel had. The least in that kingdom will be greater than John the Baptist. In the development of God's ways in the earth, this is a vast step upward.

26. Our Lord said, "Now is the judgment of this world." This also indicates a change, though "this age" proceeds. The judgment has not fallen on the world yet and will not while the heavenly company is being formed. It is for the Christian "this present evil age" (Gal 1:4) and Satan is its god (2 Cor. 4:4). What manner of persons ought we to be while we await the Savior? Doctrine is meant to form our behavior, not entertain our intellect.

27. The Kingdom in its mystery form will run beyond the rapture up to the appearing of Christ in glory.



# The Interposed Heavenly Calling

Israel is God's nationally recognized people - **Ammi** - only while they have both Calling and Government given to them. The reason why God continued working with the people of Israel after declaring them Lo-ammi is because they still had Calling. This Earthly Calling is restored in the 70th week, when Jehovah works with the Jewish remnant to form them to receive Messiah. And when He reigns, Israel, as His nationally recognized people - **Ammi** - will again be the center of His earthly seat of government.

CHURCH

**Heavenly Calling**

Rapture



*The rejection of Christ and the Interposition of the Heavenly Calling interrupts Israel's Earthly Calling as well as Daniel's 70 Weeks. The Church does not have government.*

Appearing

ISRAEL

Abraham

ISRAEL

**Earthly Calling**

Government in Israel

Government separated from Calling during the Times of the Gentiles.

69 Weeks

Daniel's Seventy Weeks interrupted

70th

Millennium

**Image of Dan. 2 - Times of the Gentiles (Luke 21:24)**

**GENTILES HAVE THE GOVERNMENT**

Israel is Ammi

Israel is Lo-ammi - "not My people" (Hos. 1)

Israel is Ammi - "My people" (Hos. 2)

*Mosaic System:*

*sacrifices anticipating the cross*

*Mosaic System rejected:*

*"many days ... without sacrifice" (Hos. 3:4)*

*New Covenant:*

*sacrifices memorial of the cross (Ezek. 40-48) under Melchizedek priesthood of Christ*

Noah

Government

Adam

The first man under probation until the rejection of Christ

The Second Man displaced the first man

"This Age,"  
the Mosaic Age, continues

"End of  
the Age"

Age to Come

The Mosaic System was a form of testing for the first man (1 Cor. 15:47) while he had a standing in the flesh before God; and testing/probation of the first man ended at the cross, though that left the law and the Mosaic age go on -- for the Church is not earthly and is not an age among the earthly ages. God will not reinstate the Mosaic System during the tribulation period, as that would reinstate the standing of the first man.

R. A. Huebner  
May 1997



## Notes on the Chart, *The Interposed Heavenly Calling*

**Government and Earthly Calling.** As may be seen on the chart, the heavenly calling is interposed in the earthly calling of Israel. When Israel had both the earthly calling and government committed to her, Israel stood as a nation, a nationally recognized people by God. But due to sins, Jerusalem was given over to the Gentiles, to whom government was transferred. This governmental power is depicted in the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 2). This image coincides with the times of the Gentiles (Luke 21:24). It has been well said that Daniel was the prophet of the times of the Gentiles. These times began with Nebuchadnezzar's taking of Jerusalem and continue until the Lord appears in glory as the smiting stone. Consequently, He will take the governmental power and be king, as well as Melchizedek priest, upon His throne (Zech. 6:13) and Israel will again have governmental power. Then once again the earthly calling and government will be reunited and Israel will again be the national, earthly people, acknowledged such by God. The chart shows these epochs on the line beginning with "Israel is Ammi."

**No Gap in the Image.** Is it really too much to suggest that in his dream Nebuchadnezzar did not see a gap in the legs of the image? Really, there is no gap in the image -- no gap in the times of the Gentiles. Those times have been running uninterruptedly.

**No Gap in the Age.** There is no such thing as an "Age of the Church," as if the church forms an earthly age among the earthly ages. The church is a heavenly thing. The Christian has a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1). So the chart shows the Mosaic Age continuing on until it is superseded by the "age to come" (Matt. 12:32; Eph. 1:21; Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30; Heb. 6:5). The phrase, "the end of the age" (Matt. 13:39, 40, 49; 24:3; 28:20) refers to time after the removal of the church. It is not the end of the alleged "Church Age," since it occurs after the removal of the church; it is the end of the *Mosaic Age*, which is what "*this age*" refers to (Matt. 12:32; Eph. 1:21; 1 Cor. 2:8; 2 Cor. 4:4; Gal. 1:4; 1 Tim. 6:17; 2 Tim. 4:10). The "end of the age" is the end of the Mosaic Age. There is no such thing as an *intercalated* "Church age," that being a device to save the "Church Age" idea by an intercalation that stops the Mosaic Age and then reinstates the Mosaic Age where it left off -- including, of course, the Mosaic System, as such.

**Separation of Earthly Calling and Government.** When the "times of the Gentiles" began, Government was removed from Israel, but not the Earthly Calling. Though Government was removed from Israel, Jews still had that status of Calling, and God continued working with Jews. This continued until the rejection of Christ at the cross. Meanwhile, Daniel's 70 weeks (Dan. 9) started. They have in view the bringing in the blessing for Israel (Dan. 9:24). But there

is a gap between the 69th and 70th week. The rejection of Christ at the cross, and the consequent introduction of the heavenly calling, *interposed* both Israel's Earthly Calling and Daniel's 70 weeks. When the Heavenly Calling is ended, the 70th week will commence and the Earthly Calling of Israel will be found with the elect, godly, Jewish remnant that God will form after the end of the Heavenly Calling, to prepare the remnant for the reception of the Lord from glory.

### **No Reinstatement of Sacrifices by God During Daniel's 70th Week.**

While the elect Jewish remnant will have Earthly Calling, that does not mean a reinstatement by God of the Mosaic System, with its attendant standing of the first man. The standing of the first man was once-for-all ended at the cross. It is clear from Hos 3:4, 5 that Israel is declared to be without sacrifice many days -- really, until the King comes. They will have no valid sacrifices until the Melchizedek priesthood (millennial) is exercised, a priesthood founded upon the finished work, thus characterizing the sacrifices, carried on as under that priesthood, as founded on the finished work -- hence they are memorial.<sup>1</sup> The sacrifices in the first half of the 70th week are not acceptable to God. God had once had His armies destroy Jerusalem and the invalid sacrifices (Matt. 22:7). In the 70th week God owns what the temple, altar, and worshipers mean as to the *spiritual significance of those words*<sup>2</sup> (Rev. 11:1, 2), in spite of the gross departure of the mass. There can be no sacrifices of the Mosaic System and the Aaronic order acceptable to God.

**The Law Did Not Die.** The Mosaic System, which gave the first man a standing before God, has ended. That left the age and the law itself go on. Neither has been *interposed*. Meanwhile, the Christian is viewed as having died with Christ (Rom. 6) and the Mosaic law does not have to do with a dead Christian. Moreover, the Christian is heavenly, as Christ is (1 Cor. 15:48). In the millennium, under the new covenant, Israel will have the law written in their hearts (Heb. 8:10). Meanwhile, we Christians are under the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2), the rule of the new creation (Gal. 6:14-16).

**The Christian Does not Have Government.** As the chart indicates, Government was transferred from Israel to the Gentiles. It remains right there until Christ takes it when He appears in glory. The Christian does not have government (Phil. 3:20). Indeed, the Christian is a stranger and a sojourner here (1 Pet. 2:11), as well as an ambassador for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20).

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1. Though sons of Aaron (particularly the sons of Zadok (Ezek. 40-48)) will officiate, they do so under a new order of priesthood: the Melchizedek priesthood of Christ.

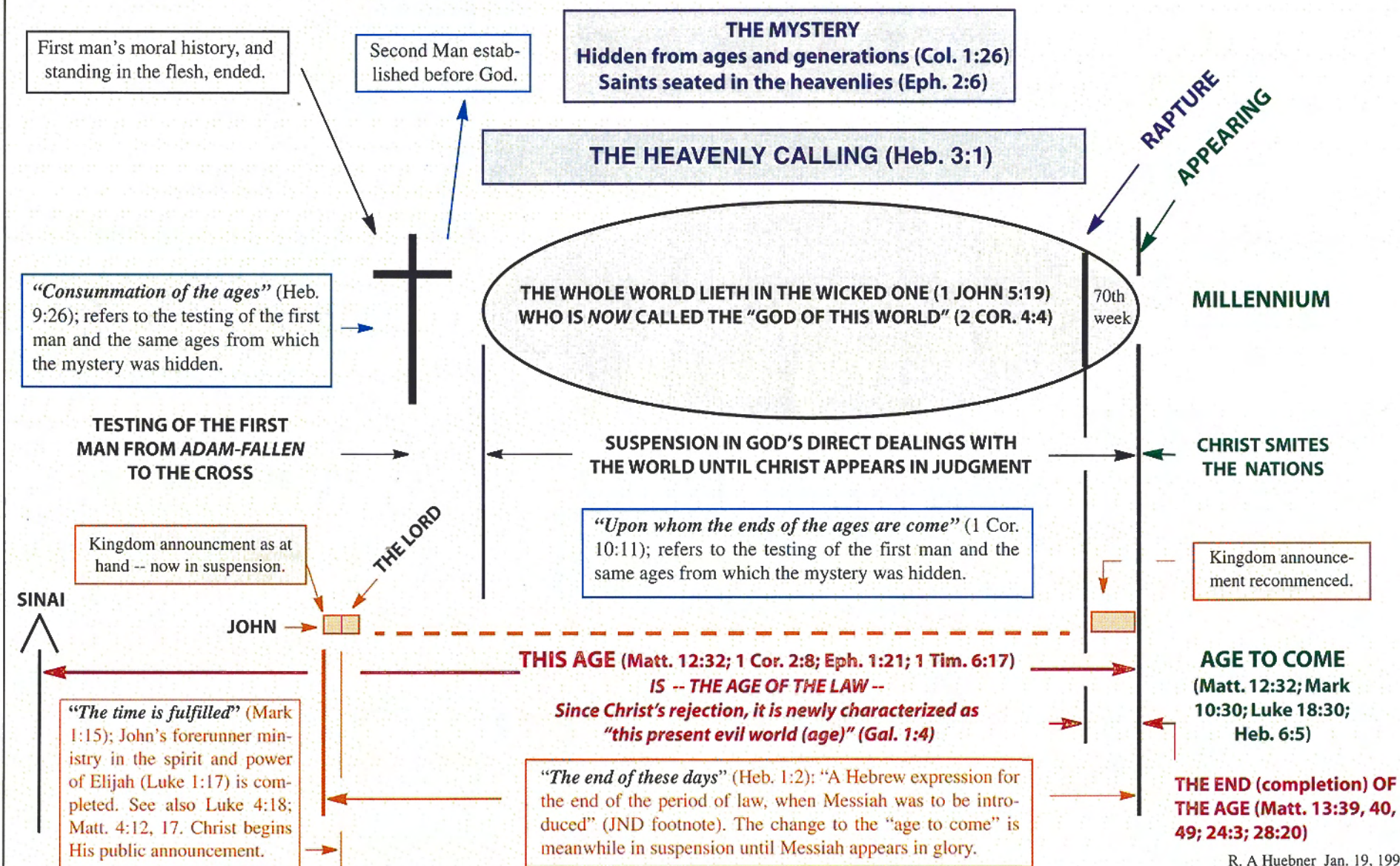
2. The measuring is symbolic. Moreover, the worshipers cannot go into the temple. The scene is in the last-half week, when God's portion is those who worship in heart (v. 1) and the rest are rejected (v. 2) while the testimony of the two witnesses proceeds (v. 3ff).

*CHART HERE THE INTERPOSED HEAVENLY CALLING*

*BACK OF INTERPOSED*



**End of the Testing of the First Man at the Cross,  
The Suspension of the Introduction of the Age to Come,  
And the Introduction of The Mystery and The Heavenly Calling Meanwhile**



## Notes on the Chart

### SUSPENSION OF THE KINGDOM ANNOUNCEMENT

The two pink colored rectangles illustrate periods during which the gospel of the kingdom is preached. The first period is composed of two phases; phase one is the period during which John preached, having come in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17), as the forerunner of Messiah. After John was in prison, the Lord also announced the kingdom as at hand -- until, as we see in Matt. 12, the power of the Spirit working in Christ was attributed to Beelzebub. This attribution was the unpardonable sin. Then in Matt. 13 the parables of the kingdom *in mystery* were given by the Lord, indicating a change in testimony -- from the advent of the kingdom to the coming introduction of a *mystery* phase of the kingdom -- *unforeseen by the OT prophets*. Thus, the announcement of the kingdom as at hand was suspended. This is what is meant by "the postponement of the kingdom." The kingdom was presented in the form of a moral test, as embodied in the meek and lowly One, and this brought out the state of the first man, in the persons of the Jews. Messiah was rejected. The gospel of the kingdom will again be preached during Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week, illustrated by the second pink rectangle -- and Christ will subsequently appear in glory.

"The time is fulfilled" (Mark 1:15) refers to a period of time. The Lord said this in connection with the commencement of His preaching the kingdom as at hand, consequent upon John's preaching having come to a close. I understand the phrase to refer to that period of time occupied by John's preaching, as forerunner. He had completed his work as forerunner of Messiah -- "the time is fulfilled" -- leading to the moment for Messiah Himself to preach the kingdom as at hand.

### SUSPENSION OF THE INTRODUCTION OF THE AGE TO COME

The commencement of John's preaching, i.e., the breaking forth of prophetic utterance after centuries of silence, marked the arrival of the *epoch* preparatory to the close of the Mosaic age ("this age") and the introduction of the "age to come" (Matt. 13:39, 40, 49; 24:3; 28:20); i.e., the millennium, the time of Messiah's reign before His ancients, in glory. However, this *epoch* was not actually followed by the introduction of the age to come. The introduction of the age to come is in suspension -- and the age merely goes on. "This age" (Matt. 12:32; 1 Cor. 2:8; 6:17; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 1:21) is the Mosaic age, which began at Sinai. We are in a period characterized by the suspension of the introduction of the "age to come." The Mosaic age merely continues on. And, we are in a period referred to as "the end of these days" (Heb. 1:2). The *epoch* called "the end of these days" commenced with the breaking forth of the prophetic ministry of Messiah's forerunner, John. But Messiah was rejected, and the introduction of the "age to come" is in suspension; and "the end of these days" continues on during this suspension. And thus "the end of these days" will still be there when the announcement of the kingdom as at hand is recommenced in Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week.

### MEANWHILE

During the prolonging of "this age," i.e., the Mosaic age, and the prolonging of "the end of these days," and the suspension of the gospel of the kingdom, God has introduced the heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1) and has unfolded the secret hidden from the OT prophets, even the mystery (Rom. 16:25, 26; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:9). The trial of the first man ended at the cross and God has subsequently established the Second Man in His proper place and sphere. "This age" has received from God a new *characterization*, consequent upon the end of the testing of the first man: it is "this present *evil* age" (Gal. 1:4). Also, Satan is *now* declared to be its god (2 Cor. 4:4). Moreover, since the close of the testing of the first man, God has pronounced this conclusion: the whole world lieth in the wicked one (1 John 5:19).

God had been dealing with the world up to the cross; dealing with it in the testing of the first man while he had a standing in the flesh. That the test involved the persons of the Jews does not change this fact. It was *the first man* that was being tested! -- in that Jewish form. The testing having been concluded, God's direct dealings with the world are in suspension until Christ appears in glory to deal with the world directly. Meanwhile, the Christian is heavenly (1 Cor. 15:48), though one could not tell that from the conduct of most Christians!

### CHRISTIANITY NOT AN AGE, NOR AN AGE OF TESTING OF MAN

Christianity is not an age among the earthly ages. There was no change in the age at Pentecost. The coming of the Spirit did not inaugurate a new, earthly age. He came to unite believers in one body to Christ, the Head, *in heaven*. There is no earthly (or heavenly!) age of grace. That is a theological figment at war with dispensational truth -- setting aside such important truth as the completion of the testing of the first man at the cross; pretending, even, that man was not fully tested by grace, when He who is "full of grace and truth" (John 1:14) was presented to the first man, in the persons of the favored Jews. Grace and truth were hated: "they have both seen and hated both me and my Father" (John 15:24). It is an insult to Christ to say God is now testing the first man by grace.

### THE KINGDOM NOT AN AGE OF TESTING OF THE FIRST MAN

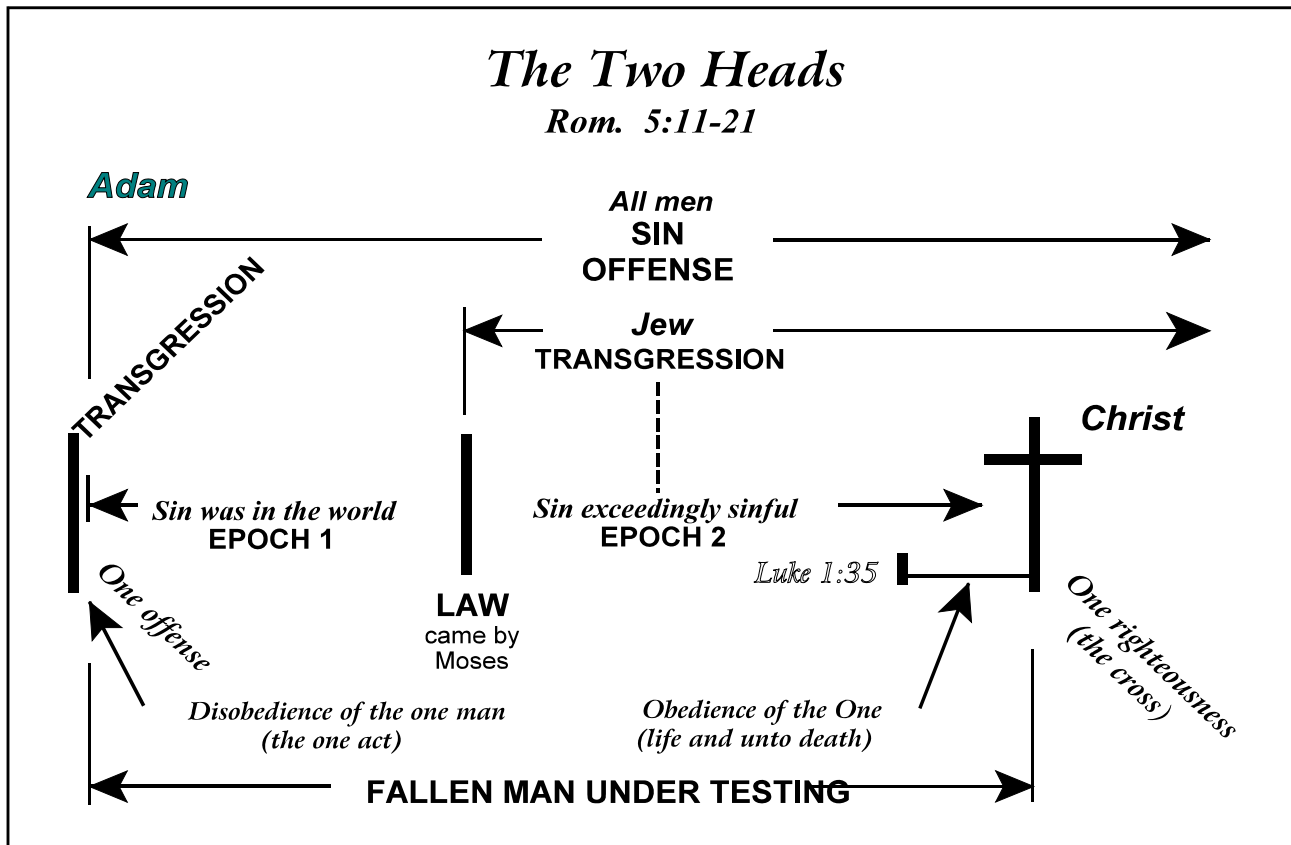
We are aware that, particularly as presented in Matthew, the first man was tested by the presentation of the King, as well as by the Kingdom as embodied in Him -- a moral test for the first man that he would indubitably fail; and this was part of the ways of God to bring His eternal purpose to pass, and glorify Himself in Christ in the two spheres: the heavenly and the earthly (Eph. 1:10). The millennial kingdom, then, is not a testing of the first man. The testing was completed at the cross, hence the introduction of all that follows are things based upon the completion of the work of Christ, His resurrection, and His glorification. The millennium is the display of God's glory in Christ, in the earthly sphere, where Christ glorified God. John 17; Psalms 150.

*CHART HERE: SUSPENSION OF THE AGE TO COME*

*BACK OF CHART HERE*

## Chapter 3.4

### *Romans 5:12-21: The Christian Under a New Head*



Adam-innocent is not viewed in Scripture as the head of a race; Adam-fallen is the head of a race. The testing of man began after the fall. It is *the testing of fallen man*, the first man as fallen, to see if he could be reclaimed. The one command under which Adam innocent stood in the garden of Eden was not part of the testing of fallen man. Adam had a law; and Adam-innocent stood under that law. That law for Adam-innocent is not part of the testing of fallen man. Rom. 5:13 says: "for until law sin was in the world; but sin is not put to account when there is no law." *World*, here, refers to the world under the headship of Adam-fallen. "Until law," without the definite article *the*, means -- *until* God brought fallen man under testing by law, law as a principle of relationship and standing before Himself for fallen man. The fact that Adam had a law before he fell from innocency does not alter the fact that:

from the time of the expulsion from Eden, "until law," fallen man was not, during that period, under test on the principle of law as a basis of relationship and standing, with God.

Under Moses, fallen man, in the persons of the Jews, were dealt with on the basis of law. This was a new character of *standing* for man in the flesh. The standing for (fallen) man in the flesh, and the testing of (fallen) man in the flesh, ended at the cross. The law did not then 'die,' was not "nailed to the cross," and was not abrogated. The testing and standing of the first man, fallen man, man in the flesh, ended at the cross. That did not change the fact that each individual is responsible to God, and now all men everywhere are responsible to repent. The believer now is dead with Christ and dead to the law.



## Introduction to Rom. 5:12-21

The standing, the position, of the first head, i.e., Adam-fallen, as under trial/testing/probation, to see if he was recoverable, ended at the cross. Consequent upon the work of Christ on the cross and His resurrection, the Lord Jesus took *the place* of the last Adam. These two Adams are heads of two races.

Notice particularly that on the chart above, the ‘testing’ of Adam-innocent <sup>28</sup> is not included in the area of the chart denoted as “fallen man under testing.” Obviously, Adam-innocent was not under ‘testing’ as a fallen person. And though Adam-innocent was God’s appointed head on earth, in Eden, he fell and was no longer Adam-innocent. He was now Adam-fallen and was removed from Eden. Adam-innocent never was the head of an innocent race. As fallen, he became the head of a fallen race, outside of Eden.

The testing of man is the testing of fallen man. The testing of Adam-innocent is not part of this -- That was its own thing. Adam had a test of obedience, being in a state of ignorance of good and evil. The testing of fallen man is a test of those having the knowledge of good and evil, which Adam did not have. The two cases essentially differ.

It is erroneous to make the ‘testing’ of Adam-innocent part of a testing of man scheme as C. I. Scofield did. It shows a grave lack of understanding the nature of the testing of man to place the ‘testing’ of *Adam-innocent* in the series of testings of *fallen man*. <sup>29</sup>

The standing of fallen man *in Adam* means a standing of fallen man in Adam-fallen. It is Adam-fallen, then, who is the head of a race, a fallen race -- as derived from Adam-fallen. The testing of the first man means the testing of the first man as fallen. All in Adam are ranged under a head that is a fallen head. The testing, then, begins outside of Eden; and it ends at the cross, for fallen man was found incorrigible and unrecoverable and rejected even the revelation of the Father in the Son, even Him who was full of grace and truth. Thus the first man had no longer a standing before God and subsequently God established a new head, the last Adam.

On the chart above, the reader will notice Epoch 1 and Epoch 2. In connection with the testing of the first man, fallen man, there are two great epochs from the time of Adam’s fall to the cross. The first is the epoch during which the first man was not under trial by law; and the second is the trial under law -- law as a principle of God’s relationship with man in the flesh.

Persons have sinned and are guilty. This is dealt with in the first part of Romans (Rom. 1 - 5:11). The next major part

of Romans (Rom. 5:12 - 8) deals with sin in the flesh, the nature from which sinful acts spring.

Coming now to the first subject (Rom. 5:12-21) taken up in the second part of Romans (Rom. 5:12 - 8), observe that there was a disobedient man and an obedient Man. The Christian, when a sinner, had been under the headship of the first Adam; now he is under the headship of the last Adam (Cp. 1 Cor. 15:45). The subject here is not that of an anomalous state such as we see in Rom. 7, but about the Christian being under the headship of Christ. The subject is not about the new creation, or about the body of Christ. As JND remarked:

We have no allusion to the bride, or union of that character here, but it is the individuals all seen in their head. We get then the doctrine of these two men, from vv. 12-18, sources of life to all connected with them, and the obedience of one, and the disobedience of the other, constituting us righteous or sinners, though each of us may have added his own sins. <sup>30</sup>

Another matter to observe is the difference between the bearing of something *towards* all, and the application of it *upon* someone. This is what we see in Rom. 3:22 regarding the righteousness of God *towards* all, but *upon* those that believe. There is something similar in Rom. 5:18 where we read “towards all.” That refers to the tendency, the bearing, the direction. In Rom. 5:19, we twice read the words “the many”; in the first case it refers to the many sinners; in the second case ‘the many’ means believers. Adam has involved all his race in sin and its results, while Christ involves all under Him in blessing.

The first (Rom. 1 - 5:11) and second parts (Rom. 5:12 - 8) of Romans answer to the two inquires of God in Genesis 3, but the treatment in Romans is in the reverse order in which God asked the two questions:

1. God asked Adam where he was. Looking at Adam morally, and not merely where he was hiding geographically, we may see this question directed to the matter of where he was morally. He was in a new state: sin and death were now working in Him. The matter of indwelling sin is dealt with in Rom. 5:11 - 8.
2. The next question concerns what had been done -- the act. The matter of sins and guilt is dealt with in the first part of Romans (1 - 5:11).

It has been noticed that in Part 2 the *blood* of Christ is not mentioned. His *death* is brought to bear as the answer to sin in the flesh, sin within us. This is seen also in the treatment of justification in parts 1 and 2 of Romans.

We will now consider Rom. 5:12-21 in three sections.

28. “Innocency” is meant to convey ignorance of evil, his state before the fall.

29. And the error is kept up in the Scofield age-ism system by continuing testing of man after the cross.

30. *Collected Writings* 26:48.

**SECTION 1: Rom. 5:12:** *the entrance of sin and death; the human race involved in Adam's sin.*

**12 For this [cause], even as by one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death; and thus death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:**

“**For this [cause]**, or, as W. Kelly, “on this account,” refers to what was unfolded concerning sins and guilt, and God’s remedy for those things, in Rom. 1 - 5:11. But more than that is involved. While not developed in Rom. 1 - 5:11, there is a state in which man is, that underlies what is described there. He is characterized by “sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3). God must also deal with that state. So now in Rom. 5:12 - 8 we enter on this matter of the state being characterized by sin in the flesh, and the power over the person that sin within exercises. God not only clears us from guilt, He brings us into a new standing as alive in Christ: “justification of life” (Rom. 5:18).<sup>31</sup>

The apostle brings before us the matter of death being brought into the world under Adam’s headship as the effect of sin. The fall of the head introduced sin and the consequent death. It was through Adam that sin entered *the world as ranged under his headship*. It is not a question of what might have been before Adam. Into *that world* over which *he was head*, death by sin was introduced into it by its head. Moreover, “*thus*” death passed upon all men. Death is the pervasive witness that sin is everywhere in the race of Adam fallen. Adam-innocent was capable of dying, but not subject to death. Fallen, he became *subject to death* -- and that is what “*mortal*” means. The Lord Jesus was that holy thing (Luke 1:35), yes, meaning His humanity was not innocent but holy. Moreover, the Son took holy humanity *into* His Person, and while capable of dying by an act of His own, in obedience to the Father (John 10:18), He was not subject to death -- not mortal.

“For that all have sinned” is evidenced by death having passed upon all men. Death is the wages of sin. Thus men’s own sins are noted as having to do with death, and not merely, or only, Adam’s sin. But an evil nature was introduced into the race under Adam through the fall. Men sin; and death is here connected with their sins. Nor does this phrase mean that in Adam all sinned. Regarding the words “for that,” W. Kelly wrote:

‘Εφ’ ᾧ does not mean “in whom”; nor is there warrant, while translating these words correctly, to add to the sentence that all died in the person of Adam. The point beyond all prominent is the way in which one man may affect the world.<sup>32</sup>

The evil, then, is traced to the fountainhead, past the law, past Abraham, past Noah, even to Adam, thus involving the entire race under him. Note, then, that it is not the law of Moses, or

law-breaking of the law of Moses, which is the issue here.

**What About Infants and Idiots?** Read Matt. 18:10-14. Their “angels behold the face of my Father.” Moreover, “the Son of man is come to save that which is lost” differs from Luke 19:10 where the words “to seek” are added. It is suggested that Luke indicates an active wandering while Matthew provides for those under the age of accountability, as it is often called. And as JND remarked about this matter:

The work of Christ is available for them; He had come to save that which was lost . . . “Lost” speaks of our condition; “guilty,” of what we have done.<sup>33</sup>

We may think of this also:

Jesus the Lord shows us very clearly that the God who gave the law is greater than the law itself, and that God was showing Himself in Divine grace to be much greater than in judgment. The judgment of God is a solemn certainty; but the grace of God a still deeper truth. God manifest in the flesh, God present upon earth in the person of His own Son, shows us what God feels about little children. The disciples did not like to be troubled with them. They thought it was too bad to take up their great Master’s time with mere children. How did the Lord answer it? He took them up in His arms and blessed them -- a good lesson for the disciples. How often they want the Lord to correct their inadequate notions! If the Lord took up and blessed little children, does it not tell me what God feels about them. He does not bless little children on earth to send them dying to hell. But if they lived to rebel against His word and against His Son the Lord Jesus, if the children when grown up dare to despise Him that died on the cross, if they refuse to accept the Savior proclaimed in their ears, is there anything God resents more strongly?<sup>34</sup>

**What is the Relationship of the Law to Verse 12?** Verse 12 raises a question regarding the fact of sin being in the world when there was no law. Especially a Jew might be troubled by this. Before the Apostle continues with v. 12 at v. 18, we have a parenthesis, vv. 13-17, addressing this in vv. 13, 14 and expanding on these matters in vv. 15-17.

**SECTION 2: Rom. 5:13-17 (Parenthetical):** *law not the root of the evil, nor its remedy; grace the remedy.*

**Sub-section 1: Romans 5:13-14:** *Death reigned before the law was given, because of sin, though sin was not in the form of transgression.*

**13 (for until law sin was in [the] world; but sin is not put to account when there is no law;**

**14 but death reigned from Adam until Moses, even upon those who had not sinned in the likeness of Adam’s transgression, who is [the] figure of him to come.**

31. See *Collected Writings* 13:206ff.

32. *Notes on the Epistle of Paul, the Apostle, to the Romans, in loco.*

33. *Collected Writings* 30:262; see also 24:166; *Things New and Old* 21:138.

34. *The Bible Treasury* 15:119.

**Adam Did Not Have *the Law*.** It should be clear from v. 13 that there was a period in the world's history when there was no law as the basis of God's dealings with man. This was already seen in Rom. 4:15:

but where no law is neither [is there] transgression.

The testimony of Scripture is uniform about it. The law came by Moses (John 1:17).

There is a covenant-theology invention that Adam had *the law*. Adam had *a* law, the command concerning the tree. Is it not obvious that "law" in v. 13 refers to the introduction of law, through Moses, as a basis of relationship with the first man in Adamic standing and responsibility? It does not say '*the law*' because the point is about law *as a principle* of God's dealings in His ways with man. We are assured, then, that God was not dealing with fallen man on the basis of law until He took that up at Sinai. It is clear that the true basis of man's ruin is not the individual's breaking of the law. If breaking the law was the basis of man's ruin, then man was not in ruin all during the time before law was taken up as the basis of the first man's relationship with God. Observe, then, the invention of the idea that Adam must have had *the law*, when one thinks that man's ruin is founded upon breaking *the law*. Besides that false invention, it necessarily leads to a false understanding of the essence of sin.

It is clear that sin came before the law.

#### **Sin Is Lawlessness, Not the Transgression of *the Law*.**

We see in the KJV of 1 John 3:4 how theology has intruded into this important statement regarding what sin is. And that is a very serious thing. To say that "sin is the transgression of the law" fits with the false idea that Adam had *the law*, and really requires that all men were under *the law* even up to Sinai.<sup>35</sup> Otherwise there would have been no sin between Adam and Moses, because there would not have been *the law* to transgress. The correct translation of 1 John 3:4 is:<sup>36</sup>

35. Recall that Gentiles never were under the law.

36. J. N. Darby remarked:

In the first place (for it is well to give the first place to what is alleged as scripture) sin is not the transgression of the law. The translation is a false one, brought about, I doubt not, by this system of doctrine. The word is used in *contrast* with being under law. It is translated differently by the translators themselves elsewhere. They that have "sinned without law shall also perish without law," and they that have "sinned under the law shall be judged by the law." (Rom. 2:12.) Now, what has been translated "transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4) is the same (as to the force of the word, only here as an adverb) as what is translated here "*without law*" (Rom. 2:12), in contrast to being under it and judged by it. That is, what has been translated "transgression of the law," is by the apostle expressly contrasted with it. It is lawlessness. This is a serious thing. This doctrine as to the law has led to the falsification of the scriptural definition of sin. I do not think any honest man will pretend to say that ἀνομία means transgression of the law, or the same thing as παράβασις (continued...)

Every one that practices sin practices also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

Sin is the expression of self-will in acting without reference to the will of God, whether or not His will has been explicitly expressed. It is the disregard of God's will. Sin, then, goes far beyond law-breaking.

Every unrighteousness is sin (1 John 5:17).

In Enoch we see one who pleased God; and Noah was found righteous. But Cain did a wicked thing in killing Abel. Abel sensed that bringing an animal sacrifice (death) would please God. This is one of the symbols of death by which one comes before God. These persons all lived between the one command that Adam was given and the giving of law through Moses.

**The Reign of Death Is Universal.** Death reigned from Adam to the giving of the law, proving that sin was there, for death is the wages of sin -- even on those who had not transgressed a law.

#### **Sin Is Not Put to Account Where There Is No Law.**

Violation of a law is a *transgression* of that law. Between Adam and Moses there was no transgression of the law because the law had not been given until Moses and others had not the command given to Adam. Sin not being put to account refers to sin in the form of transgression. A person cannot be accounted a transgressor when there was no law to transgress. Sin, as lawlessness, was, of course, present, and men sinned -- and certainly the reign of death demonstrated the fact. Verse 12 ended with, "for that all have sinned." The sinners committed acts of sin; but that was not put to their account as transgression of a command.

Another point that shows that sin in the form of transgression is meant here is the reference to "**the likeness of Adam's transgression.**" Adam had *a* law and he transgressed it. Not only was Adam's sinful act an expression of lawlessness, his sin also had the form of transgression.

Hos. 6:7 says,

But they like Adam have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously with me.

This does not mean that Adam had the Mosaic covenant, or the 10 commandments, but that the principle of disobedience to a command was the common thing in what Adam did and what Israel was doing under the law. Adam had a law and Israel had the law. Both transgressed. Between the time of Adam's transgression regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and Israel's receiving the law, sin was in the world; and the reign of death was universal, as was sin, though sin was not in the likeness of Adam's transgression. And keep in mind that the Gentiles never were under law

36. (...continued)  
νόμου (CW10:149).



(Rom. 2:12). Perhaps a quotation from JND will be helpful here:

Sin was in the world from Adam to Moses, when no law was yet there; but specific acts could not be put to charge where there was no law forbidding them. The word "imputed" is another word here from the general word for "imputing righteousness," and means putting a specific thing to the account of anyone; (which the other does not), being found, as already stated, in Philemon 18. Where no law forbade an act, you could not charge it as a transgression. Yet death reigned -- the effect and witness of sin being there -- over those who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression (that is, who had not violated an actual commandment, as Adam did).<sup>37</sup>

And that brings us to consider the difference between eternal punishment and God's dealings in time.

On the other hand, one sees the world suffering the consequences of the sins of their fathers; the heathen are living witnesses of it. God gave them up to a reprobate mind, Rom. 1:17. Thus we may easily see that we ought accurately to distinguish between the eternal judgment of God and His judicial government of the world; for in reference to His eternal judgment it is said of the Gentiles--"those who have sinned without law shall perish without law . . . in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel" (Rom. 2:12, 16) -- the gospel which Paul preached. As to the government of the world, it is said, as to the same Gentiles, "The times of this ignorance God winked at"; for in truth, sin is not reckoned where there is no law. Nevertheless death and sin reigned. Here man inherited the guilt of his fathers, while; in present government, they were not held responsible for their own acts: they were so, indeed, as to eternity, according to the light they had neglected. When God puts Himself in relationship with any people, and places a testimony in the midst of them in such sort that the light of the testimony is cast upon the sin they commit, and in which they continue to walk in spite of the testimony, then God brings, according to His government here below, judgment of all that sin upon the generation which fills up the measure of the evil, so that there is no more room for patience.

As witnesses of this, see the Jews who rejected Christ and the testimony of the Holy Spirit: all the blood which had been shed since the blood of righteous Abel had to be required of that generation. God had not required it before; He had enlightened them by His law, stirred them up by His prophets, warned them by chastisements, had made an appeal to their whole moral being by the mission of His Son. The very sins of the fathers ought to have been a warning to their children to avoid the same offences, because, after the sins of the fathers, their offenses were committed in the light. But they persisted therein, and thus *heaped up* wrath for the

day of judgment; and they had to submit to the consequences of all this, according to the just judgment of God. This in no wise prevents each of their fathers having been and being subject, at the judgment of the dead, to the consequences of his own individual sin; but the nation, the system as a whole, the public object of the government of God in the world has been nudged.<sup>38</sup>

### Adam [The] Figure of Him to Come.

The first man Adam became a living soul; the last Adam a quickening spirit. But that which is spiritual [was] not first, but that which is spiritual: the first man out of [the] earth, made of dust; the second man, out of heaven (1 Cor. 15:45-47).

We are seeing that mankind is under the headship of Adam and is involved necessarily in the fall of the head -- involved in the *consequences* of that fall. Adam as a head, points to someone to come. Another head was coming, the last Adam, and those under that head would partake of the *consequences* of what He did. In the next three verses tell us the correspondence between these heads but the vastly different consequences of the respective headships.

The Lord Jesus is designated the last "Adam" rather than the last 'man.' 'Last man' does not designate the headship of a race as does "last Adam." "The last Adam" is a designation that covers more than headship of the church. As the first Adam's headship covered more than his relationship to Eve, so Christ's headship covers more than His relationship to the church.

### Sub-section 2: Romans 5:15-18: *correspondence of headship but contrast of outcome.*

**15 But [shall] not the act of favour [be] as the offence? For if by the offence of one the many have died, much rather has the grace of God, and the free gift in grace, which [is] by the one man Jesus Christ, abounded unto the many.**

**16 And [shall] not as by one that has sinned [be] the gift? For the judgment [was] of one to condemnation, but the act of favour, of many offences unto justification.**

**17 For if by the offence of the one death reigned by the one, much rather shall those who receive the abundance of grace, and of the free gift of righteousness, reign in life by the one Jesus Christ:)**

At the end of v. 14 another head was noted, One to come. In speaking of these two heads, each of these three verses states a contrast:

- v. 15 a contrast of measure from the respective sources, or heads: God's grace abounding;
- v. 16 a contrast of the tendency of the acts regarding the thing communicated: condemned versus justification;
- v. 17 a contrast of result: death reigning or reigning in life.

37. *Collected Writings* 26:147. See also *Collected Writings* 21:197; 26:239; *Notes and Comments* 5:419.

38. *Collected Writings* 1:332

**God's Act of Favor Is as the Offense.** Adam, as we saw, was typical of Christ who was to come. There is a relationship of Adam to those under his headship. There is a correspondence to this in the last Adam to those under his headship. There is a correspondence in the fact that there is a resultant effect of being under headship; though there is a contrasted outcome in keeping with the character of the respective heads. Should not the act of favor under that head (Christ) be as the offense of Adam in its application; namely, affecting all under his headship?

**The Many.** The expression “the many” appears twice. In the first case it refers to all under Adam’s headship, which, as we know, is the entire human race. In the second case, “the many” refers to those under the headship of Christ, the last Adam. This does not mean the whole human race, of course, but those under His headship. So all under Adam’s headship die as a result of his offense in eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The grace of God, etc., has likewise come to those under the headship of Christ as the last Adam.

In v. 16 we see that one act, *one* offense, led to condemnation. This filled the world with many offenses, but the *one* act of favor dealt with the host of offenses. Indeed, the power of grace vastly exceeds the offenses.

**The Meaning of “Offense.”** JND commented on the difference between transgression and the word here translated offense<sup>39</sup> (sometimes translated trespass). “Offense” is broader than “transgression,” though a transgression is an offense. The bearing of this fact here is that all sin from Adam onward has the character of offense, whether the law of Moses existed or not. In any case,

For as many as have sinned without law shall perish also without law; and as many as have sinned under law shall be judged by law (Rom. 2:12).

. . . for we have before charged both Jews and Greeks with being all under sin (Rom. 3:8).

All are under sin, all have committed offenses; but those under law are, in addition, also transgressors of the law.

**The Meaning of “Free Gift,” “Gift,” and “Act of Favor.”** JND’s excellent translation attempts to give us in English, as much as possible, the distinctions made in the original.

39. Παράβασις is positive transgression of a law which exists.

Παράπτωμα {offense} though applicable to transgressions, is a more general word and with a different sense.

Παράβασις goes beyond and transgresses an actual law or barrier set up by God. Hence there must be a law. Παράπτωμα fails or falls from the right condition in which we should hold ourselves. Transgressions do this, but every fault and failure does. This can be without a law. A Concordance will easily show this. I am not aware of any case where Παράβασις is used without direct reference to the law (or tradition), unless the verb in Acts 1:25 (Judas παρέη), and a case where another reading is preferred (*Collected Writings* 13:210).

Regarding the gracious acts of God towards believers, he distinguished several words:

v. 15 “act of favor” (χάρισμα), “free gift” (δωρεά);

v. 16 “gift” (δῶρημα), “act of favor” (χάρισμα);

v. 17 (“free gift”) δωρεάς.

The “act of favor”; *charisma* conveys graciousness in giving and makes us think of the grace acting in the one giving it..

The “free gift”; *dorea* conveys the freeness, the gratuitousness, of what is given. It is not earned and not owing.

The “gift; *dorema* indicates the thing given.<sup>40</sup>

**The One Man, Jesus Christ.** Adam was the one man in the one case; Jesus Christ was the other man. The eternal Son became man, necessarily so in order to die; and rising again, to take the place of the last Adam. And in accordance with the union in Him of the divine and human, the value and glory of His Person was imparted to every human way, word, and work. This one is the last Adam, the one man, Jesus Christ.

**The Judgment Was of One to Condemnation.**

The “one” is Adam. And judgment came upon him which will result in condemnation in eternal punishment. Condemnation is the result of God’s judgment spoken of in Rom. 2:3 and 3:8. Condemnation is a state to which all under Adam’s headship were rendered liable, and indeed will be their state in the lake of fire. Men stand under judgment right now (John 3:18 -- “he that believes not has been already judged”). At the great white throne they will be judged according to their works and the result is their condemnation

**The Act of Favor, of Many Offenses unto Justification.**

JND remarked that this is “a gracious gift of a sum of adequate righteousness, judicially estimated and satisfactory.”<sup>41</sup> The one offense of Adam led to many offenses. But justification removes them from before God. Justification goes further than forgiveness. Justification means the clearing from any charge. The justification here is not looked at as clearance from sins and guilt, as in the first part of Romans, but has in view that state of man as having sin in the flesh which characterizes his *life* in flesh. It refers to the character of justification in v. 18 below, which see: justification of *life*.

**The Free Gift of Righteousness.** The righteousness that the Christian has is not earned by him; hence it is viewed here as a “free gift.” This is in direct contrast to righteousness which comes from the law. That would be an earned righteousness by the first man under testing. JND remarked: “the abstract thing righteousness given to us, and though taken abstractly, the thing in its nature and quality.” Concerning the relationship of this to the righteous requirement of the law being fulfilled in Christians (Rom. 8:4), he pointed out:

40. These words are discussed in *Collected Writings* 13:211.

41. *Letters* 3:436.

As to Rom. 5:17, it is not the same as Rom. 8:4. There it is the fact that, in walking in the Spirit, the sum of the requirement of the law (and so only) would be fulfilled, the δικαίωμα. Much more, perhaps; but as the flesh was not subject to it, that δικαίωμα could not be accomplished when in the flesh {in the Adamic standing before God}. But, living in the Spirit, the Spirit of Christ living in us, the body dead, the sum of the law's requirements, so walking, was fulfilled. Against the fruits of righteousness there was no law. The Christian has a higher rule -- to be an imitator of God, as manifested in man in Christ (Eph. 5:1, 2); but as people were looking for legal righteousness, what is in vv. 2, 3, was the way of getting it.<sup>42</sup>

**Reigning in Life.** It is true that death had reign over us (v. 14), but we must not therefore conclude that "reigning in life" means that 'now life reigns over us.' There are two mistakes in this:

1. "Reign in life" does not refer to something reigning over us. It means a state of life.
2. In John, eternal life is insisted upon as the *present* life of the believer. But in Paul's writings it is presented as something entered into at the end of our so-journ here, when the believer is with Christ.<sup>43</sup> "Reign in life," then, looks on to the future. It is our assured portion, as being those who have eternal life now.

### SECTION 3: ROM. 5:18-21: the result of the new headship.

42. *Letters* 3:463. See his discussion of various words in Greek.

43. In his answer to the new system of teaching fostered by F. W. Grant, W. J. Lowe wrote:

The first striking difference already apparent between Paul and John, we may note at once however: John shows the character of the life in itself, whereas Paul is occupied with the position of the believer, the sphere in which the life is manifested. "In Christ," is where God has set me, and as such has its own proper value in every passage; it stands, too, in contrast with "in Adam" as the responsible man, thus introducing us into relationship with God, and into an order of blessing in which Adam never stood. "In the Son" tells me what the life is in itself, its nature and being, and only possessed as being *in* Him, the Son.

The very verse quoted from Rom. 6, makes the distinction felt: "the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." "Jesus our Lord," added to Christ hinders its being a descriptive statement of what the *life* is; but it sets forth blessedly the relationship with *Christ*, into which we are brought through the grace of God, who gives us "eternal life." Moreover the special aspect of eternal life here, and all through Romans, is that of a *state of life* into which we enter at the close, hence future (cp. Rom. 2:7); and "alive unto God" and "eternal life" are not here synonymous terms. Verse 11, too, tells us what faith is to reckon, in applying to ourselves what is absolutely true as to Christ's position, and so true of us as in Him and with Him (Col. 3:3). We know Him as Christ, as Jesus, and as Lord. "In the Son," on the contrary, tells of relationship with God the Father, and describes the life of which the Son is the mediatorial source and dispenser. How can it be said that the expressions are parallel and employed in the same sense? (*Life and Propitiation: An Examination of Certain "New Doctrines"* London: Morrish, pp. 96, 97, 1885).

18 so then as [it was] by one offence towards all men to condemnation, so by one righteousness<sup>44</sup> towards all men for justification of life.

19 For as indeed by the disobedience of the one man the many have been constituted sinners, so also by the obedience of the one the many will be constituted righteous.<sup>45</sup>

20 But law came in, in order that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded grace has overabounded,

21 in order that, even as sin has reigned in [the power of] death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Verse 18 connects directly with v. 12, vv. 13-17 being parenthetical. Yet, vv. 18, 19 do summarize what we saw in vv. 15-17.

**"Towards all Men" (v. 18)<sup>46</sup> and "the Many" (v. 19).** The phrase "towards all men," appearing twice in v. 18, means that the direction, the bearing, the tendency, of the respective act by each head is towards all men, the entire human race. It does not mean that it is necessarily applied to all men. However, in the case of those under Adam, we have learned that all men did actually come under the consequence of his sin. But in the case of Christ, not all are brought under His headship. So in His case, while the direction of what He did was *towards* all men, it is effective only *upon* some. This is similar to the righteousness of God, which is *towards* all, but *upon* those that believe (Rom. 3:22). This distinction should be carefully noted. In v. 19, the words "the many" does not mean the same thing as "all men" in v. 18. Yes, it turns out that in one case, Adam's headship, "the many" that were constituted sinners coincides with "all men"; but in the case of Christ's headship that is not the case. In His case, "the many" is only those who believe. The bearing of Christ's act is *unlimited*; but its application is *particular*. In the case of Adam's sin, its bearing was unlimited and its application was unlimited. All under his headship suffer the consequences. In the case of Christ, those under his headship

44. "... 'one righteousness.' There cannot be the least doubt that this is the true rendering. When the apostle would say 'by the offense of one,' he uses a different and correct form, a different one from that which he uses for 'one offense.' Theology may make it 'the righteousness of one,' but not Greek" (*Collected Writings* 7:284).

45. "Romans 5: 19 is the summary of the argument of the obedient and disobedient man in contrast with law; and not only so, but declares that the law came in by the by as a distinct thing. Verses 12, 13, 14, 20, show that the apostle diligently argues here against obedience, sin, or righteousness being confined to law-breaking or law-fulfilling" (*Collected Writings* 10:97).

46. The Greek of this verse is discussed by W. Kelly in his exposition of Romans, *in loco*, and this discussion, as well as remarks found in other sources, are brought together on p. 537 of *Two Nineteenth Century Versions of the New Testament*, available from the publisher. J. N. Darby's article, "The Bearing of Romans 5:12-21," (*Collected Writings* 13:206-212) contains much detail regarding the Greek of this passage.

receive blessing, but sinners are not under His headship.<sup>47</sup> Of course, those under Christ's headship are removed from under Adam's headship.

The gospel is thus preached to all, but the blessing is only upon those who believe.

**One Offense Towards All Men to Condemnation.** This has been discussed, above, concerning v. 16. However, here (v. 18) it is brought to bear on "all men" concerning the tendency of Adam's offense.

**One Righteousness Towards All Men.** This is not the 'righteousness of one' as those who hanker after a legal righteousness as if there was a transference of Christ's righteous law-keeping to the Christian. The "one righteousness" is contrasted with the "one offense" of Adam. JND has a discussion of the Greek regarding righteousness, and says:

But the one *δικαίωμα* is the full total, the act which met the whole requirement . . . It is . . . the full sum of that needed for my being accounted just.<sup>48</sup>

And in the *Synopsis*:

" . . . even so by one accomplished righteousness (or act of righteousness) towards all men, for justification of life."<sup>49</sup>

The work of atonement on the cross was composed of the sufferings in the three hours, the death, and the shedding of blood. The infinite value and glory of His person was imparted to this work as its value and efficacy before God. This is the "one righteousness" which has satisfied God regarding the outrage of sin against His nature and His majesty. This work, this "one righteousness," is towards (not upon) all men, for justification of life; just as in the case of the "righteousness of God" towards all, but upon those that believe (Rom. 3:22).

**Justification of Life.** In Ephesians man is looked at as dead in trespasses and sins. In Romans man is looked at as alive in sins (and correspondingly, as also alive in Christ<sup>50</sup>). In the first part of Romans justification is connected with the subject of sins and guilt. There is a clearing of the guilty

ones by Christ's work. But there is more than that, even being brought into a new standing in life before God. In the second part of Romans justification it is connected with the matter of sin in the flesh, that internal power and working of evil found in every child of Adam. Therefore we read of "justification of life," which means that we have a new standing before God concerning the new life that we have. That life stands in justification before God. W. Kelly wrote:

"And this is the witness that God gave us life eternal, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life." To us it is made known, as it could not be to an OT saint, and we therefore know it as they could not. This is fully warranted to us by the next verse (13) "These things I write [the epist. aor., or, I wrote] to you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know (εἰδ.) that ye have life eternal." This conscious knowledge of it, what a privilege and to us essentially characteristic of Christianity! Nor does the Epistle close without reminding us that, among other things consciously known by us, this is one, "that the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding that we should know (γιν.) him that is true; and we are in the true One, in his Son Jesus Christ: he is the true God, and life eternal." How establishing and endearing to us. What a safeguard against every idol!

It was not the apostle Paul's work to dwell on the present gift of life eternal to the believers. The righteousness and the counsels of God are fully treated in his Epistles with Christ's work the basis, His resurrection and ascension to give them heavenly character, and His coming to crown all. Hence He speaks of life eternal at the end (Rom. 2:7, 5:21, 6:22). He does however speak, not only of reigning in life but of justification of life (Rom. 5:17, 18): a remarkable phrase, and a blessed privilege which the Christian is meant to enjoy now. It is not "eternal" only but in risen form and power. Justified by His blood meets our sins, justified in His risen life goes farther and meets sin, sin in the flesh, not what we did evilly but our evil self, in Him dead and risen. Hence we are called Rom. 6:4 to "walk in newness of life." This assuredly does not refer to walking with Christ in white when in glory, but to present walk here below. But this implies the life of Christ ours now as truly as then, when all is complete. It is none other than life eternal. And as Christ, being raised, lives to God, so are we to count ourselves dead indeed to sin, but living to God in Christ Jesus. Such is the virtue of His death and resurrection, as Rom. 7 states, that, had we been Hebrews of Hebrews, we were made dead to the law through the body of Christ, that we should belong to another that was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God: an impossible result without life, life eternal. So in Rom. 8:2 the law, not of Moses, but "of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (cp. John 20:22) made me free from the law of sin and death, the communication of Christ's risen life, the form in which He now gives life eternal to every Christian. The co-operation of the Holy Spirit in this life is clearly marked, and that which is now as clearly distinguished as the completion

47. There is a difference in vv. 18 and 19, concerning which, W. Kelly remarked:

Here {v. 19} all is explicit result, and not character {as in v. 18}; and hence the article {the} is used in Greek as pointedly as the preceding verse exhibited the anarthrous construction {no definite article, "the"}: in both cases with the utmost accuracy, and with a perfection altogether admirable, with which no writings of man can compare. Where the apostle speaks of "all men," the aim is to show the tendency whether from the first man or from the Second; where he speaks of "the many," the definitive effect is set before us (*Romans*, in *loco*).

48. *Collected Writings* 13:212.

49. 4:106.

50. I did not say 'as raised with Christ.' That we find in Colossians and Ephesians.

of His work when the body is raised (10, 11).<sup>51</sup>

JND wrote:

As to "justification of life" (Rom. 5:18) it is that justification we have as being alive in Christ; that is, it goes beyond mere forgiveness of sins as in the old man which are put away. It is the clearance of all imputation which we have as alive in Christ. But the passage gives us something more specific, it refers to vv. 16 and 17. Verse 16 is "of many offenses unto justification," which of itself goes further than clearing the conscience of sins. Verse 17 further adds that they who have received "abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life." This, while based on the clearing, brings us into the new place in life and reigning in it. Hence we have "justification of life": "by one offense towards all men to condemnation . . . by one complete righteousness [δικαιώμα] towards all men to justification" (v. 18); but then "in life," a new life in Christ -- not merely, that is, the old sins cleared away negatively, but in the new place by a work of Christ which God had fully owned. He had finished the work which His Father had given Him to do, and was in virtue of it in a new place as Man in life. Life (in us) and justification went together.

I do not know if I have made myself plain. It does not go quite so far as the "in Christ," but it does identify our justification and a new life in Him.<sup>52</sup>

**The Obedience of One.** The doctrine of many is that "obedience of one" means Christ's righteous law-keeping. Christ's fulfilling the law is supposed to be this obedience. And thus the Christian's righteousness comes from Christ's righteous law-keeping. In effect, that is a legal righteousness. Connected with this notion are other ideas, such as that all men were under the law, and Adam had the law. It is a system of theology at war with the truth concerning the Christian's true righteousness. With the pen of JND we will enlarge upon this important subject. The first thing to note is that the "obedience" is one whole, including obedience unto death -- and obedience to death was not prescribed by the law. A. C. Ord (?) well said:

. . . all the great fundamental principles exhibited in the death of Christ -- redemption, propitiation, and substitution - have their place in connection with, and cannot be separated from, both our justification and the righteousness of God, nor can the obedience of Christ either be excluded (Rom. 5:19). But in this obedience, the whole of the life and death of Christ is comprised, without being separated; from His leaving the throne of God and becoming man, to the offering up of His life on the altar, all is looked at as one great whole, for "taking the form of a servant, he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:7, 8). The moment we begin to separate, or distinguish the life of Jesus from His death, the language of Scripture universally applies the death, or

value of the blood of Christ, to our justification, rather than His life; separately and alone that is never referred to for our justification, whereas His death is repeatedly so used, which shows unmistakably where the justifying efficacy really lies. As to the law, it is never mentioned as the ground of justification in any way.<sup>53</sup>

Indeed, to make this all out to be measured by the law is, an insult to Christ, unintentional as I suppose regarding the character of His walk and the revelation of the Father therein (John 14:9). But such lowering of His walk certainly is consonant with the false notion that the law is a transcript of the mind of God. The system substitutes the law for Christ, for it is the Son who is a transcript of the mind of God. Indeed, He is the Word, the Logos, the revealer of God, full of grace and truth. The law came by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17). I am sorry for those who do not see the profound difference. The law was the requirement for man in the flesh, in Adamic standing. And though Christ kept the law, to make that the measure of everything is indeed the exposure of the poverty of theology, as well as the utterly false notion that the law is a transcript of the mind of God.

The law was never intended by God to be the source of blessing for man. It had a particular function up to the cross; namely, in connection with the testing of the first man (in the persons of the favored Jews) to bring out the subsisting state of the first man in the form of being a transgressor (cp. Gal. 3:19). God never intended for man to possess blessing through its instrumentality, by man keeping it (Gal. 3:18, 29) -- though if he did keep it he would not pay the wages of sin.

The Lord Jesus lived a life to the infinite glory of God; and in that life He suffered atoningly in the three hours of darkness where he bore our sins in His own body on the tree, and was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. And then He poured out His life in death as He laid it down voluntarily as an act of will in obedience to the Father (John 10:18)

For as by the disobedience of one the many connected with him were constituted sinners, put into that place; so by the obedience of one the many connected with Him were constituted righteous. The ὑπακοή is looked at as the whole principle of Christ's life, including as to its character, and proved by, obedience unto death. There was a disobedient man, proved in eating the forbidden fruit: he disobeyed God's will. There was an obedient man: He obeyed God's will. The character and measure of the obedience all through, as proved by it, was obedience unto death, the death of the cross. This had nothing to do with law.<sup>54</sup> ♦

There is a text referred to, "By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one, many

51. F. E. R. *Heterodox*, London: Weston, pp. 17-19, 1902.

52. *Letters* 3:167, 1881; see also 3:434, 435; and *Collected Writings* 13:212.

53. *Justification and Acceptance with God* . . ., Present Truth Publishers: Morganville, p. 21.

54. *Collected Writings* 13:210.

shall be made righteous." But so far from there being a word of law or obedience to law here, it is in express contrast. "Moreover the law entered," *pareiselthe*, was no part of this great scheme in the two Adams, only came in by the by that the offense might abound. Mark, no word about keeping it. It had an object; it was to convict -- bring in offense --- make sin sinful. So Luther, *passim*. The obedience of Christ is in contrast with law. It is a monstrous idea to make Christ's obedience merely legal. He kept the law, surely; He was born under it, though as Son of man above it in title. But His obedience was absolute. What righteousness of the law called upon Him to give His life for sinners? But that He did as obedience. What, to bear the law's curse for another? All His life was obedience, but far beyond law; He laid down His life so, not according to law. And here it is obedience as a principle contrasted with disobedience, and no thought of law. There was a disobedient man and an obedient one -- Adam and Christ. The law came in by the by. He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. Did the law make a righteous man suffer? Christ's obedience was perfect and absolute. To reduce it to fulfilling the law is horrible, though He fulfilled the highest requirement of the law. The law was suited to the first man, Christ's obedience to the glory of God, into which He is entered because He finished the work His Father gave Him to do. So in Phil. 2, He was obedient unto death (*mechri thanatou*). It is the character and extreme possible limit of a principle of obedience--He was obedient even to death. Think of saying, He fulfilled the precepts of the law even to death! What precept commanded a person to die? No; His obedience was the principle of perfect submission to His Father's will, whatever the cost might be. <sup>55</sup> ♦

First, as to the passage quoted -- Romans 5:19: we are told, that "His whole life, as the law-fulfiller, constituted the obedience by which many are made righteous." Now, how does the passage speak? It speaks of Adam and Christ as two heads of races subordinated to them, in contrast with law, showing that we must not confine Christ to those under law, since death and sin had reigned when there was none -- between Adam and Moses -- over those who had not transgressed any covenant like Adam (Hos. 6:7). And Christ's work could not be limited within bounds short of sin and sinners. It is a contrast between sin and law-breaking; the passage showing that it was not simply by law-breaking, but by a disobedience which applied to those who were not under law, and an obedience which did the same, that evil and good came; and making, not individual law-keeping, but their state in their respective heads, the true ground of ruin or righteousness, and then adds, in direct explicit contrast with this: "(But) law entered that the offense might abound; but where sin abounded grace did much more abound." Rom. 5:19 is the summary of the argument of the obedient and disobedient man in contrast with law; and not only so, but declares that the law came in by the by as a distinct thing. Verses 12, 13, 14, 20, shew that

the apostle diligently argues here against obedience, sin, or righteousness being confined to law-breaking or law-fulfilling. But this is not all. In chapter 6, the apostle raises the question, in practice: whether not being under law is a reason for sinning, as is alleged. "Sin," he assures us, on the contrary, "shall not have dominion over us, *because* we are not under law, but under grace." And then shows that, though *not* under law, we yield ourselves up to obedience unto righteousness. He contrasts Christian obedience and law. Taking from under law might seem, as with our modern legal divines, to take away from obedience. The answer of the apostle is, "In no wise." We get from under the power of sin, because we are not under law; and we obey as servants to righteousness and to God, being not under law. In a word, the passage quoted to shew that obedience is law-fulfilling is an elaborate argument of the apostle's to shew that, while doubtless Christ kept the law, as to Him and as to us obedience is insisted on outside, and in contrast with, law. <sup>56</sup> ♦

But if the law be not thus a rule of life and way of righteousness, and Christ's own obedience unto death makes us righteous who believe in Him, what principle have we to guard us against sinning and practical ungodliness? Here what answers to the other tree of Paradise comes in -- the tree of life. It is not by imposing a law that we are kept in obedience (that failed us, for the same reason that it did in obtaining righteousness), but by giving a life. Christ becomes our life, and our obedience is in this life to God Himself, in contrast still with law (Romans 6). But this introduces another point, which applies to law too. The law indeed kills us, as alive in conscience without it; but this could only be ruin and condemnation. Christ has died in grace for us, and this is appropriated to us by faith in Him that is risen. We say we are crucified with Christ. The faults of the old man are not made up by law-keeping, but the old man itself is wholly condemned and set aside. God has condemned sin in the flesh by Christ's death, and set it aside; for we are dead. He only that is dead is really justified from sin. The sins have been put away, for Christ is crucified for us; sin in the flesh condemned by His death, but we are crucified with Him, not in the flesh. We were in the flesh, and then the motions of sin could be excited by the law. We reckon ourselves, being baptized to His death, dead to sin, and alive to God; Christ risen, our life; so that we walk in newness of life. But this is our deliverance from law; because He who was under it has died and satisfied its claims, and come from under them; law having dominion over a man as long as he lives -- and we are dead, and alive with a new kind of life, out of the state and place where law reached us. We have died wholly out of that, as truly as Christ has died and risen into another, God's true place for man in Christ. It is a new creation in us, and by which we are placed in the new creation, where the old things are passed away and all things are new.

55. *Collected Writings* 7:314..

56. *Collected Writings* 10:97.

Thus life is new, as well as righteousness.<sup>57</sup> ♦

The flesh says, if one man's obedience makes me righteous, I may continue in the sin of my old nature! No: you are dead to sin, and what you are dead to, you cannot live in.

In Rom. 6 the objections of the natural man to the obedience of Christ constituting us righteous are all met, as the apostle connects practical righteousness and a holy life with being dead with Christ, and the reception of a new life to God through Him as a necessary result.<sup>58</sup> ♦

**OT Saints not “in Christ” or “In the Last Adam”; nor was Justification the Ground on Which They Stood Before God.** J. A. Trench, in a response to F. W. Grant, wrote:

Divine power, expressed in the resurrection of Christ, has come in and taken us out of all we were in Adam, and put us into the whole of the position of Christ founded upon the finished work of the cross, and made good to us individually when we believe the glad tidings of our salvation, by the Holy Ghost who takes up His place in us, giving us the consciousness that we are in Christ and Christ in us, and of union with Him and with all that are His. All reasoning as to what OT saints had or could not have had, will not take away from the plain force of such scriptures to a mind subject to them. Whither this reasoning leads may be seen: “the direct result to me would be this, that OT saints were neither children of God, nor could they be justified from sin, or in the last Adam,” &c. ({F. W. Grant,} p. 8). Thus what scripture applies to a revealed position before God, that we are brought into on earth as the fruit of a gloriously accomplished redemption, is here attempted to be applied to saints before Christ came, which if it were, would have taken them wholly off the revealed ground upon which God placed them. To have our place in Christ according to Rom. 8:1, our old man must have been crucified with Christ; but having died with Him we have died out from under the law, and the bond of relationship with that first husband has been absolutely broken; how then could OT saints, who were “kept under the law” have been in Christ? Of course they I were children of God, as surely as they were born of God, though the mere possession of the nature carried with it then no more than now the consciousness of relationship, and were justified from sin *before God*,<sup>59</sup> and not under condemnation; though none of these things were the ground upon which they stood, as they are, and are characteristic of (in contrast with them) the ground upon which we stand. Read 1 Cor. 15 and think of an OT saint being “in the last Adam”! Also Gal. 3:23 - 4:7 for the contrast of their place and ours, specially Gal. 3:28 as to how “in Christ” takes out of

Jewish ground, as out of all other distinctions of the flesh. For “if any man be in Christ, there is a new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17; cp. also v. 16).<sup>60</sup>

**Concluding Remarks on Rom. 5:18, 19 Regarding What Is the Believer's Righteousness.** *In Justification and Acceptance With God*, by A. C. Ord (?) Has the following remarks upon Rom. 5:18, 19, which Scripture is alleged to show that the believer's righteousness is actually a legal righteousness, based on the notion that Christ fulfilled the law for the believer, etc.

There are several passages referring to Christ, as the efficient cause of our righteousness before God, and their meaning has to be ascertained. But the reader will remember that what we are contending against is not that Christians are righteous in Christ, or for the sake of Christ, which we all believe, but that they are under the law, and that their righteousness is necessarily and purely a legal one, supposed to be founded on the fact that Christ fulfilled the law in their stead, or that His life on earth is our righteousness in contrast with His death, which is only allowed to have a “negative”<sup>61</sup> value, as clearing away transgression which would otherwise stand in the way.

Rom. 5:18, 19, has been repeatedly referred to as if it proved conclusively the doctrine called in question, but with how little reason will be seen upon a careful examination of the passage; “Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto the justification of life; for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” Now the words “by one offence” and “by one righteousness” (Greek) are very abstract and do not say in what the righteousness consists; except that it is contrasted with one offence, the one act of Adam by which all were ruined, which makes the ascription of it to the one act of Christ's death most suitable. But the next verse contrasts the obedience of Christ with the disobedience of Adam. What does that mean? In Phil. 2 where the same contrast with Adam is in view, the obedience of Christ from first to last is looked at as one great whole, “He took on him the form of a servant” and “became obedient unto death even the death of the cross,” where His obedience was fully tested. Besides this we have what is similar to this “obedience of one” in many other passages already examined as in Heb. 10, where Christ is represented as saying with reference to His death, “Lo, I come to do thy will.” These and other scriptures, for which the reader may refer to the early part of this work, suffice to show that the word of God makes more of the obedience of Christ in His death than in His life. It therefore falls short of supporting what it is brought forward to prove in the following points:

57. *Collected Writings* 10:159.

58. *Collected Writings* 26:65.

59. “Before God” I say, in contrast to any revealed position; for note the difference in Rom. 3:20, between “the *passing over of* sins that are passed through the forbearance of God,” and *justification* now, the cross laying the righteous ground for both the one and the other. The paper here as everywhere, leaves out the full place the cross has before God.

60. “Life and the Spirit,” in *Words of Faith* 3:211, 212. This was also printed as a pamphlet

61. In making use of this word it is not intended to imply that it is strictly accurate; but throughout this work it is applied in the sense assigned to it by these writers who speak of the death of Christ as negative' in respect of righteousness, though admitting that it puts away sin.

**First.** It does not say that Christ's living obedience justifies us *in contrast* with His death.

**Secondly.** There is not a syllable in it about His obedience to the law.

**Thirdly.** The apostle's argument is to prove that the sin of Adam has ruined the whole human race without and apart from the intervention of the law which, no doubt, had its own specific effect in condemning man to death where it was disobeyed. But he says that death reigned from Adam to Moses over those who had not had any distinct command given to them (like the law or the injunction laid upon Adam) to disobey; hence the reign of death over such is to be traced not to the law but to Adam's fall, combined with their own sin which is its consequence, and he then contrasts all this with the second Adam, and righteousness and life derived from Him, as sin and death had been derived from the first Adam; so that if the law is alluded to, it is only to put it on one side, as not entering into the parallel which he is here drawing between Adam and Christ, the effects of the sin of the former, and redemption and righteousness brought by the latter. In order to do this he dismisses for the time the effect of the law over a part of the human race because he is specifying on the one hand what had affected the whole, i. e., Adam's fall, and on the other what is equally intended to apply to the whole, viz., the redemption wrought by the second Adam.

**Fourthly.** That in the next verse the law is brought in as something quite distinct from this, and having a separate object of its own. "*Moreover the law entered that the offence might abound*"; i. e., not only that men were made sinners by one man's disobedience which had been met by the obedience of Christ unto death, but that they were "*transgressors*" or offenders when the weight and authority of a distinct command had been superadded; but this has rendered grace more apparent, and that it much more abounds *by Jesus Christ over sin* however aggravated. Respecting the expression "those that receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness," since righteousness in its *application* to the individual is undoubtedly a gift, it does not touch the question at issue, for all believe righteousness to be by Christ and bestowed of God, consequent upon what He had done, whether it be as the result of His death or in His fulfillment of the law.

That Christ is made unto us righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30) says nothing as to how He is so made, except that He is made so to us by God; and if other scriptures tell us that this is by His blood justifying us, or as the result of His having borne sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21), and being now risen from the dead, it is merely an assumption to say it is by His keeping the law, when the word of God says nothing of the kind. In the same passage it is stated that "he is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption." How can wisdom, or sanctification, or redemption -- all which Christ is equally said to be made to us -- be imputed? Indeed the form of the expression "made unto us," instead of favoring this doctrine is rather fitted to suggest other ideas. Had the supporters of this doctrine written the passage, they would have said, His

legal obedience is our righteousness, whereas the Holy Ghost says of Christ Himself in His present position before God, "He is made unto us righteousness," for this is what we have obtained through Him and in Him, and thus He is made righteousness *to us* rather than having fulfilled it for us.

Indeed it is now confessed <sup>62</sup> that the precise expression *the righteousness of Christ* is *only* once used in the New Testament. "Through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:1). But had the apostle even meant to teach this doctrine he would have reversed the words and put "through the righteousness of Jesus Christ our God and Savior"; whereas, as it stands it is far from expressing it, and as has been suggested, in an epistle addressed to Jews may well bear the force, we have seen it constantly has in the Old Testament, the faithfulness of God to His promises, which accords better with the form of the expression. But even if we take it as the righteousness of Christ, where is there a syllable of His obedience to the law? And we have seen that His death and suffering, and our present standing before God in Him, are spoken of as righteousness. What a feeble foundation upon which to build such a systematic superstructure of doctrine. It is admitted that "the righteousness of Christ" (in reality it is of God) is only *once* mentioned in the New Testament, and as we have seen His obedience to the law justifying us, nowhere; whilst to deny thereupon that the blood of Christ justifies and admits to heaven, or obtains eternal life for us, is in truth in defiance of all Scripture.

The explicit and positive statements of particular passages as well as the general bearing of Scripture have been fully and carefully traced, and the result is now left to the impartiality of the reader, only recalling to his mind how serious are the questions he is called on to weigh; for a slight has been undeniably put upon the value of the person and of the death of the Son of God, the real nature and evil of sin in believers has been disguised, and the standing of the Christian in full peace and blessing before God in Christ has been disfigured and beclouded. This cannot but produce distance from God practically and corresponding feebleness of action and power against evil, though it may be freely and thankfully admitted that many who have obscure and uncertain views of truth are more earnest and faithful in carrying out the measure of light they possess than others whose knowledge is more advanced, whilst their hearts are less devoted to Christ. Nevertheless it is Christ who is the truth, and it is the truth that makes free when known, and we are sanctified by the truth; so that if the light it gives be dimmed and the standard of truth lowered, the consequence is that our power of living to and enjoying God is infallibly weakened as well as the strength of Christian life and of holiness.

Besides this, the idea held by some to the present day, that the whole work of Christ consists in His having kept the law in His life and suffered its penalty in His death, and that there was nothing in His heart but the law, besides

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62. By Mr. Mylne in "Reposing in Jesus" -- more recently by others.



contracting the personal glory of Christ to the limits of the law, produces very narrow views of the character of God and His grace toward man; and whilst it provides (in comparison) little for the believer, leaves nothing for those who are far off from God. This is a very capital defect in this system, and in practice the reflection of these principles may be seen in the harsh, exclusive spirit often exhibited by persons of this and of the ultra-Calvinistic school towards the unconverted, and those who differ from them. For our views of the character or aspect of God towards man as manifested in the person and work of Christ, will infallibly and very materially affect our behavior towards others, as our blessed Lord has shown us (Matt. 5:44-48; cp. 1 John 4:11).

In every sense, therefore, these questions have a practical bearing, and their importance as regards Christian life and character can hardly be exaggerated.

**But Law Came In, in Order That the Offense Might Abound.** This does sound like the law did not come in to produce, or be the basis of, righteousness.

The word “law” does not have a “the” preceding it. W. Kelly has a good discussion about this (*in loco*). While the reference is to Moses’ law, without the *the*, something characteristic is intended. So the mere historical fact of the introduction of the law is not the point; rather, “law came in,” law as a new basis of God’s dealing with the first man, in the favored persons of the Jews. The point is the character of God’s dealings.

“Abound” indicates the increase of offense emanating from the action of “sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3) under the restraint on the will imposed by the law. The quickened soul in Rom. 7, in conscience under the principle of law before God, felt this deeply (Rom. 7:7, 8).

The law is not the determining factor in man’s state under the Adamic headship, since sin was in the world before the giving of the law, shown by the universal reign of death. It was something brought in subsequently; added to more fully bring out that state..

God does not make sin abound as if He was the author of it. Besides, sin was there before the law was. But the law came in by the way, in God’s ways in testing the first man, to bring out a feature of sin; namely, that it really is a flouting of His will; and added to that, the despising of His rights and authority in giving the law. Sin is lawlessness; and while sin is a flouting of God’s will, an acting without regard to His holy will, the prohibitions of the law brought that into bold relief. The law gave this flouting of God’s will a visible character, for then it took the form of transgression against the stated, public commands of God. Thus man’s contempt for God was manifested in this way. Yes, the law was a provocation upon sin in the flesh (Rom. 7:8). God’s purpose was to manifest the state of the first man. So man’s lawlessness is shown to be also offense against God’s government of man.

### **But Where Sin Abounded Grace Has Overabounded.**

It is not said that grace abounded where the offenses abounded. The statement is most general -- where sin abounded -- including all those under the headship of Adam. The statement certainly excludes the law as involved some way in the overabounding of grace.

“Overabound” surely is meant to convey the superlative degree of grace in abounding exceedingly in contrast to the abounding of sin.

This grace results from the work Christ wrought in glorifying God on the cross with respect to the outrage of sin against the nature and majesty of God. God acts in accordance with His estimate of the worth of that work. And who can know that but God? For the infinite value and glory of the Person of Christ was imparted to that work and determines its value. Its value, then, is commensurate with the value of His Person. This is really infinite in character. The cross provided the righteous basis upon which grace, overabounding grace, lays hold of the believer in eternal embrace:

that he might display in the coming ages the surpassing riches of his grace in his kindness towards us in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:7).

**In Order That, Even as Sin Has Reigned in [the Power of] Death, So Also Grace Might Reign Through Righteousness to Eternal Life Through Jesus Christ Our Lord.**

**Grace reigning through righteousness** means that Christ so wrought for the glory of God, on the cross, regarding our sins, as well as sin in the flesh, that God has a righteous basis for His actions in grace.

There are **four phases with respect to righteousness**, during the history of this world, followed by another state altogether in the new heavens and the new earth:

1. From Adam to the law, the first man (man in Adamic standing and responsibility) was not under trial by law, but was not found righteous. Sin was in the world.
2. From the giving of the law until Christ, the first man was under trial by the law, in the persons of the favored Jews (Rom. 3:1), but was found to be a transgressor.
3. Now, grace reigns through righteousness. The first man is judged in the cross and is no longer under testing. The Mosaic age continues on, the law is left where it was, the Mosaic System is rejected. God’s dealings with the first man, as such, are over. He leaves the world to go on its course until the intervention by the public introduction of Christ when He appears in glory to smite the nations and set up the promised kingdom on earth.
4. In the kingdom, we are told, righteousness will reign -- a King shall reign in righteousness (Isa. 32:1). This will be introduced when the Son of Man takes the reigns of government; for, as the smiting stone of Dan. 2, He will have crushed the image -- and the stone become a

great mountain and filling the earth. That is His kingdom in the earth. When His judgments are in the earth, then will the people learn righteousness (Isa. 26:9).

And then in the eternal state *righteousness will dwell* (2 Pet. 3:13).

Grace reigning through righteousness **to eternal life** means eternal life, as Paul speaks of it, at the end of our journey here, as was pointed out, above, by W. J. Lowe (and others as well, of course):

Moreover the special aspect of eternal life here, and all through Romans, is that of a state of life into which we enter at the close, hence future (cp. Rom. 2:7); and “alive unto God” and “eternal life” are not here synonymous terms. <sup>63</sup> ♦

It is not merely the deliverance from the burden of sins which lay upon us, but goes on to the life manifested in the Lord’s resurrection, which faith appropriates now, so that we yield ourselves to God, “as alive from the dead” (Rom. 6:13), a life which we shall know in its fulness with Him in glory, when He will be manifested as firstborn among many brethren. <sup>64</sup> ♦

Rom. 5:12-21 closes with attribution “*through our Lord Jesus Christ*.” I am not aware that the Apostle has any other idea than that Jesus Christ is the Lord of all under His headship and that this Lordship is to be owned by those who profess to know Him. God has made Him both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36) and He has not given us the option of coming to Him as Christ, for salvation, while not owning Him as Lord!

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63. *Life and Propitiation* . . . , p. 97.

64. *Life and Propitiation* . . . , p. 105.

## Chapter 3.5

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### *Outline of L. S. Chafer's Views Concerning an Intercalated Age of Grace*

#### *Introduction*

The Scripture expression “the end of the age” does not mean the end of a church age, for the saints will be raptured before “the end of the age.” The phrase, *the end of the age* (Matt. 13:39, 40, 49; 24:3; 28:20) is really the end of the Mosaic age, which age is the age we Christians are now in. The cross did not change the age; the Mosaic age continues on. The work God is now doing is not an earthly age among the earthly ages. That is, Christianity is not an age among the earthly ages. It is a heavenly thing, above and outside of the ages. So while God is doing the heavenly work, the Mosaic age (referred to in Matt. 12:32; 1 Cor. 2:8; 2 Cor. 4:4; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 1:21; 1 Tim. 6:17; 2 Tim. 4:10) <sup>65</sup> continues on -- continues right through the period called Daniel's seventieth week -- until it is displaced by “the age to come” (Matt. 12:32; Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30; Eph. 1:12; Heb. 6:5), which is the millennial age, i.e., the administration of the fullness of times (Eph. 1:10). The testing of man ended with the cross. Man had been under probation by God, and the final test was Christ Himself. Since then man is not under probation (testing) any longer. We will review this in chapter two. The intercalary-age-of-grace system that we are reviewing says that man is presently still under testing and is being tested by grace. This system involves a number of other points as well, which we will note below.

#### *The Intercalated Age of Grace and What it Entails*

L. S. Chafer (hereafter LSC) was the protégé of C. I.

Scofield and founded the school now known as the Dallas Theological Seminary. He wrote a number of books, his chief work being a seven volume systematic theology with an eighth volume as an index. The intercalated-age-of-grace system we will review is found in this work. It seems to me that LSC perceived a deficiency in the Scofield scheme that there is an “age of grace” among the earthly ages, namely the matter of “the end of the age.” He saw that “the end of the age” cannot be the end of Scofield's postulated “age of grace.” <sup>66</sup> He wrote that:

- ❖ the age of grace is an *intercalated* age and it is intercalated into the Mosaic age;
- ❖ it interrupted the Mosaic age and the Mosaic age will recommence after the rapture of the saints, and will be in force during the tribulation period;
- ❖ this intercalated age interrupted the time during which the law is in force, but the law will be in force again during the tribulation period;
- ❖ moreover, the intercalated age, i.e., “the church age,” interrupted “the times of the Gentiles,” which means a “setting aside of the Gentile times for the age of the church” (ST4:331). He spoke of the times of the Gentiles as *intercalary*, yet somehow “the times of the Gentiles” did not interrupt the Mosaic age when those Times began -- as the *intercalary* “age of grace” is supposed to interrupt the Mosaic age when it began. Below is a chart that seeks to represent LSC's ideas.

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65. Consequent upon the rejection of Christ, the Mosaic age was stamped with some new features. For example, Satan was then called the ruler of this world (John 16:11) as well as the god of this age (2 Cor. 4:4).

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66. C. I. Scofield wrote:

The present age, then, which began with the first advent of Jesus Christ and ends with His return in glory . . . (*Will the Church Pass Through the Great Tribulation?* P. 5, 1917.

LSC thus sought to account for the character of the “age of grace,” to keep the “age of grace” an unforeseen thing by the OT prophets, to keep the church a mystery and heavenly, and to maintain the Scofield system, which regards man as still under testing (probation).

Now, in *Part 1*, it is pointed out that the Scofield system is really a system of *age-ism* with some elements borrowed from J. N. Darby (hereafter JND) without which it would not have arisen as a system. However, the Scofield system is different in a number of respects and, very importantly, it violates the truth that the probation (testing) of the first man ended at the cross. Thus the Scofield system proposes an “age of grace” during which man is being tested by grace.

The problems that result from the inserting the erroneous Scofieldian “age of grace” among the earthly ages have thus been increased by LSC trying to “refine”<sup>67</sup> the Scofieldian age-ism system. LSC spoke of the church as a heavenly age. But ages of time are all earthly and asserting that one of them is heavenly does not make it heavenly. It really is an *earthly* “church age” among the *earthly* ages. Involved in this is the refusing to acknowledge that *the earthly man* (“the first man,” 1 Cor. 15:45-47) is no longer under testing (probation) since the cross. What we have, then, is the first man, of the earth, earthly, being tested in a “heavenly age.” The end of the probation of the first man in the cross will be reviewed in a later chapter.

Last century many of JND’s opposers held that the Christian was under law, in one manner or another. He repeatedly pointed out that the Christian is dead with Christ and the law cannot apply to Christ dead and risen, nor to believers who are *in Christ*. He said, scripturally, that the Christian was dead, not that the law was dead. How easy it would have been to affirm that not only is the Christian dead, but that the law is also dead, if that was what Scripture stated. But the Scripture says the first of these, not the second. Yet LSC, and those that follow the above scheme of his, assert that the law is obviously dead now (but will be in force again in the tribulation period). No, it is not at all obvious that the law is now dead. Scripture does not so state. One extreme is to say that Christians are under the law; the other extreme is not only to say that the Christian is dead but, that the law is dead also. The truth is that the law is not dead but that the Christian is dead to the law and to sin. How one thinks about the law (is the Christian under it as the rule of life, or is it dead or not) is connected with how one views the present work that God is doing. In a later

chapter we will review the Scriptures brought forward to allege that the law is dead since the cross, until somehow reinstated after the church is removed.

## *The Intercalated Age of Grace and the Times of the Gentiles*

### **DURATION OF THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES**

The times of the Gentiles measure foreign dominion over Jerusalem, evidently began with the Babylonian captivity, and continue until the present hour and will do so until Israel is returned to possession of her own land (ST7:170).

The latter term was introduced by Christ (Luke 21:24) and measures the period in which Jerusalem will be under the overlordship of Gentiles (ST4:380).

### **BUT LSC REALLY BELIEVES THOSE TIMES RUN FOR ONLY 560 YEARS**

It is thus disclosed that the Gentile times run for 560 years -- 70 of the captivity, and 490 more unto the full realization of all Jewish promises (ST4:338).

If this detached, dissociated age, segregated character of this age {the “Church age”} is not granted, there can be no tracing of God’s time-periods as they are revealed; for, as it is clearly indicated in the outworking of Daniel’s 490 years for the Jews and the 560 {70 + 490} years for the Gentiles, the divine reckoning makes no place for this unforeseen and unpredicted age of grace, as it is manifested in the Church (ST 4:339).

Here he treats the times of the Gentiles in exactly the same way as Daniel’s 70 weeks. As there is a gap between the 69th and 70th week, so he places the same gap into the times of the Gentiles. In reality then, in spite of a few other statements, he really believes that the times of the Gentiles is not in force in the alleged “church age.” An acknowledgment that Jerusalem remains under Gentile domination does not change the point.

### **THE CHURCH AGE IS NOT PART OF THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES**

Strictly speaking, this Church age is not a part or development of the times of the Gentile times (ST4:330).

### **THE CHURCH AGE HAS INTERRUPTED, BUT NOT ENDED, THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES**

It cannot be made too emphatic that God’s earthly purpose centers in the Jew, and that, apart from the interruption of a Gentile period {i.e., the times of the Gentiles} which is in itself interrupted by the Church age, there would be only the direct outworking and development to fulfilment of every Israelitish covenant. These interruptions, or intercalations, in no way jeopardize the primary earthly purpose in Israel . . . there is a time which also serves for Israel’s chastisement, an intercalation of Gentile times; and (3) there is an intercalation of the age of the Church into Gentile times, and therefore, equally into Jewish times and seasons. Daniel is chosen of God to explain the intrusion of Gentile times into Israel’s calendar, and Christ and Paul

67. Referring to “Scofield’s second-generation scheme” R. Zuelch wrote, “Further simplification has occurred in more recent decades, especially since World War II. Modern classical dispensationalists, as represented by the third-generation Walvoord/Ryrie/Pentecost school, have continued to refine dispensationalism, “ (*CTS Journal* (Chafer Theological Seminary) Fall 1966, p. 15).

explain the intrusion of the age of the Church into the Gentile and Jewish times (ST4:332).

That determined for Rome, which was interrupted by this age of the Church, will yet be consummated when the outcalling of the Church is accomplished and she has been removed from the earth (ST4:334).

#### **THE CHURCH AGE IS INTERCALATED WITHIN THE GENTILE TIMES**

Since Israel's program is that which is incomplete, both the intercalation of the Gentile times and the intercalation of the Church within Gentile times are looked upon as gaps in the predicted Jewish program (ST4:342).

... there is an intercalation of the church into Gentile times (ST4:332).

His view is illustrated on the chart below.

#### **OBSERVE: GOD DEALT WITH THE JEWS AFTER THE CROSS VIA THE ROMANS**

Indeed, God "sent his forces, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city" (Matt. 22:7). It is notorious that the destruction of Jerusalem occurred under the Roman armies in AD 70. And as Luke 21:24 said:

And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and be led captive into all the nations.

So it certainly happened in AD 70. There is no gap in Luke 21:24. There is no "age of grace" gap in the times of the Gentiles. The Roman empire continued on after Acts 2. It was to Rome that Paul was taken as a prisoner. It was Roman power that banished John to the isle of Patmos. It was Rome that persecuted the saints in Smyrna (Rev. 2). It was Rome that trod down Jerusalem in AD 70. Recall that above we saw that LSC claimed:

That determined for Rome, which was interrupted by this age of the Church, will yet be consummated when the outcalling of the Church is accomplished and she has been removed from the earth (ST4:334).

Well, Matt. 22:7 was determined by God for Rome for AD 70. LSC boldly affirmed that:

It is clear that Gentile times are now accomplished but for the seven years which will be experienced immediately upon the removal of the Church, which event closes this intercalary age (ST4:380).

God transferred *government* into the hands of the Gentile powers for the times of the Gentiles, but, according to LCS, the times of the Gentiles stopped at the cross, as did Daniel's 70th week. Concerning the feet of the image, the clay represents the democratic principle over against the iron rule. Democracy has already emerged during the alleged "church age" and will be coupled together with the iron after the church is removed.

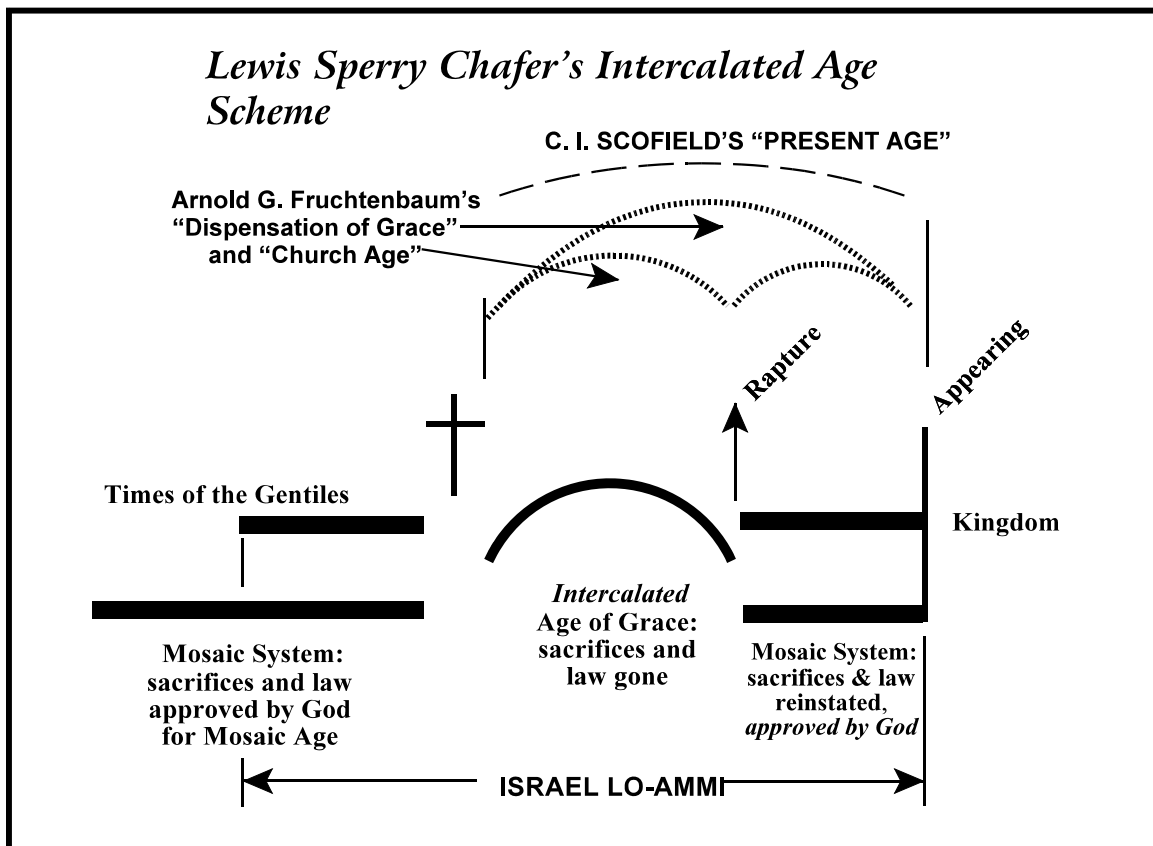
So, according to LSC, the intercalary "church age" stopped the Mosaic age; but the intercalary "times of the Gentiles" did not stop the Mosaic age back in 605 BC when *it* began. And yet the intercalated "church age" stopped the intercalated times of the Gentiles, which when *it* was

intercalated, did not stop the Mosaic age! With the word "intercalary" we can stop what we want to stop and not stop what we do not want stopped!

#### **OBSERVE: ISRAEL LO-AMMI DURING THE ENTIRE TIMES OF THE GENTILES**

Moreover, keep in mind that Israel was pronounced Lo-ammi (not my people) from when the times of the Gentiles began.

*The Lo-ammi period for Israel exactly parallels the times of the Gentiles.* That is, Israel is Lo-ammi during the entire period of the times of the Gentiles. The two go hand in hand. Now, that brings up the question: are we to believe that the Lo-ammi status of Israel also was interrupted (intercalated) and Israel's Lo-ammi status is in abeyance *now*? But why not, if the parallel period of "the times of the Gentiles" is in abeyance? Israel will be pronounced Ammi when all Israel is saved when Christ returns in glory. See *J. N. Darby's Teaching Regarding Dispensations, Ages, Administrations and the Two Parentheses*, available from the publisher. Part 8 has a detailed discussion concerning Israel being Lo-ammi.



LSC claimed that "the age of grace" is an intercalated age and that the times of the Gentiles is also intercalated by the "Age of Grace." Notice that the intercalated "age of grace," supposedly a "heavenly age," interrupts the earthly Mosaic age and the law, and it interrupts the earthly times of the Gentiles; but the intercalation of the times of the Gentiles did not interrupt the Mosaic age when those times began in about 605 BC. Had the intercalation notion been consistently carried out, the times of the Gentiles would have interrupted the Mosaic age, but that would not serve the end to be arrived at.

Moreover, "the times of the Gentiles" period is parallel to the "Lo-ammi" period, starting at the same time and ending at almost exactly the same time. And why would the Lo-ammi period not be intercalated by the "church age" just as in the case of the parallel, interconnected "times of the Gentiles"? -- why, because being not Lo-ammi, i.e., not, not-my-people, means they *would be* God's people during the "age of grace." The truth is that all three, the times of the Gentiles, the Mosaic age, and the Lo-ammi status, continued on. The church, being heavenly, is above and outside of ages.

Keep in mind that during the alleged "heavenly age" the first man, the earthy man, is continued under testing by the Scofield system.

### *Observe The Problem With The Scofield Age-ism Scheme*

C. I. Scofield wrote:

The present age, then, which began with the first advent of Jesus Christ and ends with His return in glory . . . .  
(*Will the Church Pass Through the Great Tribulation?*  
p. 5, 1917.

This scheme, we noticed earlier, places Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week in "the church age." Now, surely any 'dispensationalist' Christian who thinks about this must be disturbed about that

idea. The great tribulation is part of "the church age"? So LSC invented a 'solution.' The Age of Grace is an intercalated age. "Intercalate" means to insert something, as for example, an intercalary day into the calendar. After that day passes, the calendar continues on as before the intercalated day. So, in LSC's scheme to solve the problem left by CIS, he intercalated an age -- and this means that the Mosaic System picks up again right where it was interrupted. And that means that the sacrifice system of Judaism picks up just where it was interrupted. It means the reinstatement of the sacrificial system and the Aaronic priesthood as it was

before the cross, a reinstatement by God and under the sanction of God. We utterly repudiate this repugnant and revolting notion, an insult to the finished work of Christ. I am glad to say that some correspondence with Scofieldian dispensationalist leaders indicates that there is widespread rejection of the idea. But then where does that leave them? -- to go back to the truth as unfolded through J. N. Darby? I can hardly picture that happening.

Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, a Scofieldian age-ist, in his book, *Footsteps of the Messiah*, has a chart showing what he called the "Dispensation of grace" spanning the time from Pentecost until the appearing of Christ in glory, the same period of time as CIS's "Present Age." But, he places under this a "Church Age" followed by the great tribulation, which is thus outside the church age. Thus the great tribulation is a part of the "Dispensation of Grace." Really, these incredible notions are the vain and desperate exigencies of the basically flawed Scofield age-ism system. The adherents rightly know that covenant theology is unsound, but they have traditionally worked at putting distance between themselves and J. N. Darby. They have rejected the truth of the end of the testing of the first man at the cross and have created an age-ism system. This they call 'dispensationalism'; whereas, it hinders persons from seeing much dispensational truth.

The fact is, then, that the end of the testing of the first man, man in Adamic standing before God, ended with the rejection of Christ. And this great and important fact is foundational for Christianity; and it vitiates the Schofieldian scheme in its several permutations, as well as covenant theology.

\* \* \* \* \*

Since the idea that "the age of grace" among the earthly ages entails the notion that man is still being tested by God, on the next page is a summary chart regarding the end of the testing of the (fallen) first man; and in ch. 3.6 we will briefly review some Scriptures that show that the probation (testing) of "the first man" ended with the rejection of Christ at the cross. In ch. 3.7 we will review JND's teaching concerning the law and the Christian, and JND's teaching regarding Christian responsibility. In ch. 3.8 we will review in some detail the Scriptures LSC uses to show that the law is not now in effect, another erroneous idea that is part of, and required by, his intercalated-age-of-grace system. In ch. 3:9, an answer to "ultradispensationalism" is given, particularly of the view that the body of Christ began with the salvation of Paul.

## End of the Testing of the First Man

... that which is spiritual [was] not first ----- then that which is spiritual (1 Cor. 14:46)  
 The first man out of [the] earth, made of dust, ----- the second man, out of heaven (1 Cor. 15:47)

### FINAL TESTING

*Tested by the person of  
the Son, the Second Man*

And at last He sent to  
them His Son (Matt. 21:37)

The perfect King and the Kingdom (Matt.)  
 The perfect Servant and perfect service (Mark)  
 The perfect Man and perfect dependency (Luke)  
 The only-begotten, full of grace and truth (John 1:14)  
 The revelation of the Father in the Son (John 15:24).

Note particularly that the first man, in the persons of the Jews, *was tested by the kingdom* in the offer of the King and kingdom; and *was tested by grace* in the person of the Son. Man is not now being tested by grace. God has concluded testing the first man, having shown all to be under sin (Rom. 3:9).

**ADAM,  
The First Man**

**UNDER:**  
Conscience  
Government  
Law  
Priesthood  
Judges  
Kings  
Prophets

"The fulness of the time" (Gal. 4:4)  
 "In due time" (Rom. 5:6)  
 (at the end of the time of testing)

"Yet sinners" (Rom. 5:8)  
 "Still without strength" (Rom. 5:6)  
 (conclusion at the end of the testing)

"Consummation of the  
ages" (Heb. 9:26)  
 (ages of testing)

### NOW

*The Second Man has now  
displaced the First Man*

In view of the end of the testing  
of the First Man, God declares:

Wrath of God revealed from heaven (Rom. 1:18)  
 Every mouth stopped (Rom. 3:20)  
 All the world under judgment (Rom. 3:20)  
 All have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23)  
 All are dead (2 Cor. 5:14; Eph. 2:1)  
 Now is the judgment of this world (John 12:31)  
 In due time Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6)  
 Christ died for all (2 Cor. 5:14)  
 Christ gave Himself a ransom for all (1 Tim. 2:6)  
 Christ is the propitiation for the world (1 John 2:2)

The trial of the First Man ended at the cross. The declaration that man is lost followed upon the conclusion of the trial of man in the flesh. The case is closed and now God sends forth the gospel based on what the Second Man has done.

**NOW:** Rom. 3:21; 2 Tim. 1:9-10; Eph. 3:10; Heb. 9:26

God **NOW** enjoins men  
everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30)

"Upon whom the ends of the  
ages are come" (1 Cor. 10:11)  
 (ages of testing)

R. A. Huebner -- Jan. 19, 1998



## Chapter 3.6

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### *Is Man Under Probation Today?*

#### *Israel Is Lo-ammi During The Times of the Gentiles*

Those who claim that there is an age of grace among the earthly ages also claim that God is now testing man in respect to grace. Those who hold that the church is not an age among the ages also know that man is no longer under probation since the cross. That is, man is not now being tested -- and specifically he is not now being tested in respect to grace. And those who are more fully instructed in the heavenly character of the church realize that the present age is the Mosaic age. The Church is above and outside ages.

The Church, properly speaking, the body of Christ, is not a dispensation, it does not belong to the earth; but there is an order of things connected with it during its sojourn here below -- an order of things whose existence is linked with the Church's responsibility.<sup>68</sup>

I know what a person means by "the dispensation of the kingdom of heaven," but we belong to a heavenly thing during an interval, and there are no dispensations in heaven.<sup>69</sup>

Yes, there are no dispensations in heaven. What does it mean when someone speaks of an alleged church age as "a heavenly age"? In the age-ism scheme, ages and dispensations are equated. The "heavenly age," then, is a heavenly dispensation. There are no dispensations in heaven. There is no heavenly dispensation on earth. The talk about an earthly age being a "heavenly age" is but an attempt to preserve the heavenly character of the church while imposing an age-ism scheme upon dispensational truth. It is an attempt to circumvent the objection that the idea of "a church age" makes the church an earthly age among the earthly ages. That is exactly what it does; and inserting the word "heavenly" in front of the word "age" does not change its true character.

Defect, or feebleness, in view may not apprehend some of these things. But it should be obvious that neither the Jews nor the Gentiles are being tested in an age whose

beginning and ending coincides with the time during which God is gathering a heavenly people out of the world.

Long before this time when God is gathering a heavenly people, He removed government from Israel and gave it to the Gentiles. The period during which government is in the hands of the Gentiles is called "the times of the Gentiles" (nations) by our Lord in Luke 21:24. "The times of the Gentiles" is depicted by the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 2). This period runs from the time of Nebuchadnezzar until the smiting stone smashes the image on its feet,<sup>70</sup> which smiting depicts the coming of our Lord from heaven, at His appearing in glory, to smite the nations and set up the kingdom. That kingdom is symbolized in Dan. 2 as the smiting stone becoming a great mountain and filling the whole earth.

Simultaneous to the transfer of government from Israel to the Gentiles, the nation of Israel was pronounced Lo-ammi (meaning, "not-my-people"). See Hos. 1. The nation remains in that status until the appearing of the Lord in glory to set up the kingdom -- at which time all Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:26), the rebels having been purged out (Ezek. 20; Zech. 12-14). Then Israel will be the center of earthly government once again. Meanwhile, including at this very moment, the people of Israel are Lo-ammi. The Lo-ammi period runs parallel to the times of the Gentiles. While the Gentiles have the governmental power that was transferred to them, the people of Israel is Lo-ammi. While the people of Israel is Lo-ammi, the Gentiles have the governmental power that was transferred to them from Israel. This has been the case from the time of Nebuchadnezzar and nothing has changed regarding that. There has been no interruption of this status and this status will only be changed when Christ appears in glory. The idea that the times of the Gentiles stopped at the cross and that there remains a future seven year period of it, is no more sound than if one proposed that the Lo-ammi status for Israel stopped at the cross and there only remains a future seven year period for them to be Lo-

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68. *Collected Writings* 4:328.

69. *Collected Writings* 25:244.

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70. The fact that the nation was established in 1948 does not mean "the times of the Gentiles" is over. The worst time for the Jews in that land is yet to come (Matt. 24:21-22).

ammi. And what that would mean is that they are not Lo-ammi now. That is, that would mean that they are *not* “not my people” now -- which would mean that they *are* God’s people now. Of course you must see the error of supposing that the *Lo-ammi status* stopped at the cross. What would make one think that the parallel *times of the Gentiles* stopped at the cross?

So the cross did not change the status of the people nor the status of the times of the Gentiles. Israel began to be Lo-ammi during the age of the law and continues to be Lo-ammi for the remainder of the Mosaic age, which age continues up to the introduction of the millennial kingdom, when they will be Ammi (Hos. 2). And the governmental power that was transferred, from those pronounced to be Lo-ammi, to the Gentiles, occurring during the Mosaic age, was not interrupted by the cross. That transferred governmental power continues on through the Mosaic age.

### *The Final Test of the First Man Was the Revelation of the Father in the Son*

#### *The Two Men*

The ways of God to accomplish His purpose to glorify Himself in Christ entails His dealing with two men:

The first man Adam became a living soul; the last Adam a quickening spirit. But that which is spiritual [was] not first, but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual: the first man out of [the] earth, made of dust; the second man out of heaven (1 Cor. 15:46, 47).

The designation “Adam” refers to two headships. Men as born into the world stood before God in an Adamic standing while under testing. That is, God took account of man as before Himself for probation. The testing came to the point where it involved the giving of the law to Israel. The nations were never under the law. The law, however, addressed man in Adamic responsibility, *in the persons of the favored nation*. Thus, it addressed the first man -- according to the text above it was the natural man; for first “that which is natural.” The law did not address itself to the children of God, as such. It was for the first man, the natural man, but in the persons of the favored Jews.

Observe the order specified: *first* that which is natural, *then* that which is spiritual. The two are sequential, not simultaneous. God is not dealing with the first and second man simultaneously. First . . . then.

When the Lord Jesus was walking here on earth He was the second man in His own person, of course; i.e., He personally was the second man. But that is not the same as being installed into *the place* proper to the second man in the purpose of God. Consequent upon His death and

resurrection He was in the place of the second man. His death and resurrection are the great dividing point. The cross ended the place the first man had under the probation of God. The first man’s *history*, *morally speaking*, was closed by the cross. God is done with him, except that having declared men to be LOST, He saves, but that is another matter.

The cross, which was the culminating demonstration of the moral depravity of the first man, is the very instrument through which God is manifested as a just God and a Savior. This reminds me of some lines in a hymn by J. G. Deck:

The very spear that pierced Thy side,  
Drew forth the blood to save.

Consequent upon the final failure of the first man, he has lost his place before God, under probation, and has been displaced by the second man, out of heaven.<sup>71</sup> The first man is *the* man of responsibility and the second man is *the* man of God’s purpose. The history of *the* responsible man (who utterly failed in it) is morally ended and He has been displaced before God by the man of purpose, the second man. God does not have the two before Him at the same time. “First . . . then.” And we believers are before God in connection with the man of purpose, the approved man, the accepted man, the second man.

### *The Presentation of Christ to the First Man*

#### **CHRIST WAS PRESENTED TO THE FIRST MAN**

Perhaps you have not thought of it that way -- that Christ was presented to the first man. You were thinking He was presented to the Jews. Well, yes He was, of course:

He came to his own, and his own received him not (John 1:11).

And while thinking of that, keep in mind that while the first three gospels trace steps in the rejection of the Lord Jesus, in the gospel of John his rejection is stated at once at the beginning, and John has a very distinct character from the other three. The gospel of John is written, therefore, as assuming that rejection -- and it characterizes that rejection in the most profound and distinctive manner, as we shall see below. But here we should direct our thoughts to the fact that though He came to His own, in the ways of God the first man was being tested in the persons of the Jews. And Christ is the consummation of that testing.

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71. “Out of heaven” denotes the moral origin of Christ. His humanity did not come from heaven -- He came from heaven and took holy humanity into His person. His humanity came from Mary; and the union of Godhead and manhood in Him was by the overshadowing of the Spirit (Luke 1:35).

**EXAMPLE FROM MATTHEW**

First, then, we will note a parable in Matt. 21:

Hear another parable: There was a householder who planted a vineyard, and made a fence round it, and dug a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen and left the country. But when the time of fruit drew near, he sent his bondmen to the husbandmen to receive his fruits. And the husbandmen took his bondmen, and beat one, killed other, and stoned another. Again he sent other bondmen more than the first, and they did to them in like manner. And at last he sent to them his son, saying, They will have respect for my son. But the husbandmen, seeing the son, said among themselves, This is the heir; come let us kill him and possess his inheritance. And they took him, and cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him. When therefore the lord of the vineyard comes, what shall he do to those husbandmen? They say to him he will miserably destroy those evil [men] and let out the vineyard to other husbandmen, who shall render to him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus says to them, Have ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which they that builded rejected, this has become the corner-stone: this is of [the] Lord, and it is wonderful in our eyes? Therefore I say to you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and shall be given to a nation producing the fruits of it . . . (Matt. 21:33-43).

Here we see the final test: the last thing that could be done. "And at last he sent to them His son." They did not reverence His son, not then; but they shall! The Lord continued, telling them of some of the consequences. Observe also that this parable is followed by another in Matt. 22, regarding a wedding feast for the king's son, that bears on the same rejection but brings out other consequences. One of these was that:

And [when] the king [heard of it he] was wroth and having sent his forces, destroyed those murderers and burned their city (Matt. 22:7).

We may be sure that God did this even if we did not realize that the Romans did this very thing in AD 70. These Romans were "his forces," for God had transferred governmental power from Israel, about BC 605, to Nebuchadnezzar; and that power thus committed to the head of gold in the image of Dan. 2 was now administered by the iron section (the fourth) of the image: Rome. No, "the times of the Gentiles" was not interrupted by the cross.

Well, Christ's rejection is traced, no doubt, in keeping with the character of each respective gospel. Matthew gives us God's governmental/disciplinary dealings, and dispensational changes, in a very pronounced way. We turn now to John where Christ's rejection is marked by very distinct features in connection with the Son's glory, full of grace and truth.

## *The Testing by Grace Took Place When The Son Was Here*

**THE TIME OF TESTING BY GRACE AND TRUTH IS PAST**

We already noted that John 1:11 states Christ's rejection at the beginning of that gospel which is characterized by the presentation of the divine Persons, as well as what God is for the children of God.

We have considered some matters concerning the second man: something the Son became. He was not man before the incarnation. On the other hand, He was eternally Son in the Godhead. The divine Persons are one in will; and in omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. But there is distinction of Persons, and God acts in accordance with that distinction of Persons. The Father sends, the Son comes and carries out the Father's will, and does all in the power of the Spirit. In Col. 1:19 we read of what *the pleasure* of the Fulness was: to dwell in Christ. And Col. 2:9 states *the accomplished and abiding fact*:

For in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

From the instant of conception, from the instant the union of the divine and human took place, there all the Fulness dwelt -- and, of course still does, forever so, my soul. Yes, we shall see Him as He is!

Every word and work of the Son was done in the power of the Spirit in obedience to the Father. All the Fulness dwelt in Christ. He perfectly gave expression to the Father in all things, so that He could say:

He that has seen me has seen the Father; and how sayest thou, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I [am] in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words which I speak to you I do not speak from myself; but the Father who abides in me, does the works (John 14:10).

We read:

And the word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we have contemplated his glory, a glory as of an only-begotten with a father), full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

The light had appeared but the darkness apprehended it not (John 1:5). Man was dead in trespasses and sins, and knew it not. He had no faculty to see the light, but does that mean the light was not there? Of course not. It was there but men had not the faculty to see Him full of grace and truth. The Lord Jesus was full of grace and truth while here walking before the Father in the power of the Spirit. The first man, in the persons of the Jews to whom He was presented, was tested by Him Who was personally full of grace and truth. Thus man had been tested before the cross by grace and truth in His person. The cross was the end of man being tested by grace and truth. There is no "age of grace" wherein man is being tested by grace. The first man was under testing by grace (and truth) in the person of the Son, up to the cross, where, in the most amazing display of grace, He gave

Himself! Calvary is the terminal point for the probation of man, ending in him having rejected Him in whom all the Fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily. There is no test after that. *I suggest that it really takes away from Him, from His glory, to claim that man is being further tested.* The notion really implies that the previous testing was not enough! It implies that the Son, full of grace and truth, was not enough to complete the testing of the first man.

### THE REJECTION OF THE FATHER AND THE SON

And what is the Son of God's testimony about His rejection?

If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. He that hates me hates also my Father. If I had not done among them the works which no other one has done, they had not had sin; but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father (John 15:22-24).

There was no greater test than the revelation of the Father in the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit. In fact, this sin (of rejection) is unique. Surely it must be in a class by itself! And so it is. The word *sin* in this text refers to a unique sin. Surely our Lord was not saying that if He had not come and spoken to them sin would have been nonexistent. No. Rather, he is speaking of a unique *sin*: namely, the rejection of the revelation of the Father in the Son, in the power of the Spirit. This then is the pronouncement:

*They have both seen and hated both me and my Father.*

There is nothing beyond or surpassing that. This is the climax. This fully declares the state of the first man. What kind of a notion regarding testing do they have who continue it on after the cross? While it is not intentionally meant as an insult to the Father and the Son, it is insulting.

### *The Resultant Judgment Pronounced Upon the First Man on the Occasion of His Climactic Sin*

The *sin* we considered when looking at John 15:22-24 is named again, in John 16. The Spirit who is omnipresent, present everywhere, was going to come. Of course, He was here in the world before and He will be in the world after the rapture of the saints, yet He would be sent and He would come. He would come in a certain capacity and for certain functions, among them to indwell the believer and the church. In John 16 we see that the Spirit was to be sent in testimony to Christ's place in glory consequent upon His rejection here. This is what He would do:

And having come, he will bring demonstration to the world, of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe on me; of righteousness, because I go away to [my] Father, and ye behold me no longer; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is

judged (John 16:8-11).

**Bring Demonstration.** Concerning the word "demonstration," a footnote in JND's translation says:

. . . his presence and all that he does affords this demonstration.

That men have not the faculty to perceive this does not change the fact. Nor is the "demonstration" the same thing as "testing." Indeed, the present work of the Spirit in bringing such "demonstration" indicates that the testing is over, that man is pronounced lost in view of the conclusion of the testing.

**Of Sin, Because They do not Believe on Me.** This refers to that unique sin named in John 15:22-24. This was the culmination of all sin, the consummation of the probation of the first man. The Spirit is present here to bring demonstration of this. He has come on account of the fact that this sin has taken place. There is no further testing of the first man at this time while He is here; nor thereafter, of course.

**Of Righteousness, Because I Go Away to My Father.** We might have expected the word "unrighteousness" here. But what we have here is reference to the fact that though Christ was rejected and crucified, God has righteously acted in raising Him from the dead and setting Him at His own right hand. He was raised from among the dead by the glory of the Father (Rom. 6:4). All that proceeds in moral excellence from God was brought into action in raising Christ from among the dead. Christ had glorified the Father and finished the work He was given to do. The Father answers with glory, and through glory. It was righteousness to do so. And the Spirit brings demonstration of this righteousness and Christ's consequent actings from the glory.

**Of Judgment, Because the Ruler of This World Is Judged.** We need to consider John 12:31 in this connection:

Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

We know that judgment has not yet been executed nor has the time arrived yet when Satan is cast out. The Lord refers here to *the sentence* of judgment: judgment is pronounced, the sentence will be carried out later. These things that our Lord had been saying as given in the presentation of Himself in John's gospel, have in view the rejection noted in John 1:11 and they anticipated the cross. These judgments are based on the accomplishment of His work on the cross. The word "now" has in view the accomplishment of the work on the cross. John's gospel has numerous anticipatory statements, assuming the work is finished.

So he pronounced sentence on the world in view of the cross. There was no need for further testing of the first man. Judgment is already pronounced; the testing was concluded. Moreover, Satan now has received acknowledgment of two titles in John's Gospel in connection with Christ's rejection:

he is the *prince* of this world and the *ruler* of this world. He had not been so designated before but was then so designated in view of the termination of the probation of the first man. Returning to John 16:11, the significance is that not only is sentence pronounced on the world (John 12:31), *the world is judged in its head*, its ruler, he being recognized by the Lord in that position in consequence of the world's rejection of the revelation of the Father in the Son, in the power of the Spirit. In another Scripture Satan is also spoken of in a new way. He is called the god of this world (age) -- in 2 Cor. 4:4.

There is another pronouncement in Scripture that resulted from the fact that the probation of the first man was concluded at the cross. And this also involves the recognition that the world is judged, and is judged in its head, its ruler:

The whole world lieth in the wicked [one] (1 John 5:19).

So the Scriptures declare man to be totally lost, the whole world guilty before God; this is the conclusion from the probation/testing. The moral history of the first man is concluded. His state has been exhaustively and fully manifested, and finally so by God sending Him Who is full of grace and truth. God is not now testing man. The first man has been displaced and God has established the second man in resurrection and glory -- and He acts in view of that, forming a heavenly people at present:

. . . and such as the heavenly [one], such also the heavenly [ones] (1 Cor. 15:28).

. . . (we too being dead in offences,) has quickened us with the Christ, (ye are saved by grace,) and has raised [us] up together, and made [us] sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:5, 6).

Meanwhile, the Mosaic age continues on until Christ comes in glory.

### *Adamic Standing Now Gone*

The next chapter is composed of quotations from J. N. Darby on the subject of the law and the Christian, finding that the law has not died, but that the Christian is dead. Having died with Christ, we are dead to the law.

But it is a mistake to think that the subject of testing hinges only on whether the law is dead -- as if the law being intercalated, would leave room for testing by grace now. The truth is that the Christian is not merely dead to the law. He is dead to the entire Adamic standing and responsibility of *the* first man -- who, as a matter of fact, had been tested by other things besides the law. Moreover, when the Son was here in manhood, He was "full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). This was displayed, and He was rejected. The first man was tested by grace and truth, and rejected Him who was its full display. And, as we have seen, they rejected the manifestation of the Father in Him, the Father Whom He had declared (John 1:18). God is finished with the entire Adamic

standing and responsibility of the first man, as such.

What we have seen indicates that those who place an age of grace into the earthly ages have not apprehended the end of the first man, and his standing, before God. They have given him a present place and, moreover, have not seen that the second man has *displaced* the first. And surely this must have a corresponding expression in Christian practice.

### *What About Responsibility Now?*

We have been considering that *the* responsible man, i.e., the first man, has had his standing in responsibility, as under probation, ended in the cross. Note carefully that this does not mean that natural men are no longer connected with the first man. They are; but the first man's *history, morally speaking*, is closed. God is done with him, except that, having declared the conclusion from the probation that men are **TOTALLY LOST**, He saves; but that is another matter. Concerning individual persons since the cross, though not under probation, they are responsible for their works and will be judged at the great white throne for their works (Rev. 20).

Now, although the ground of man's responsibility is over in the sense of having wholly failed under it, when proved in every possible way, yet as to moral dealing with each individual, the responsibility is there to the full; and as an individual under moral dealing, a man has to go through the history of the process of responsibility and its failure; but he goes through it to bring out this, that he is lost already. He has to prove the truth of God's verdict that in man there is no good thing; and so the result of the principle of responsibility is for him to find out that he is lost, that the responsibility is over; not as if it was not true, but because he is lost and ruined, as the man who has lost all his money by foolish ways. It is important to keep up responsibility, but the individual is brought to the consciousness that on that ground it is all up with him. Man is lost. We have spent every farthing, and have only debts; these we have if that is any good. It is all over with the first man, and no mending of him will do: he is lost and ruined; but Christ came to save the lost.

Now the Second Man is set up. It is not a mending of the first man, but the substitution of the Second. There is no improvement or correction of the first man (although we are practically changed if we come to Christ), but the sins of the first Adam are all cleared away; and, secondly, the tree itself is cut down by the roots for faith. In the cross we see the responsibility met completely; Christ has met all the failure . . . <sup>72</sup>

### *Probation of the First Man and the Scofield Age-ism System*

Though you may not have thought about it, the Scofield age-

72. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 32:236.

ism system is built upon the denial that the testing of the first man ended at the cross. In other words, if C. I. Scofield had accepted the truth that the probation of man ended at the cross, there really would have been no Scofield age-ism scheme. Larry V. Crutchfield wrote a dissertation on the views of J. N. Darby regarding ages and dispensations, and while opting for the Scofield age-ism system, he wrote:

The whole idea of responsibility somehow ending with the cross is completely foreign to Scofield. Here as with the concept of God's governmental dealings with humankind, Scofield applies the principles of dispensational characteristics more consistently and uniformly throughout his system.<sup>73</sup>

**First:** notice the use of the word "responsibility" in this statement rather than better expressing what the real issue is: "testing" or "probation" of man in the Adamic standing. Natural man remains responsible to God -- but the probation is over, the first man is judged in the cross, the verdict based on the probation is rendered, and the second man is established before God, having displaced the first man. The first man represents "the responsible man" and the second man is "the man of purpose." Because "*the* responsible man" was proved incorrigible and irremediably lost, and since the cross he has been declared to be so, it does not follow that individual natural men have no responsibility to God. They will indeed be answerable at the great white throne judgment according to their works (Rev. 20). The era of testing ended at the cross and there are no ages of testing thereafter.

**Second:** observe that implicit in this is that C. I. Scofield differed with JND that the testing ended at the cross. Let us be quite clear about it: JND taught that the probation of the first man ended at the cross. CIS continued the testing of man after the first man was judged in the cross -- as did L. S. Chafer and as do all who hold CIS's scheme, and as L. V. Crutchfield does. *The New Scofield Reference Bible* says:

The point of testing in this dispensation is the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . The continuing, cumulative revelation of the previous dispensations combines with this fuller revelation to emphasize the utter sinfulness and lostness of man and the adequacy of the historically completed work of Christ to save by grace through faith all who come to God by him . . . (p. 1162).

**Third:** according to L. V. Crutchfield's summary remark, CIS did not hold JND's views on "God's governmental dealings with mankind" and neither do those who hold to CIS's scheme. The development of God's ways in government in the earth is an important subject in dispensational truth.

**Fourth:** the uniformity of the Scofield age-ism system is

schematic and artificial, depending as it does on the denial of important truth. The followers of the Scofield age-ism scheme who say his system is more akin to Isaac Watts than J. N. Darby are correct. And was Isaac Watts a dispensationalist because he distinguished some time periods? Is that really what "dispensational truth" is all about?

### *Probation of the First Man and the Intercalated Age System*

The intercalated age of grace system of L. S. Chafer means that Judaism will be reinstated by God after the rapture of the church:

Upon the completion of the present divine purpose in the Church, Israel's Sabbaths will be reinstated (ST4:111).

The earthly story is taken up at the end of this age precisely where it left off . . . (ST4:167).

. . . the entire system known as Judaism, along with all its component parts, is, in the purpose of God, in abeyance throughout the present age, but with definite assurance that the entire Jewish system thus interrupted will be completed by extension into the kingdom, the new earth, and on into eternity to come.<sup>74</sup> As the Jew has been removed from the special place of privilege which was his in the past age and leveled to the same standing as the Gentile -- under sin -- so Judaism has experienced a cessation of all its features until the hour when the Jewish program begins again; however, Judaism is to be restored and to complete its appointed course (ST4:248).

Can he have had any correct idea at all about the subject of the probation of the first man, a central teaching of the recovered truth last century, relating to dispensational truth -- and specifically the testing of the first man under the Mosaic Covenant and the law? So Judaism will be reinstated according to this system that says that the law is dead now and nailed to the cross. Somehow the law will get off the cross to which it was allegedly nailed; and not only that, but ***Judaism itself will be reinstated*** so as to be there after the rapture. So you see that the testing of the first man is not ended. Surely not, since this system means the Mosaic System is intercalated. The Mosaic System was sanctioned of God. Allegedly, the Mosaic System was intercalated. It follows that the reinstatement of the Mosaic System is from God, continuing where it left off. Thus, the first man will be under test as He was before the cross, under the Mosaic System. And this is supposed to be dispensational truth! The fact is, then, that this system sets aside the truth that the *testing* of the responsible man ended at the cross and that he is displaced before God by the Man of purpose. It means there are two simultaneous standings: one for the Christian, in Christ; the other for the non-Christian -- he having a standing in the flesh before God. God has both before Him

73. *The Doctrine of Ages and Dispensations as Found in the Published Works of John Nelson Darby (1800-1882)*, Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1986, p. 99.

74. {This last phrase is indeed stunning.}

at the same time; the first man and the second Man.

Since “Judaism has experienced a cessation of all its features until the hour when the Jewish program begins again,” then the Mosaic Covenant will be begun again. Is it unfair to ask, concerning this covenant, how this covenant will be reinstated, what will mark its reinstatement, and with whom will this covenant be reinstated, and on what basis? Not only would that be a setting up of the first man’s standing under the law, it means that at that point God will recognize the state of Israel, whereas God is merely watching (Isa. 18). Israel will not be regathered until after the appearing of Christ in glory. Meanwhile, what is transpiring is human effort.

The fact that the Jews will set up a Judaistic system, and that the remnant will be under the law *in their consciences*, does not prove the reinstatement, by God, of Judaism, as such. Nor does Matt. 24 support the idea that God is the Author of such a reinstatement, merely because He is tender towards the consciences of the remnant concerning the Sabbath.

The Jewish system utilized the law in the testing of the first man during the probationary times. The Mosaic Covenant *recognized a standing in the flesh* before God. When the Judaistic system became no longer recognized by God, as a consequence of the cross, the standing of the first man, a standing in the flesh, was ended. Because the *standing* of the first man was ended, it does not automatically follow that the law itself, as the law, was ended. The probation was ended; the standing in the flesh was ended; the Mosaic System was ended as being acceptable to God; but the law itself did not die, nor was it nailed to the cross. We will examine the idea of the annulment of the law in another chapter.

There is a distinction between (1) the first man being tested under the Mosaic Covenant with this testing coming to an end at the cross, and (2) the law not being annulled. The Jewish system was God’s relationship with the first man under the law in his Adamic standing. The testing involved the obedience of the first man in his Adamic nature. That standing in the flesh before God was ended at the cross. God’s relationship with man under the law in Adamic standing was then terminated. The probation was completed. Let us be clear about this. The cross necessarily ended the Mosaic System, *as a system under which the first man had a standing in the flesh before God*. The law had a place in the Mosaic System of testing the first man in his Adamic standing. The *Mosaic System* is no longer recognized by God *because* the testing of the first man ended. But it does not follow that the law itself has been abolished. The law was left where it was -- God’s requirement for man. Moreover, the Mosaic age was left where it was. There has been no change in the age, while God meanwhile forms a heavenly people. And there will be no change in the age

until “the age to come” (the millennium) begins. Nor is there any testing of the first man now, neither by grace, nor under the law; nor will there be the reinstatement of what was God’s relationship with man in Adamic standing under the law. But, no doubt unwittingly, that alleged reinstatement of Judaism, which necessarily involved the probation of the first man in his standing before God, in the flesh, under the law, is just what this false age-ism system really amounts to. It means the reinstatement of the Mosaic Covenant and the reinstatement of the first man in Adamic standing in the flesh, under the law. Moreover, under the system that has man under test by grace now, the first man has not lost that standing, even though the second man, the man of purpose, has been established before God. It ought to be clear that what we are reviewing is not dispensational truth but a false age-ism scheme.

### *Additional Implications of the Idea That the Mosaic System is Intercalated The Curse on the Fig Tree*

The Fig tree cursed by the Lord (Matt. 11:19; Mark 11:13, 14, 20, 21) is representative of Israel under the law. No fruit was produced. Leaves, which speak of profession in Scripture, there were; but no fruit. And from that Fig tree there never will be fruit:

Let there be never more fruit of thee forever (Matt. 21:19).

There will not be a fruitful Fig tree after the rapture of the saints, when the Mosaic System is supposed to be reinstated. Such a notion about reinstatement, which means the probation of man to see if he can produce fruit for God, is like supposing the Fig tree will again be under testing to see if there might be fruit. Are we to suppose that when the *Mosaic System* is reinstated by God, that the Lord’s curse is going to be reversed? No? What then? Is He going to test for fruit from a cursed tree that has dried up (Mark 11:21)?

### *The Cutting Down of the Fig Tree*

In Luke 13:6-9 there is a parable that indicates that Christ came seeking fruit from Israel for three years and found none. The sentence was: “cut it down; why does it render the ground useless.” But there was another year of *exposure* of the state, which, I apprehend, closed with the stoning of Stephen. How does this bear on God allegedly reinstating the Mosaic System, which tested Israel to see if fruit would be borne? Why, that would mean that God would reinstate that test of Israel just as if sentence had not been pronounced and as if it had not been executed.

### *The Olive Tree*

With the exception of the election of grace among Israel, the natural branches have been broken out of the Olive tree (Rom. 11). The natural branches will be grafted in again (Rom. 11:23) when the Deliverer shall come out of Zion and turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Rom. 11:26). That, of course, is when He appears in glory after second half of Daniel's 70th week. How does this bear on God allegedly reinstating the Mosaic System, under which system the natural branches had not been cut out of the Olive tree before the cross? Are we to suppose that the cut out branches (Jews in whom was no faith) will be reinstated by God under the Mosaic Covenant, under which system (before the cross) they were not cut out, but in the future they will be under the Mosaic Covenant but remain in the cut-out position? Or then when still in unbelief, will they be grafted in again?

### *Jettison the False Age-ism System*

The notion of the reinstatement of the Mosaic System just where it previously was interrupted is as plain and patent a denial of the end of the testing of the first man as could be found. It reinstates in the future the testing of the first man under the pre-cross Mosaic System. And this age-ism system has done so by alleging a dispensational testing scheme, that in actuality destroys this basic dispensational truth that the testing of the first man is terminated. Why not just jettison the unscriptural intercalation-of-a-church-age notion? The fact is that the notion is altogether incompatible with the truth that the testing of the first man is concluded and he no longer has a standing before God. This is a very basic truth of Scripture and the Scofieldian age-ism system, made even worse by the "intercalation" notion of L. S. Chafer, is at war with this basic dispensational truth. Of course, what that means is giving up Scofieldian dispensational age-ism and recognizing that it does not really represent dispensational truth.

### *The End of the Testing and Standing of the First Man Explains Two Scriptures 1 Corinthians 10:11*

Now all these things happened to them [as] types, and have been written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come (1 Cor. 10:11).

This text also assumes that the trial of man is completed as well as that what transpired under that testing serves as instruction for the Christian.

The expression, "the ends of the ages," which will be found in 1 Cor. 10:11, is rather strange; but to preserve the sense of the Greek, we could not say, "the last times," any more than "the end of the ages," still less "the end of the world." The end of the ages was not yet come; but all the different dispensations by which God had put Himself in relation with

man, so far as they were connected with man's responsibility, had come to one point, and were brought to an end in the death of the Lord Jesus. After that -- great as had been His long-suffering -- God established a new creation. We have therefore used the literal translation, "the ends of the ages."<sup>75</sup>

### *Hebrews 9:26*

But now once in the consummation of the ages he has been manifested for [the] putting away of sin by his sacrifice (Heb. 9:26).

For consummation, the Arndt and Gingrich *Lexicon* (p. 792) says "completion, close, end." Under the words "End, Ending," W. E. Vine's *Expository Dictionary of new Testament Words* says:

In Heb. 9:26, the word translated "world" (A.V.) is in the plural, and the phrase is 'the consummation of the ages.' It was the heading up of all the various epochs appointed by divine counsels that Christ was manifested (i.e., in His incarnation) "to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

It was the heading up of all the epochs of the testing of man, actually.<sup>76</sup>

There is an "age to come" (Matt. 12:32; Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30; Eph. 1:12; Heb. 6:5), the millennium, but that age is not, of course, included in the statement about the consummation of the ages. Evidently, then, the phrase "consummation of the ages" does not mean that there will not be any more ages. The consummation of the ages refers to the consummation of the testing of man in the ages up to the cross. The testing terminated during the Mosaic age. The moral history of the world is ended, though the world goes on. The moral history of man is ended, though man goes on. The moral history of the Mosaic age has ended, though the Mosaic age goes on.

J. N. Darby brought before the saints the subject of the testing of the first man, its completion at the cross, and the consequent setting up of the second man. Let us hear what he said about the consummation of the ages:

The "end of the ages," or "consummation of the ages," are all the dealings of God with man to test his general condition. In this general sense the state of innocence comes in; but the proper connection is what is after the fall, yet not looking at man as lost, but testing his state and whether he was recoverable, or was lost and had to be saved. Without

75. J. N. Darby, *Collected Writings* 13:199.

76. It is interesting to notice the way in which *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (p. 803) by The Dallas Seminary Faculty handles this:

By The phrase "end of the ages" The writer evidently meant the climax of the Old Testament eras as well as the imminency of the climax of all things.

I do not know if the writer shared the view that the "age of grace" is intercalated, but if he did, he seems to have forgotten that the Mosaic age is to be reinstated after the rapture of the saints. In such a scheme of ages the climax of the Mosaic age will not be reached until Christ appears in glory.



law; under law; God manifested in the flesh, were the great features of this. Hence in John 12:31 the Lord says, "Now is the judgment of this world." Though there was testimony there were no religious institutions before the flood, unless the fact of sacrifices. There were after: government; promises to Abraham, showing it was grace to one separated from an idolatrous world and head of a new race; the law; the prophets; and at last the Son as come, not as offered. Then God laid the foundation of His own purposes in righteousness. <sup>77</sup> ♦

When God had made this plain, before the law, under the law, by promises, by the coming and presence of His Son, then the work of God takes the place, for our salvation and God's glory, of man's responsibility -- on the ground of which faith knows man is entirely lost. This explains the expression (v. 26) "in the consummation of the ages."

Now this work is perfect, and perfectly accomplished. Sin had dishonored God, and separated man from Him. All that God had done to give him the means of return only ended in affording him opportunity to fill up the measure of his sin by the rejection of Jesus. But in this the eternal counsels of God were fulfilled, at least the moral basis laid, and that in infinite perfection, for their actual accomplishment in their results. All now in fact, as in purpose always, rested on the second {last} Adam, and on what God had done, not on man's responsibility, while that was fully met for God's glory (cp. 2 Tim. 1:9, 10; Titus 1:1, 2). The Christ, whom man rejected, had appeared in order to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Thus it was morally the consummation of the ages.

The result of the work and power of God are not yet manifested. A new creation will develop them. But man, as the child of Adam, has run his whole career in his relationship with God: he is enmity against God. Christ, fulfilling the will of God, has come in the consummation of ages, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and His work to this end is accomplished. This is the moral power of His act, of His sacrifice before God; in result, sin will be entirely blotted out of the heavens and the earth. To faith this result, namely, the putting away of sin, is already realized in the conscience, because Christ who was made sin for us has died and died to sin, and now is risen and glorified, sin (even as made it for us) left behind. <sup>78</sup> ♦

The promise, given to Abraham and confirmed to the one seed (Christ), could not be set aside nor added to by a transaction 430 years after {i.e., after the giving of the law: Gal. 3:17}. God had thus bound Himself, but the law came in by the bye till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made, that is, Christ. Then its function ceased, and consequent on Christ's work, all being sinners, the law broken, and Christ rejected (the last means by which God could seek for fruit from man), the attempt only proving that man hated both Christ and His Father -- that the mind of the flesh was enmity against God, then God's righteousness is revealed without law (the Greek reads

"apart from law"), the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ. Man's probation as to the history of it, on the ground of getting good by any means from him, was over. Now, says Christ, is the judgment of this world {John 12:31}. Hence it was Christ cursed the fig-tree never to bear fruit. Hence it is that it is said "now once in the end of the world [the consummation of ages], he hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

When I say the probation is over, it is not that man is not yet dealt with as to receiving the gospel. Of course he is; but what can be made of man in the flesh? It has been tried, and it is not now the question whether he can succeed in making out righteousness for the day of judgment, but, receiving the truth, find out that he is already lost, and righteousness and salvation and indeed glory his as believing in Christ. As a person under probation, <sup>79</sup> he knows he is a lost sinner, and finds a new life, a perfect salvation, and divine righteousness in Christ. Now all this clearly shows the place of the law between the promise and the coming of the Seed to whom the promise was made, and how we are created again in Christ Jesus unto good works. It is no longer the law requiring human righteousness from flesh to prove what it is, but a new creature and the power of the Spirit leading us in the path in which Christ walked. We are sons and to walk as God's dear children, to put on, as the elect of God holy and beloved, bowels of mercies -- the whole character and walk of Christ. <sup>80</sup>

## Conclusion

by J. N. Darby

At last God sends His Son. He said, "I have yet one Son, it may be they will reverence my Son," and He would try man by His coming. "They cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him." In Matt. 21 we find God seeking fruit from that which ought to have yielded it; and so Christ, when He came, first looked for fruit. He desired to find (v. 18, 19). "He hungered. And when he saw a fig-tree in the way he came to it, and found nothing thereon but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever; and presently the fig-tree withered away." He cursed it -- this was nature judged, that flesh should NEVER produce fruit, for there was nothing in man in the flesh to suit God. Plenty of profession, outward show, and assumption to be something, "but leaves only." "There is none good; no, not one." And so He said, "Now is the judgment of this world." The world was judged then, although that judgment is not executed yet; in grace God carries the execution; but still there was the complete ending of all human responsibility as regards the record of it. Each individual may have to come to conviction of it, of course.

But according to the gospel, Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost, not in probation whether he would be so. All is proved worthless; for the husbandmen not only killed God's Son, who came looking for fruit, but also rejected all His invitations and Himself come in grace. If God spent His Son in

<sup>77</sup>. *Letters* 3:442.

<sup>78</sup>. *Synopsis* 5:224, 225.

<sup>79</sup>. He is not using the word "probation" here in the sense that man, as such, is under testing. This will be clear to the reader when he reads the summary.

<sup>80</sup>. *Collected Writings* 31:335, 336.

the effort to get man's heart back to Himself, it only showed that his heart was enmity against God, and would not own Him. He came with perfect grace, and showed He had power sufficient to bring every blessing to man; all His miracles were blessing to man except the cursing of the fig tree, which was not, because, after all, there must be the judgment of the flesh. The cross then comes in, and proves not only that man is a sinner (we get that in his being turned out of Paradise), but that man is in himself irreclaimable. This closes the first Adam's history- the history of man responsible in the flesh, and it was the end of the world; that is, morally, the world was ended and judged. So the apostle speaks in Heb. 9 26. "Now once in the end of the world" (literally "in the end [or consummation] of the ages," those ages in which God was testing man in responsibility as a reclaimable sinner)-hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

Christ came to seek fruit and they had none for Him. He came to make a feast, as the expression of God's grace to them, and they would not sit at it. In the two parables (Matt. 21 and 22) there is not only the end of the history of man in responsibility, but also the rejection of Christ come in grace. The mind of the flesh is proved to be enmity against God; and we must learn that there is no good in us. But God does not give up His grace, it superabounds over all man's condition as a sinner, and an irreclaimable one.

This is just the difference between the synoptical Gospels and John. The first three -- Matthew, Mark, and Luke -- are the presentation of Christ to man to be received, and with proofs of power sufficient to remove all the effects of sin; but behind all you find the difficulty that man is in the flesh, and the mind of the flesh is enmity against God. John's testimony starts with this, that He was not received, and therefore coming in that grace which was above all the rejection. In chapter 1, "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came to his own and his own received him not;" so God comes out in grace. The flesh is looked at in John as having disowned Christ, and therefore his Gospel all through is election and grace. There is no such language in the other three Gospels as He uses here in speaking of man. He goes to the roots and principles of things in John, and so He says, "Ye are of your father the devil," speaking to sinners, and "no man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." But He says, I'll have my own sheep notwithstanding what man is. Thus, on the rejection of His word in ch. 8 and His work in ch. 9, He gathers them, whether of the Jews or of the Gentiles, to the one Shepherd, and gives them eternal life. So in John 1 we find Him received by those who were born of God, not of the will of man. "To as many as received him to them gave he power [that is, title, authority, or right] to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12, 13). There I get the people of God. Man's responsibility is closed: he is a lost sinner; he has been in a state of probation, and it is over.

Now, although the ground of man's responsibility is over in the sense of having wholly failed under it, when proved in every possible way, yet as to moral dealing with each individual, the responsibility is there to the full; and as an individual under moral

dealing, a man has to go through the history of the process of responsibility and its failure; but he goes through it to bring out this, that he is lost already. He has to prove the truth of God's verdict that in man there is no good thing; and so the result of the principle of responsibility is for him to find out that he is lost, that the responsibility is over; not as if it was not true, but because he is lost and ruined, as the man who has lost all his money by foolish ways. It is important to keep up responsibility, but the individual is brought to the consciousness that on that ground it is all up with him. Man is lost. We have spent every farthing, and have only debts; these we have if that is any good. It is all over with the first man, and no mending of him will do: he is lost and ruined; but Christ came to save the lost.

Now the Second Man is set up. It is not a mending of the first man, but the substitution of the Second. There is no improvement or correction of the first man (although we are practically changed if we come to Christ), but the sins of the first Adam are all cleared away; and, secondly, the tree itself is cut down by the roots for faith. In the cross we see the responsibility met completely; Christ has met all the failure, the fruit of the tree of responsibility, and has glorified God in so doing. Man has brought in confusion; but Christ came, met the case, and cleared the scene, and triumphed over all. When He came, God's character as to facts was compromised, and there was no escape. If He had saved none, but at once cast off sinners, it were righteousness, but there would have been no love. If He had let all pass, when man was a sinner, and in such sort saved all (which man would call love, but which would not have been divine love, for God is holy), where were the righteousness? But Christ came. Well, surely in the cross there is righteousness against sin, as nowhere else, yet there is the infinite love of God to sinners.

In Him, in Christ, I get both the trees of Paradise united, fulfilled in grace, bearing our sins and putting away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and becoming life according to righteousness. I am brought to the discovery of what I am, and then I see Christ has died on the cross and has taken the whole thing on Himself. When I see Him-the Son of God-dying on the cross, I say if this is not righteousness -- judgment against sin -- I do not know what is. But whom is He dying for? -- the guilty sinner. Well, if this is not love, I do not know what is. On the cross we get every attribute of God perfectly maintained -- His majesty and truth, as well as His righteousness and love -- every claim met, and God perfectly glorified in the Person of Christ, the Lamb of God. He was there making atonement for sin that the gospel might go out to all the world; and as to believers, bearing their every sin. The whole thing is met there, and the believer's responsibility cleared away, as to sins, that he may enter into responsibility on a new ground, that of a child of God. He has met fully, and completely, and absolutely, all the fruit of man's eating the tree and all the sins of the believer (his responsibility). This, of course, does not touch the believer's responsibility to Christ or to God as a believer in Christ; for this is of a new order, and comes in upon a different ground.<sup>81</sup>

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81. *Collected Writings* 32:234-237.

## Chapter 3.7

### *Is the Law Dead? No. And What is the Christian's Responsibility?*

*Comments Collected from J. N. Darby*

#### *The Great Truth as to the Christian and the Law*

But another question, as we are all aware, connects itself with it -- the place the law holds in the ways of God. This connects itself, or rather identifies itself, with the question -- Is the purpose, which is inseparable from the grace of God, the first thing in His ways, or the responsibility of man, that is, grace or law; in fact, the first Adam or the Second? Here the old Aristotelian adage becomes true -- 'Αρχὴ τῆς θεωρίας τέλος τῆς πράξεως. That law in principle, and ultimately the law as given in fact, identifies itself with, and is the measure of, responsibility in the first Adam, will hardly be questioned. That it is not in itself grace is evident. It requires from man, and does not give to him sovereignly or contrary to what he has deserved. Yet both are divine and true in their place. It is because the relative place of each of these is not seen that the difficulty has, I believe, been insoluble. If both be of God, both must be maintained: His authority in respect of man's responsibility; sovereign grace abounding over all. God's title in both must be maintained. The difficulty lies in this, that while God's title is involved in both, in their nature they contradict one another. To require and to give are necessarily opposed to one another. If a thousand pounds be due, it is very just to require it, but it is not grace. If I pay it so as to free the debtor, when he has no claim on me, it is pure kindness and grace; only righteousness is satisfied by the payment.

But we shall find that this is not all. I affirm, then, that purpose and the Second man and eternal life in Him came before the question of responsibility in the first, but that responsibility and law came actually first in the history of man and of this world; that both meet in Christ, and in Him only the difficulty is solved -- a difficulty which heathens have reasoned on as well as Christians, because it lies in the nature and state of man. When I have unfolded this from scripture, I will apply it to our question and to the rest of God.

The truth that the purpose and full promise and grace of God was before the world, and in the last Adam, the Second man, not in the first, involves this additional truth -- that,

whatever its collateral blessings for the world (and they are many), it is not of the world, not directly part of its history and government, though it be developed and find its place in it, and God's secret and overruling government order all things for good to those who are faithful to Him in it. As was true of Christ, so of Christians, "Ye are not of the world, as I am not of the world."

But I will proceed to the scripture proof of my proposition, that the purpose of grace, though revealed after, came before the responsibility of man (I do not say the predestination of persons here, but the purposes of grace); while the bringing in of the accomplishment of that purpose came after the question of the responsibility was settled in the first Adam . . . <sup>82</sup> ♦

The great truth is this: we have died on the cross to our whole standing in Adam, and to the law that was the rule for it; and we are risen with Christ into the new creation in Him, alive from the dead to give ourselves to God. We have the treasure in earthen vessels, but our place before God is that-in Christ, and Christ in us. We have died from under the law, but therein died to sin, and are alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord. We are in a wholly new position, and, though the righteousness of the law be fulfilled in one whose life Christ is, it is because he walks after the Spirit, and does not put himself under law. He cannot (Rom. 7) have two husbands at a time, Christ and the law. Remark here that I am speaking, as the passages I refer to are, of practical righteousness, a godly life, but if we are under the law for that, the law also curses us. As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse, and if the curse is not executed, the authority of the law is gone. If we are under law, we are under a curse, or its authority destroyed. If Christ has borne the curse, we have died with Him out of the position in which the law reached us; by the law dead to law, that we might live to God, crucified with Christ, yet living, but not we, but Christ living in us. He will not live wrongly. I do not enter here into failure, or Christ's blessed advocacy if we do fail, but only bring out the principles

82. *Collected Writings* 10:270-272.

of the life in which we do live to God. <sup>83</sup> ♦

Now the doctrine is that we have died in Christ. The law supposes living, responsible men, as, of course, as children of Adam we are. The law has power over a man as long as he lives. Dead, it cannot deal with him as a present responsible person. I cannot accuse a dead man, as a present thing, of evil lusts and self-will. The apostle puts the case of the marriage relationship {in Rom. 7}; death dissolves it, and leaves the person free; we have died under law, but so are dead to law, and now are married to another, a risen Christ, who is, as man, put in a wholly new place, after the question of sin is settled, and then gives the experience of the soul under the first husband, the law, not now as to guilt, but as to the power of sin dwelling in us. <sup>84</sup> ♦

The law is not dead. It is still in full force against the unrighteousness of the man who is under it; but I have died under it. The law has condemned me, and spent its full curse on me in Christ. <sup>85</sup> ♦

. . . {Rom. 7:6} should be, “having died in that wherein we were held.” It is not the law that is dead, but I am dead. The law is the jailer, I am the prisoner. The mistake people are making is that they are killing the jailer instead of the thief. The jailer is not dead, the thief is. <sup>86</sup> ♦

However, it is not the law which dies, but Christ died under the law; for as many as have sinned under the law shall be condemned by the law; and the law is good if a man use it lawfully (Rom. 2:12; 1 Tim 1:8). <sup>87</sup> ♦

### *The Consequence of the Same Truth*

In {Romans} chapter 7 he considers the consequences of the same truth as to the law. The law, he says, has dominion over a man so long as he lives; he then gives the tie of marriage as an explanation of it. As long as the first husband lives, the wife cannot be to another man without guilt. The first husband then represents the law, the second is Christ raised from the dead. Christ when living on this earth was Himself under the law; and thus we cannot be at the same time under the law and united to Christ raised from the dead. However, it is not the law which dies, but Christ died under the law; for as many as have sinned under the law shall be condemned by the law; and the law is good if a man use it lawfully (Rom. 2:12; 1 Tim. 1:8, 9). If it were ourselves who were dead under the law, we should be lost; but Christ died for us. And because He is risen from the dead, our souls are united to Him, the law having no longer a hold over a dead man. Therefore, now, Christ, He who is raised from the dead, is our only husband. Thus the resurrection of Christ has delivered us from the law, as well as

from sin and condemnation. <sup>88</sup> ♦

In {Romans} chapter 7, the apostle applies the doctrine of death to the law, and he opens it in this way, “Know ye not that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?” It is true even of human law, and physical death. He proceeds with the analogy of husband and wife. You cannot have two husbands at one and the same time -- we cannot have Christ and the law both at once. We are bound up with one or the other, as a principle, to God. The woman cannot have two husbands. “Wherefore ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ.” It is not that the law has died, we are dead; the image, so far, changes, but the bond is broken; and this difference is blessed, because I hold also my old evil nature for dead, and this is by the body of Christ. In His death, as we have seen, I reckon myself dead. The law was never abrogated, and the principle of it was sanctioned as of God, and those that have sinned under it will be judged by it. Verse 6 correctly reads: “but now we are clear from the law, having died in that in which we were held.” It is not then, that the law is dead, but we are dead to that by which we were held. Hence, note, death to sin goes with it. Therefore, the apostle says, we are dead to the law by the body of Christ, because Christ was made a curse for us, and died under it, as bearing the curse. But how? Why the law applied its full curse to Him, as willingly offering Himself, and He died under it.

The law as a weapon took its full effect on Christ. It did everything it possibly could, by way of its curse coming on Christ. The curse of the law was the death of the sinner, and Christ in grace was made sin for us; therefore, what could the law do more than spend its full curse on the head of Him, who was made sin for us, who died under the law? Christ was born under the law and kept it. He puts Himself under its curse, and goes through it all, and rises entirely out of it. And faith applies Christ’s position to the believer. But alas! to how many Christians law is Christianity. But Christ comes as a Mediator, and takes my place, my whole cause: and faith has received all that. He thus was in my place, bringing all the good of it to myself, as if I were in His place. He is not speaking of union with Him now, as in Ephesians. I come and have my place actually and livingly in Christ, for He is the quickening Spirit, the last Adam, who comes and gives me a portion with Himself in His present position. All question of the claims of the law upon the believer has passed away in Christ, for in Christ he has died to the life and position in which he could be under it; and now I have a life in Christ after the whole question of law is settled before God. I am married to another husband, to Him who is raised from the dead.

The Jew is still fully under the law. The believer has died to it in Christ. Does this weaken the power of the law? No, not at all, it has all its power. See Gal. 2:19, 20. <sup>89</sup> ♦

83. *Collected Writings* 31:333.

84. *Collected Writings* 29:302.

85. *Collected Writings* 26:71.

86. *Collected Writings* 21.

87. *Collected Writings* 7:130.

88. *Collected Writings* 7:129.

89. *Collected Writings* 26:68, 69.

### *The Law Still Has Its Authority* <sup>90</sup>

Deliverance from the law is not by abrogating its authority; that could not be, for it was God's, and was the necessary and right rule for living man, alive in this world. <sup>91</sup> ♦

We were in the flesh, and then the motions of sin could be excited by the law. We reckon ourselves, being baptized to His death, dead to sin, and alive to God; Christ risen, our life; so that we walk in newness of life. But this is our deliverance from law; because He who was under it has died and satisfied its claims, and come from under them; law having dominion over a man as long as he lives -- and we are dead, and alive with a new kind of life, out of the state and place where law reached us. We have died wholly out of that, as truly as Christ has died and risen into another, God's true place for man in Christ. It is a new creation in us, and by which we are placed in the new creation, where the old things are passed away and all things are new. <sup>92</sup> ♦

I believe the law to be the perfect rule of life for man in the flesh, but it supposes sin, and applies to sinful flesh, to man in the flesh; and, being on the principle of requirement, and rightly so (for it is a very important principle and maintains God's rights), it condemns me as to righteousness, and is no help to me, but the contrary, as to sanctification. If then the law be holy, just, and good in its contents, why not be under it? why not maintain it? Because I am then in a relationship with God which involves condemnation and the power of sin. Law is law, not grace, and the strength of sin is the law. Maintain the law as law and you destroy its authority if it be not law to you; and if it be law to you, it is the strength of sin, and sin will have dominion over you. It must, as law, have external authority, God's authority as such. If you weaken that, you have destroyed it as a law.

And here I separate from both parties who have discussed it. They both, in my judgment, really destroy its authority, one unintentionally, the other declaring it is abrogated, buried, and the like. The former are obliged to yield a great deal, desiring

to maintain its authority, because they cannot help it; the latter destroy its authority and make it to be abrogated. I do not abate one jot or one tittle. I do not raise the question of Gentiles not being under it, though historically true; because, if not, they are lawless, and I admit the law to be a perfect rule for man in the flesh. I say I am not on Gentile ground, though a Gentile; not ἄνομος Θεῷ lawless in respect to God, but ἐννομος Χριστῷ, I do not say under the law to Christ (that is an utterly false translation), but duly subject to Christ. Yet I do not say the authority of the law is weakened or done away, but that I AM DEAD TO IT. The law has power over a man as long as he lives -- and can have it no longer; and I am no longer alive in the flesh.

I reject the altering, modifying, the law. I reject christianizing in it; that is, weakening its legal character by an admixture of grace that is neither law nor gospel. I maintain its whole absolute authority. Those who have sinned under it will be judged by it. It will have its own authority (that is, God's) according to its own terms in the day of judgment; but I am not under it but under grace, not under the schoolmaster but a son, because faith is come, and I have the Spirit of adoption. I am on another footing and in another relationship with God; I am not in the flesh, not in the place of a child of Adam at all, but delivered out of it by redemption. I have died and risen again; I am in Christ.

Let us see what scripture teaches on this point. Positive transgressions are blotted out by the blood of Christ. The law, we are told, as a covenant of works is gone in Christ's death. Now I say that scripture teaches more than that, teaches what applies to the old man as regards our standing before God, and that we have, for faith, died out of the place and nature in which we were under the law. Take the fullest and clearest case -- a Jew actually under it: I do not doubt it will be practically realized by a Gentile as a principle. What is the judgment of law on my old man, my being as in flesh? Condemnation only as a covenant? No, death. It is not merely a new motive, a new spring of conduct afforded, by which, law being maintained as law, I keep it. Law is (2 Cor. 3) a ministration of death as well as of condemnation. But what then? "I through the law am dead to the law." It has killed me, "that I might live to God." "Add not to his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." You might say it is abrogated as a covenant of works but not as a rule of life, though scripture does not say so: it is a mere human invention. But you cannot say I am *dead* to it, but it is to be my rule of *life*. That is nonsense.

I am dead to the law by the law. It has done its work and killed me as regards itself; I do not exist as regards the law, or it has failed in its power. And I am dead to the law that I might live to God. If I have not done with it, I cannot live to Him. And how? "I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." That is not law. When faith came, says the apostle, we were no longer under a schoolmaster, that is, under law. Note here: It is not Christ bearing our sins that delivers from law at all. True deliverance is wrought there as

90. It is asked, "What is that which subsisted *de facto*, not by divine authority, not yet actually set aside, which Christians were called to come out of?" It was Judaism at Jerusalem. It did subsist *de facto* till the destruction of Jerusalem; had no real divine authority after the cross, but was left by the patience of God, not yet set aside; and Christians, that is, Jewish Christians, had remained in it by thousands, nay, wanted to subject Gentile Christians to it, though God did not allow that; and the Jewish Christians were now called to come out of it. A great many of the priests even, it is said, were obedient to the faith. This was now to close (*Collected Writings* 15:223).

{Heb. 8:4}. For if He were on earth He should not be a Priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law. Therefore, at the very time when the heavenly priesthood was being unfolded to the Hebrews, there existed on earth another priesthood, which though no longer recognized, was yet in operation. This was a time of transition between the two dispensations. We gather from this that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written before the fall of Jerusalem. For what object? First, to show the Hebrews their heavenly privileges; but also to bid them go forth without the camp (*Collected Writings* 28:20; see also 27:379, note).

91. *Collected Writings* 10:160.

92. *Collected Writings* 10:159.

regards our sins. But, in freeing me from law, God is not delivering me, a living child of Adam, from the dread consequences of my sins. He is doing another work. It is I who have died with Christ. Nor is it forgiveness of sin which is spoken of in such case, although through this death of Christ it is not imputed. We die to sin -- not sins, not for sins, but *to* sin. "He that is dead is justified from sin."

If the obedience of one has constituted me righteous, why cannot I say then I may live in sin? How can we that are *dead* to sin *live* any longer therein? The reasoning of the apostle in the end of Romans 6 is fatal to the use of law as a rule of life. We have nothing to do here with a question of a covenant of works. It is a question of life, living in sin, obedience, holiness, -- what the principle and rule of it is. Am I going to sin, to be what is called an Antinomian, because I am not under law? No. What principle, what rule of life, have I? Reckon yourself to be dead to sin and alive to God. As alive in Christ, I am to yield my members as instruments of righteousness unto God. I can do it, obey, not a law, but a person, God Himself absolutely. Why? I am not under law but under grace. *I yield myself*. What an occasion to explain that we were not under it as a covenant of works but that we were as a rule of life! But now living rules of life are treated of; how we arrive, and on what principle, at sin not having dominion over us. It is this (not justification) which is arrived at by not being under the law. Will that lead us to sin? Again what an occasion to tell us, No, you know it is still a rule of life. But no. Silence, ominous silence. They had been the servants of sin, and what now? They had obeyed from the heart -- the law from having new motives? No; the form of doctrine which had been delivered to them. They were not under law: if they were, sin would have dominion over them. But they had obeyed the new form of doctrine. They were slaves to righteousness, slaves to God, and had their fruit unto holiness. Sin's wages were death, God's gift eternal life. The law does not come in at all, save to shew that those who get under it would be under the dominion of sin. Nor does the covenant of works come into the question, but life, walking in sin, its dominion, obedience, holiness -- but we are not under the law. But this must be treated of specifically.

The fifth {ch. of Romans} (from verse 12) had shown that all must be traced for righteousness to the two heads, Adam and Christ, and that the law had only come in by the by to make the offence abound. The sixth that we, having died in Christ, are not under the dominion of that sinful nature, nor under law which applied to it. The seventh will now fully treat the question of position under law itself. The apostle declares the absolute incompatibility of being under the law and Christ at the same time. He states it in the strongest way. We cannot be bound to the law any more than a woman can have two husbands at the same time. Husbands -- for what? To justify as a covenant of works? No. To obey, to bring forth fruit unto God. You have nothing about works to justify, nor covenant of works, but it is the question of what I am bound to, by what law I am bound.

Is not that it? Read and see. Well, I am become dead to the law by the body of Christ that I may be to Another. And then,

mind, I am bound to Another who has authority over me, and I cannot have anything else come in and claim authority. I have seen Moses and Elias disappear, having served God in their generation, and have heard the Father's voice saying, This is my beloved Son, hear Him. I have been prepared by the sixth chapter to see that it is not disobedience and living in sin, because, being dead to sin, I live to God through Christ, and am obedient to Him. I now find, in detail, that, thus dead as I am, the obligation to my first husband is closed, become impossible. I am married to Another; I am bound to Him: the bond and obligation is absolute. I can hear only Him. I cannot even say, I go by my second husband to know what my first means and commands. I have but one: His authority is complete and absolute. We have nothing to do here with justification or covenant of works, but -- to whom am I bound? One paper I looked at tells me the chapter means "The death of Christ dissolved our old relation to the law as a covenant of works, and left us at liberty to contract a new relation." Did anybody ever read such an effort to elude scripture? -- a new relation with what? With the law over again? What old relation to the law is spoken of in the chapter? We have died, so that there is no more relationship at all, and we are married *to another* -- Christ raised from the dead. Where is a covenant of works spoken of or alluded to in the chapter? Further, what constitutes the whole point of the chapter, our being dead, is not alluded to by the author. "Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ." If I wanted a proof that I have to do with a writer who had a system which hindered him from daring to look scripture in the face, this sentence would be it. But I do not seek controversy, so I take no further notice of it. I add here it is well known that in verse 6 we should read as in the margin: "having died in that in which" -- ἀποθανόντες *not* ἀποθανόντος. Else those who say the law was abrogated and buried would have this text to lean upon. If we have then died with Christ, we can also say, we have been quickened together with Him, and raised up together, and made sit together in heavenly places.

The Christian is a heavenly person though walking through the wilderness, and he is the epistle of Christ in it. What is his rule? To walk as Christ walked. Every part of scripture, law and all, may furnish him light, and he may use it to convict of sin, for natural conscience owns the righteousness of it. Paul governed his conduct by a prophecy of Isaiah 49. And thank God the New Testament abounds in precepts to guide us. Nor are we to let slip the word commandment. Because if we did everything right, nothing would be right if it were not obedience, and command expresses authority. Still we ought to be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. The spiritual man judges all things. I can only speak of the principle and standard here. I may surprise perhaps my readers when I say that the conduct of *God* is made our standard, as being made partakers of the divine nature. It is not the perfect rule for man in the flesh, but the divine conduct for man in the Spirit. The apostle can say, "When we were in the flesh," and describe in the seventh of Romans the conflicts of a renewed man who is not set free by known redemption, but is still under his first husband -- the law, knowing it is spiritual, consenting to it, delighting in it, but

never keeping it. But he can, when he has known deliverance, say, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath set me free," knowing that God has not forgiven but condemned sin in the flesh, but in Christ a sacrifice for sin, and that, now a Christian, not in the flesh but in the Spirit, his place and standing are changed -- alive thus in Christ, created again in Christ Jesus unto preordained good works that he may walk in them, renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him. What are these good works? I have said, scripture has said, he, perfect before God in Christ, is to imitate God. Where to find the image of this in a man? Christ is the image of the invisible God. United with Him in heaven, the Christian is to walk like Him on earth, in grace as manifesting God, looking to Him above, and so changed into His image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Let us see the scripture account of this. First, the Father's<sup>93</sup> name being revealed, not the legal name of Jehovah, we are to be perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect. He loves them that do not love Him, He is kind to the unthankful, and to the evil. But more precisely in Eph. 4, 5, this is fully developed. We have subjectively and objectively the pre-ordained walk of the Christian: subjectively -- the putting off the old man, and putting on the new, and, secondly, our bodies being the temple of the Holy Ghost, the not grieving the Spirit of God by which we are sealed to the day of redemption; then the objective rule -- Be ye kind, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ hath forgiven you. We have then the two essential names of God, given as that to be realized, and Christ presents the realization of them in man: "Be ye imitators of God as dear children, and walk in love as Christ hath loved us, and given himself for us, a sacrifice and an offering to God for a sweet smelling savor." We are to be imitators of God, His love in Christ being our pattern.

And here we find the superiority of the Christian principle to law in its very nature. Law taught me to love my neighbor as myself -- made my love to self the measure of my duty to my neighbor. Christianity looks for having no self at all, but giving up ourselves for our neighbor. Two principles form the perfectness of this: He gave Himself *for* others and *to* God. This last is needed that the principle may be perfect. The affection must have a perfect object as well as be perfectly, and in order to be perfectly, free from self, and perfect in itself. For affections have their character and value from their object. But the principle of legal perfection is another, and wholly short of this. The rule was not what a man ought to be as such, but to be an imitator of God as a dear child of his Father, Christ being the manifestation of love in this and the measure of it. To compare the mutual love of oneself and another, and make it the same as the absolute self-devotedness of Christ, is a mere abuse of terms, because the word love is used in both. The other name of God is Light. We are light in the Lord: we are to walk

as children of light. Again Christ is referred to: "Christ shall give thee light." Thus perfect love in self-sacrifice, imitating God therein, walking as being in Christ, in and of the light which manifests everything, Christ being the model of it. Such is the rule of life of the Christian. He is dead, and his life hid with Christ in God. If he believes, it is Christ lives in him, he is not living (alive) in this world. People may resist such views, but, if they do, they must resist scripture. The great secret of all is, that we are not, as before God, and responsible to Him, alive in the Adam life at all. Christ is our life -- Christ who is risen. I am dead, have been crucified with Christ, to sin or the flesh and the lusts thereof, to the law by the body of Christ, to the world, and the world to me. The whole scene of a living man, this world in which the life of Adam develops itself, and of which the law is the moral rule, I do not belong to, before God, more than a man who died ten years ago out of it. I come, having the life of Christ, having the Son and so have life, into the midst of it, to walk in the path which He has traced through it. And now, what is the Sabbath the rest of? This creation. I am not of it. It is a new creation I am of, old things are passed away. If I had known Christ after the flesh, as belonging to this world, down here and under the law, I know Him no more. And what is the rest of the new creation to which I belong as having died and risen, Christ being my life? The heavenly rest of which the Lord's-day is the intimation, the day of Christ's resurrection.<sup>94</sup> ♦

### *True Christian Responsibility Flows From the Place we are In; Not from the Law*

Now, although the ground of man's responsibility is over in the sense of having wholly failed under it, when proved in every possible way, yet as to moral dealing with each individual, the responsibility is there to the full; and as an individual under moral dealing, a man has to go through the history of the process of responsibility and its failure; but he goes through it to bring out this, that he is lost already. He has to prove the truth of God's verdict that in man there is no good thing; and so the result of the principle of responsibility is for him to find out that he is lost, that the responsibility is over; not as if it was not true, but because he is lost and ruined, as the man who has lost all his money by foolish ways. It is important to keep up responsibility, but the individual is brought to the consciousness that on that ground it is all up with him. Man is lost. We have spent every farthing, and have only debts; these we have if that is any good. It is all over with the first man, and no mending of him will do: he is lost and ruined; but Christ came to save the lost.

Now the Second Man is set up. It is not a mending of the first man, but the substitution of the Second. There is no improvement or correction of the first man (although we are practically changed if we come to Christ), but the sins of the first Adam are all cleared away; and, secondly, the tree itself is cut

93. This is the name of Christian relationship in eternal life, and was revealed by Christ even when here. Jehovah was the name of relationship for Israel, Almighty (El Shaddai) for the Patriarchs. The Most High will be God's millennial name.

94. *Collected Writings* 10:283-289.

down by the roots for faith. In the cross we see the responsibility met completely; Christ has met all the failure, the fruit of the tree of responsibility, and has glorified God in so doing. Man has brought in confusion; but Christ came, met the case, and cleared the scene, and triumphed over all. When He came, God's character as to facts was compromised, and there was no escape. If He had saved none, but at once cast off sinners, it were righteousness, but there would have been no love. If He had let all pass, when man was a sinner, and in such sort saved all (which man would call love, but which would not have been divine love, for God is holy), where were the righteousness? But Christ came. Well, surely in the cross there is righteousness against sin, as nowhere else, yet there is the infinite love of God to sinners.

In Him, in Christ, I get both the trees of Paradise united, fulfilled in grace, bearing our sins and putting away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and becoming life according to righteousness. I am brought to the discovery of what I am, and then I see Christ has died on the cross and has taken the whole thing on Himself. When I see Him -- the Son of God -- dying on the cross, I say if this is not righteousness -- judgment against sin -- I do *not* know what is. But whom is He dying for? -- the guilty sinner. Well, if this is not love, I do not know what is. On the cross we get every attribute of God perfectly maintained -- His majesty and truth, as well as His righteousness and love -- every claim met, and God perfectly glorified in the Person of Christ, the Lamb of God. He was there making atonement for sin that the gospel might go out to all the world; and as to believers, bearing their every sin. The whole thing is met there, and the believer's responsibility cleared away, as to sins, that he may enter into responsibility on a new ground, that of a child of God. He has met fully, and completely, and absolutely, all the fruit of man's eating the tree and all the sins of the believer (his responsibility). This, of course, does not touch the believer's responsibility to Christ or to God as a believer in Christ; for this is of a new order, and comes in upon a different ground.

But in the cross God's character is not only maintained but fully glorified; for the death of Christ is the perfect putting away of sin<sup>95</sup> and of all that belonged to the first man. We, therefore, as believers, are crucified with Christ; we are not in the flesh but in Christ. We are dead to the condition in which we were as children of Adam, and we are in a new position altogether; in Christ we are children of God. All that we were has been met and settled on the cross, and a new life has been given to us, so that now we are not in the first Adam but in the Second Man. The fruit of the first is all taken away, and the tree itself cut up by the roots for our faith; we have died with Christ, been crucified with Him. The responsibility is met by the atonement, and He Himself is the eternal life; so the two trees of Paradise are fully reconciled.

Now the counsels of God come out, because He could not

bring them out till redemption was accomplished, and righteousness fully established, and in respect of all that, too, which called it in question. The ground we stand on is not now God's forbearance, because what we have is not promise, but the accomplishment of promise. It was forbearance He exercised towards the Old Testament saints, passing over their sins, but it is in the atonement *we* see His righteousness in doing this. Now God is righteous in saving a poor sinner-just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus; and because righteousness is now established, my standing is not founded on responsibility as a child of Adam, but on redemption as a son of God. It is a new footing and foundation. Not only are my sins put away, but that which has put them away has so vindicated the righteousness of God, and glorified Him, that man has a place at the right hand of God in glory.

With regard to this Christ could appeal to the Father righteously to give Him that place. "I have glorified thee," He said, "glorify thou me," and Jehovah answered, "Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thy foes thy footstool." This puts the Son of man in the glory of God; and God has given us a place and standing in Him, clear of all the responsibility of the first Adam. But there is responsibility now for us, and it flows from and is measured by this very standing.

We have thus the two trees in grace -- the tree of life, and the tree of responsibility. Under the law we saw it was responsibility first, and then life. In grace it is first life, then responsibility.

Not only are my sins gone, but I and everything belonging to me buried in the death of Christ; the "I" merged into Him as to life, as it is written, "Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," and the life I now live is in the Risen One. He rose, and is now seated in glory in virtue of what He did as man, and has sent down the Holy Ghost to unite to Himself as Head (having taken this place as man in heaven) believers as members of His body, and to reveal all the counsels that were about us before the world was; and this is the church. The Christian is united with Christ, where He now is, we are seated there, and blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Him. The Head is there, and we, the members, are, by the Holy Ghost, united to Him.

Now comes in the responsibility of the Christian. True responsibility flows from the place we are in -- not as having to get into the place, but as being in it. Seeing our place we can learn what our responsibilities are; else we never can assume responsibility. You are not responsible to me as children or servants, because you are not my children or my servants. If you were my servant, your duties and responsibilities would flow from your being so. You have totally failed as a child of Adam; and now, if a believer, God says you are a child of God. Well, now, let us see if you are walking as a child of God in all your ways. This is our responsibility. We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, and are left in this world to shew out the character of such. We are the epistle of Christ, and have to see that we are a good one, known and manifestly so before all men. Christ should be so seen in us that he who runs may read.

If you are in Christ, Christ is in you; and our place is a settled one. Christ is before God for us, and we are before the

95. This, in its fullest effect, reaches, I doubt not, to the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. But the believer knows its efficacy for himself now. I do not here speak of those who believe not. They are doubly guilty.



world for Christ. What is laid on us is not responsibility before God as a child of Adam, but as a child of God. I am not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, and the life of Jesus is to be manifested in our mortal bodies. There is our responsibility, and it is an individual thing. You will see the individual put always first in scripture, because the individual must be put right before there can be any church. The epistle to the Romans deals with the individual, so also does the first chapter to the Ephesians, till we come to the last verses. We always have truth brought out for the individual before corporate blessing is unfolded or responsibility is enforced. We are saved by Christ individually and owned as brethren.

This leads on to relationship with Christ and with one another. Our relationship with the Father is that of children; our relationship with Christ, first, that He is not ashamed to call us brethren, and then as members of His body, and so baptized into one body by the Holy Ghost. This is the effect of God's work, and we are created unto good works, which God has fore-ordained for us. The ground we stand on is not our works: Christ stood on that ground once for us, and if we did we should be lost. We stand on Christ's work and are saved, and the Holy Ghost has come down and united us to Christ as His members; and he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. <sup>96</sup> ♦

### *Where Does Christian Responsibility Begin? Not in the Law*

Christ was there {with His disciples} and could not be in them. He was with them but had to go away. The Holy Ghost is in us, and stays with us. Christ was amongst them here, but not in them. He was absolutely alone in that sense -- most accessible, affable, but alone. This other Comforter stays here, abides with us and in us. It is a thing that is only known by having it; but the effect of having it is that I know I am in Christ. He gives the consciousness of being in Christ. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. On the other side we know Christ is in us. Thus we get our full complete blessedness before God on one side, and the measure of our practical responsibility down here on the other. I am accepted in the Beloved; I have got a new place -- not in the flesh at all. Responsibility as a child of Adam is completely and entirely over -- not as a Christian, but as a man. There is none righteous no not one. I do not want the day of judgment to tell me what I am. The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which is lost. It is not a state of probation. Man has plenty of debts and not a farthing. You come and tell me how to conduct myself, but I have nothing to live on. My standing and responsibility is that of a child of God, in Christ not in the flesh. Christ has answered for my sins not in the first man but in the second; the debts are all cleared. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ. There is the blessed place I am in. The sealing of the Holy Ghost comes at the recognition of the grace of the forgiveness of sins. There we are white as snow. The Holy Ghost says "I will dwell in that man."

God cannot seal an unbeliever, He seals a believer. It is a blessed place, high above angels. When once I believe that the Son of God became a Man and died for me, glory is only a natural consequence. Nothing is too good for us; all the rest is easy to believe.

The other side of that is where Christian responsibility begins. Saved, in Christ, sealed with the Holy Ghost, there is no responsibility; I could not get into a better place in heaven. But if that is true another thing is true: if I am in Christ, Christ is in me down here, and I say, now let Him be seen. Conflict is consequent upon that. The Lord does not enter into conflict with Satan for us, till He takes His place. My place is settled in Christ and my duties are settled by Christ being in me. It is not a question of what I am doing, but of Christ being in me. I am to manifest the life of Jesus and nothing else: it requires watchfulness and diligence. I ought to walk as He walked. We are sanctified to the obedience of Christ. What is the obedience of Christ? He never had a will of His own. The Father's will was the source of all He did. In Matt. 4 Satan said, "If thou be the Son of God, command." "Nay, I came to obey and serve -- not to command -- I have no word out of God's mouth." The obedience of Christ was having God's will as the origin and motive of all He did, not only the rule. "If I am a Son I do not depart from the place of a servant." That is the way Satan was perfectly silenced. There is no harm in eating when hungry. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." He can do nothing without that word, and Satan can do nothing.

It is Christ who is our life dwelling in us, that life living "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." If I had a direction telling me all I ought to do, it would not do. I want to know His will to test my state. If God has not a will I am to do nothing. But it needs spirituality to discern His will -- "filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." When I am uncertain, there is something that hinders, and I detect it. If the eye is single the whole body is full of light. As I get then the full blessedness of being in Christ, so I get Christ in me. That brings on the present dealing and government of God with us in this path. "If ye love me keep my commandments." "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me . . . and I will love him and manifest myself to him." We get the positive enjoyment of the place; and that does depend upon the conduct -- the place does not. "Grieve not the Spirit of God." If I grieve Him He grieves me, and the effect of the Spirit's presence in me is to make me unhappy -- conscious of having grieved Him if in disobedience. Some people are afraid of commandments; I am not. If I did everything right, and it was not obedience, I should have done nothing right. Commandment brings in authority and therefore I like it. He adds "If a man love me He will keep my words." There must be obedience. He leads me in the path (*Misc. Writ.* 4:56, 57).

<sup>96</sup>. *Collected Writings* 32:236-240.



## Chapter 3.8

### *Is the Law Dead? Yes, Says L. S. Chafer*

#### *Introduction*

In chapter 3 we looked at some comments by JND dealing with the death of the Christian with Christ and the result, a new place before God, in Christ. The Christian is dead but the law is not. It remains where it was. Indeed, it is presently usable:

Now we know that the law [is] good if anyone use it lawfully . . . (1 Tim. 1:9).

Indeed, it acted on Paul (Gal. 2:19, 20).

But the “completion of the age” in “the end of the age” was seen by LSC not to be part of the alleged “age of grace”; therefore the Mosaic age, which allegedly was terminated by the death of Christ, would have to be in force again during that future period. His scheme, then, is that the Mosaic age was interrupted (put in abeyance) and will be implemented again. Thus he has the “age of grace” among the earthly ages, with the law in abeyance now. Observe this: I am using the word *abeyance*, which he uses, but his teaching means much more than that, as we shall see. His teaching really means that **the law was crucified**. Also, as part of the Scofield system, he holds that man is being tested now -- man is under probation now.

#### *The Law Allegedly Now in Abeyance and to be Reinstated Elements of the Allegation*

##### **THE LAW IN ABEYANCE NOW**

Let us hear a summary of L. S. Chafer’s view here:

##### 5. The Dispensation of the Law.

This lengthened period began with Israel’s assumption of the law at Mount Sinai (Exod. 19:8), was characterized by fifteen hundred years of unfaithfulness and broken law, and terminates with the Great Tribulation in the earth. Its course was interrupted by the death of Christ and the thrusting in of the hitherto unannounced age of the church. Thus the church age, while complete in itself, is parenthetical within

the age of the law. At the removal of the Church when the Lord comes again to receive His own, the law age will be resumed and continue for that period known as Daniel’s seventieth week (Dan. 9:24 27) -- which week is generally conceded to be seven years. Israel’s judgments began with her dispersions, were continued in the destruction of Jerusalem and her final scattering among the Gentiles and will end with that hour of her greatest affliction in the coming tribulation. The greatest of her sins is the rejection of her Messiah at the first advent of Christ.

##### 6. The Dispensation of the Church.

Beginning with the death of Christ and the day of Pentecost, a new responsibility is imposed on all men -- both Jews and Gentiles. This responsibility is personal and calls for the acceptance by each individual of the grace of God toward sinners as it has been provided in Christ, with good works as the fruit of salvation. While the primary purpose of God in this dispensation will be perfectly accomplished in the gathering out of the Church, the course and end of this age is characterized by an apostate church and a Christ rejecting world. The judgment will be personal as has been the responsibility. The dispensation of the Church continues from the cross of Christ and the advent of the Spirit to Christ’s coming again to receive His own.<sup>97</sup>

Implicit in the remarks about the dispensation of the law is that the law is now in abeyance, and is so for all men.

In his *Systematic Theology* (hereafter ST) LSC makes frequent reference to the fact that the law is in abeyance:

. . . the law as an ad interim system did come to its end and a new divine economy superseded it (ST4:18).

. . . there is the most conclusive teaching concerning the complete ending of the law by the death of Christ (ST4:111).

The passing of the law of Moses is the Explicit Teaching of the New Testament Scriptures (ST4:234).

At the cross, it will be seen, the divine application of the law ceased even for Jews . . . (ST4:237).

The complete passing, through the death of Christ, of the

97. *Major Bible Themes*, Dunham: Findley, pp. 100, 101, 1953.

reign of the Mosaic Law, even for Israel, is the extended testimony of Scripture (ST4:240).

It appears to me that what lies at the base of this is the refusal to acknowledge that the end of the probation/testing of man ended at the cross, and thus closed *the first man's* moral history.

### THE LAW AND JUDAISM REINSTATED AGAIN AT THE END OF THE AGE

Upon the completion of the present divine purpose in the Church, Israel's Sabbaths will be reinstated (ST4:111).

The earthly story is taken up at the end of this age precisely where it left off (ST4:167).

. . . the entire system known as Judaism, along with all its component parts, is, in the purpose of God, in abeyance throughout the present age, but with definite assurance that the entire Jewish system thus interrupted will be completed by extension into the kingdom, the new earth, and on into eternity to come.<sup>98</sup> As the Jew has been removed from the special place of privilege which was his in the past age and leveled to the same standing as the Gentile -- under sin -- so Judaism has experienced a cessation of all its features until the hour when the Jewish program begins again; however, Judaism is to be restored and to complete its appointed course (ST4:248).

Can he have had any correct idea at all about the subject of the probation/testing of the first man, a central teaching of the recovered truth last century, relating to dispensational truth -- and specifically the testing of the first man under the Mosaic Covenant and the law? So Judaism is reinstated by this system that says that the law is dead now and nailed to the cross. Somehow the law will get off the cross to which it was allegedly nailed; and not only that, but ***Judaism, as such, will be reinstated by God Himself***, so as to be in force after the rapture. What are the implications of this notion?

- ❖ It means there will be a God-sanctioned reinstatement of the sacrifices under the old Mosaic System. What is the character of such sacrifices? They are not millennial sacrifices (Ezek. 40-48) carried out under the ***Melchizedek priesthood***, when that Priest sits upon His throne (Zech. 6:13) and *therefore* are necessarily memorial. But in addition to that, LSC's view is that there are sacrifices during the tribulation period carried out under a reinstated Mosaic System. The nature and meaning to God of these reinstated, tribulation-period sacrifices does not appear to have been addressed by those who hold to the *intercalation* of an age of the church!<sup>99</sup> The fact that the Jews will set up a Judaistic System then, and that the *godly remnant* will be under the law *in their consciences*, does not prove the reinstatement of Judaism,

as such, by God, as having his sanction for the reinstatement. ***It is amazing that anyone calling themselves dispensationalist would adhere to the idea of the intercalation of a church age that necessarily involves the God-sanctioned reinstatement of the Mosaic System.*** The reader should perceive clearly that the idea of the *intercalation* of a church age means that when the pretribulation rapture takes place there is necessarily a reinstatement of what was intercalated. It was Judaism that was intercalated by God, in this system, as hence Judaism will be reinstated by God.

The Jewish system utilized the law as part of the testing of the first man during the probationary (pre-cross) times. The Mosaic Covenant *recognized a standing in the flesh* before God. When the Judaistic system became no longer recognized by God as a consequence of the cross, that means that the standing of the first man, a standing in the flesh, was ended. Because that was ended, it does not automatically follow that the law itself, as the law, was ended. The probation was ended; the standing in the flesh was ended; the Mosaic System was ended as being acceptable to God; but the law itself did not die, nor was it nailed to the cross.

There is a distinction between the first man being tested under the Mosaic Covenant, and this coming to and end at the cross -- and the status of the law. The Jewish System was God's relationship with man, under law, in his Adamic standing. The testing involved the obedience of the first man in his Adamic nature. That standing in the flesh before God was finished at the cross. God's relationship with man under the law in Adamic standing was then terminated. The probation was completed. That leaves the law where it was. Moreover, the Mosaic age was left where it was. There has been no change in the age, while God meanwhile forms a heavenly people. And there will be no change in the age until "the age to come" (the millennium) begins. The Mosaic age is terminated by the introduction of the age to come. There is no testing of *the first man*, as such, now, neither by grace, nor under the law; nor will there be the reinstatement of what was God's relationship with the first man in Adamic standing under the law in the Mosaic System.

- ❖ No doubt unwittingly, that reinstatement of the probation of the first man in his standing before God, in the flesh, under the law, under the Mosaic System, is just what this false system of an intercalated age of grace really amounts to. It means the reinstatement of the Mosaic Covenant and the reinstatement of the first man in Adamic standing under the law -- though in reality, since the Scofieldian system itself has man under test now, the first man has not lost that Adamic standing in the flesh, according to this system, even though the second man, the man of purpose, has been established before God. It ought to be clear that what we are reviewing is not dispensational truth but a false age-ism scheme that is at war with important truth.

The first man, in the persons of the Jews, was tested by grace

98. {This last phrase is indeed stunning.}

99. Happily, a number of Scofieldian writers whom I queried about God-sanctioned sacrifices during Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week reject the idea that God sanctions those sacrifices.

in the person of the Son when here, as full of grace and truth (John 1:14). God most certainly did test man in every way and the result is stated in John 15:24. It is an insult to the Father and Son to say that the testing of man continues, even though insult is not intended. The cross, the express rejection of the revelation of the Father in the Son, is the great turning point in the ways of God. *The first man was tested by grace in the Son's person.* This is also true concerning the kingdom. The kingdom was offered and rejected. It was there in His person. *The first man was tested by the kingdom in the Son's person.*

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It is **pseudo-dispensationalism** to carry  
the testing of the first man beyond the cross.

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We will now turn to look at passages alleged to prove that the law itself is dead. Keep in mind that the "intercalation" scheme really means that God will resurrect the law for the reinstatement of Judaism after the rapture.

### *Examination of the Passages Alleged to Prove that the Law is Dead*

Even if the law is dead now, which it is not, the intercalation of a church age must be rejected, as seen above. But let us review a group of passages that LSC asserted show that "the law has passed":

. . . these Scriptures, by overwhelming revelation, assert that the law has passed, through the death of Christ. They assert that the law has ceased as a means of justification,<sup>100</sup> and as a rule of life for the one who is justified (John 1:16-17; Rom. 6:14; 7:1-6; 2 Cor. 3:1-18; Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14; Gal. 3:19-25) (ST4:108).

The doctrine of Scripture is that the Christian is dead; he has died to law and sin. This is true of him *in Christ*. Romans is express and plain about it, along with other Scriptures. But this has proved to be insufficient for Scofieldian ageism. And rather than give up the idea of an earthly "age of grace" among the earthly ages; rather than accepting the truth that the testing of the first man was ended at the cross; and rather than giving the development of God's ways in earthly government its place also; the system is maintained and augmented with additional errors. Let us look at the Scriptures referenced above that allegedly show that the law is dead.

#### *Passages in John*

##### **JOHN 1:16, 17**

Concerning this passage LSC said:

According to this passage, the whole Mosaic System was

fulfilled, superseded, and terminated in the first advent of Christ (ST4:240).

If "the whole Mosaic System was fulfilled," perhaps he had something in mind to account for why he said it would be reinstated at the end of the age in spite of having been fulfilled, but I am not aware that he has explained himself on this point. He had cited this text when he claimed that "these Scriptures, by overwhelming revelation, assert that the law has passed, through the death of Christ" (ST4:108). Not only does this not overwhelmingly support his thesis, it indicates no such thing at all. John 1:17 does not tell us the law is ended. Rather, it tells us that Christ brought something else.

Note that in one statement he speaks of "the first advent of Christ" and in the second of "the death of Christ." Which is it? He did not become full of grace and truth at his death.

The fact is that when Christ walked here, He was full of grace and truth (John 1:14). This was as man here, while under the law of Moses! So grace and truth in its fulness, in His person, was here during the time LSC acknowledges that the law was in force. I suggest that John 1:17 states a contrast -- not termination, fulfillment or the superseding of law. This latter has been read into the passage to bolster an erroneous system. Also, see the long footnote to this verse in JND's translation.

##### **JOHN 15:25**

. . . but now they have hated both me and my Father.  
But that the word written in their law might be fulfilled,  
They hated me without a cause (John 15:25).

LSC's comments on this passage serve as an example of how a Scripture can be looked at when under the power of an erroneous system. What supports the false system seems to be found everywhere in Scripture. It is true that the upper room discourse looks beyond the cross, as he noted; but then, commenting on Christ's have said "their law," not 'your law,' he makes the stunning leap to his system by saying:

By this Scripture not only is the whole law system definitely declared to be done away during the dispensation of grace . . . (ST4:245).

The Lord cited a fulfillment from the very law that those that hated him professed to keep. It strikes me as very morally appropriate to refer to the law of those that hated him as "their law." Citing a fulfillment of the law in no way announces its end.

#### *Passages in Romans*

##### **ROMANS 6:14**

For sin shall not have dominion over *you*, for ye are not under law but under grace (Rom. 6:14).

Verse 6 informs us that our old man has been crucified with Christ. What we were in our standing in Adam has thus been dealt with. Moreover, v. 7 adds that "he that has died is justified from sin." And v. 11 tells us to "reckon yourselves

100. Strange; the law never was given as a means of justification.

alive to God in Christ Jesus.” Clearly, the context is not about the law being dead but rather that we have died. The passage does not support, in any way whatsoever, the false notion that the law has died.

### ROMANS 7

In Rom. 7, the expression “the law” and “law” are used. A person who has “the inner man” (v. 22) is in view, i.e., one who has the new nature but is not delivered (v. 24). He is not set free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2) working in his members. In conscience, he is before God on the basis of law. That means he is before God for acceptability on the basis of performance of some kind -- “law” -- as a principle of relationship. This may, of course, take the form of “the law,” i.e., obviously, the law of Moses. The law of Moses is not merely the principle of law, but “the law.” In the introductory part of Rom. 7 the apostle uses an example of two men and a woman. Who in this passage died? Verses two and three, for illustrative purposes, takes the common case of marriage and say a woman cannot “be to” two husbands at the same time, but “if” the husband died, only then is she free to marry another. Paul’s point was that one cannot “be to” both the law and Christ at the same time. And yet when it comes to his statement of who actually died, did he say the first husband died? No. Rather, Paul’s brethren died (Rom. 7:4). And Christ died. No, the law did not die. Yet LSC wrote:

The law, or obligation, of the wife to her husband ceases with his death. Should she be married to a second husband, she is then under an entirely new obligation. The sacrificial death of Christ was the ending of the reign of the law, which law is likened to the first husband (ST4:241).

First, it is directly taught in Scripture that the Christian is dead with Christ, crucified with Christ. In the case of the Jew under the law, that is how he stands with respect to the law; he is crucified with Christ -- and therefore not in connection with the first husband. Why introduce here the notion that the first husband died? That is not the point to the passage, nor does it even imply such a thing. Moreover, if the law had died, one might be then under some other obligation, who knows what? But we are under Christ. How do we know that? -- because it is *we* who have *died* with him. This is all simple and clear, taught in the Word. But LSC has brought his system to the passage, importing into it the notion that the first husband died when in fact it was the woman who died, and so has no obligation to the first husband. How is it that LCS will have it that the first husband died? What he really believes is that both the woman and the first husband died. There is no such idea in the passage.

### ROMANS 7:6

But now we are clear from the law, having died in that in which we were held, so that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of letter (Rom. 7:6).

Ever ready to find the law dead, LSC wrote, concerning “newness of Spirit” and “oldness of letter,” that these expressions:

. . . indicate different divine economies which characterize two different dispensations. The age now past is marked off by the letter of the law . . . (ST6:123).

Rom. 7 is not about different economies and proof that the law is dead. This text is about the fact that we, being dead to the law, are in the position of being able to serve in newness of spirit, not a service as under the law. It is self-evident from the passage that the believer, not the law, is *stated* to be dead.

### ROMANS 10:4

For Christ is the end of [the] law for righteousness to every one that believes (Rom. 10:4).

Charles L. Feinberg says this verse means that:

The Law as an active force has ceased to exist, because the death of Christ fulfilled all the requirements of the Law.<sup>101</sup>

Arnold Fructenbaum wrote:

The clear-cut teaching of the New Testament is that the Law of Moses has been rendered inoperative with the death of Christ; in other words, the law in its totality no longer has authority over any individual. This is evident from Romans 10:4 . . . .

The Greek word for “end,” *telos*, can mean either “termination” or “goal.” However, the evidence clearly favors the meaning of “end.”<sup>102</sup>

Charles C. Ryrie stated:

All interpreters of Scripture are faced with the clear teaching that the death of Christ brought an end to the Mosaic law (Rom. 10:4) . . .<sup>103</sup>

Though it is true that our Lord fulfilled the Law, this passage is not teaching that, but rather that He terminated the Law and provided a new and living way to God.<sup>104</sup>

One would think from this that the passage had said: “Christ is the end of the law,” period! Is not that exactly the meaning given to it by these writers? But it does *not* say that. He is the end of the law *for a particular purpose for particular persons*. The passage says nothing about the law being dead for all mankind. That idea is imported into the passages. Now, this is so *evidently* the case that it warrants saying that these writers are so dominated in their thinking by

101. *Millennialism: The Two Major Views*, Chicago: Moody, p.214, 1980.

102. *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, Tustin: Ariel Ministries, p. 643, 1992. Interestingly, the Dallas Theological Seminary staff commentary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Wheaton: Victor Books, p. 480, 1983 says of *telos*, “It means that Christ is the designed end (termination) or Purpose-Goal of the law (cf. Gal. 3:24), the Object to which the law pointed.”

103. In R. B. Zuck, *Vital New Testament Issues*, Grand Rapids: Kregel, p. 79, 1996, repeated from *Bibliotheca Sacra*, “The End of the Law,” p. 239, July 1967.

104. *Basic Theology*, Wheaton: Victor Books, p. 303, 1986.

the notion that the law is dead that they impose it upon a text which actually *expressly limits* this to those who believe. And if they are not able to see this, then what can we expect them to say about the other passages they use?

JND has some good comments on this passage:

But there is another portion of scripture which is relied on to put Christians under the law, I mean the sermon on the mount, and in particular Matthew 5:17; but I apprehend the Lord's words are wholly misapprehended here. I do not believe the law or the law's authority is destroyed. I believe those who have sinned under it will be judged by it. I believe it will be written in the heart of Judah and Israel hereafter under the new covenant, the substance of which we have in spirit though not in the letter. It will never pass till it be fulfilled. But Christ is the end of it -- the *telos*, the completion and end of it -- for every one that believes. We are not under it, because we are dead and risen in Him, and the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives -- applies to man in flesh; and we are not in flesh, but in the Spirit in Christ risen: "If ye be dead with Christ . . . why as though living [alive] in the world," &c., says the apostle. In flesh a man must be under law (which is indeed death and the curse, because the flesh is sinful) or lawless, which is surely no better; but in Christ he is neither. He is led by the Spirit in the obedience of Christ.<sup>105</sup>

### 2 Corinthians 3

L. S. Chafer wrote:

In the midst of the strongest possible contrasts between the reign of the teachings of the law and the teachings of grace, it is declared that these commandments were "done away" and "abolished." IT SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED THAT the old was abolished to make place for the new, which far excels in glory. The passing of the law is not, therefore, a loss . . . (ST4:242).

To this let us add from Roy L. Aldrich:

Three times in 2 Corinthians 3:6-13 it is declared that the Mosaic System is done away or abolished (vv. 7, 11, 13). The participle used in each of these three verses is from the verb *katargeo*, which means *to abrogate, to cancel, to bring to an end*. No stronger term could be found to describe the abolition of the law. It is the very word used to describe the destruction of the Antichrist in 2 Thessalonians 2:8.<sup>106</sup>

- ❖ Notice that in the second quotation, the writer equates the Mosaic System and the law. That is an equation they all make. I agree that the "Mosaic System" is abolished. These writers refuse to accept that the probation of the first man is concluded and that the verdict based upon the conclusion of the testing has been rendered in the Word. Next, they confuse the Mosaic System, which utilized the law in that probation, with the law itself. Part of the

Mosaic System is the testing of the first man. The testing is concluded. The Mosaic System is concluded, but that leaves the law. The testing is over, the Mosaic System is necessarily ended, the Mosaic System's use of the law in that testing is ended -- but it does not follow that the law, which is God's requirement for man in the flesh, is gone.

- a) The phenomenon that we have been observing in regard to this issue about the law being dead, or gone, or in abeyance, is that what Scripture states, concerning the law, to be true for those as *in Christ*, is stated by these writers to be true for all mankind -- i.e., they affirm that the law is gone entirely. Let us read 2 Cor. 3:14:

But their thoughts have been darkened, for unto this day the same veil remains in reading the old covenant, unremoved, which *in Christ* is annulled. But unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil lies on their heart. But when it shall turn to [the] Lord, the veil is taken away (2 Cor. 3:14).

Note that the veil is there "unto this day." Thus the Jews are recognized<sup>107</sup> and the veil lies on their hearts. So the veil subsists while the church is being gathered and that veil will subsist until -- when? -- when "it"<sup>108</sup> (Israel's heart) turns to the Lord in the future (cp. Rom. 11:26). So this veil was not removed or annulled as a result of Christ's death. It will be taken away when Israel's heart turns to the Lord (Rom. 11:7, 8, 25, 26). It is annulled *in Christ*, of course. Now note that Roy L. Aldrich carefully pointed out that

"Three times in 2 Corinthians 3:6-13 it is declared that the Mosaic System is done away or abolished (vv. 7, 11, 13)."

Yes, it is the *Mosaic System* that is done away, and three times the word is used. So it is true that the old covenant is abolished but our context is dealing with these matters from the perspective of *in Christ*. And this is just the issue with almost all these passages that supposedly prove that the law is gone. It is gone *in Christ*, as is the veil. What authority from this passage did LSC have to state:

it is declared that these commandments were "done away" and "abolished."

-- as if the words *in Christ* were not in the context. Leave the words *in Christ* out of the context and you might have had a show of reason for LCS assertion. Why did the Spirit say *in Christ*? The ignoring of this qualifier shows LCS has read his system *into* the text. JND's translation has a helpful footnote here:

'That annulled,' or 'done away,' may appear a little harsh,

105. *Collected Writings* 10:22.

106. "Has the Mosaic Law Been Abolished?" *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Oct. 1959, p. 328.

107. "Give no occasion to stumbling, whether to Jews, or Greeks, or the assembly of God" (1 Cor. 10:32).

108. He says that "it" refers to "an individual Jew receiving Christ," *Grace*, Grand Rapids: Kregel, p. 166, 1995 reprint. Though that is not what "it" refers to, his comment means that the Jew is in a particular position recognized by God now.

but the apostle uses it as a formula for the old covenant done away in Christ. If this be borne in mind, the sense will be clearer by the use of it. It contrasts 'that annulled' with 'that which abides:' so vers. 13 and 14.

Distinguish between the old covenant which used the law in the probation of the first man, and the law itself. The probation ended in the cross, the testing was completed, the Mosaic System set aside, but that left the law itself.

Elsewhere JND wrote:

It is a great mistake to apply the Sermon on the Mount in its positive statements to the law of the Ten Commandments, as if it was a spiritualizing of them. The Law, as a system, is spoken of, taken up in Matt. 5:17, 18, along with the Prophets. Prophecies, ceremonies, and all that is in the Law, were not set aside, or annulled, but fulfilled, the body was of Christ, and no doubt the Lord fulfilled its behests and precepts. It was to be kept till all was fulfilled. For faith, it was fulfilled in Christ, and, as to practical righteousness, is fulfilled in the Christian; Rom. 8.

- ❖ The intercalated age of grace idea requires the reinstatement of the Mosaic System after the rapture of the church. Hence the reference to the abolition of the Antichrist is strange. No one thinks that after some time he will be reinstated. Why think that the Mosaic System will be reinstated any more than the Antichrist? – it appears that the *intercalation* requires it.

Let us turn now to some of JND's comments on 2 Cor. 3.

Then we have another contrast: death and condemnation characterized the law in contrast with the gospel, which is the ministration of righteousness and of the Spirit. It is the presence of the Holy Ghost, righteousness being established. The law claimed righteousness and could not get it; now, I have righteousness made out for me, and established. A righteousness being established, the Holy Ghost can come and minister righteousness. In Galatians it is characterized by the Spirit: "He that ministereth to you the Spirit," and so on. Indeed the whole blessing now is stamped with the presence of the Holy Ghost. It is what characterizes the thing -- the ministration of the gospel. It is the presence of the Holy Ghost, and divine righteousness, instead of condemnation and death. The law required righteousness and no lust. This must be death to a man; it is so in his natural condition. "When the law came, sin revived and I died." The old covenant was confined to the law. Only the second time it was under half grace. Moses says, "Blot me out." "No," God says, 'I shall not: everybody shall answer for himself.' That is the law in principle; yet grace is introduced. God tells Moses to lead the people, but His angel shall go first. The contrast here is, if that which is done away took place in glory, much more that which remains is glorious.

Verse 13 is a very important one, because his argument runs from that to the word "veil." It is "that the children of Israel should not look"; for "could" is not right either; it is about half-way between. The use of the Greek word differs: but here in v. 13 it is not "so that they could not," nor "that they could not," but "so that they should

not," as nearly as one can say it. In the words "look to the end," the apostle took the law as so many commandments about sheep and bullocks, without ever looking beyond. Christ is really the end of it all. Moses put a veil over his face, because they could not bear to look at his face. There is no veil now; but they were afraid of the glory. The law being a ministration of death and condemnation, they could not look at that. If you connect the least glimpse of the glory of God with the law, then a man cannot look at it; just as they had before said to Moses when God spoke out of the fire, "You go and speak to God for us, lest we die." The apostle takes the law absolutely here as law -- death and condemnation; but the way in which it worked in Israel then was that it hindered their looking to the end of that which was abolished. So Moses put on the veil in order that they might not see the glory itself. That was before he went in to the Lord. The veil was not put on in order to hinder, but it was put on to the hindrance of their looking. "It came to pass when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come nigh him. And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him, and Moses talked with them. And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face."

The reason they were afraid to look at Moses was because the glory was there. They could not look to the end; they did not know when they offered a sacrifice that this was typical of Christ. The "end" is clearly God's purpose in it, and this was what they could not look to. It was a glory which came requiring righteousness, and this too they could not meet. In Christ Himself you have the explanation of all these images of the law. The veil is now done away, but it is on their (Israel's) hearts still. When Moses was turned to the Lord, the veil was taken off, and so it shall be with their hearts when they are turned to the Lord. "It shall turn" (v. 16) refers to Israel's heart when this is turned to the Lord. There was no glory the first time on Moses' face because he had not been in such close intercourse with God. The whole thing is a beautiful picture of grace and law, for Moses was under grace. God says to him, "Thou hast found grace in my sight."<sup>109</sup>

Now we have the gospel of the glory, for that glory is not veiled and it is the Christian's privilege to behold that glory (2 Cor. 3:18; 4:6).

### *Passages in Galatians*

#### **GALATIANS 3:19-26**

Why then the law? It was added for the sake of transgressions, until the seed came to whom the promise was made . . . But the Scripture has shut up all things under sin, that the promise, on the principle of faith of Jesus

109. *Collected Writings* 26:321, 322.



Christ, should be given to those that believe. But before faith came, we were guarded under law, shut up to faith [which was] about to be revealed. So that the law has been our tutor up to Christ, that we might be justified on the principle of faith. But, faith having come, we are no longer under a tutor; for we are all God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:19-26).

In one place, after quoting these Scriptures, LSC remarked:

Comment is unnecessary concerning this unconditional declaration relative to the passing of the Mosaic System (ST4:420).

However, we can find a comment:

The distinction between Jew and Gentile is broken down and *all* are "under sin." (ST4:165).

**The Distinction Between Jew and Gentile Does Continue Before God.** And so this last sentence of LSC is 50% false. What is true is that all are under sin. It is false to say that the distinction between Jew and Gentile is therefore broken down. **In Christ** this is true; outside of Christ it is false. The Jew is recognized now as having the veil on him when he reads the old covenant (2 Cor. 3:14-16) and we see that it will continue that way until the heart of Israel is turned to the Lord in the future. There is no thought in Scripture that that veil on the heart of the Jew is now gone and that it will be reinstated upon their hearts after the church is removed. 1 Cor. 10:32 recognizes three classes in the world: "... Jews, or Greeks, or the assembly of God." Moreover, Rom. 11 recognizes the on-going distinction between Jew and Gentile. Israel is now under a judicial blinding (Rom. 11:7, 8), except for the election of grace. Indeed, it is one of the mysteries "that blindness in part is happened to Israel," and for how long? -- until the fulness of the nations arrives (Rom. 11:25).

The truth is, then, that God has concluded all (Jew and Gentile) under sin, but continues to recognize the distinction between Jew and Gentile. In Christ, of course, there is neither Jew or Gentile. No, the cross did not remove the law, and it may be used if a man knows how to use it lawfully (1 Tim. 1:9-12).

**Comments Are Certainly Necessary.** The passing of the *Mosaic System* is not the real issue. LSC has made the Mosaic System and the law to be the same thing, so that by showing that the Mosaic System is gone, then the law is also. And what underlies these things is that he has the erroneous idea that man is now being tested by grace. LSC thinks it so clear that the law is dead that no comment on this passage is necessary. What he is doing once again is using a passage which speaks of those who are "sons," who are "**in Christ Jesus**" (Gal. 3:26, 14) to show that the law is gone. A comment that seems necessary is that the chapter is about the blessing of those **in Christ**, just as we saw in 2 Cor. 3:7-16 and LSC wants to get out of the passage that the law is dead. There is not a word about the law having passed away.

**"Our Tutor Up to Christ."** Sin was in the world before the

law was given. The law made sin take the form of transgressions, to bring it into plain view, "until the seed came to whom the promises were made." What was the tutor teaching? The lesson was the trial of the first man in the persons of the favored nation. The law was the appointed tutor to teach that "until." The lesson of the trial of the first man is terminated -- *that* tutoring function, which involves the probation of the first man, is ended, but that in no wise implies that the law is ended. But the word "until" is utilized to say that at that point the law went out of existence. However, the word "until" blocks the reinstatement of the Mosaic System.

1. Why, then, would the *Mosaic System* be reinstated after the rapture of the saints? How is the "until" to be undone after the rapture? It should have said something like "for the time being until the tutor is reinstated." It is stunning to think persons who call themselves "dispensationalists" believe what amounts to a reinstatement of the "tutor"; i.e., in their view, the reinstatement of the *Mosaic System*!

We read "until the seed came." That concluded the Mosaic System. Is the seed going to do the opposite of "came," so as to undo what His coming did -- so that the Mosaic System can be reinstated?

2. LSC will not have it that the testing of the first man is completed; i.e., that man is no longer under probation. *That* is what the death of Christ ended; and therefore the Mosaic System under which man was being tested had to end. But the *system*, under which man had a standing in the flesh before God, ended when the standing of the first man ended. Christ's death left the law where it was as the rule of right for man in the flesh, though God is no longer regarding man in the flesh as under probation. The test has been concluded and the verdict rendered.

The giving of the law "for the sake of transgressions" was part of the testing of the first man in the persons of the favored Jews. The testing terminated in Christ's rejection at the cross. Thus in the ways of God, His use of the law *as part of a system* for this purpose, i.e., the testing of the first man, was until the Seed was here and was rejected on the cross. That leaves the law itself, which had been God's instrument for testing the first man *while under that system*, not now the instrument of testing but, just where it was as the rule for man in the flesh, the blinded nation not having learned from that testing -- but pretending to keep it. So the *Mosaic Covenant* was temporary, is not in force now, but that leaves the law here. So to speak of the Mosaic System as being set aside does not mean that the law also is set aside.

**The Coming of Faith.** The coming of faith does not mean

that no one had faith in OT times. Its coming refers faith as the revealed and acknowledged way to blessing, involving faith in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus. When Paul wrote, "But before faith came, we were guarded under law, shut up to faith [which was] about to be revealed," he means by "we," we Jews, for Gentiles were never under the law of Moses. And when under the law, the Jews were "shut up to faith." At that time faith was not God's revealed and acknowledged way and principle of blessing (though, of course, OT saints had faith -- believed what God had said). The testing of the first man was not completed and the Jews "were guarded under law." But when that testing was completed, God revealed a new thing, namely, "that the promise, on the principle of faith of Jesus Christ, should be given to those that believe."<sup>110</sup>

**The Law Our Tutor Up to Christ.** "Our" means the Jews, for Gentiles never were under the law of Moses. The law was not a tutor to bring persons to Christ; it was a tutor *up to that time* -- specifically up to His rejection on the cross. This passage is another indicator that the testing of the first man ended at the cross. Because the law was a tutor up to that point does not mean that thereafter the law was gone. No, but rather that its use as an instrument of God in the testing of the first man was concluded, and that man is not now under testing. The Jew then was no longer "shut up to faith," for God was no longer doing that, though a Jew may keep himself in such a condition, refusing to be "justified on the principle of faith." So that tutoring use of the law, as part of God's having tested man, came to an end, but it does not follow that the law itself is gone. If the Mosaic System is reinstated, the "tutor" will be reinstated.

**LSC Continues the Testing of Man.** The notion that man is now being tested by grace during an age of grace entails reading into these passages that speak of what is true *in Christ*, the notion that the law is gone. It is required by the false system and lo! there it is in these Scriptures. It is but the exigency of the system of intercalating a "church age" into the Mosaic age that fosters this doctrine about the law being dead, and therefore it has to be found somewhere -- but it is really nowhere. There is no "heavenly age" (heavenly dispensation) among the earthly ages during which man is being tested by grace. This ongoing testing notion is another false component of this system that requires that the law be dead so as to be replaced by the testing by grace. It is all a denial that the first man no longer has a status before God and is no longer under probation. In effect, this system means that the first man still has a status before God.

**A Summary Statement from JND is Helpful Here.**

. . . all that is of the flesh is finally and hopelessly

condemned. Christ, by dying, has closed all possible connection between God and man in the flesh. Man in the flesh has rejected Christ, is condemned, and judgment only remains for him. The law was not given to all men. It was the rule of right for man in the flesh, but given when man was a sinner, whom God knew to be wholly and hopelessly lost, to the Jewish people, to bring out the great truth of man's condition, if righteousness was claimed from him. Sin, death, judgment, were already man's portion, and nothing else. He was lost; he proves it by rejecting Christ. But the law came in to raise the question of righteousness. Christ was perfect here as everywhere, but alone in it. Man in flesh, unless redemption came in, was as alienated from God as ever. But redemption came in by death, and the believer has died with Christ, does not in God's sight exist in the life in which he was in the flesh (and if he were under law, it was in flesh), and he has died away from under it to have his place and portion through redemption in Christ risen, having died as to the life in which he was under the law. He is in Christ, and in Christ accepted according to Christ's own acceptance. The value which Christ has in the sight of God, which is real and meritorious, is the value in which he stands, but as dead and risen. The death of Christ has put away his sin, and all the glorifying of God, in virtue of which Christ as man is at God's right hand in righteousness (he stands in the value of Christ) is his righteousness. He is not under law at all, but under grace.<sup>111</sup>

#### **GALATIANS 5:18**

. . . but if ye are led by the Spirit ye are not under law (Gal. 5:18).

LSC included this in a list of Scriptures that he claimed was "decisive language" that showed "that the law as an ad interim system did come to its end and a new divine economy superseded it" (ST4:18). But, of course, he did not explain this text's "decisive language" that the law is gone. Really, how could anyone suggest such a false meaning for this passage? The truth is that his words are a mere assertion, and it is clear that the passage shows that those led of the Spirit, who are therefore *in Christ*, are not under the law.

#### **Ephesians 2:15**

. . . but now in Christ Jesus *ye* who were once afar off are become nigh by the blood of the Christ. For *he* is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of enclosure, having annulled the enmity in his flesh, the law of commandments in ordinances, that he might form the two in himself into one new man, making peace; and might reconcile both in one body to God by the cross, by it having slain the enmity (Eph. 2:13-16).

LSC refers to the Eph. 2:15 text in a number of places (ST4:95, 108, 242; 3:112), but does not attempt to show how it tells us that the law is gone. He wrote a book on Ephesians, wherein he correctly wrote:

110. There is much more to Christian position and blessing than in this statement, but Paul is dealing with the state of the Galatians to get them away from listening to law-teachers and ground them again in the basics of grace.

111. *Collected Writings* 10:60.

The removal of both the enmity and the partition between Jew and Gentile is divinely accomplished through the creation of “one new man;” not by renewing individual men, but by forming one new Body -- the Church -- of which Christ is the Head. Thus, in the Church (verse 16), He reconciles both Jew and Gentile “unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby” . . . <sup>112</sup>

Yes, in v. 13 we read “*in Christ Jesus*” and in v. 15 “*in himself*.” There is not a word here that supports the notion that the law is gone for all men. The passage is speaking of what is true *in Christ*. But Arnold Fructenbaum, ignoring this, plunges ahead with the false notion anyway:

If the Mosaic Law was still in effect, it would still be a wall of partition to keep the Gentiles away; but the wall of partition was broken down with the death of Christ. Since the wall of partition was the Mosaic Law, that meant that the Law of Moses was done away with. <sup>113</sup>

And this is a good occasion to raise a matter that I do not find addressed by LSC, *et. al.*

- ❖ If the **death of Christ** ended the law, i.e., if it was nailed to the cross, and removed the partition *for all men*, then what will un-nail the law from the cross and restore the law and the partition after the rapture of the saints? May we be directed to Scripture which says these things?

### *Colossians 2:14*

And you, being dead in offences and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he has quickened together with him, having forgiven us all the offences; having effaced the handwriting in ordinances which [stood out] against us, which was contrary to us, he has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross . . . (Col. 2:13:14).

LSC wrote:

Again, the believer has been delivered from the law by no less an undertaking than the nailing of the law with its handwriting of ordinances to the cross (ST4:109).

It seems to me to be bold to say that the law was nailed to the cross and injurious to that very work on the cross to then affirm that the law will be reinstated after the rapture of the saints, as his system of ages (involving an “age of grace” among the earthly ages wherein man is still being tested) requires. The issue is:

- ❖ If the law was nailed to the cross so as to end it for all men, what is it that un-nails it so as to apply it again after the rapture of the saints?

Yes, it is true that he speaks here of the believer, but he elsewhere included this passage as one of those that so overwhelmingly shows that the law is gone for all. There are

several facts to notice:

- ❖ The passage is not about all men, but about those “quickened together with him” (v. 13); thus, the passage is about those *in Christ*.
- ❖ He prejudices the reader’s understanding of the meaning by rewording, so as to fit his notion, thus -- “the law with its handwriting of ordinances.” Observe, then, that the text says no such thing; rather, “having effaced the handwriting in ordinances.”

Moreover, do not substitute the word “law” for “handwriting in ordinances.” JND has a footnote to “handwriting”:

Handwriting, obligation to which a man is subject by his signature.

And again:

The handwriting should be, “the obligation” -- the obligation that existed in ordinances. <sup>114</sup>

I will quote F. W. Grant here:

It is not the law itself of which he is speaking, but of our *obligation to it*. This is what the “hand-writing” means, and this is what is effaced for us, it being nailed to the cross. The law is not dead, as we have seen in Romans, but we have died to it. It is stated here in another way, but the same thing in effect. <sup>115</sup>

### *Hebrews 7:12, 18*

#### WHAT WAS SET ASIDE?

For there is a setting aside of the commandment going before for its weakness and unprofitableness, (for the law perfected nothing,) and the introduction of a better hope by which we draw nigh to God (Heb. 7:18, 19).

We have previously distinguished the setting aside of the Mosaic System which regarded the first man as having a standing before God, under the law, in the flesh, and the law itself. The system under which the first man stood in probation was set aside, but the law itself was not abrogated. We shall have to consider it again here. Arnold Fructenbaum wrote:

Hebrews 7:18 states that the Mosaic Law was “disannulled.” Because it is no longer in effect, there is now a new priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek. If the Mosaic Law was still in effect, Jesus could not function as a priest. <sup>116</sup>

First, note that the word “commandment,” singular, is used in Heb. 7:18. What is meant is the *order of approach* to God under the Mosaic order.

Second, notice that JND translates Heb. 7:12, not “the law” but “law.” W. Kelly wrote:

112. *The Ephesian Letter Doctrinally Considered*, New York: Loizeaux, p.88, 1944 [1935].

113. *Op. Cit.*, p. 645.

114. *Collected Writings* 27:257.

115. *Numerical Bible*, Acts-2 Cor., p. 369.

116. *Op. cit.*, p. 645.

. . . not of “the law,” . . . but “of law.” There is a totally different principle henceforth.<sup>117</sup>

Heb. 7:12 does not say that there has been a change of *the* law. It informs the reader that there has been a change in the principle upon which God is dealing.<sup>118</sup> The Mosaic System is annulled, not the law. Concerning Heb. 7:18, W. Kelly wrote:

Our chapter however draws a still larger deduction, not only an incomparably higher priesthood, to which Aaron's gives place, but disannulling of a foregoing commandment as weak and unprofitable; for, as is added parenthetically, the law perfected nothing. Christ is not only perfect in Himself but brings in perfection, and in every way. And this is what is implied in Chap. 6:1 -- “let us go on to perfection.” It really is Christianity in contradistinction from Judaism . . . There is a doing away of a foregoing commandment, and an introduction of a better hope, by which we draw near to God: the legal state is annulled, and a better hope supervenes now. It is Christianity, and by it we draw near to God, instead of standing at a distance as being essentially Jewish.<sup>119</sup>

Heb. 7 does not teach that the law is dead, or that it is nailed to the cross. One who wishes to find it so, undoubtedly will. But it really is not there. The *forgoing commandment* refers to *approach to God* via the Aaronic priesthood and system of worship while the first man had a standing in the flesh, in contrast to the introduction of a better hope by which we draw near to God. The priesthood is changed and the Mosaic System is annulled, or set aside. *The* law is left where it was. The point is, as said above, “There is a totally different principle henceforth.”

J. N. Darby long ago pointed out that, not the law but, the Mosaic System was set aside:

But, as thus given to man as an external system, it was clearly (and that is admitted on all hands) set aside. There was an annulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof (for the law made nothing perfect), and the bringing in of a better hope by the which we draw nigh to God. God was not to be tempted by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither the Jewish disciples nor their fathers had been able to bear. The whole system, as a system, was declaredly and unquestionably set aside, and Christianity, the faith, not law, came in. After that faith came, that is, Christianity, the

system of faith, we were no longer under the schoolmaster. I make a difference as to the ten words, of which I will speak. God spoke them out of the midst of the fire, and added no more. They were laid up in the ark. All this made a difference, but as terms of a covenant, they are clearly set aside with the rest, supposing them for a moment written on our hearts, and we the objects of the new covenant; if that were so, still, as engraved in stones as legal conditions of blessing in the old covenant, all is done away together. What waxed old was ready to vanish away. The old covenant we are not under, and surely the commandments formed the basis of that.

But it will be said, every one admits that: but you must distinguish between the principle of the old covenant and the contents of that which constitutes its main terms, though there may be other details. Precisely so . . .<sup>120</sup>

And in the same paper he affirmed that the law is not abrogated:

I believe the law to be the perfect rule of life for man in the flesh, but it supposes sin, and applies to sinful flesh, to man in the flesh; and, being on the principle of requirement, and rightly so (for it is a very important principle and maintains God's rights), it condemns me as to righteousness, and is no help to me, but the contrary, as to sanctification. If then the law be holy, just, and good in its contents, why not be under it? why not maintain it? Because I am then in a relationship with God which involves condemnation and the power of sin. Law is law, not grace, and the strength of sin is the law. Maintain the law as law and you destroy its authority if it be not law to you; and if it be law to you, it is the strength of sin, and sin will have dominion over you. It must, as law, have external authority, God's authority as such. If you weaken that, you have destroyed it as a law.

And here I separate from both parties who have discussed it. They both, in my judgment, really destroy its authority, one unintentionally, the other declaring it is abrogated, buried, and the like. The former are obliged to yield a great deal, desiring to maintain its authority, because they cannot help it; the latter destroy its authority and make it to be abrogated. I do not abate one jot or one little. I do not raise the question of Gentiles not being under it, though historically true; because, if not, they are lawless, and I admit the law to be a perfect rule for man in the flesh. I say I am not on Gentile ground, though a Gentile; not a ἄνομος Θεῷ (lawless in respect to God, but ἐννομος Χριστῷ, I do not say under the law to Christ (that is an utterly false translation), but duly subject to Christ. Yet I do not say the authority of the law is weakened or done away, but that I AM DEAD TO IT. The law has power over a man as long as he lives -- and can have it no longer; and I am no longer alive in the flesh.

I reject the altering, modifying, the law. I reject christianizing in it; that is, weakening its legal character by an admixture of grace that is neither law nor gospel. I maintain its whole absolute authority. Those who have

117. *Hebrews, in loco*.

118. Charles C. Ryrie ignores the distinction between “the law” and “of law.” Ignoring this fact is necessary to what he wrote concerning this text: “Since Christ is the believers’ High Priest, there has to have been a change in the Law, since He could not qualify as a priest under the Levitical priesthood,” in R. B. Zuck, *Vital New Testament Truths*, Grand rapids: Kregel, p. 83, 1996. Since he thinks that the law has to be dead for Christ to be a priest, evidently He does not understand the true character of the heavenly priesthood of Christ. No doubt that is connected with the idea of the existence of a church age among the earthly ages. That idea negatively affects understanding of the heavenly truth.

119. *Ibid*.

120. “The Sabbath: or, Is the Law dead , or am I?” *Collected Writings* 10:281.

sinned under it will be judged by it. It will have its own authority (that is, God's) according to its own terms in the day of judgment; but I am not under it but under grace, not under the schoolmaster but a son, because faith is come, and I have the Spirit of adoption. I am on another footing and in another relationship with God; I am not in the flesh, not in the place of a child of Adam at all, but delivered out of it by redemption. I have died and risen again; I am in Christ.<sup>121</sup>

### CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD

The Melchisedec priesthood is an *order* of priesthood different than the Aaronic *order* of priesthood; and the Melchisedec priesthood of Christ

has been constituted not according to law of fleshly commandment, but according to power of indissoluble life (Heb. 7:16).

While the Melchisedec priesthood is not in operation now (it is millennial) Hebrews shows that the Melchisedec priesthood rests upon a totally different principle than law -- *the power of an indissoluble life*. This is a priesthood with which the law has nothing to do, and Christ's present, heavenly activity as High Priest partakes of that character -- *the power of an indissoluble life*. This, therefore, is a priesthood on the other side of death. Christ is outside the sphere of the law. And for the Christian, one who is **in Christ**, the legal state is gone. It is disannulled to the Christian by his being in Christ, not by the law having ended. The setting aside of "the commandment going before" (Heb. 7:18) is in the context of the old approach to God having been set aside by the introduction of a better hope whereby we draw nigh to God. The establishment of the Melchisedec priesthood of Christ necessarily means a different approach to God than found in the law. Heb. 7 shows the superiority of the Melchisedec priesthood to the Aaronic, and its superior basis (Heb. 7:16). Then the statement (v. 17) of testimony to it, next that it displaces the basis for the Aaronic priesthood (Heb. 7:18), and then (Heb. 7:19) a better hope is connected with this better approach. For all that, there is no indication that the law itself is dead.

Now notice the erroneous idea stated above that if the law was still in effect, our Lord could not be a priest. Does not that statement mean that if the law still subsists now in the earth, the Lord Jesus could not now be a priest in the power of an indissoluble life, *in heaven*? Let us read Heb. 8:4, 5:

If then indeed he were upon earth, he would not even be a priest, there being those who offer the gifts according to the law, (who serve the representation and shadow of heavenly things, according as Moses was oracularly told [when] about to make the tabernacle . . .)

That is not to say that God regards Judaism as being acceptable to Him as the present way of approach. It is not -- and He was soon going to put an end to the temple through

the Romans (in AD 70 -- cp. Matt. 22). My point is that the law was still there, and not gone for all men as the system we are reviewing requires. The reason our Lord could not be a priest *on earth* is stated to be that there are priests (of the Aaronic order) on earth who offer gifts according to the law (Christ's priesthood is in heaven). This is not to affirm that God continued to recognize the Jewish system as valid. He did not. Let us review again what was said in regard to LSC's statements regarding the reinstatement of the Mosaic System after the rapture.

### AN IMPORTANT DISTINCTION

Can those who hold to an intercalated age of grace have had any correct idea at all about the subject of the probation of the first man, a central teaching of the recovered truth last century relating to dispensational truth -- and specifically the testing of the first man under the Mosaic Covenant and the law? So Judaism will be reinstated according to this system that says that the law is dead now and nailed to the cross. Somehow the law will get off the cross to which it was allegedly nailed; and not only that, but *Judaism itself will be reinstated* -- approved of God! -- so as to be there after the rapture. The fact that the Jews will set up a Judaistic system then, and that the remnant will be under the law, *in their consciences*, does not prove the reinstatement of Judaism, as such.

The Jewish system utilized the law in the testing of the first man during the probationary times. The Mosaic Covenant *recognized a standing in the flesh* before God. When the Judaistic system became no longer recognized by God as a consequence of the cross, that means that the standing of the first man, a standing in the flesh, was ended. Because that was ended, it does not automatically follow that the law itself, as the law, was ended. The probation was ended; the standing in the flesh was ended; the Mosaic System was ended as being acceptable to God; but the law itself did not die, nor was it nailed to the cross. This distinction is important.

There is a distinction, then, between the first man being tested under the Mosaic Covenant coming to an end at the cross and the status of the law subsequently. The Jewish system was God's relationship with man under the law in his Adamic standing. The testing involved the obedience of the first man in his Adamic nature. That standing in the flesh before God was finished at the cross. God's relationship with man under the law in Adamic standing was then terminated. The probation was completed. That leaves the law where it was. Moreover, the Mosaic age was left where it was. There has been no change in the age, while God meanwhile forms *a heavenly people* (1 Cor. 15:48). And there will be no change in the age until "the age to come" (the millennium) begins. Nor is there any testing now, neither by grace, nor under the law; nor will there be the reinstatement of what was God's relationship with man in Adamic standing under

121. *Ibid.*, pp. 283, 284.

the law. But, no doubt unwittingly, that reinstatement of the probation of the first man in his standing before God, in the flesh, under the law, is just what this false system really amounts to. It means the reinstatement of the Mosaic Covenant and the reinstatement of the first man in Adamic standing under the law -- though in reality, since the false system has man under test now, the first man has not lost that standing, even though the Second Man, the man of purpose, has been established before God. It ought to be clear that what we are reviewing is not dispensational truth but a false age-ism scheme.

### *An Objection to the Law not Being Dead Now*

It may be claimed that if the law is not dead now, then men are still under it, and under it during the age of grace.

**First:** we saw that *the* responsible man, i.e., *the first man*, has had his standing in responsibility, as under probation, as under trial, ended in the cross. We noted that this does not mean that natural men are no longer connected with the first man. They are; but the first man's *history, morally speaking*, is closed. God is done with him as to probation, except that having declared the conclusion from that probation, that men are **TOTALLY LOST**, He saves, but that is another matter.

Now, although the ground of man's responsibility is over in the sense of having wholly failed under it, when proved in every possible way, yet as to moral dealing with each individual, the responsibility is there to the full; and as an individual under moral dealing, a man has to go through the history of the process of responsibility and its failure; but he goes through it to bring out this, that he is lost already. He has to prove the truth of God's verdict that in man there is no good thing; and so the result of the principle of responsibility is for him to find out that he is lost, that the responsibility is over; not as if it was not true, but because he is lost and ruined, as the man who has lost all his money by foolish ways. It is important to keep up responsibility, but the individual is brought to the consciousness that on that ground it is all up with him. Man is lost. We have spent every farthing, and have only debts; these we have if that is any good. It is all over with the first man, and no mending of him will do: he is lost and ruined; but Christ came to save the lost.

Now the Second Man is set up. It is not a mending of the first man, but the substitution of the Second. There is no improvement or correction of the first man (although we are practically changed if we come to Christ), but the sins of the first Adam are all cleared away; and, secondly, the tree itself is cut down by the roots for faith. In the cross we see the responsibility met completely; Christ has met all the failure . . . <sup>122</sup>

**Second:** God can, and does, use the law to teach individual persons something. In 1 Tim. 1:8 we read:

Now we know that the law [is] good if anyone use it lawfully

We see it being used in Rom. 7 upon one who has "the inward man" (Rom. 7:22). The fact that the law is not dead does not mean that the probation of the first man, when under the law, must therefore now be continuing. Teaching individuals, as such, is not the continuance of the trial of the first man. The law may be used of God to teach an individual what the first man failed to learn when under probation, i.e., when under testing.

**Third:** the false notion of the intercalation of a "church age" means the reinstatement of the law after the church is removed. What ended the law? The cross, it is said. The law was nailed to the cross. (Precisely what un-nails it?)

And that puts the Jews in Daniel's 70th week back under the law in the pre-cross sense. Before the cross, the first man was being tested by the law. LSC puts the Jews in that position again. If I say that the Jewish remnant will be under the law *in their consciences*, that is not at all the same thing as the *reinstatement* of the law in LSC's system.

**Fourth:** What LSC's system means, in effect, is that Judaism will be reinstatement *by God* and *recognized by Him* as before the cross. It will then have validity before God. It is worth repeating what JND wrote regarding Judaism:

It is asked, "What is that which subsisted *de facto*, not by divine authority, not yet actually set aside, which Christians were called to come out of?" (Page 10.) It was Judaism at Jerusalem. It did subsist *de facto* till the destruction of Jerusalem; had no real divine authority after the cross, but was left by the patience of God, not yet set aside; and Christians, that is, Jewish Christians, had remained in it by thousands, nay, wanted to subject Gentile Christians to it, though God did not allow that; and the Jewish Christians were now called to come out of it. A great many of the priests even, it is said, were obedient to the faith. This was now to close. <sup>123</sup>

{Heb. 8:4}. For if He were on earth He should not be a Priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law. Therefore, at the very time when the heavenly priesthood was being unfolded to the Hebrews, there existed on earth another priesthood, which though no longer recognized, was yet in operation. This was a time of transition between the two dispensations. We gather from this that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written before the fall of Jerusalem. For what object? First, to show the Hebrews their heavenly privileges; but also to bid them go forth without the camp. <sup>124</sup>

The Mosaic age continues to this very hour. The law continues to this hour. Judaism was overthrown when God

122. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 32:236.

123. *Collected Writings* 15:223.

124. *Collected Writings* 28:20; see also 27:379, note.

sent his forces and destroyed those murders and burned their city (Matt. 22:7 -- AD 70). In the future, the Jews will set up, in the land, a form of Judaism. What will befall them will be worse than the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70:

. . . for then shall be great tribulation, such as has not been from [the] beginning of [the] world until now, nor ever shall be; and if those days had not been cut short, no flesh had been saved; but on account of the elect those days shall be cut short (Matt. 21, 22).

**Fifth:** keep in mind that this system says the law, which he equates with the Mosaic System, is reinstated by God. The LSC system means, in effect, that there will be the reinstatement of a God-recognized *Aaronic order* of priesthood. In the millennium, the Lord Jesus will be a priest upon His throne (Zech. 6:13). This is what the Melchisedec priesthood points to. The Melchisedec priesthood of Christ is founded on the finished work. The millennial sacrifices take their character from being offered under the High Priesthood of the Melchisedec order. Looking back to the cross, looking back to the finished work, the sacrifices are memorial in character. The sons of Zadok, offspring of the faithful warrior priest, Phinehas, shall lead in the priesthood (Ezek. 40-48). And though they are sons of Aaron, they do not function under the Aaronic order. They are under the order of the Melchisedec priesthood of Christ. Meanwhile, now, He functions in an Aaronic *function*, spiritually, though not in the Aaronic *order*. But this instructive subject is too large to develop here.

The truth is that there is no valid priesthood since the cross other than that of our Lord and what is under Him. Now, all believers are priests. And He is declared priest *forever*, after the *order* of Melchisedec. God only does, and will in the future, recognize this *order* of priesthood. Who, in the future, does LSC suppose will be the High Priest in Israel, of the Aaronic order, functioning according to that order, that God will recognize under the reinstated Mosaic System?

**Sixth:** the sacrifices under the Mosaic System pointed forward to the work of Christ. Those sacrifices were a standing witness to the fact that the once-for-all work was not yet done. What will be the meaning of the sacrifices during the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel? Keep in mind that the notion is that the Mosaic System will be reinstated at the point where it was rejected by God!

## Conclusion

We have looked at the passages brought forward by LSC to warrant his assertion that presently:

The complete passing, through the death of Christ, of the reign of the Mosaic Law, even for Israel, is the extended testimony of Scripture (ST4:240).

We have not found *any* testimony to this effect, much less finding “extended testimony.” We saw that he consistently used passages that show that the law is gone for those *in Christ* as if those passages said that the law is gone outside of Christ. Not only is this an unacceptable process, we have seen that Scripture indicates that the law is still here. But not only have we not found Scripture to teach that the law is gone, LSC has not told us how the law, alleged to be nailed to the cross, is going to be uncrucified, un-nailed, so as to be in effect again after the rapture of the saints. To say that the law was nailed to the cross so as to be gone for all men; to say that the cross removed the middle wall of partition for all men, and then to affirm that the law will be reinstated after the rapture of the saints; to say that the middle wall of partition done away as regards all men, by the cross, will be erected again after the rapture of the saints; to hold a system which, in effect, reinstates a valid Aaronic priesthood functioning as before the cross; offering sacrifices that look forward to the work of Christ; is, in my judgment, to say the least, deplorable. The idea appears to be part of a humanly devised system imposed on Scripture, namely, the creation of a “church age” wherein the first man is still under testing. It is a false Age-ism system calling itself dispensational truth – whereas it undermines dispensational truth.

“This age” is still the same Mosaic age. There is no earthly “age of grace” among the earthly ages. The (Mosaic) age goes on; the world goes on; and God is doing a heavenly work now in connection with the Second Man, the first having been set aside. Christianity is not an earthly age among the earthly ages. It is not a “heavenly age” among the earthly ages. The ages spoken of in Scripture that have to do with time are all earthly ages. The idea of a “heavenly age” among them is an expedient of the dispensational Age-ism system. The law is still here and it will still remain after the rapture of the saints.<sup>125</sup> It need not somehow come down off the cross to be reinstated. It never was abrogated. We do not need to solve how the law allegedly nailed to the cross is going to be un-nailed, for the law was never nailed to the cross.

In addition, during the tribulation period God will form a godly remnant of the Jews, under the law *in their consciences*, knowing it is broken, yet looking for Messiah’s deliverance and the restoration of the kingdom to Israel under the new covenant. But that is another subject.

125. When Christ introduces the “age to come,” i.e., the millennium, the law will be written in the hearts of Israel under the new covenant.





# *Acts: The History of the Spirit's Work in Testimony to the Resurrection and Glorification of Christ Parts 1 and 2*

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Acts 1</i></b> <b><i>Preparation for the Spirit's Coming</i></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Acts 2-12</i></b> <b><i>Preparation for the Unfolding of the Truth of the Mystery</i></b></p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PETER PROMINENT</b></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Acts 1: Ascension</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Acts 2-7: A Year of Grace Exposes the Jews' Rejection of the Spirit's Testimony</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Acts 8-12: A Transition Period in Preparation for Paul's Mission</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>DISCIPLES WAITING</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>CHURCH COMPOSED OF SAVED JEWS</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>GENTILES ADDED TO THE CHURCH</i></p>
<p>Acts 1 shows the spiritual exercises of the disciples prior to the coming of the Spirit. These exercises were based on the promise of the Spirit's coming, the prophecies of the coming kingdom in power, and the promise of Christ's return -- but not on a vision of Christ actually in the glory.</p> <p>Christ's entrance into glory was hidden from their view by the cloud. Their mission was not the unfolding of the heavenly sphere and our union with Christ there as members of His body. This was reserved for Paul. The full complement of the twelve apostles was established according to an O. T. means. All was now ready for the Spirit's coming at the opening of the heavenly parenthesis.</p> <p>The ministry of the twelve had especially in view testimony to the death, resurrection and exaltation of Christ.</p>	<p>Christ baptized (Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:5) those who had believed (John 7:39), in the power of one Spirit, into one body (1 Cor. 12:13) consequent upon Christ's exaltation (John 7:39; Acts 2:32, 33). The Lord added to the church daily those who were to be saved (Acts 2:47). While the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16), i.e., the Jewish election of grace (Rom. 11:5), were exclusively being called during this brief period, the Spirit's testimony to Christ's resurrection and glorification was presented to Israel for their rejection before the gospel proceeded to Samaria and beyond. This testimony occupied the year of grace (Luke 13:6-9). The Spirit's testimony through Stephen closed this year, with Stephen giving his life as the first Christian martyr. He had traced their history of always resisting the Spirit (Acts 7). Stephen answers to the embassy in the parable in Luke 19:11ff. While the cross ended the testing standing of the first man, Christ, the Second Man, had taken a place in glory, and it was needful to show that the first man (in the character of the favored Jew) would not have it so, before the Spirit gathered in Gentiles. Saul, soon to become an apostle for this purpose, is here seen as a persecutor. During this year of exposure of the fall of Israel, the apostles ministered the Word in the power of the Spirit, accompanied by signs (Acts 2-4). His presence as dwelling in the church detected deceit (Acts 5) to keep the saints clean, and sustained unity and order in the face of internal difficulty (Acts 6).</p> <p>This testimony was not really a continuation of the previous kingdom proclamation, for there was no preaching that the kingdom was at hand. The Spirit called upon them to repent for the slaying of Christ and then the Lord would return and set up the kingdom. (And eventually, connected with their repentance this will happen). God thus cleared the ground for the unfolding of the heavenly things; for He knew that they would not repent, yea, that they could not unless He acted sovereignly to move them to do so. Acts 2-7 shows that a blinding, in part, came upon them (Rom. 11:7-10; 1 Thess. 2:15-17).</p>	

After the year of exposure of the fall of Israel, the testimony of the Spirit "branches out into the free action of the Spirit of God, independent of, but not separated from, the twelve and Jerusalem as the center" (J. N. Darby). Samaritans were brought into blessing, as well as an Ethiopian proselyte (a son of Ham), etc. (Acts 8), a token of the Spirit's sovereignty in grace. A special vessel of grace (1 Tim. 1:13-16) was formed for future work in connection with seeing the Lord in glory, Who said, "why persecutest thou me?" This view of the Lord gave character to the apostleship and ministry of Paul, who unfolded the heavenly glory and our union with the Head in heaven. Thus Paul immediately preached Christ as the Son of God (Acts 9), the character in which He is the foundation of the church (Matt. 16:16-18). Formally, however, he did not enter upon his special mission until the time of Acts 13.

Next, through Peter's continued ministry, Eneas and Dorcas experience the Spirit's power (Acts 9) away from Jerusalem. Then the Spirit added Gentiles to the church (Acts 10 & 11) with the lesson that God declared the Gentiles suited to hear the gospel and believe. The free action of the Spirit brought in more Gentiles (Acts 11:20, 21), though in sending Barnabas from Jerusalem the connection with that center was kept up. The Spirit's action was also manifested in prophecy (Acts 11:27-30).

In Acts 12 we see the ministry of angels for the heirs of salvation (Heb. 1:14). As Paul's conversion reminds us of the future conversion of Israel, in answer to the Lord's prayer, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do," so Peter's deliverance reminds us of that future deliverance of the Jewish remnant.

Acts 8 - 12 is transitional and preparatory for a new mission about to begin from the Gentile assembly at Antioch -- without dependence on Jerusalem or the 12 apostles for its validity.

# *Acts: The History of the Spirit's Work in Testimony to the Resurrection and Glorification of Christ Part 3*

<b>Acts 13-28</b> <i>The Truth of the Mystery Unfolded</i>	
<b>PAUL PROMINENT</b>	
<b>Acts 13-20: The Mystery Proclaimed</b>	<b>Acts 20-28: Prisoner of the Lord for the Gentiles</b>
<b>CHURCH PREDOMINANTLY GENTILE</b>	
<p>Acts 13 introduces the Spirit's testimony in Paul's mission, beginning formally at Antioch, based on the fact that the church, which is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22, 23), was formed by the baptism in the power of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13) at Pentecost, once for all. All added to the body since that baptism in the Spirit receive the same "Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4; John 14:16, 26; 16:7). Such are "in Christ" and so there were those "who also were in Christ before me," said Paul (Rom. 16:7). Paul's mission included the unfolding of the truth of the mystery of Christ and the church, as well as the gospel of the glory. As the Jews refused the Spirit's testimony to Christ in glory, so they refused the Spirit's testimony of grace to the Gentiles.</p> <p>"The Holy Ghost now calls, through prophets, for the separation of Barnabas and Saul for the work to which he had called them, and they are sent forth by the Holy Ghost. It is a new kind of apostle. The first thing we find is a figure of the total blinding of the Jews who resist the Holy Ghost, and the eyes of Gentiles opened to believe. Notwithstanding this, Paul (for he is now called Paul) according to the Lord's mind goes always first to the Jews, and afterwards to the Greeks. John Mark leaves them. After having preached round, they choose elders for the churches, of whom we here read first among Gentiles. He then returns to Antioch, and there we find what the laying on of hands had been: that is, they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they had now fulfilled. And there they abode long time with the disciples.</p> <p>"The church having now been freely established on heavenly principles outside Jerusalem, Satan seeks to introduce confusion by bringing in the law upon them; and God, to maintain unity, causes the matter to be referred to Jerusalem, so that the apostles there, and the church, should themselves declare the Gentiles free . . . they dismiss Judas and Silas; then we get another thing, Paul gathering fellow-laborers around himself . . . Now, we get the direct guidance of the Holy Ghost in the carrying out of his ministry; but that direct guidance as not excluding his drawing conclusions from divine intimations sent to him. Then we have Paul pursuing his ministry -- kept of God everywhere -- the very demons forced to own him -- and as competent as the other apostles to confer the Holy Ghost: free ministry, under the guidance of God's Spirit. still going on" (<i>Collected Writings of J. N. Darby 19:29</i>).</p>	<p>"And now Paul, returning to Jerusalem, intimates the close of his ministry in those parts to the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, predicting the efforts of Satan, and calling upon them to watch and labor with the same earnestness and energy as had marked his own labors amongst them . . . He now returns to Jerusalem, the Holy Ghost warning him, and the disciples telling him by the Spirit, not to go up. On the suggestion of the elders at Jerusalem, he accommodates himself to Jewish ceremonies, the believers at Jerusalem being all zealous of the law. This brings him into captivity; but the effect of the captivity is to bring him into the place of testimony before the Jews, who refuse grace to the Gentiles, before Lysias, Felix, Festus, Agrippa, and Nero. But he is a prisoner all the time, and as such he works at Rome. (Paul's gospel was a prisoner at Rome from the first day.) This closes the testimony to the Jews; and thus closes the history we have of the dissemination of the gospel in apostolic times" (<i>Collected Writings of J. N. Darby 19:30</i>).</p> <p>The Jews had rejected the Lord Jesus when He came in grace here below, thereby closing the history and trial of the first man. The Second Man, having been exalted above, consequently sent the Spirit in testimony to that exaltation -- first to the Jews, but they did not repent of their wickedness. And finally, they did what they could to hinder the grace flowing down from the glory, ministered by the Spirit to the Gentiles. And connected with these repeated exposures of their state, the Spirit proceeded with another work, the opening of the heavenly parenthesis on the day of Pentecost, the formation of the body of Christ on that day, the gathering in of Gentiles and the unfolding of the heavenly truth of Christ's glory and the position of the saints, through the ministry of Paul. All was perfectly timed as only God can sovereignly do for His own glorification in Christ. For God has but one purpose: to glorify Himself in Christ -- but in two spheres, the earthly and the heavenly. The Spirit's present work regarding the heavenly parenthesis will end at the rapture. Even so, come Lord Jesus!</p>

R. A. Huebner 1993

## Chapter 3.9

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### *The Opening of the Heavenly Parenthesis*

#### *With an Answer to So-called Ultradispensationalism*

##### *Introduction*

At the rear cover there is a chart outlining the major divisions of the book of Acts, which book gives us the history of the Spirit's testimony to Christ resurrected and glorified. The truths connected with the heavenly parenthesis were not unfolded suddenly on the day that parenthesis opened. The chart will assist in seeing how God worked in unfolding the truth of the mystery of Christ and the church, though the heavenly parenthesis opened on the day of Pentecost.

The opening of the heavenly parenthesis is interconnected with truths and facts that would help us understand why the heavenly parenthesis (which is bound up with the formation of the body of Christ) opened when it did. In particular, it is important to understand the truth regarding the two men (1 Cor. 15:45-47), when the trial of that first man was completed and consequently the second man (Christ) was established,<sup>126</sup> and when the fall of Israel occurred. We will also examine in some detail the subject of the baptism in the Spirit, when it occurred and the results. Pentecost, and Joel's prophecy (cited in Acts 2), will also be considered.

There are Christians who claim that the body of Christ was begun with the salvation of Paul. I will refer to this as the Acts 9 position. Others claim that the body began in Acts 13 (Acts 13 position). Others say it was formed in connection with Paul being in prison (Acts 28 position). These later are followers of the scheme of E. W. Bullinger (1837-1913) and have been called "Bullingerites" and "ultra-dispensationalists." Many of them hold the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked -- a doctrine that is a fundamental

affront to the work of the atonement.<sup>127</sup> E. W. Bullinger seemed to hold a sort of Acts 13 type position in his *The Church Epistles*,<sup>128</sup> but under the influence of Charles Welch he switched to the Acts 28 position.

Subsequently, J. C. O'Hair (independently of E. W. Bullinger, he claims) took an Acts 13 position. From this the Acts 9 position sprang, C. R. Stam apparently being the father of this variation. These do not hold annihilationism or the unconscious state of the dead.

I have thought it well to thus briefly touch on these errors because we will consider teachings of the Acts 9 and 13 positions, showing how refusal of the fact that the body was formed at Pentecost leads to setting up two churches, two baptisms in the Spirit and two different meanings for persons being "in Christ," thus even placing O. T. saints "in Christ," and other errors (such as the denial, in effect, that the standing and testing of the first man was ended at the cross; consequently leading to error concerning the new creation). And such supposedly revel in the truth of the mystery -- but I suggest that these positions lower Christ's glory and confuse the Christian position and the truths that Christians ought to apprehend.

The next two pages give a true view of the Acts, contra "ultradispensationalism" (not the best description), Then we shall examine some of the erroneous teachings on which "ultradispensationalism" rests beginning with how the system necessarily denies that the trial of the first man ended at the cross and that consequently the Second Man took His place.

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126. Of course He was the second man before the cross, when here on earth in manhood, as to His person, but it was in resurrection that He took the position of the second man.

127. E. W. Bullinger did not hold the idea of the annihilation of the wicked though he held a doctrine sometimes called "soul sleep" of the dead until resurrection.

128. Some of Dr. Bullinger's notions regarding the mystery of Christ and the church were examined in *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 1:124, etc.

## *The Trial of the First Man Completed at the Cross*

Here I shall comment on this subject in view of the system which says that the body of Christ was not formed at Pentecost (Acts 2), doing so from the perspective of the teachings associated with the name of J. N. Darby -- which I believe to be truth taught in the Word of God.

In effect, this system means that the trial, the probation of the first man, was not completed at the cross, for Israel was still under testing in the early chapters of Acts. Thus, the early chapters in Acts a part of a period, such say, of *prophecy*, and not part of the time during which the church as a *mystery* existed. Thus there are two churches, the first being a *kingdom church*, beginning before the cross and extending through the early chapters of Acts. Then, consequent upon the salvation of Paul (Acts 9 position) the *mystery church*, which displaced the kingdom church, was begun (in some very vague way).

1 Cor. 15:45-47 reads:

Thus also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul; the last Adam a quickening spirit. But that which is spiritual [was] not first, but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual: the first man out of [the] earth, made of dust; the second man, out of heaven.

The first man, Adam, was appointed the head of the natural, earthly creation. Such he was in his own person. But he fell, and after the fall he begot children likewise fallen. Consequent upon the fall, he became the head of a fallen race. This fallen race is an order of men ranged under a fallen head, Adam. It is an earthly order characterized by "the first man." This order of man stood before God in responsibility. Adam had eaten of the tree of responsibility, not of life. In the fall he had the knowledge of good and evil, without the moral power to please God. His order of *fallen man* was under probation, under testing, from the fall until the rejection of Christ. All this is centered in what Scripture calls "the first man." We need to see that "the first man" does not merely refer to the first in time. It has a moral significance and refers to all ranged under Adam's headship as fallen. All men are naturally a replication of him as fallen and hence we are "in Adam" naturally; or, as Scripture also says, "in the flesh." The trial of the first man ended in putting Christ on the cross. Hence in the parable concerning the vineyard, we read:

And at last he sent to them his son, saying, They will have respect for my son (Matt. 21:37).

Yes, the time of respect will eventually come, but meanwhile He was cast out, closing the times of testing of the first man. Our Lord said:

Now is [the] judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out: and I, if I be lifted up out of the earth, will draw all men unto me. But this he said signifying by what death he was about to die (John 12:31).

Morally speaking, this was the end of the world, though the

sentence awaits execution, as He here anticipated. Another Scripture reads:

But now once in the consummation of the ages he has been manifested for [the] putting away of sin by his sacrifice (Heb. 9:26).

There is still an age to come (Heb. 6., etc.). The consummation of the ages, here, refers to the ages (I did not say dispensations, nor did Scripture) of the trial of fallen man, the first man. It is His sacrifice which terminated the trial of the first man. The conclusion in Rom. 3 is that the first man is "without strength" when looked as at alive in sins. Indeed:

"Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God; for neither indeed can it be (Rom. 8:7).

Colossians, which stands between Romans and Ephesians in doctrinal unfoldings, declares man to be "alienated and enemies in mind by wicked works" (Col. 1:21), goes further and declares man to be "dead in offenses" (Col. 2:13). Ephesians simply begins with man being "dead in your offenses and sins" (Eph. 2:1) and then shows the believer this:

(we too being dead in offenses,) has quickened us with the Christ, (ye are saved by grace,) and has raised us up together, and has made [us] sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:5, 6).

Christ is called the *last* Adam because there will be no other race after the one He formed. The word "Adam" signifies, in both cases, the headship of a race. The first man, Adam, was the head of the natural creation on earth while Christ is head of the new creation.<sup>129</sup>

Now, Christ took the place of the last Adam in resurrection, and this was founded upon an accomplished redemption. Christ is "the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3:14). When did that creation of God (i.e., the new creation) begin? When Paul was saved (Acts 9);<sup>130</sup> or when he began his formal ministry (Acts 13)? Of course not. When Christ rose from among the dead He had that place. Thus Col. 1:18: "Who is the beginning, firstborn<sup>131</sup> from among the dead." He stood forth in glorious resurrection in resurrection-life. He had laid down His life, but took it again in resurrection, and thus we call it resurrection-life, life on the other side of death.

The Son had ever quickened whom He would. Thus, OT saints, and also His disciples (except Judas) were quickened, that is, had divine life, were born again. But His disciples that

129. Keep in mind that He is also head of other things also (Eph. 1:10, 21-23).

130. P. M. Sadler, editor of *The Berean Searchlight*, in a letter to me, dated Dec. 15, 1989, affirmed that the new creation began with the salvation of Paul.

131. "Only begotten Son" is a divine name. "Firstborn" is an acquired title of rank, of preeminence. As come into the world He takes the place of firstborn of all creation; as risen from among the dead, He takes the place of firstborn from among the dead; and concerning brethren, He must needs be firstborn among many brethren. It is not at all a matter of priority in time; it is a matter of preeminence in rank and dignity.

were with Him, though having divine life were not connected with Him as one in life with Him in resurrection-life. Such a connection could only be with Him in His risen manhood. Thus he Himself told us that before His death He abode alone:

Except the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bears much fruit (John 12:24).

He rose from among the dead in resurrection-life, Head of the new creation, and shortly thereafter He breathed upon His disciples (John 20:22) the Spirit as power of life, thus characterizing the divine life they already had (as having been born of God) as resurrection-life (John 20). The grain of wheat fell into the ground and died and brought forth much fruit (John 12:24). He now no longer abode alone, but the disciples (as we do now also) formed one plant in Him (John 12:24), now having life in abundance<sup>132</sup> (John 10:10). This is indeed *oneness* of life in the Son (1 John 5:11).<sup>133</sup>

The second man (Christ) is out of heaven (1 Cor. 15:47). This does not mean that His humanity came from heaven. It came from Mary under the overshadowing power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). The second man being out of heaven refers to what characterizes the second man. It refers to what is moral. He is characteristically a heavenly man. He was from heaven. He was of heaven. And He will eternally bear this character. And, oh joy, He has connected us with Himself eternally, too. Not that we could be in deity; we have life in the Son in connection with His risen manhood, now glorified above all heavens.

None of this could be until that which was first, that which was natural, was fully tried and found wanting. All this blessedness awaited Christ's death and resurrection. It could not be earlier (John 12:24). There was a long period of trial of the first man, Adam. What was first was natural (1 Cor. 15:46). The principle of this is illustrated throughout the book of Genesis where the one born first does not obtain the inheritance! Have you ever noticed that?

There is also the instructive word "yet" in Rom. 5:8. Why does it say while we were "yet" sinners? The word refers to the fact that though God tested the first man (all of us ranged under his headship naturally) in every way, he was yet but a sinner.

What was the last trial of the first man? Note that while Israel stood in a special place, their trial was a part of the trial of the first man -- now with promises, the law, priesthood, sacrifices, the glory cloud, kings and prophets and the covenants. All was failure upon failure. That is why the prophetic ministry became so pronounced. But it was the trial of the first man in the persons of the favored nation. The

parable of Matt. 21:33-46 tells the tale. The owner of the vineyard had one remaining thing to do. He sent His Son. They will reverence His Son, He said -- yes, but in a future day, of course, when God will also answer the prayer of that Son, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

The crucifixion closed the trial of man. It is a grave mistake to think that the preaching in Acts 2-7 or 2-12 indicates that the Jew was still under trial, that the first man was still under trial. God's dealings in trial concerning the first man were over at the cross, and the second man consequently took His place in glory, upon which the Spirit came in a special capacity.

There are two truths that especially characterize the heavenly parenthesis:

- (1) Christ is in glory.
- (2) The Spirit is here in the special capacity of testimony to a resurrected and glorified Christ and for forming a heavenly company united to the Head in heaven as members of one body, etc. His coming at Pentecost opened the heavenly parenthesis and when He, the restrainer of 2 Thess. 2 leaves at the rapture of the saints, the heavenly parenthesis will thereby be closed.

Now, it is much to be observed that Christ taking His place in glory and the coming of the Holy Spirit in this special capacity is dependent upon the trial of the first man having been completed. Christ resurrected and glorified is proof of it. Note the sequence: "But that which is spiritual [was] not first, but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual" (1 Cor. 15:46). It is contrary to Scripture that the natural (when the first man was under trial) should have a standing before God (as under testing) at the same time as the spiritual (when the second man took His place). When did the second man take his place? When Paul was saved (Acts 9) or began his formal ministry (Acts 13)? Where is Scripture for such notions?

I ask, when did Christ take His place? What did it follow? Paul's salvation or the beginning of his formal ministry? Listen:

... having made [by himself] the purification of sins, set himself down on the right hand of the greatness on high, taking a place so much better than the angels ... (Heb. 1:3, 4).

Well, I suppose, no one would think otherwise than that He took His place consequent upon His finished work and resurrection. Why don't all see that therefore the trial of the first man (and therefore the trial of the first man in the persons of the favored nation, the Jews) was over by their rejection and crucifixion of the Son? Apparently not all Christians see the end of the trial of the first man at the death of Christ, because they say that what they call "the dispensation of the Spirit" (or some, "the dispensation of grace" or "the dispensation of the mystery") began at Acts 9, or 13 or 28 or somewhere else.

132. This refers to the character of the resurrection-life, not to jubilation or fruitfulness in the Christian.

133. Interestingly, in *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:406 and 3:15, referring to Christ as quickening spirit, he capitalizes "Spirit."

Part of their system is that the Jews continued to be tested after Acts 2 under *the previous dispensation* (or an additional one intercalated) and up to Acts 9, or 13 or 28 according to the school of opinion they espouse.

Those who delay the formation of the body of Christ to some time after Acts 2 do not apprehend that the testing of the first man ended with the cross. This seems implicit in ideas concerning what a dispensation is. For example:

God Himself never changes. In His person, essence and character He is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8). His dealings with man, however, have undergone various changes down through man's history -- changes made necessary down through man's history. Identifying these changes is a basic issue in studying the Bible dispensationally for a dispensation is a particular program that God administers (or dispenses) for man's obedience.<sup>134</sup>

Since that writer holds that we are in a dispensation now, with the idea it is "a particular program that God administers (or dispenses) for man's obedience," this implies that man is still under testing. That is, this system implicitly denies that the cross ended the testing of the first man. Worse yet, what this writer says implies that the first man is still under test even after whenever he thinks the fall of Israel occurred. Indeed, this is implicit in his definition of a dispensation. And this brings us to the subject of Israel's fall and when it occurred.

### *The Stumbling of Israel*

Rom. 11:11-15 reads:

I say then, Have they stumbled in order that they might fall [πεσωσιν]? Far be the thought: but by their fall [παραπτωματι] [there is] salvation to the nations to provoke them to jealousy. But if their fall [παραπτωμα] [be the] world's wealth, and their loss [the] wealth of [the] nations, how much rather their fullness? For I speak to you, the nations, inasmuch as I am apostle of nations, I glorify my ministry: if by any means I shall provoke to jealousy [them which are] my flesh, and shall save some from among them. For if their casting away [be the] world's reconciliation, what [their] reception but life from among the dead?

Rom. 11 does not support the notion that there is no future for Israel as if they have irremediably fallen. They have fallen but not irremediably. (Of course, the non-elect have indeed fallen irremediably). In verse 11, the word "fall" (πεσωσιν) means to fall irremediably so as not to regain the former place. "Far be the thought," says Paul. The next two uses of the word "fall" in verses 11 and 12 are translated "trespass" by W. Kelly and others. This is, perhaps, clearer.

At any rate, it is a fall that involves a moral trespass on Israel's part.

Israel has stumbled but not so as to fall irremediably. Verse 15 speaks of their casting away, meaning that they are laid aside. The natural branches (Jews) of the olive tree (a figure for the line of God's blessings) have been broken out (Rom. 11:16-24) but not the elect Jews; because *some* of the branches were broken out (Rom. 11:17), thus not all.

Israel stumbled and fell (Rom. 11:11), were cast away (Rom. 11:15) and blinded (Rom. 11:7), or as Wm. Kelly has it, were "hardened." The question before us is when did this happen? I answer, the stumbling and fall and hardening of Israel is interlocked with the end of the trial of the first man and thus occurred at the death of the Lord Jesus, Whom they slew. This is the trespass of Rom. 11. Just imagine delaying this to when Paul was saved,<sup>135</sup> or began his formal ministry or was put in prison or who knows where. Likely some will say it occurred when Israel finally rejected the "reoffer" of the kingdom in Acts. Such notions are the exigencies of a false system. The reader should have noted by now that *implicit in moving the formation of the body of Christ from Pentecost is the denial that the cross marked the end of the trial of the first man*. In effect, this makes something else the turning point instead of Christ and the cross -- and thus far lowers Christ's work. How so, you say? Why, in the cross God fully judged the first man, and put him away from before Himself. This is why the Christian can reckon himself dead (Rom 6). This is why a Christian can say, "I am crucified with Christ . . . ." It is because the standing in Adam, the first man, was terminated at calvary. It was part of Christ's work. Giving man any standing after that lowers the work of Christ.

Christ Himself is the occasion of Israel's fall:

And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary his mother, Lo, this [child] is set for the fall and rising up of many in Israel (Luke 2:34).

It is Christ Himself that is the touchstone of this whole question. Matt. 21:44 reads:

And he that falls on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.

Here are the two positions of our Lord: on earth as the stone of stumbling, and above as the smiting stone. "And the chief priests and the Pharisees, having heard his parables, knew that he spoke about them" (Matt. 21:45). Reader, I ask you, what was it that sealed their doom? Was it not what they did to Him Who was set for the fall and rising of many in Israel (Luke 2:34)? Was it not that they fell on this stone? He was

134. R. Jordan (Acts 9 position), *The Grace Journal*, Nov. 1989, p. 1.

135. C. R. Stam (Acts 9 position) says that "God's dealings with Israel at Pentecost prove that He had not yet concluded them in unbelief or cast them away at that time," *Acts Dispensationally Considered* Chicago: The Berean Bible Society, 1954, 1:69.

the stone that the builders rejected (Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17). Yes, He was the stone of stumbling and the rock of offence (1 Pet. 2:7, 8). The subsequent preaching to Israel (Acts 2-11) cannot change this. The parable in Matt. 21:33-42 is express:

And they took him, and cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him (v. 39).

And the hearers of the parable pronounced their own judgment. The judgment, note well, turns upon the casting out and killing of the heir.

When therefore the Lord of the vineyard comes, what shall he do to those husbandmen? They say to him, He will miserably destroy those evil men . . . (Matt. 21:40, 41).

The rejection of the Lord Jesus is very strongly marked in Matthew which emphasizes God's governmental dealings, ways and changes. In Matt. 12, the leadership committed the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, namely, saying that the power (confessedly) working in Christ was Beelzebub's (Matt. 12:24). It may be perceived that in the unfolding of God's purpose in Matthew's account, this led to the parabolic form of teaching wherein certain things were meant to be hidden from the rejecters of Christ (Matt. 13:13-15). He had hinted to them that they would make of Him their adversary (Matt. 5:25).

The rejection of the Lord came to a climax at the cross. Just before He was crucified we read of His lament in Matt. 23:37-39 where He said, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate." A few days later, the awful shout of rejection rose up before God, "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15). Then they crucified the heir (Matt. 21:38) and therefore the kingdom of God was taken from them (Matt. 21:43). Thus Israel stumbled and fell.

The fact is that the Lord sought fruit from Israel for three years, for Israel was a fig tree without figs, and the sentence was:

. . . cut it down; why does it also render the ground useless (Luke 13:7).

The added year (Acts 2 - 7) does not change the sentence against Israel. Another year was added to demonstrate, not that it would produce fruit, but to prove that the stumbling, the fall, the blindness, had indeed taken place. It was *a year of exposure* of the state of Israel, with respect to the rejected one now in the glory of God, while the believing remnant (the Israel of God) continued to be augmented. After that the Word began to go forth to the Gentiles. It was not a continuation of the testing of the first man. It was an added demonstration of Israel's resistance to the Spirit (Acts 7), Who answers to the servant of the parable. They cast Christ out down here *and* would not have a Christ in glory either (Luke 19:11ff; Acts 7:54-58).

Additionally, when charged with the murder of the Lord

Jesus, those whose hearts were touched by the preaching in Acts 2ff had an opportunity, as it were, to take the place of the manslayer and run into the city of refuge, while the rest were left for the avenger of blood to overtake them (Deut. 19).

It is true that reconciliation was sent to the Gentiles consequent upon Israel's fall (Rom. 11:11, 12, 15). This does not prove that the message was sent (or had to be sent) to the Gentiles, say, the day Israel fell, or the day after. There was a lapse of time marked by the *exposure* of Israel's resisting the testimony of the Spirit regarding the resurrection and exaltation of Christ. So before the Gentiles were blessed and the mystery was revealed, the Jews were addressed first (Acts 3:26). This was the first step in the **NEW** mission, new because it was to the Gentiles, beginning, however, at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8).

The Acts 9/13 position advocates have a difficult time pin-pointing the fall of Israel, whereas it is interlocked with the end of the testing of the first man; and thus the fall of Israel occurred when the testing of the first man ended (the cross). Consequently, the second man was glorified. *The false system results in a concurrent standing for both the first and the second man.* Now, Scripture declares that there was no concurrency:

But that which is spiritual [was] not first, but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual: the first man out of [the] earth, made of dust; the second man, out of heaven (1 Cor. 15:46, 47).

Previously, it was pointed out how a false definition of a dispensation betrayed the fact that implicit in that definition was a denial that the trial of the first man ended at the cross. Of course, it would follow from this error that the same writer would find the fall of Israel somewhere in Acts instead of at the cross -- in order to suit the theory of the body of Christ being formed with Paul's salvation or his formal ministry. The following citation will show this and also many errors concerning how the N.T. is handled as a consequence of delaying the formation of the body of Christ to a time subsequent to Acts 2:

**Time Past:** In *Matthew through John* we find the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ to the nation Israel. In the book of Acts we have the fall of Israel and salvation going to the Gentiles through the ministry of the Apostle Paul.

**But Now:** *Romans through Philemon* provide the doctrine for the present dispensation of grace.

**Ages To Come:** *Hebrews through Revelation* focus on the ages <sup>136</sup> to come when God will bring to fruition His

136. I hope the writer meant to say "age" because "the ages to come" refers to the eternal state while "the age to come" is the millennium.

purposes for both the nation Israel and the Body of Christ.<sup>137</sup>

While Bullingerism gave rise to the term “ultra-dispensationalism,” there are references now to that as “extreme” and the Acts 9/13 positions as “moderate.” Distinctions do have value (especially if one feels misrepresented). “Moderate” is too mild a word when I look at the last quotation above.

## Summary

The point at which the testing of the first man ended involves many truths, some of which we have considered.

1. The testing of the first man ended with the death of Christ, not at the salvation of Paul, nor at the beginning of his formal ministry, nor when he was put in prison, nor when Israel finally rejected the “reoffer” of the kingdom, whenever that is supposed to have been.
2. Israel was cast away consequent upon slaying the Lord Jesus.
3. The second man took His place in glory consequent upon finishing redemption and its correlative ending of the testing of the first man.
4. As a consequence of His taking His place above, the Holy Spirit came down in a special capacity. He came to empower the disciples for the **NEW** mission, to the nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8), and to baptize those who had believed on Christ into one body (1 Cor. 12:13).

## The Baptism in the Spirit

### THE MAN IN THE GLORY

It is blessed indeed to contemplate our Lord Jesus as the man in the glory of God. The eternal Son, Who always was, is, and will be, uninterruptedly, in the bosom of the Father (John 1:18) yet speaks of Himself thus:

. . . and have believed that I came out from God. I came out from the Father and have come into the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father (John 16:27, 28).

How unspeakably precious this is to the soul! He came out from God and came out from the Father. Have you noticed that this is, so to speak, movement in the Godhead? Why, yes, my soul, it is movement in the Godhead, the Son coming out from the Father and coming into the world. The Father was the Father when (and before, too) the Son so came out. And it was **the Son**, as such, Who came out from **the Father**, as such, before He came into the world in incarnation.

In John 17:5 we read:

And now glorify me, thou Father, along with thyself, with the glory which I had along with thee before the world was.

The blessed Lord never glorified Himself in any way. As man He asks and receives everything. And now He requests to enter that glory as to presence and place. It was a glory He had along with the Father before the world was -- only now, oh staggering thought, He would enter that personal glory as man!

He had told His own that He was going to prepare a place for them (John 14:3). This was a place above, to be shared with Him. And *as soon as He entered* the place above, as man, victorious over sin and hell and death, *the place was ready*. He has not been busy for 1900 years getting it prepared. No, no. When He entered there as glorified man, it was by that very entry prepared.

He said, “and I sanctify myself for them . . .” (John 17:19). This sanctification is not in a moral sense -- could not be -- but refers to setting Himself apart in the glory for effecting our practical sanctification to God. And thus He is in the glory the transforming object to our gaze (2 Cor. 3:18).

The cross marked the end of the testing of the first man; and consequent upon that work the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father (Rom. 6:4). Yea, and God gave Him glory (1 Peter 1:21). There is a consequence of the glorification of Christ. The Spirit could not come until Christ was glorified (John 7:39).

The finished work of Christ, and the consequent resurrection and glorification above is the great change upon which all devolves, not the salvation or formal ministry of a servant of Christ (Paul), however illustrious, or anything else. See, for example, in Eph. 1:20-23 how all is connected with Christ’s glorification. And so the giving of gifts is likewise the expression and demonstration of His ascension into glory (Eph. 4:9-13). We see some of these gifts functioning in the early part of Acts, including Philip the evangelist.<sup>138</sup>

### THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT

The Spirit is omnipresent, present everywhere. He was here in O.T. times. Yet our Lord spoke of the Spirit as One Who would come:

But I say the truth to you, It is profitable for you that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I go I will send him to you (John 16:7).

Here we learn that in order for the Spirit to come, the Lord Jesus would have to go away (into the glory, of course). We also learn that as thus gone away, the Lord would send the

138. In Eph. 4, the gifts given are the men themselves, given from *Christ*, the head of the body, to activate and stir up the ministry of all the joints and bands. In 1 Cor. 12, the gifts are looked at as in the persons and are manifestations of the *Spirit* for profit. In Rom. 12, the gifts are viewed as services to *God*.

137. R. Jordan, *The Grace Journal*, Nov. 1989, p. 5.



Spirit. Not only must the Lord go away before the Spirit would come, the Lord had to be glorified first:

But this he said concerning the Spirit, which they that believed on him were about to receive; for [the] Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified (John 7:39).

There are several other Scriptures to note:

And I will beg the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see him nor know him; but ye know him, for he abides with you, and shall be in you (John 14:16-17).

. . . but the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and will bring to your remembrance all the things which I have said to you (John 14:26).

Those who receive the Spirit during the heavenly parenthesis will have Him for ever.<sup>139</sup> He is not a come-and-go Spirit. The words, “for he abides with you,” do not mean that they had Him indwelling already, for He had not come yet to abide in them. It is a statement of character; He is such a One as abides -- once come, of course, in this special capacity. He was not yet in them, but “shall be in you.”

Note also that the Father would send the Spirit in the Son’s name. In John 16:7 we saw that the Son would send Him. Thus *both* would send Him; and the Spirit would be the divine remembrancer and teacher.

In Luke 24:49 we read:

And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but do ye remain in the city till ye be clothed with power from on high.

The Spirit is *the promise of the Father* and thus He is the Holy Spirit of promise, as we read of Him in Eph. 1:13.

. . . in whom also, having believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

Why is He so designated in Eph. 1 as “the Holy Spirit of promise?” It is to draw our attention to the connection with what transpired at Pentecost when the Spirit came and baptized those who had believed into one body (1 Cor. 12:13). He came at Pentecost as the promise of the Father and formed the saints into one body united to the glorified head in heaven. The body was formed once for all and we are joined to it by the same Holy Spirit of promise (via sealing) that formed that body.

Before the Lord Jesus was received up into glory He,

. . . commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem but to await the promise of the Father, which [said he] ye have heard of men. For John indeed baptized with water but ye shall be baptized with [en] the Holy Spirit after now not many days (Acts 1:4, 5).

So they waited; and the Spirit came at Pentecost, the 50th day after the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits (Lev. 23). The sheaf of firstfruits was waved before Jehovah the morrow after the sabbath following the passover; i.e., on our Sunday. This signified Christ’s resurrection as the firstfruits. Now, of the grain of the same crop from which the sheaf of the firstfruits came, were made two loaves. However, leaven was put in the two loaves, for there is an evil nature in those who compose the present testimony; but it was baked, and fire (judgment, self-judgment) stops the action of the leaven. Two loaves speak of testimony, testimony to Him Who is the firstfruits.

The Spirit came, and parted tongues, as of fire, sat upon each of those waiting according to our Lord’s instructions. In Acts 2:32, 33 we read:

This Jesus has God raised up, whereof all we are witnesses. Having therefore been exalted by the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which ye behold and hear.

So our Lord, having been exalted received the Spirit the second time. He received Him once as perfect man, in bodily form as a dove, for Him did the Father seal without measure. But now as glorified man, He received the Spirit in consequence of His work which glorified God and saves and cleanses sinners so that they, too, may receive the Spirit. The Father gave Him, as glorified man, up there in the glory, the Spirit, (i.e., gave Him the promised Spirit) and the glorified Lord Jesus Christ sent that Holy Spirit of promise here below. Thus were the Scriptures we have been considering fulfilled. This was how both the Father and the Son sent the Spirit. Note, too, that when we considered how the Son prayed in John 17:5, asking to enter that glory which He had with the Father before the world began, we noted that as man He asks and receives all. He did not glorify himself. And here, in the glory, as the glorified man, He asked the Father for the Spirit for his disciples (John 14:16-17), and in the glory He received the Spirit for His disciples, and sent that Spirit (Luke 24:49). Of course, the Father also thus sent the Spirit. And the coming of the Spirit clothed them with power from on high. They were also baptized in the power of the Spirit into one body, though the results of that were not revealed at this time, for God would yet expose the moral state of Israel now stumbled, fallen and blinded, doing so through their stubborn refusal of the One now glorified.

The Spirit, we have been considering, came; came in a special capacity, though He was ever here as the omnipresent One. When will He leave? For those who understand that the restrainer of 2 Thess. 2:7 is the Holy Spirit, it is clear that He will be removed (in that special capacity) at the rapture. Now, this is the close of the heavenly parenthesis. The close of the heavenly parenthesis is coincident with the removal of the Spirit, i.e., removal with respect to the special capacity in

139. Indeed, the church will have its place eternally, as Eph. 3:21 and other Scriptures indicate. See Chapter 8.4.

which He came.<sup>140</sup> It is clear that He came at Pentecost. It was His coming that is coincident with the opening of the heavenly parenthesis -- a conclusion which is, of course, opposed to the notion that the body of Christ began in Acts 9, 13 or 28, or anywhere other than Acts 2.

### *There Is Only One Baptism in The Spirit*

The reader may be aware that Pentecostal/Charismatics speak of several baptisms in the Spirit, for they speak of in, by, of and with, the Spirit.<sup>141</sup> Here are the passages, before Pentecost, which speak of the baptism in the Spirit:

he shall baptize you with [en] the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11)  
 he shall baptize you with [en] the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:4)  
 he shall baptize you with [en] the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:16)  
 he it is who baptizes with [en] the Holy Spirit (John 1:33)  
 ye shall be baptized with [en] the Holy Spirit after  
 now not many days (Acts 1:5)

In a footnote to the word "with" in Matt. 3:11, J. N. Darby says, "*En*, 'in the power of,' be it external or simply the nature and character of, but always including the latter: see Luke 2:72."

The Pentecostal/Charismatic varying of the English prepositions to represent *en*, in order to make several kinds of Holy Spirit baptisms is a farce. Amazingly, C. R. Stam, an advocate that the body of Christ began in Acts 9, did a similar thing, *while writing against Pentecostalism*:

There is a vast difference between the baptism with or in the Spirit at Pentecost and the baptism *by* the Spirit today. At Pentecost it was Christ who baptized believers *in or into the Spirit* (Matt. 3:11), while today it is *the Holy Spirit* who baptizes believers *into Christ and His Body* (Rom. 6:3; Titus 3:5; 1 Cor. 12:13). These are exactly opposite.<sup>142</sup>

Of course, if 1 Cor. 12:13 does actually refer to Pentecost, his entire system collapses. Rom. 6:3 reads *eis* Christ, i.e., *unto* Christ, and refers to water baptism (which he does not believe, of course).

140. The Spirit will, of course, remain here as the omnipresent One, effecting the new birth during the tribulation. What think you of the understanding concerning what God is doing when posttribulationists object that "If the Spirit is removed in a pretribulation rapture, how can anyone thereafter be born again?"

141. See my *The Word of God Versus the "Charismatic Renewal,"* obtainable from the publisher.

142. *The Berean Searchlight*, Sept. 1984, p. 168. So also his, *Acts Dispensationally Considered* 1:70. R. C. Brock speaks similarly:

Paul is the only one who writes about this baptism *BY* the Holy Spirit. What took place at Pentecost was the baptism *with* the Holy Spirit *BY* the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:11; Acts 11:16). Christ continued His ministry to ISRAEL on the Day of Pentecost. *The Revelation of the Mystery*, p. 12.

What this means is that there are two absolutely distinct baptisms in the Spirit. It is really not possible to deny that a baptism in the power of the Spirit took place at Pentecost, of course. But the system involves that the body of Christ was formed in Acts 9, Paul being the first member of that body. The body never had only one member; no, not for one second.

It is a Pentecostalist doctrine that persons were baptized "into the Spirit." There is no such teaching in Scripture. Persons were baptized into one body.

It is true that Matt. 3:11 shows us that Christ is the baptizer. The Spirit is the effectual power. But the gospels do not tell what the result of Christ baptizing in the power of the Spirit would be. It awaited the revelation of the mystery of Christ and the church before the result would be stated; namely, the formation of one body. So while the five scriptures cited look forward, 1 Cor. 12:13 looks back at what happened and tells us that the body of Christ was formed.

### *1 Corinthians 12:13*

1 Cor. 12:13 reads:

For also in [the power of] one Spirit *we* have all been baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bondmen or free, and have all been given to drink of one Spirit.

The word "in [the power of]" represents the same Greek preposition, *en*, as in the other five places. Let us insert this preposition.

For also *en* one Spirit we have all been baptized into one body . . . (1 Cor. 12:13)

he it is who baptizes *en* the Holy Spirit (John 1:33).

Where the difficulty is in understanding this simple and obvious connection is that men impose their troublesome system on Scripture.

The baptism in the Spirit is a once -for-all event. It happened only once. J. N. Darby remarked:

As to 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13, it is the aorist (ἐβαπτισθημεν) and therefore says *nothing of continuity*: it is continuous, if we speak of individuals receiving the Holy Ghost. But people look for a re-giving of the Holy Ghost, as if He did not abide for ever; and the thought of *re-giving* denies that, and also the responsibility of the church consequent upon it, which is a great evil.<sup>143</sup>

When a Christian is sealed with the Holy Spirit of *promise* (Eph. 1:13), Who is the same Holy Spirit of *promise* that came at Pentecost, as we have seen, he is joined to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17) and thus becomes a member of that body once-for-all formed at Pentecost. It was the man in the glory that baptized, in the power of one Spirit, those that had believed,

143. *Letters* 3:467.

into one body. Now, by sealing, 1 Cor. 12:13 is made good to us.

So the above citation from C. R. Stam, regarding several differing baptisms *en* Spirit, says five references to the baptism *en* Spirit refer to one thing and the sixth reference<sup>144</sup> to the baptism *en* Spirit refers to another thing (**no evidence being produced in Acts 9-28 for its occurrence**). His system requires this. It takes away, too, the truth that the man in the glory was not the baptizer, *en* Spirit into one body. The theory is that the Spirit, not Christ, in virtue of one Spirit, formed the body. I think this lowers one of Christ's glories.

I suppose also that this must mean that some like Peter were baptized into the Spirit and Paul was not; that Peter was clothed with power from on high by being baptized into the Spirit, but Paul was not. I ask, did Peter ever become a member of the body of Christ? When? -- and how (if not at Pentecost)? What did it? How do we know? If so, then he was a member of the body as Paul was, but in addition, he was baptized into the Spirit and clothed with power from on high. Poor Paul; he missed being clothed with power from on high, yet he said,

For I reckon that in nothing I am behind those who are in surpassing degree apostles (2 Cor. 11:59; cp. 12:11, 12).

As we have considered the doctrine of two distinct baptisms in the Spirit for the purpose of delaying the formation of the body of Christ (and thus the opening of the heavenly parenthesis), it follows that what it means to be positionally "in Christ" must be also divided into two different things.

The body of Christ is a joint-body of Jews and Gentiles. The fact that no Gentiles were added to the body until after Pentecost is beside the point. 1 Cor. 12:13 comprehends all members from Pentecost until the rapture, though that baptism took place at Pentecost. We are joined to that body when sealed with the same Holy Spirit of *promise* in the power of Whom that body was then formed. That baptism is an all-encompassing and embracing event as is this:

... has quickened us with the Christ (ye are saved by grace) and has raised [us] up together, and has made [us] sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:5, 6).

So just as these things are true in connection with Christ's resurrection and seating above, and God including us in His divine view of it, so with 1 Cor. 12:13. Jews, Greeks, bond or free did not need to be present at Pentecost any more than you or I needed to be present when Christ was raised, in order for God to count us as raised up together with Christ (Eph. 2:6).

## *"In Christ" and the Finished Work of Christ for Salvation*

### "IN CHRIST"

On the day of Pentecost, those baptized in [the power of] one Spirit into one body (1 Cor. 12:13), were made members one of another and were joined to the head in heaven, the man in the glory. "For even as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also [is] the Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12). "The Christ" in this passage is likened to the human body. In this passage, "the Christ" refers to the Head in glory and the members on earth forming -- "the Christ." All such have the indwelling Spirit. "But he that [is] joined to the Lord is one Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17). The man in the glory received the Spirit there, in consequence of the perfection of His work, and poured Him out upon those fit to receive the Spirit, as those cleansed by that perfect work (Acts 2:32, 33). So He received the Spirit and they below received the Spirit; and He above and they below were joined, united, by one Spirit (a collective act). Subsequent to Pentecost, saints are joined to that body when sealed (an individual act) with the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. 1:13).

Hence, those who were "in Christ" between Pentecost and Paul's salvation were "in Christ" before Paul. Paul stated that some were "in Christ" before him.

Salute Andronicus and Junia . . . who were also in Christ before me (Rom. 16:7).

What this means is that the body of Christ, formed by Christ's baptizing, in the power of one Spirit, into one body, existed before Paul was "in Christ"; and the only time this could have happened was at Pentecost. Therefore, those who say that the body was formed when Paul was saved, or later, must explain away the above verse. Here is a way in which an Acts 9 position advocate does so.

When the Apostle Paul makes mention of those who were *in Christ* before him he does not mean to imply that Andronicus and Junia were in the *Body of Christ* before him. It deserves our most thoughtful attention that the Church, the Body of Christ, was not even introduced on the stage of this world until the conversation of Paul, who was the *first* member of that Body (Col. 1:24-26; 1 Tim. 1:12-16). The phrase in Christ used by the Apostle here in Roman 16:7 is to be understood in its broadest sense of *redemption*. Every blood-washed saint of all ages can be said to be in Christ redemptively. He stands before God, not in himself, but *in Christ!*<sup>145</sup>

The believers of this dispensation have the unique honor to not only be *in Christ* redemptively, but also *in Christ* as far as being in the Body of Christ is concerned. Christ, who is our head, is the one we share in common -- He is the

144. Actually there is one more such reference (Acts 11) where Peter refers to it in looking back to Pentecost.

145. P. M. Sadler, *The Berean Searchlight* Nov. 1989, pp. 229,230.

common denominator.<sup>146</sup>

OT saints are nowhere in Scripture said to be “in Christ.” The writer has manufactured this idea and says they were, not because Scripture says so, but because it is a notion essential to his system; and without this invention of these two kinds of “in Christ,” the system collapses -- because there were persons in Christ before Paul, thus indicating that the body of Christ began before Paul.

It is alleged that 1 Cor 15:22 demonstrates that it is a redemptive term:

While *dispensationally* it is possible to be “in Christ” either according to the *prophetic program* (Gen. 22:18, Isa. 45:25) or the *mystery program* (Eph. 2:13; 3:6),<sup>147</sup> the term itself is actually a *redemptive* term, as 1 Cor. 15:22 demonstrates . . . .<sup>148</sup>

Appending a reference to Gen 22:25 and Isa. 45:25 exposes that he has no warrant for his notion of O. T. saints being in Christ. Note that Eph. 1:10 says:

. . . to head up all things in the Christ.

1 Cor 15:22 says:

For as in the Adam all die, thus also in the Christ all shall be made alive.

Here we have “in the Christ” as in Eph. 1:10. It is not a redemptive expression. Moreover, the words “be made alive” refer to resurrection, to being raised from physical death, not to redemption. Besides, saying that in the Christ all will be made alive is not the same thing as saying that all those made alive are “in Christ.” It is clear that 1 Cor 15:22 does not “demonstrate” that “in Christ” is a redemptive term. In the next verse (v. 23) we read:

But each in his own rank: [the] firstfruits, Christ; then those that are the Christ’s at his coming.

All saints *belong* to Him but that is not to say that all saints are “in Christ,” which is the Christian position in which we are before God. Keep in mind that what gave rise to these erroneous notions is the need to prove some other erroneous notions.

### THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST FOR SALVATION

Not only were the early saints in Acts not “in Christ” as members of His body according to this system, we are also informed that they did not have the finished work of Christ for salvation preached to them. C. R. Stam wrote:

We should like to ask who, before Paul, proclaimed the finished work of Christ for salvation. Did Peter preach this at Pentecost? (see Acts 2:38 and cf. Rom. 3:21; Gal.

3:23; 1 Tim. 2:5-7). And who before Paul presented Christ as Head of a new race?<sup>149</sup> Did Peter at Pentecost? Did he not rather present Him as King of Israel? (Acts 2 and 3). Christ as head of a new race was revealed through Paul with the ushering in of the dispensation of grace and the mystery (Rom. 5:12-19; cf. Eph. 2:15; 3:1-3). Does this sound as if “basic salvation” was presented for the faith of “all believers, regardless of calling”?<sup>150</sup>

Regarding the souls that accepted what Peter preached, we are told that they were “saved” (Acts 2:47). The saved persons also continued in “breaking of bread” (Acts 2:42). In Luke 22:19 we read that the Lord Jesus said:

This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me . . . This cup [is] the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

Paul, in 1 Cor. 11 refers to this remembrance of the Lord. Certainly from Pentecost on the disciples continued to remember the Lord in His death for them. Keep in mind that the idea we are reviewing is that these “saved” ones who remembered the Lord Jesus in His death for them in the breaking of bread allegedly did so apart from having had presented to them “the finished work for salvation.” Peter preached:

Repent, therefore, and be converted, for the blotting out of your sins (Acts 3:19).

Is not the effect of the notion being reviewed that these saints had the forgiveness of sins preached to them as a result of Christ’s death and had their sins blotted out without knowledge of the finished work of Christ for salvation? In Acts 4:12 Peter says:

and salvation is in none other, for neither is their another name under heaven which is given among men by which we must be saved.

Also, Peter preached forgiveness of sins (Acts 5:32). So these so-called Kingdom Church people were indwelt by the Holy Spirit of promise sent down as a result of Christ’s finished work, His resurrection and exaltation; they had their sins blotted out, had Christ presented as the only One in Whom there is salvation, were saved, had forgiveness of sins -- all without having had, it is alleged, the preaching of the finished work of Christ for salvation, because, allegedly, no one before Paul preached this. This is an excellent example of how systematized error works. The final section of this chapter, where we will consider **the new mission**, also has a bearing on this issue.

146. *Ibid.*, p. 235.

147. {They define “the prophetic program” as that which ran up until Acts 9, and then “the mystery program” began. That allows them to generate “the Kingdom Church,” in which the disciples and the Lord were, and which ran on in the early chapters of Acts. This “Kingdom Church” gradually faded off the scene}.

148. R. Jordan, *The Grace Journal*, Jan./Feb. 1991, p. 1.

149. His method here is to link together what is true (concerning Paul and Christ’s headship) with his unfounded assertion.

150. *Did the Twelve Apostles Become Members of the Body of Christ?* Chicago: Berean Bible Society, 1963, p. 6.

## *The Church Divided*

### THE CHURCH DIVIDED

In Matt. 16:18 Christ spoke of building His church upon Himself as Son of the living God.<sup>151</sup> It was something future. In Acts 2:47 we learn that the Lord added daily to the church. The church had been formed previously that morning and continually thereafter received accessions. In Acts 5:11 we learn of an occasion when great fear came on the church, while Acts 8:1 speaks of the church at Jerusalem. Paul made havoc of the church, Acts 8:3. The system which delays the formation of the body until Acts 9 would not regard these as references to the church which is Christ's body.<sup>152</sup>

We might ask, in view of Acts 8:1 speaking of the church at Jerusalem, if the reference to the church in Jerusalem in Acts 11:22 is the pre-body "Kingdom Church"; or did the pre-body Kingdom Church at Jerusalem change into the church which is Christ's body? And if it changed, when did it change, and how did it change? What is the Scripture that tells us about these changes? In Acts 15:4 we find Paul being received by the church at Jerusalem. Was it then part of the church which is Christ's body? If so, when and how did it change over? And if it had not changed into the body of Christ, what did Paul have to do with it? But if the church at Jerusalem was still "the Kingdom Church," then we have the interesting phenomenon of the delivery of the decrees of the apostles and "the Kingdom Church" to all others to keep (i.e., those who were in the body of Christ).

Before Paul was saved he persecuted the church (Acts 8:3); i.e., the Kingdom Church, as we are supposed to believe. So fierce was he that "being exceedingly furious against them, I persecuted them even to cities out [of our own land]." So there must have been quite a few of these so-called Kingdom Churches (cp. also Acts 9:31).

151. C. R. Stam wrote:

Israel was the Church, God's called-out people, when she was in covenant relationship with Him. Similarly, the "my Church" of which our Lord spoke, was to be founded upon a recognition of Himself as Israel's Messiah (See Matt. 16:16; John 1:49; 11:27; etc.) not upon a recognition of Christ as the exalted Lord, the Dispenser of grace to a Lost world. *The Church, The Bride and the Body*, Chicago: The Berean Bible Society, p. 2.

Scripture says, "Christ, the Son of the Living God," "and upon this rock I will build my assembly" (Matt. 16:16,18). It is Christ, not as Israel's Messiah but, in his character as Son of God upon which this assembly is built. And note how Paul immediately began preaching Christ in this character (Acts 9:20). We know that it was Paul who *doctrinally* laid the foundation (1 Cor. 3:10,11). Note also that our Lord said He *would* build, not 'I am building.' The notion that Christ built a Messianic, or Kingdom, Church is another myth of the system we are considering. The church Christ referred to began at Pentecost.

152. C. F. Baker (Acts 13 position), *A Dispensational Theology*, Grand Rapids: Grace Bible College Publications, 1972, pp. 528, 529, calls it "the Kingdom Church which Christ was building" and "Church of Israelites" which Christ gathered around Himself and which existed at Pentecost.

In 1 Cor. 15:9 he says that he persecuted the Church of God. Here the church is not looked at in a local character but as an entity encompassing all believers on earth. It is the church on earth that he persecuted. In 1 Cor. 1:2 he addressed the epistle to the church of God at Corinth. He used the expression "church of God" in 1 Cor. 10:32 and 11:22 also. Evidently the Corinthians were part of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). Were they supposed to think that "church of God" in three passages had to do with the body of Christ and the last one referred to the Kingdom Church? In persecuting the church, Paul was persecuting Christ's body (and thus persecuting Christ -- Acts 9:4). Were the Galatians supposed to know that he persecuted the Kingdom Church (Gal. 1:13); and the Philippians also (Phil. 3:6)?

Well, those who believe in two baptisms in the Spirit and two kinds of being "in Christ" are quite capable of believing such things. The system demands it. The system collapses if any one of these distinctions is false.

Two arguments offered to prove the existence of two fundamentally different churches are these:

1. Acts 2:41 says that souls were added and a thing has to exist already to receive additions. Therefore, the church already existed at Pentecost.<sup>153</sup>

These 3000 "were added in that day" to what had been *formed just that very morning*. Peter and those with him had received the baptism in the Spirit and thus formed one body (1 Cor. 12:13). Subsequent to this, on the same day, after the preaching, about 3000 were added. The above argument does not prove the church existed before Pentecost. The Lord said "I will build" (not, I am building) "my church"; and we first hear of its existence in the early chapters of Acts.

2. When Paul says "the church which is His body" he implies another church which is not Christ's body.<sup>154</sup>

Col. 1:18 says, "and *he* is the head of the body, the assembly." Reasoning in the same manner, one would allege that this implies another body, which is not the assembly. 1 Tim. 3:15 says, ". . . how one ought to conduct oneself in God's house, which is [the] assembly of [the] living God." Does this imply that there is another house of God, which is not the assembly? If I were to assert such things would you not conclude I was trying to bolster an unscriptural system?

### WAS PAUL THE FIRST MEMBER OF THE BODY OF CHRIST?

Recall that in the above citation from P. M. Sadler (Acts 9 position), he said:

. . . the church, the body of Christ, was not even introduced on the stage of this world until the conversion of Paul, who

153. C. F. Baker (Acts 13 position), *A Dispensational Theology*, p. 483.

154. *Ibid.*, p. 483.

was the *first* member of the Body (Col. 1:24-26; 1 Tim. 1:12-16).<sup>155</sup>

Is it not rather obvious that Paul being the special minister of the mystery that is spoken of in Col. 1:24-26 does not prove that the mystery began with Paul? It began at Pentecost but the doctrine of it was not manifested to the saints immediately. But besides the hollow reasoning about Col. 1:24-26, there is an appeal to 1 Tim. 1:12-16 as if this Scripture states Paul was the first member of the body of Christ. Paul says, rather, that he is the first of sinners. The text states that. But let us see how the reasoning proceeds.

The BODY OF CHRIST begins with the Apostle Paul. Notice very carefully his testimony to this fact.

**1 Timothy 1:13-16**, “Who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am FIRST (chief). Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me FIRST Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a PATTERN to them which should hereafter believe of Him to life everlasting.”

This is the Holy Spirit’s interpretation of Paul’s conversion in Acts 9. It is worthy enough to be accepted by all. The word ‘first’ is the **same** Greek word in both cases, and the using of ‘chief’ as a translation is very misleading. Paul was no worse a sinner than anybody else. All outside of Christ are DEAD in sin (Ephesians 2:1).<sup>156</sup>

The argument devolves upon the words “that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern . . . .” The writer takes this to refer to becoming a member of the body of Christ. An implication is that thus he would be the first to be baptized in the Spirit. Then a second person, a third, etc; and thus the result is continuous baptism in the Spirit -- which is contrary to the construction of 1 Cor. 12:13. It is not continuous but occurred once-for-all at Pentecost. 1 Tim. 1:13-16 says nothing about entering the body of Christ, or about the baptism in the Spirit. The words, “that in me first,” refers to rank. W. Kelly translated thus:

. . . Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. But for this cause mercy was shown me that in me, [as] chief, Christ might display the whole long-suffering for an outline-sketch of those that should believe on Him unto life eternal.

J. N. Darby translated:

. . . Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am [the] first. But for this reason mercy was

shown me, that in me, [the] first, Jesus Christ might display the whole longsuffering, for a delineation of those about to believe on him to life eternal.

If “first,” it is first in rank; if “chief,” it is chief in rank. In both verses the word *protos* (chief/first) refers to the same thing; namely, his rank as a sinner, not to being the first in time to be a member of the body of Christ. It was the character of His terrible persecutions that gave him this rank. And the character of the grace shown to such a one was the character of the grace shown to all.

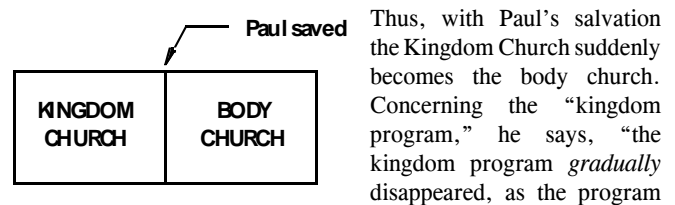
C.R. Stam (Acts 9 position) wrote:

We believe that Paul’s conversion and call to apostleship marks the beginning of the new dispensation and of the body of Christ.<sup>157</sup>

There is no proof whatever that the baptism in the Spirit of 1 Cor. 12:13 took place at that time, or any other time, if it did not take place at Pentecost. “We believe” is what has determined it for him, not Scripture.

It is interesting also that after the body of Christ was allegedly formed with Paul’s salvation, the Spirit “fell upon them even as upon us also at the beginning” says Peter, concerning a group of Gentiles (Acts 11:15). For the Acts 13 position this is interesting because this would be the inclusion of Gentiles in the Kingdom Church.

C. R. Stam’s Acts 9 theory can be illustrated this way:



for the one body emerged thus:



From *Did the Twelve Apostles Become Members of the Body of Christ?* p. 1. The first diagram is my representation of his view. If that is not accurate, Acts 9 position ultradispensationalists are free to supply evidence of inaccuracy. The second diagram is his and it shows, amazingly, two very distinct programs going on at once. The truth is that there was one program that had several phases to it. Acts is the history of the Spirit’s testimony to the resurrection and glorification of Christ. The NEW mission to the Gentiles (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8) began at Jerusalem, gathered in believing Jews while exposing Israel’s resistance of the Spirit’s testimony, and then went to Samaria and then outward. In due time the great secret came out respecting the mystery, God having, however, formed the body at Pentecost.

155. *The Berean Searchlight*, Nov. 1989, p.230.

156. R.C. Brock, *The Revelation of the Mystery*, Pendley: St. Petersburg, June 1968, p.6. Obviously, the Acts 13 position does not accept this reasoning.

157. *Acts Dispensationally Considered* 1:176.

## *Joel's Prophecy*

### JOEL'S PROPHECY NOT FULFILLED AT PENTECOST

We will consider this passage again in Part 3 but comment on it here in connection with our present subject. Joel's prophecy, quoted by Peter in Acts 2, was not fulfilled at Pentecost.<sup>158</sup> Let us consider why it was not fulfilled; and after that, why Peter quoted Joel's prophecy. First we will place Joel 2:28,29 alongside of Acts 2:17,18:

And it shall come to pass afterward [that] I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. Yes, even upon the bondmen and upon the handmaid in those days will I pour out my Spirit. (Joel 2:28, 29).

And it shall be in the last days, saith God, [that] I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your elders shall dream with dreams; yea, even upon my bondmen and upon my bondwomen in those days will I pour out of my Spirit, and they shall prophecy. (Acts 2:17, 18).

The number of people upon whom the Spirit came hardly answers to "upon all flesh." Granted that "upon all flesh" does not mean every person on the globe; it does indicate more than Jews only. It refers to people generally without distinction of nationality and class. Those Jews present at Pentecost, upon whom the Spirit came, do not answer to the prophecy.

At Pentecost, those upon whom the Spirit came were Jews. Now, the Spirit of God had numbers of O.T. prophecies to cite, through Peter, referring to the pouring out of the Spirit upon Israel (Isa. 32:15; 44:3, 4; Ezek. 36:27; 37:14; 39:29; cp. Isa. 59:21; Zech. 12:10 -- "at the end of the days"), and needed not to cite Joel, who speaks of the Spirit coming "upon all flesh," if the intent was that Pentecost was the fulfillment of prophecy concerning only the Jews.<sup>159</sup> There is a suitability to citing Joel because of his statement of the pouring out of the Spirit on "all flesh." The passage is cited in view of the fact that blessing was now

going to out to Gentiles. Of the prophets who speak of the effusion of the Spirit, Joel is the only one who prophesies of it as going beyond Israel. This is the prophecy selected by the Spirit for Peter to use. I suggest that this is in keeping with the new mission stated in Luke 24:47:

. . . and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

The NEW mission given by the Lord (see also Acts 1:8), whether understood by them or not is beside the point, was a *mission to the nations*, beginning at Jerusalem. The prophecy cited from Joel, regarding the effusion of the Spirit, includes the nations ("all flesh") and thus fits so beautifully *in application* to Pentecost, for Pentecost began that new mission.

References to the Spirit coming on Israelites clearly refer to the millennium. And, the expression in Joel, "upon all flesh" includes Israel.

Where is Joel's prophecy placed chronologically? Joel says, "And it shall come to pass afterwards . . . . After what? Isa. 1:26 says of Jerusalem, "Afterwards thou shalt be called, Town of righteousness, Faithful city." Hosea 3:5 says, "Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king; and shall turn with fear toward Jehovah and toward his goodness, at the end of days." Compare the expression "at the end of days" with Peter's word, "and it shall be in the last days . . . ." These verses all refer to the millennium.

It is claimed that Peter said the last days had arrived. Not so (see Part 4 for details concerning this); nor was it yet the prophesied last days of Joel. Nor did he say 'this is the fulfillment of that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.' Besides, just shortly before, the disciples asked the Lord if it was time for the kingdom to be restored to Israel (Acts 1). Did the Lord tell them something to encourage them to think that Israel's last days were about to arrive?

There is no reference in Acts 2 to anyone actually dreaming and seeing visions.

Now we will consider what was written concerning signs:

158. Amillennialists and postmillennialists believe Joel's prophecy was fulfilled. Such see the church as the spiritual Israel and believe that the church was a subject of O.T. prophecy. Those who say that the body of Christ was formed at Paul's conversion, or later, also claim that Joel's prophecy was fulfilled at Pentecost. Their reason is that they view the early chapters of Acts as strictly and only an era of prophetic fulfillment and thus not a period included in the period of the body of Christ.

159. It is argued that 1 Cor. 12:13 cannot be applicable to Pentecost because not all those classes were present. In response, we point out that there were not representatives of "all flesh" there either.

<p>And I will shew wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be changed to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come. And it shall be that whosoever shall call upon the name of Jehovah shall be saved: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as Jehovah hath said, and for the residue whom Jehovah shall call (Joel 2:30-32).</p>	<p>And I will give wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: the sun shall be changed to darkness and the moon to blood, before the great and gloriously appearing day of [the] Lord come. And it shall be that whosoever shall call upon the name of [the] Lord shall be saved (Acts 2:19-21).</p>
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Spiritualizers may point to the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) to find a fulfillment of these signs. However, when Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70 there was no deliverance in mount Zion and in Jerusalem. Indeed, it was quite the opposite.

Moreover, the fact is that these signs will actually take place **before** Israel's deliverance and subsequent experience of the Spirit being poured out. Notice, too, that Peter did not cite all of Joel 2:32, the last half obviously pointing to a future day for fulfillment of this prophecy. He sought to make *an application* of the portion cited in Acts 2:21 to his hearers.

The texts state expressly that these signs precede that advent of the day of the Lord.<sup>160</sup> And there will be those who shall call upon the name of the Lord and be saved. The pouring out of the Spirit will follow after the setting up of the kingdom. Thus, the signs will precede, in time, the pouring out of the Spirit. The destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) cannot answer to the signs, therefore.

C. R. Stam (Acts 9 position) claims that "the signs of Pentecost were to be followed by signs both in heaven and on earth . . . ." <sup>161</sup> Concerning the purpose of Pentecost, he claims it was for the purpose of enduing them with "supernatural power" in preparation for the great tribulation which would have come had God not intervened in grace. <sup>162</sup> This gives the appearance that he thinks that the effusion of

the Spirit was even to precede the great tribulation. C. F. Baker (Acts 13 position), who asserts that Joel predicted Pentecost (and thus Israel's last days began) says that the signs did not take place because Israel's rulers "hardened themselves in their unbelief and opposition to Christ." <sup>163</sup> Not only do these writers reverse the order (necessary to their system) but claim fulfillment of the prophecy, and some excuse away non-fulfillment of parts of the prophecy. I suppose anything can easily be 'proved' by such methods.

Referring to Joel 2:28-32, J. N. Darby noted:

This is an entirely distinct prophecy, which goes by itself, preceding the day of Jehovah, as indeed is clearly stated, which day ushers in the blessing previously spoken of. The order in the last days will be repentance, deliverance by the day of Jehovah, temporal blessing, the Holy Ghost. Before the day of Jehovah, signs will take place. This last stands therefore necessarily apart, as the calling on the name of Jehovah of course precedes the deliverance. <sup>164</sup>

The Spirit, then, will be poured out upon all flesh in connection with the setting up of the kingdom. In Acts 2 the coming of the Spirit, which involved the baptism in the Spirit, brought into being the body of Christ.

#### THIS IS THAT

As has already been indicated, Peter made *an application* of two things in Joel's prophecy:

1. What the onlookers were witnessing was consistent with what Joel had said about the Spirit being poured out on all flesh.
2. He used the point that whoever would call upon the name of the Lord would be saved.

His thrust, then, was *this* has *that* character. It has been objected that the text does not say 'this has that character.' Well, then, we ought to note that the text does not say 'this is the fulfillment of that.' Notice Acts 1:16 shows Peter was quite capable of using the word "fulfilled" (cp. Acts 3:18). It is a prophecy of the signs preceding the establishment of the kingdom, that those calling on the name of the Lord would be saved and there would occur the pouring out of the Spirit on all flesh. The fact is that there are numbers of citations of the O. T. in the N. T. used in just this way as Joel's prophecy; for an application or illustration, while the fulfillment of those passages is in the future.

### *The Day of Pentecost*

#### IS PENTECOST RELATED TO THE CHURCH?

160. The Day of the Lord follows after the apostasy and the revelation of the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:3). Man's day (1 Cor. 4:3) continues until the appearing of Christ in glory. With His appearing, man's day is ended and the Day of the Lord begins

161. *Acts Dispensationally Considered* 1:91.

162. *Ibid.*, p. 119.

163. *Understanding the Book of Acts*, Grand Rapids: Grace Bible College Publications, 1981, p.21.

164. *Synopsis* 2:366, note.



As part of the system of delaying the formation of the body of Christ, C. R. Stam wrote:

Pentecost was a Jewish feast day, not related in any way to the Body of Christ.<sup>165</sup>

Paul wrote:

For also our passover, Christ, has been sacrificed; so that let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven . . . (1 Cor. 5:7, 8).

Paul speaks of Jewish feasts and these feasts have application to Christians. Passover, as we know, refers to the death of Christ. The “feast,” however, refers to the feast of unleavened bread which ran from the 15th to the 21st of the month (Lev. 23). It denotes an unleavened walk and here Paul applies it to Christians. Moreover, the feast of first fruits (Lev. 23) typifies the resurrection of Christ. That, too, is related to the body of Christ. There is one more of the four feasts that took place in the first two months of the Jewish year (starting with Abib -- Ex. 12), and that is Pentecost.

The last three feasts of Jehovah took place in the 7th month and speak of the regathering of Israel (trumpets), Israel’s national repentance (the day of atonement), and Israel’s entry into rest (booths).<sup>166</sup> See Lev. 23. These apply to Israel.

Not only have the feasts of Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits and Pentecost something to do with the church (which is Christ’s body) but in Ezekiel 40 - 48 where we learn about feasts to be celebrated by Israel in the millennium, no mention is made of Pentecost (the feast of Weeks). It received its fulfillment just as passover did. However, Passover will be celebrated in the millennium because the blood of the New Covenant was shed for them also. Christ’s death had both us in view *and* the nation of Israel, as such (John 11:51, 52).

Besides this, the waving of the sheaf of the firstfruits (Christ in resurrection) and Pentecost have a connection. See Lev. 23.

### THE TIME OF THE FEAST

Israel was to count from, and include, the day that the wave-sheaf was waved, seven sabbaths. That equals 49 days. They were to count also the day after the seventh sabbath, which made 50 days in all (Lev. 23:15, 16). This is where the word *Pentecost* comes from. It refers to the 50th day. J. N. Darby translated Acts 2:1, “And when the day of Pentecost was now accomplishing . . . .” It was then that the Holy Spirit came (John 7:39; Acts 2:32, 33) in a special capacity, the doctrine of which was reserved for the apostle Paul to expound.

Lev. 23:15 says of the days, “they shall be complete.” This is seven sevens. It signifies, I believe, the spiritual exercises of the Lord’s people during those days that they

were awaiting the descent of the Spirit. See Luke 24:29; Acts 1. This was a time during which exercise for testimony was prepared; which testimony is typified in bringing the *two* loaves out of their dwellings. This was done on the morrow after the seventh sabbath, the Lord’s day when fulfilled.

We should learn from this that it is morally right and suitable that spiritual exercise precedes testimony and service.

### A NEW MEAL OFFERING

There is a reason why the meal offering of the Feast of Weeks is called a NEW meal offering, or, oblation (Lev. 23:16).

1. The meal offering of Lev. 2 typifies the perfection of Christ in His holy Person and His walk for God’s glory, as energized by the Spirit (the oil). No leaven was allowed in it.
2. Hence this is a new meal-offering. It had leaven in it, which was strictly forbidden in the meal offering which speaks of Christ. Leaven denotes evil in Scripture usage.

### THE CHARACTER OF THE NEW MEAL-OFFERING

Let us look at each characteristic of the new meal-offering.

1. It was brought “out of your dwellings.” To be a testimony to the true character of the wave-sheaf (a resurrected Christ) there must be an exercise of heart in our dwelling. Where, and in what condition of soul, do we spiritually dwell?
2. There were two wave-loaves. Two is the number of testimony in Scripture. The Holy Spirit formed a testimony, to the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, at Pentecost. They were made from the same grain as the wave-sheaf. “Except a grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it abides alone; but if it die, it bears much fruit” (John 12:24). His grace has identified us with Himself in His victory over death and with His resurrection-life (John 20:22). As the sheaf of firstfruits was waved before Jehovah, so were the loaves. The waving signifies something for the enjoyment and pleasure of God.
3. The wave-loaves were of two-tenths (of an ephah, probably) of fine flour. The quantity of the wave-sheaf was also two-tenths. Again we have the number of testimony. It also means that we ought to maintain the character of Christ Himself as the faithful and true witness, for He has made us partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4).
4. The wave loaves were baked with leaven. There was no leaven in the meal-offering (Lev. 2) which typifies Christ. Evil is present with me, said Paul (Rom. 7:21). The leaven in the wave-loaves signifies the difference between Christ and His people. But fire, representing judgment, stops the action of leaven. Hence these are baked loaves. Do we judge ourselves (1 Cor. 11:31)? Self-judgment will stop the working of leaven. There is,

165. *Acts Dispensationally Considered* 1:68.

166. The reader will find the seven feasts of Lev. 23 positioned on a five color chart in my *Daniel’s 70 Weeks and the Revival of the Roman Empire*, available from the publisher.

then, a treasure that we have in these earthen vessels. But in the earthen vessel there is sin, and this refers to our fallen nature. The prince of this world had nothing in Christ (John 14:30). In us, alas, he has material upon which to work. But fire, judgment, self-judgment, will stop it working.

Now, Christ stood forth in victorious resurrection, “marked out Son of God in power, according to [the] Spirit of holiness, by resurrection of [the] dead” (Rom. 1:4). This is the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits. Of necessity, there followed His exaltation, “far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things” (Eph. 4:11). He fills the very heart of the Father. Oh, that He might fill your heart and mine!

The exaltation took place 40 days after He rose from the dead (Acts 1). We may thus distinguish the resurrection and exaltation but not separate them morally. On the 50th day, the descent of the Spirit took place, forming what answered to the wave-loaves. Yea, His coming formed the one body (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:3), but this is not seen in the wave loaves. The two wave-loaves typify a testimony, like Christ Himself, to the true character of the wave-sheaf. We have observed that Acts is the history of the Spirit’s testimony to the resurrection and glorification of Christ.

#### THE CELEBRATION OF THE FEAST

No doubt the feast of weeks was celebrated many times in Israel. It was one of the three feasts (Ex. 23:15,16; 34:22; Deut. 16:16; 2 Chron. 8:13) at which all the males had to appear before Jehovah. This did not hinder women and children from coming however (1 Sam. 1:3, 4; Luke 2:41).

Note that a record in the O. T. of this feast being kept is absent. Also, it is absent in Ezek. 45:21-25. It will have no application in the millennium because it was fulfilled in Acts 2:1-4. What took place as recorded in Acts 2:1-4 is the formation of a new testimony to the character of the wave-sheaf. The testimony of the Jewish remnant during the great tribulation will again be the gospel of the kingdom, which John (Matt. 3:2) and our Lord (Matt. 4:17) preached. That is the testimony to the coming of the kingdom in power, as drawn nigh. That which was preached in the early part of Acts is part of the new mission, to the Gentiles (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8), beginning at Jerusalem.

### *The Alleged Continuance of the Kingdom Program*

We are told that the early part of Acts is a continuation of the kingdom program that existed before the cross. R. Jordan (Acts 9 position) wrote,

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM” (Luke 24:47).

After some 40 days of personal instruction from their resurrected Lord in things “pertaining to the kingdom of

God,” the apostles understood that the program of God still focused on Israel and her coming kingdom:

“When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, LORD, WILT THOU AT THIS TIME RESTORE AGAIN THE KINGDOM TO ISRAEL?” (Acts 1:6).<sup>167</sup>

It is interesting that he cited two Scriptures which show the opposite of his theory. Notice where he put the emphasis in Luke 24:47. He is trying to force continuity whereas this text explicitly states discontinuity. The program our Lord specified in Luke 24:47 was that repentance and remission of sins should be preached *among all nations*, beginning at Jerusalem. This is the new program and it is not a continuation of the kingdom for Israel program. Previous to the cross the mission was expressly confined to Israel:

These twelve Jesus sent out when he had charged them, saying, Go not off into [the] way of [the] nations, and into a city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. 10:6).

But he answering said, I have not been sent save to the lost sheep of Israel’s house (Matt. 15:24).

Subsequent to the cross, we read:

And he said to them, go into all the world and preach the glad tidings to all the creation . . . And they going forth preached everywhere, the Lord working with [them], and confirming the word by the signs following upon [it] (Mark 16:15, 20; cp. Heb. 2, 3, 4).

Then opened he their understanding to understand the scriptures, and said to them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all the nations beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:45-47).

Now observe what could be said by the time the book of Hebrews was written:

How shall *we* escape if we have been negligent of so great salvation, which having had its commencement in being spoken [of] by the Lord,<sup>168</sup> has been confirmed to us by those who heard; God bearing, besides, witness with [them] to [it], both by signs and wonders, and various works of power, and distributions of [the] Holy Spirit, according to his will? (Heb. 2:3, 4).

How much more clearly does it need to be stated before believed? The “great salvation” the Lord spoke of was spoken by the Apostles; and had application when the book of Hebrews was written. To neglect that “great salvation” was perilous to the soul at the time of the writing of Hebrews, long after Paul was saved. Certainly more truth was revealed through Paul, but the “great salvation” was preached before Paul and was preached long after he was saved, and continues to this day -- though Paul speaks of the gospel of the glory,

167. *The Grace Journal*, Nov. 1989, pp. 3,4.

168. See especially John’s gospel.

which is an additional subject.

Of course Peter preached to the Jews. And it is quite true that Acts 10:9-16 shows Peter's Jewish prejudices. God knew how to over-rule that. True, too, that Peter might have been slow to grasp the implication of Luke 24:47. But for all that, when guided in his preaching by the Spirit, he said, on the very day of Pentecost itself:

For to you is the promise and to your children, and to all who [are] afar off, as many as the Lord our God may call (Acts 2:39).

Yes, we Gentiles who "once were afar off" (Eph. 2:13) are included here in Acts 2:39, for the sovereign God has called us. Peter says, "For to you is the promise." I suggest that this refers to the promise of the Holy Spirit (the promise of the Father) about which the Lord had told them (Luke 24:49, etc.). And not only did Jewish believers receive the promised Holy Spirit, so did Gentiles:

. . . in whom also, having believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. 1:13).

Thus we are sealed with the same Holy Spirit of promise that they received at Pentecost. How wonderfully all fits together. The point here is, however, that in Acts 2:39, Peter, guided by the Spirit, included the Gentiles.

In summary, observe these points:

1. Before the cross the preaching was confined to Israel.<sup>169</sup>
2. Subsequent to the cross the Lord told them to preach to the whole world.<sup>170</sup>
3. They preached everywhere and the Lord worked with them and confirmed this preaching everywhere with signs.<sup>171</sup>
4. The Lord told them to preach repentance and remission (forgiveness) of sins. They did so.
5. Heb. 2:3, 4 calls this "great salvation" and says there was witness to it by signs.
6. The Lord told the disciples that the preaching should begin

at Jerusalem.

7. The preaching, as guided by the Spirit, had in view those who were afar off.

Now, this is obviously a NEW program, not a continuation of the pre-cross program<sup>172</sup> to only the lost sheep of the house of Israel. It is new in both content and audience. What the disciples understood is not the point. The question is: What was God's program? Yes, the program was to begin at Jerusalem, but that fact alone does not determine what the program was, whatever else God may have been doing in connection with Israel.<sup>173</sup> It is expressly stated that the nations are in view. And what was the Lord's answer to the disciples' question (Acts 1:6)? Did he encourage them to expect the kingdom immediately? Quite the contrary. Indeed, in Luke 19:11-27 we are expressly told that the parable was stated because they were near Jerusalem and because the disciples "thought that the kingdom of God was about to be immediately manifested." In fact, He subsequently told them what the program would be: ". . . and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, *and to the ends of the earth*" (Acts 1:8). Here again is the new mission to the nations. Now, this shows a break with what preceded. Yet, because the new program was to start at Jerusalem, and it did, it is asserted that this is only a continuation of a previous kingdom program. Such false reasoning is required by the theory that the body was formed some time after Pentecost (Acts 2).

It is claimed that the "first real offer of the kingdom" was made after Pentecost (cp. Acts 3:19-21). C. R. Stam wrote, "The kingdom was not even offered to Israel until Pentecost"<sup>174</sup> because Christ had to suffer first before the kingdom glory would be realized (cp. Luke 24:26; 1 Pet. 1:11). To this I reply:

1. Certainly Christ had to suffer before the Kingdom would be inaugurated. But as a matter of fact, we now know that it was also the purpose of God (Eph. 3:11) that the assembly be formed before the kingdom would be established. The formation of the body, therefore, had to be before the kingdom. But, behold, this fact did not set aside the preaching of Acts 3:19-21. So I ask this: if a real offer of the kingdom could not be made because Christ had to suffer first, how could a "first real offer of the kingdom" be made until the body of Christ was here no longer, since in the divine purpose of the ages, the formation of the body of Christ had to precede the kingdom? Obviously, God is not limited in offering the

169. I do not enter here on the abeyance of the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom and also the introduction of the parables of the mystery form of the kingdom. It is clear that John's gospel shows the Lord speaking of the great salvation, though it awaited the atonement, His resurrection and glorification, and the descent of the Spirit for its propagation.

170. The gospel of John assumes the rejection of the Lord at its very beginning (John 1:11) and presents the eternal Son of God, the Lord Jesus, as Savior of the world.

171. The theory that the signs and sign gifts were for the Jews (part of the system we are noticing) is false. The signs authenticated the Apostles, as sent from Christ. Paul calls them the signs indeed of the Apostle (2 Cor. 12:12). Scripture does not state that the signs were for the Jew, though Jews sought such. "So that tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers; but prophecy, not to unbelievers, but to those who believe" (1 Cor. 14:22). Now, if you want to change the word "unbelievers" to "Jews," if you want to set up a theory that the signs were only for the Jews, as J. C. O'Hair did, and go on and on with that way of handling Scripture, you may end up holding the false system we have been noticing. I am aware that Sir Robert Anderson held this idea of the signs.

172. The Lord had spoken of bringing other sheep into one flock which were not of the (Jewish) fold (John 10:16).

173. He would have a remnant according to the election of grace that was there brought into blessing while exposing the fallen state of Israel, and their resistance to the Spirit's testimony to the resurrected and glorified Christ, even as in the stoning of Stephen who testified to His place in the glory.

174. *Acts Dispensationally Considered* 1:69.

kingdom by either case.

2. Jerusalem had to be destroyed, not necessarily before the rapture, but certainly before the setting up of the kingdom (Matt. 22:7; Luke 21:20). Yet this did not hinder the Spirit regarding what was said in Acts 3:19-21. C. R. Stam's reasoning is contrary to the facts of Scripture -- yet required by his system. Surely his system is wrong.

The objectors' delay of the kingdom offer is part of a false system and their reasoning upon it falsifies what the sovereign God can and cannot do. He did offer the kingdom in the Person of the lowly and meek Lord Jesus as a moral test to thus bring out the state of the people. This false system systematically takes away from Christ what is His due.

### *The "Prophetic Clock"*

Acts 9 position periodical contains the following comments regarding Acts 7:54-56:

Don't read over this too lightly, for a tremendous change has taken place: In Acts 2 Peter warns them that Christ had *sat down* in heaven at the Father's right hand *until* that time came for Him to return in wrath and destroy His enemies. In Acts 7 Steven sees Christ *standing* -- no longer seated, but now "*standing* on the right hand of God." There is only one scriptural explanation for the change in His posture: the time for the outpouring of His wrath had arrived. Our Lord was standing to do what Psalm 110:1 warned He would do: "make His foes His footstool." . . .

At the very *moment* when the prophetic clock had reached the hour of judgment, God in His grace *interrupted* the prophetic program by ushering in an *unprophecied* [sic] program -- a previously unknown purpose called "*the mystery*" . . . .

. . . Just as the prophetic clouds of judgment lay heaviest on the horizon, God in His infinite grace and manifold wisdom *interrupted* prophecy . . . .<sup>175</sup>

1. This falsifies the Word which says, *with respect to* His enemies, "sit until." This theory has Him sitting, getting up and then sitting again *with respect to* His enemies; so he did not do as the Psalm said: "sit until."
2. His "only one scriptural explanation," used to bolster the Acts 9 position, being false, we may look for another explanation. That kind of reasoning upon scripture to bolster a false theory reminds me of an amusing posttribulationist argument, which says, why do you pretribulationists say Christ gets up from the throne to come for the rapture seven years before He crushes his enemies, when Psa. 110:1 says he sits until then? Suppose I were to reply that Christ sat down in perpetuity (Heb. 10:12) and therefore will never get

up? You would answer, "But that sitting forever is *with respect to* the finished work on the cross." Well, of course; but *with respect to* His enemies, He will not, nor ever has, risen from the throne until His enemies are made the footstool of His feet. That says nothing *with respect to* His martyr Stephen, nor does it say anything *with respect to* the rapture of the saints.

### *Distorted Scofieldian Dispensationalism*

In an Article, "Are We Ultra-Dispensationalists? A Response to a Critique by Charles C. Ryrie,"<sup>176</sup> the editor, P. M. Sadler, wrote:

Numerous times throughout the chapter on *Ultradispensationalism* he makes the bold assertion, "In other words, they are sure when the Church did not begin, but are not sure when it did begin!"<sup>177</sup> Are we to conclude a dispensational approach is untrue on the basis that there is disagreement among some of the brethren?<sup>178</sup>

I wonder if the last sentence means that if you believe that the church began in Acts 2, you do not take a dispensational approach. At any rate:

The precise moment the Body of Christ came into existence in mid-Acts<sup>179</sup> is inconsequential. What must be acknowledged, however, is the fact that the revelation of the Church which is Christ's body was *first* committed to the Apostle Paul. On this essential of the faith the Grace Movement does, indeed, speak with a unified voice.<sup>180</sup>

Now, I also may think that the revelation of the mystery was first given to Paul, but Scripture does not explicitly state that. Yet he exalts it into "this essential of the faith." On *that* "the Grace Movement" is united -- that is, united on what Scripture does not state -- but they are divided on when the church began, and *this* is dismissed as inconsequential. But he goes beyond exalting this into an "essential of the faith" to contradicting what Scripture does expressly state. After quoting Eph. 3:2, 9, Rom. 16:25 and Col. 1:25, 26, he wrote:

So then, while Paul received the Mystery by direct *revelation* from the Lord of glory, the apostles and prophets, and those since, have received it through the *illumination* of the Spirit (Gal. 1:11,12 cf. Eph. 3:5).<sup>181</sup>

None of the Scriptures cited by him tell us that the apostles and prophets received the mystery through illumination. Rather, Eph. 3:5, to which he directs us, says:

176. P. M. Sadler, *The Berean Searchlight*, Nov. 1991, pp. 234-242.

177. [*Dispensationalism Today*, Chicago: Moody, p. 195, (1968).

178. *The Berean Searchlight*, Nov. 1991, p. 235.

179. {He quietly ignores the Acts 28 Bullingerites, but of course they do not go away.}

180. *Ibid.*

181. *Ibid.*, p. 241.

175. *The Grace Journal*, vol. 3, # 5, May 1990, pp. 2,3.

. . . as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets in [the power of the] Spirit . . .

In effect, the writer is telling us that Paul could have written:

. . . as it is now revealed to his saints . . .

No! That is not going far enough. He is telling us that “revelation” in v. 3 means revelation, but that “revealed” in v. 5 means “illumination”; and thus we have:

. . . as his holy apostles and prophets and saints have been illuminated . . .

What more is necessary to be said about such distortion, unless to ask that if God meant to say that “it has now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets,” how should He have worded it to convey that fact?

Observe also this illogical conclusion:

- 1 Paul was the first, or the only, one to receive a revelation of the mystery;
2. The body of Christ could not exist before the revelation about it was given;
3. Therefore the body of Christ could not have been formed at Pentecost.

Even supposing point one is true, which it is not, there is no proof that point two is true. Point three depends on point two being true. It is the exigency of a humanly devised system that asserts point two is true. The fact is that the body of Christ was formed at Pentecost, and God meanwhile exposed the state of the Jews, and then revealed the mystery.

The article is titled “Are We Ultra-Dispensationalists?” and I suppose supporters of the writer’s views are supposed to think that they are the true dispensationalists. I have long thought that the word “ultradispensationalist” is inadequate; though, however long, it has the advantage of being one word. The prefix “ultra” means “beyond the range or limits of” or “beyond what is normal.” It is *distorted Scofieldian dispensationalism* and “ultradispensational” in that sense

There is at work, however, that which is seriously defective concerning salvation and the gospel. Listen to this from P. M. Sadler:

A new set of terms are set forth in salvation. Paul is the first to proclaim the *good news* of Calvary, how that Christ died for our sins and rose again. In Paul’s gospel alone, sinners are saved by grace through faith apart from the works of repentance and the law (Rom. 4:5; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; Eph. 2:8, 9).<sup>182</sup>

The concatenation of ever so many Scripture references will not produce a statement that Paul was the *first* to proclaim that Christ died for our sins and rose again. At best, it is an argument based on silence. Scripture says:

How shall we escape if we have been negligent of so great

salvation, which having had its commencement in being spoken [of] by the Lord {see John’s gospel}, has been confirmed to us by those who have heard . . . (Heb. 2:3).

P. M. Sadler’s statement, in effect, means that our Lord taught that, what is here called “so great salvation,” is salvation by repentance and the law; and it follows that so did the twelve apostles preach that in the early part of Acts. This is more than derangement; it is perversion! I say it is “perversion” because of the pretension that this is advanced dispensational truth. It is a slur, if not worse, on the work of Christ which takes in every believer from Adam on. No man was ever saved but by grace. J. N. Darby, responding to the postmillennialist, David Brown, wrote:

From Adam to the end of time no one was or will be saved but by the redemption and the work of the Spirit.<sup>183</sup>

The notion that “dispensationalism” teaches more than one way of salvation is merely cheap polemics, though of course there are “dispensationalist” who do so. I add here that antidispensationalists might think about O. T. Allis, who, *having just quoted Heb. 10:4*, denounced the thought that the sacrifices of Ezek. 40-48 are memorial:

There is not the slightest hint in Ezekiel’s description of these sacrifices that they will be simply memorial. They must be expiatory in exactly the same sense as the sacrifices described in Leviticus were expiatory.<sup>184</sup>

The sacrifices were not expiatory. The work of Christ, of which they are a type, is expiatory. The O. T. sacrifices were typical, looking forward; those in the millennium will be memorial. The Melchizedek priest will be on His throne (Zech. 6:13) and the sacrifices take their character from the Melchizedek order (founded on the *finished work* of Christ), not the Aaronic order (which looked forward). But this instructive subject is not ours here.

## History is Distorted Also

C. R. Stam wrote:

Later Mr. John N. Darby and Dr. C. I. Scofield were raised up to recover “that blessed hope” and related truths . . . This writer well remembers the days when the “Darby-Scofield Movement” had gotten under way . . .<sup>185</sup>

That statement is a myth. Next, in a short article, “The Recovery of Grace Truth,” P. Sadler (who seems now to have taken C. R. Stam’s place) wrote about Paul, Luther and the Huguenots and then said:

These were followed by devout men of God like J. N. Darby who recovered the truth of the premillennial rapture. C. I. Scofield built upon this by uncovering the dispensational approach to Scripture. Then God raised up

182. “Characteristics of the Mystery,” *The Berean Searchlight*, April, 1992, p. 48.

183. *Collected Writings* 11:374.

184. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 247.

185. *The Berean Searchlight*, Jan. 1988, p. 301.

Pastor J. C. O'Hair who took a giant step in teaching us how to rightly divide the Word of Truth. He showed us that there is a difference between Prophecy and the Mystery. He was followed by Pastors Stam, Baker, Elifson and others who were used of the Lord to bring order out of chaos. Pastor Stam was largely responsible for systematically putting the message together and working out many of the problem areas.<sup>186</sup>

In the Jan. 1991 issue of the *Berean Searchlight*, p. 295, P. M. Sadler wrote:

The Huguenots were followed by devout men of God like J. N. Darby who as we have said, recovered the truth of the pretribulation Rapture. C. I. Scofield built upon this by uncovering the dispensational approach to the Scriptures. Later, God raised up Pastor J. C. O'Hair who took a giant step in teaching men how to rightly divide the Word of Truth.<sup>187</sup> He was instrumental in showing the Church the great distinction between *Prophecy* and *the Mystery*.<sup>188</sup>

186. *The Berean Searchlight*, May, 1989, p. 90.

187. It appears to me that J. C. O'Hair fell into this erroneous system by the way he tried to refute Pentecostalism. C. R. Stam (*The Berean Searchlight*, Jan. 1988, p. 293), says:

It was in a hotel in Indianapolis that Pastor J. C. O'Hair came to see that water baptism has no place in God's program for the Church, the body of Christ.

He had been invited to help an Indianapolis pastor whose congregation had been invaded by Pentecostalist teachings. Night after night he spelled out the difference between our Lord's "great commission" to the twelve and his greater commission to the Apostle Paul and to us. He showed from the book of Acts and the epistles of Paul how the Pentecostal program, with its supernatural sign gifts, had passed away.

One night a man came forward at the close of the service and said, in effect: I am inclined to agree with all you have said, but if your premise is correct, would you not have to eliminate water baptism for today along with the sign gifts?" O'Hair replied, "Of course not," but the question kept robbing him of his sleep that night, until he concluded that the man had been right, that it was not Scripturally consistent, or logically possible to acknowledge the passing of the sign gifts but to continue practicing water baptism.

From that time he began to see the glory of the "one baptism" into Christ and His Body, and with that, the glorious truth of the mystery so dear to the heart of the Apostle Paul.

It seems to me that there is an implication that brethren like J. N. Darby, W. Kelly, Ed. Dennett, R. Holden, Wm. Trotter, etc., etc., could not really have had a correct grasp of the mystery. Of course, persons ignorant of their writings might think that.

188. {Here is what JND wrote in 1848 (*Letters* 1:131):

I distinguish entirely between the *church* and prophecy. I do not believe the church is the subject, though it is the recipient and depository of prophecy, as Abraham was of what should happen to lot.

What is meant by the "difference between Prophecy and the Mystery" is that J. C. O'Hair viewed the early chapters of Acts as fulfillment of prophecy and so the mystery could not have begun until Paul ministered. The fact is that JND was the one who brought out that the church was not the subject of O. T. prophecy, as well as the character of the mystery. Now, readers of JND know these things and realize how shallow the above

(continued...)

Today, we stand upon the shoulders of giants who have retrieved for us the glorious truth of the pretribulation Rapture.<sup>189</sup>

J. N. Darby was used by God to recover the truth of the *pretribulation* rapture to the Lord's people (posttribulationists also believe in a "premillennial rapture") in connection with, and at the same time as he understood, the truth of the church, the body of Christ. These are interconnected,<sup>190</sup> though one might hold a pretribulation rapture without that interconnection -- though that is an aberration. He understood also the fall of the church (all in 1827). It was he who rightly understood dispensational truth, the mystery, the place of prophecy, and much else. C. I. Scofield was saved about 1879 and JND died in 1882. As to a "Darby-Scofield Movement," obviously the two men had nothing to do with each other personally. C. I. Scofield took from JND the teaching of the pretribulation rapture and the distinction between Israel and the church. He omitted (or never understood) the end of the standing of "the first man" at Calvary, *an error that opens the way for "ultradispensationalism."* Moreover, omitted from CIS's dispensational scheme is the place of the government of God in the development of His way's in the earth. Without the distinction between Israel and the church, and the truth of the pretribulation rapture, both borrowed from JND, there never would have been a Scofield dispensational scheme at all, defective as it is. So while his scheme is dependent on JND, it nevertheless hinders a proper understanding of dispensational truth.

Above, we saw that P. M. Sadler claimed that "C. I. Scofield built upon this by uncovering the dispensational approach . . . ." Of course, this notion is quite absurd. However, he sees CIS in the line of recovery of truth now espoused by the Acts 9 position of "ultradispensationalism" (omitting E. W. Bullinger). I suggest that what is transpiring is this:

1. Failure to credit JND with the recovery of the truth of the mystery.
2. Failure to credit JND with the unfolding of dispensational truth;
  - a) especially regarding the end of the testing of "the first man,"
  - b) as well as the bearing of the development of the ways of God in the earth in government.
3. Crediting C. I. Scofield with an advance upon JND, whereas his system is *disordered*, not incorporating

(...continued)

citations are -- but there will be some who need this called to their attention.}

189. *The Berean Searchlight*, Jan. 1991, p. 295.

190. I am aware of the view of Morgan Edwards. See Appendix 3.

points 2a and 2b; while also confusing ages and dispensations, strictly speaking. Moreover, the omission of point 2a opened the door for this ultradispensational scheme).

regarding dispensational and other truth.

4. Bypassing E. W. Bullinger.
5. Crediting J. C. O'Hair (Acts 13 position) with finding the key to deny that the body of Christ was formed at Pentecost (Acts 2).
6. Crediting C. R. Stam with solving the problems left by J. C. O'Hair and settling on the Acts 9 position.
7. And so, "Today, then, we stand upon the shoulders of giants who have retrieved for us the glorious truth of the pretribulation Rapture."

In reality, what this represents is a systematic undermining of truth recovered in the nineteenth century, while holding some elements of that recovered truth in a distorted way.

### *Summary*

Among the worst feature of the Acts 9/Acts 13 system is that it lowers numbers of Christ's glories and unduly exalt's His honored servant, Paul. Let us briefly review this.

1. The end of the standing and trial of the first man, in the death of Christ, is, in effect, not acknowledged.
2. And so the fall of Israel occurring upon the end of the standing and trial of the first man in the rejection and death of Christ is also not acknowledged.
3. When Christ rose from among the dead, He thus became the beginning of the new creation. He is robbed of this by asserting that the new creation began with Paul's salvation.
4. Christ's headship of the body resulted from a complex of glories: His death, resurrection, exaltation and consequent sending of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The false system, in effect, makes Christ's headship of the body devolve upon Paul.
5. Christ Himself is the One Who is the baptizer into one body. This system says that the Spirit is the baptizer into one body.
6. This system means that those in the earliest part of the Acts did not have the finished work of Christ for salvation preached to them.
7. The mission for which Christ sent the Spirit is broken into two incompatible programs which are viewed as operating simultaneously for some time.

I trust that you will clearly see that this system lowers Christ's glories. This system is not of God, Who is not the author of confusion. It is a confusion pretending to rightly divide the Word of God, whereas it is severely retrograde





## Part 4

# *Does Acts Show that the Church Fulfills the OT Prophecies of the Kingdom?*

### *The Kingdomization of the Church by Antidispensationalists*

It is intended in Part 4 to examine a number of passages in Acts where antidispensationalists claim that the church is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the kingdom. Such a notion, we have seen, is contrary to Rom. 16:25, 26, Eph. 3:9, and Col. 1:26. And, of course, the Jews *had to* expect a temporal kingdom and so the godly remnant expected a temporal kingdom as did John the Baptist; as did our Lord, who confirmed the expectation of the kingdom. But the kingdom was presented as embodied in the meek and lowly One Who was rejected and so the kingdom is “postponed.” Of course, God never purposed to inaugurate the kingdom at that point. Christ must die and God be glorified in it; and redemption wrought. Thus, the kingdom was presented in such a way so as to test the state of the people and show the ruin of man. Then a heavenly parenthesis was introduced which occupies the time between Pentecost and the rapture.

The objective of the spiritualizers of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the kingdom is to show that the reign of the Messiah was inaugurated at Pentecost.<sup>1</sup> Some have thought that the book of Acts presents clear proof of this. O. T. Allis concluded:

The verdict of the Book of Acts on the question, whether the Church, the founding of which it describes so graphically, was foretold by the prophets seems to be so

clear and unmistakable that we might rest our case after citing its testimony. But it may be well to show that the testimony of Acts is fully confirmed by the use made of the Old Testament in other books of the New Testament.<sup>2</sup>

### *The Kingdomization of the Church By Covenant Pretribulationists*

It should be expected that the self-styled, self-congratulating “Progressive Dispensationalists,” at this stage in their theological approach to covenant posttribulationists, would join with those, like the amillennialist, O. T. Allis, and others who embrace covenant theology, in making the church to be the kingdom; i.e., the notion that the reign of Messiah was inaugurated at Pentecost. While allowing for a future kingdom (as do covenant posttribulationists), the *Covenant Pretribulationists* regard the present as a phase of the Davidic kingdom. Briefly stated, the system is this:

All of the language describing the church in the New Testament is either directly drawn from **or is compatible with** the genres of covenant promise and the Messianic kingdom.<sup>3</sup>

Being a Dispensation of the kingdom, the church corresponds to the mystery form of the kingdom which Jesus revealed in the parables of Matt. 13.<sup>4</sup>

The identity of the church as a present reality of the coming eschatological kingdom receives further

1. See, for example, O. T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1945, p. 136.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 134.

3. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, Wheaton: Victor Books, p. 260 (1993).

4. *Ibid.*, p. 262.

explanation in Ephesians.<sup>5</sup>

The Church as a Present Revelation of the Kingdom.<sup>6</sup>

The emphasis is mine and those emphasized words are classical “weasel words.” If they think that they cannot produce Scripture that something is Davidic, then they can claim that it “*is compatible with*” -- and, behold, there is their theological demonstration! Such is theology. Thus the truth concerning Christ’s headship of the body and the Christian’s heavenly position and eternal portion is removed by this system. For example, our being seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6) is not compatible with covenant promise. This system undermines what Christianity is and that our blessings are in the heavenlies in Christ (Eph. 1:3). It thus directly lowers Christ’s place, limiting all his present actings to a Davidic character. The fact is that David’s great Son is also **David’s Lord**. This system will not have it that **our Lord is presently acting above what is Davidic**. Indeed, the designation that the Lord took and often used, consequent upon it being manifested in Israel that they would not have Him, namely, “the Son of man,” is a title that is of vastly wider bearing than that of “the Son of David.” This system has subsumed some things that result from our Lord’s place as the Son of man under their Davidic system -- changing thereby the full bearing of those things -- and vitiating and corrupting others. The truth is the opposite, namely, that His title as the Son of David will have its expression under the immense range and bearing of His title as the Son of man. A few things regarding this will be pointed out in Chapter 4.3, where we will consider the claim that Christ is on David’s throne now.

If Ephesians can be so distorted, what must the book of Acts suffer at their hands? Just as O. T. Allis spoke of “The verdict of the book of Acts on the question . . .,” so Kenneth L. Barker, after citing alleged examples from Acts that he thinks indicate the present Davidic phase of the Kingdom, wrote:

Additional examples could be given, but these suffice to validate the principle of progressive fulfilment in understanding and explicating the phenomena of biblical prophecy.<sup>7</sup>

Thus we may expect them to say that Christ is on David’s throne now (Acts 2:30-36) and that the fallen tabernacle of David (Acts 15) is now rebuilt, etc., just as the antidispenationalist have insisted. Interestingly, by refuting the claim of O. T. Allis, above, in effect the *Covenant Pretribulationists* will also be answered.

\* \* \* \* \*

Let us now examine the relevant passages in the Acts.

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5. *Ibid.*, p. 258.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 256.

7. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, eds., *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 327 (1992).

## Chapter 4.1

### Acts 1:3-9: Is it at This Time?

... to whom also he presented himself living, after he had suffered, with many proofs; being seen forty days, and speaking of the things which concern the kingdom of God; and, being assembled with [them], commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to await the promise of the Father, which [said he] ye have heard of me. For John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit after not now many days.

They therefore, being come together, asked him saying, Lord, is it at this time that thou restorest the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not yours to know times or seasons, which the Father has placed in his own authority; but ye will receive power, the Holy Spirit having come upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. And having said these things he was taken up, they beholding [him], and a cloud received him out of their sight (Acts 1:3-9).

We have already partially considered this passage in Chapter 1.4. The Lord said these words in vv. 6-8 on the occasion of His being taken up out of their sight. He said these words to *the Apostles*, as vv. 1, 2 show. The question asked by the Apostles in verse 6 is about the literal<sup>8</sup> kingdom they and the others of the remnant expected, which expectation the Lord had confirmed. We never read that our Lord told His disciples that there would be no such kingdom for Israel. Nor did He state that in this passage. The Apostles wanted to know if the time had now come for the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. The kingdom had been taken away, in 605 B. C., through Nebuchadnezzar. It was at that point in time when the “times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24), depicted by the image of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (Dan. 2), began. The nation, as such, was declared to be Lo-Ammi (not my people; Hos. 1:9). The restoration of the kingdom refers to the transference of power back to Israel, under the reign of Messiah (cp. Acts 3:21).

We noted elsewhere that the death of our Lord was not only for the gathering together into one the children of God that were scattered abroad, but also for the *nation* of Israel (John 11:51, 52). He was “a minister of [the] circumcision for [the] truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers . . .” (Rom. 15:8). All Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:26) and that nation will be born in a day (Isa. 66:8), all being righteous (Isa. 60:21) the

rebels all having been purged (Ezek. 20). To Israel belongs a future, national adoption (Rom. 9:4) and they will then be pronounced to be Ammi (Hos. 1:10, 11; 2:1; My people). They will enjoy the new covenant (Jer. 31:31; Heb. 8). That coming kingdom will not be unspiritual for Israel.

In Acts 1:3 we see that the Lord had spoken to the Apostles, during 40 days, concerning the kingdom of God. He did not tell them that there was to be not national future for Israel. If He did, produce the Scripture that says so! He could not deny what the prophets had said. And this led to the question the Apostles asked in v. 6.

Some opposers of the thought of a future, national kingdom for Israel might suggest that the disciples, in v. 6, did not refer to such a kingdom. One postmillennialist suggests that they were speaking of a present kingdom:

... merely asking the Lord, “Is it *now* time for Israel to be converted to you and enter the kingdom, which you have established?” This would fit well within the semantic theological and psychological framework of the episode.<sup>9</sup>

This is absurd and desperate spiritual alchemy. A different use of that technique is given by the amillennialist, Simon Kistemaker, who, astonishingly, says that even if the explanation that the disciples meant a political kingdom was the correct explanation:

... if we interpret the text to mean the restoration of spiritual Israel . . . Conclusively, then, . . . it is possible and even probable to give a spiritual interpretation of the Apostles’ question.<sup>10</sup>

If that will not do, theology can supply other alternatives. However, the amillennialist, O. T. Allis acknowledges:

That it would be an Israelitish kingdom the disciples apparently still regarded as self-evident.<sup>11</sup>

The fact is that *it is self-evident*, and certainly to us also when Rom. 16:25, 26, Eph. 3:8-11, Col. 1:24-26 as well as the prophets are believed -- instead of being explained away as F. F. Bruce did:

8. I do not imply by the word “literal” that there is nothing of a spiritual character in the kingdom when all Israel shall be saved and the knowledge of Jehovah shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

9. Bahnsen, G. L., and Gentry, Jr. K. L., *House Divided, The Break-up of Dispensational Theology*, Tyler: Institute for Christian Economics, p. 172, 1989.

10. *Acts*, Grand Rapids: Baker, p. 52, (1990).

11. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 312.

This hope of an earthly and national kingdom (Mk. 10:35-37; Lk. 1:68-75) was recast after Pentecost as the proclamation of the spiritual kingdom of God . . . .<sup>12</sup>

Of course, this alleged recasting is a figment of spiritual alchemy, as we shall see, for the preaching after Pentecost reaffirmed the expectation of the future kingdom for Israel, particularly during the period up to the stoning of Steven; i.e., during the period of God's exposure of the state of Israel after their rejection of the Lord -- until they sent Steven after the Lord, now gone to the far country, with a message, as it were (Acts 7:55-60; cp. Luke 19:14). If it is admitted that the disciples did indeed refer to a national kingdom for Israel, v. 3 is compelled to mean, for example:

This, of course, could only mean that He was instructing them concerning the work of the Kingdom in which they were to serve Him as soon as they should receive power through the coming of the Holy Spirit . . . .<sup>13</sup>

The fact is that one decides what the content of the Lord's instruction concerning the kingdom of God (v. 3) was, based on whether or not he thinks that the church fulfills the Old Testament prophecies of the kingdom. One thing certain from the question in v. 6 is that if the Lord had been telling them there would be no such national kingdom for Israel, they did not understand, or else did not believe, Him. There is no reason why He could not have spoken of both the moral aspects of the kingdom and of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, and there we leave it.

At any rate, the Lord did not answer the question of v. 6, by saying 'I have told you that there will be no such kingdom,' nor could He, for the prophets had prophesied of it. O. T. Allis, in his polemic against dispensational truth, admitted this:

The Old Testament prophecies if literally interpreted cannot be regarded as having been fulfilled or as being capable of fulfillment in this present age.<sup>14</sup>

And a Jew *had* to understand the OT prophecies that way. Moreover, those prophecies make a coherent whole, literally understood (with all due allowance for figures of speech and symbols). The Lord did not tell them that there would be no such kingdom, but that it was not for them to know "**the times and seasons.**" But in v. 3 He told them that they would be baptized in "the Holy Spirit **after now not many days.**" If we do not have an agenda, the distinction between the two subjects is quite clear. The Lord's directing their thoughts to "after now not many days" regards a different subject than the one meant by "It is not yours to know times or seasons . . . ." Verse 3 speaks of Pentecost and times and seasons refers to the events of Daniel's 70th week and what follows.

"Times" (*chronos*) refers to duration or date of occurrence chronologically, while "seasons" (*kairos*) refers to characteristics of the chronological periods. These two words apply to the same events, not to two differing periods. The

Covenant Pretribulationist, Darrell Bock, claims that *chronos* refers to the future and *kairos* applies at Pentecost. But that would mean, contradicting the Lord's words ("it is not for you to know the *chronos* or the *kairos*,") that they would, in fact, know the *kairos*. The theological figment is part of, and illustrative of, his agenda to have the present be an aspect of the Davidic kingdom -- which his system substitutes for the heavenly position and character of the church. This is called "Progressive Dispensationalism."<sup>15</sup>

The Lord's answer is instructive for us to consider in connection with 1 Thess. 5:1 where we also find reference to times and seasons.<sup>16</sup> In order to help us understand the bearing of this, part of a footnote to 1 Cor. 8:1 in J. N. Darby's translation is quoted:

Two Greek words are used for 'to know' in the New Testament -- *ginosko* and *oida*. The former signifies objective knowledge, what a man has learned or acquired. The English expression 'being acquainted with' perhaps conveys the meaning. *Oida* conveys the thought of what is inward, the inward consciousness of the mind . . . .

Acts 1:7 reads "It is not yours to know (*ginosko*) times or seasons." Now, this cannot contradict 1 Thess. 5:1, 2. The meaning of Acts 1:7 is that times and seasons were not to be their portion to experience. The times and seasons, "the defined periods of which prophecy speaks" (W. Kelly), are not connected with the rapture. Thus we do not know them in the sense of becoming objectively acquainted with them by experiencing them. If the disciples had entered into the times and the seasons, they would surely become objectively acquainted with them. The disciples, in accordance with the expectation of the remnant, had asked, "Is it at this time that thou restorest the kingdom to Israel?" The expectation was right, the time was wrong, and, furthermore, times and seasons were not to be any Christian's lot. Christianity is not part of the times and seasons.

All of this does not imply necessary ignorance on the part of Christians concerning the subject of times and seasons. "Ye know (*oida*) perfectly well yourselves, that the day of [the] Lord so comes as a thief in the night" (1 Thess. 5:2). "This great and solemn truth was part of their inward conscious assurance" (W. Kelly).

While it is true that the disciples, as seen in Acts 1, were still occupied with the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, and also Matthias was chosen as the twelfth apostle by the Old Testament method of lots, the fact remains that in Acts 1:6-8, the Lord tells them that times and seasons are not their portion to know, in the sense of experiencing them.

12. *The Acts of the Apostles*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, p. 102 (1990, third ed.).

13. P. Mauro, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, p. 108.

14. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 238.

15. Donald K. Campbell and Jeffrey L. Townsend, eds., *A Case for Premillennialism, A New Consensus*, Chicago: Moody, p. 188, note 11 (1992).

16. 1 Thess. 5:1 connects directly with 1 Thess. 4:14. 1 Thess. 4:15-18 is parenthetical in explanation of how those now dead in Christ can come with Him when He appears -- by prior rapture.

## Chapter 4.2

### Acts 2:16-21:

### Joel's Prophecy

#### Quotations

There are two general ways in which OT Scriptures are quoted in the NT <sup>17</sup>

1. They are quoted to show a fulfillment, as often in Matthew's gospel; and Acts 1:16 is an example.
2. They are quoted to:
  - a) illustrate a point;
  - b) make an application;
  - c) show that something is not inconsistent with the ways of God.

Therefore, something may fall within the use of a prophecy but not be its fulfillment. Acts 2:17-21 and Acts 15:14-18 are examples of #2. Sometimes such quotations are very full and contain more than what refers to the point under consideration, thus showing that the fulfillment has not occurred. The fulfillment is millennial, but something in #2 is applicable meanwhile.

#### The Character of What Happened

W. Kelly remarked:

... the apostle Peter quotes {from Joel} to show that the immense blessing of that day was in accordance with the highest favor promised for the kingdom . . . But, observe, the apostle did not affirm that this scripture was fulfilled. He says, "It is that thing which was spoken by the prophet Joel"; and so it is. What was promised was the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. Without saying that the present fact was the fulfillment of the prophecy (which men have assumed, to the great misunderstanding of scripture and lowering of Christianity), he showed that it was of that nature, and such therefore as to be vindicated by the prophecy before their conscience; but the apostle's language is guarded, while the commentators are not. They go to far. We do well always to hold fast to scripture.

As to the promise that the Spirit should be poured

upon "all flesh," we must bear in mind that "all flesh" is in contrast with restriction to the Jew. This is another feature which made the Pentecostal gift so admirably illustrate the scripture. For the patent fact that God caused those who received the Holy Ghost to speak in different languages distributed over the Gentile world, not causing all the converts to speak the Jewish language (a poor thing if true, which it is not, but a mere dream of superficial paradox), but causing the Jews gathered from their dispersion among all nations to speak the tongues of the Gentiles was a magnificent witness to the grace that was going out to the Gentiles to meet them where they were. The judgment of God had inflicted these various tongues upon them, and completely broken up the ambitious project of joining together to establish a unity of their own through the tower of Babel. But the grace of God went out exactly where His judgment had placed them. <sup>18</sup>

#### Acts 2:17-21 Is Future

And it shall be in the last days, saith God, [that] I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your elders will dream with dreams; yea, even upon my bondmen and upon my bondwomen in those days will I pour out of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will give wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be changed to darkness and the moon to blood, before the great and gloriously appearing day of [the] Lord come (Acts 2:17-21).

We previously sought to show the misuse made of this passage by so-called Acts 9/13 "ultradispensationalists." We saw that the passage is millennial and that Peter showed that what had happened was not inconsistent (or absurd) with the ways of God. That is, Joel's prophecy was not fulfilled at Pentecost though the effusion of the Spirit (see v. 17) and the calling on the name of the Lord (see v. 21) fell within the scope of Joel's prophecy. Moreover, the position taken here is that there was not even a partial fulfillment. The effusion

17. See W. Kelly, *An Exposition of the Book of Isaiah*, pp. 54-58, for an examination of how Isaiah is quoted.

18. *Lectures Introductory to the Study of the Minor Prophets*, London: Broom, p. 95 (1874).

of the Spirit at Pentecost was not upon all flesh, as Joel's prophecy says it will be.

### THE LAST DAYS

It is claimed that since Joel said "and it shall come to pass afterward" and Peter said, "and in the last days," Peter thus claimed that the listeners were living in the last days.<sup>19</sup> Peter made no such claim. His "last days" does not refer to the last days in which we now live. While Peter was speaking, the last days of the church were not yet present. The last days, as regards the church as *viewed in testimony on earth*, began when the church fell into ruin -- and did so before the apostles were all gone. When Paul wrote of the characteristics and persons of the last days, he told Timothy to turn away from such (2 Tim. 3:1). 2 Timothy contains instruction for conduct in the last days, which had arrived before the writing of the book. Peter warned of them (2 Pet. 3:3); and John pronounced that it was "the last hour" (1 John 2:8). The church was fallen, ruined, as *the vessel of testimony seen in responsibility on earth*. The writing of the book of Revelation is the standing witness to this fact, because prophecy is occasioned by failure -- and this was the failure, the ruin, of the church on earth, seen in responsibility.<sup>20</sup>

The last days, or "end of the days" (Isa. 2:2; Jer. 23:20; Hos. 3:4, 5; Micah 4:1) of which the O. T. Prophets spoke has the coming Kingdom in view. Recall that "this age" in the N. T. means the age which began with the introduction of the law. **Christianity is not an age.** The "end of the days" of the prophets means the closing era of "this age" in view of the establishment of the Kingdom under Messiah. Joel, says "afterwards," which Peter refers to as the "last days."

Heb. 1:1, 2 -- "at the end of these days" -- has nothing to do with the last days as related to the church seen in ruin concerning responsibility on earth. J. N. Darby, in a footnote, wrote:

See Isa. 2:2. A Hebrew expression, as several here, for the end of the period of law, when Messiah was to be introduced.

### PROPHECY, VISIONS, AND DREAMS

Joel had said that "your sons and daughters shall prophesy and your young men shall see visions, and your elders shall dream with dreams" (Acts 2:17). Obviously this did not happen at Pentecost but if Joel spoke of the formation of the Church, why, it simply must have happened. So, to circumvent the problem an objector said:

Since tongues could be broadly described as a kind of prophecy, this passage provided the nearest equivalent to

tongues in Old Testament phraseology . . .<sup>21</sup>

### SIGNS ON THE EARTH BELOW

Peter says, "and I will give wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be changed to darkness and the moon to blood before the great and glorious appearing day of [the] Lord shall come" (Acts 1:19, 20).

The signs are said to be, "probably the gift of tongues and the various healing miracles which are shortly to be recorded."<sup>22</sup> Thus it is implicitly admitted that healing miracles did not occur at Pentecost -- so how was Joel's prophecy fulfilled at Pentecost? And then we are treated, as well we might be, to silence concerning the blood, fire, etc.

### WONDERS IN THE HEAVEN ABOVE

How can this be handled?

If we do not accept that the reference is to the cosmic signs which accompanied the crucifixion (Luke 23:44f.), then Peter is looking forward to the signs which will herald the end of the world . . . to the 'end' of the last days, rather than to their 'beginning' which is just taking place.<sup>23</sup>

Anything, so long as the theory that the church fulfills the Old Testament prophecies concerning the kingdom is maintained. How, for either suggestion, was Joel's prophecy fulfilled *at Pentecost*? Regarding Luke 23:44ff:

1. This was before Pentecost.
2. If Joel is to be understood literally regarding the sun being turned to darkness, why was not the moon turned to blood?<sup>24</sup>

Joel's prophecy is not about the darkening of the sun when our Lord suffered at Calvary. That darkness was literal, of course. Joel's prophecy of the moon turning to blood, however, is symbolic. The symbols of sun, moon and stars were present in Joseph's dream where they meant Jacob, his wife and his sons, respectively. These symbols are used of powers: supreme, derivative and lesser, respectively. These symbols are repeatedly associated with the day of the Lord (Isa. 13:9-11; Ezek. 32:7, 8; Joel 2:10 & 3:15). Our Lord used these symbols also (Matt. 24:29; Mark 13:24, 25) as did John (Rev. 6:12; 8:12 -- cp 12:1). But I do not mean to say that there shall be no actual signs in the heavens.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

24. F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, p. 69, 1955, says ". . . the paschal full moon may well have appeared blood-red in the sky in consequence of that preternatural gloom." That refers to an event before Pentecost and in any event is certainly outside the words "*this is that*." At Calvary there was a *literal* darkness -- but concerning the moon, we are offered a "may well be" and an *appearance* of a blood-red moon.

19. I. H. Marshall, *Acts*, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, p. 73, 1983.

20. See my *The Ruin of the Church, Eldership and Ministry of the Word by Gift*.

## *This Is That*

The thrust of the quotation, its bearing on what was transpiring, is the pouring out of the Spirit upon all flesh (v. 17) and that whoever calls on the name of the Lord would be saved (v. 21). Joel is quoted for the principle of these two things and they were applied on this occasion. What was happening had that character. Joel was selected for quotation by the guidance of the omniscient Spirit of God because Joel spoke of "all flesh"; and this passage regarding the pouring out of the Spirit (rather than the others) is in view of the work that was going to be carried on among the Gentiles, for whoever calls on the name of the Lord would be saved. It is not the fulfillment, which awaits the Kingdom, but has application, in principle, meanwhile.

There are antidispenationalists who assert that this phrase means that Pentecost fulfilled Joel's prophecy.<sup>25</sup> This leads to quite a working of the theological imagination. The truth is that the Spirit came at Pentecost in fulfillment of *the promise of the Father* (Luke 24:49; John 14:26). The Spirit was not given until the Lord Jesus was glorified (John 7:39). And so, having been exalted, Christ received from the Father the Spirit and then Christ poured Him out (Acts 2:32, 33). Thus the Spirit we have received is not called the Holy Spirit of Joel's prophecy, but the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. 1:13). He is the promise of the Father and of the Son (not of Jehovah) in connection with the place that we have before the Father, in the Son.

Another alternative is to put part of the prophecy off for, now, more than 1900 years. So the position taken by the editor of the *Evangelical Quarterly*, I. H. Marshall, is that "Peter sees that it is beginning to be fulfilled in the events of Pentecost."<sup>26</sup> No wonder he did not comment on the words "this is that which was spoken through Joel the prophet." He has had opportunity to read other amillennialists on this passage who have asserted that these words mean 'this is the fulfillment of that.' But *his* view means 'this is a partial fulfillment of that,' since part is to be

fulfilled, he says, in the future. The truth is that the only understanding of "this is that" that does justice to the passage itself, and is also in keeping with the Scripture statements that the mystery was "hidden throughout the ages in God" (Eph. 3:9, and silence was kept about it (Rom. 16:25, 26), and that it was hidden from generations and ages (Col. 1:26), is this: "this is that" means that this outpouring of the Spirit has that character -- not that it is the fulfillment.

I have pointed out elsewhere that the objection to this, namely, that the text does not say 'this has that character' is countered by pointing out that the text does not say 'this is the fulfillment of that.' Far worse is I. H. Marshall's view, which makes the words mean "this is a partial fulfillment of that," (or, "this is the beginning of the fulfillment of that"). Peter showed his audience how the view that this was necessarily drunkenness is false, since Joel had spoken of something of a similar character. Thus, there was another, the true, explanation. So at Pentecost, the effusion of the Spirit fell within the bearing of this aspect of Joel's prophecy but did not fulfill it either fully or partially.

### JOEL SAID, "UPON ALL FLESH."

In Acts 2 the Spirit came **upon Jews only**. And so on an 'antidispenational' view of the passage, that fact would require an antidispenationalist to say that this also was the *beginning* of fulfillment, which view, of course, is taken.<sup>27</sup> It is interesting that the Spirit of God cited *Joel* in regard to the pouring out of the Spirit on all flesh. Other references to the effusion of the Spirit (Isa. 32:15; 44:3, 4; Ezek. 36:27; 37:14; 39:29; cp. Isa. 59:21; Zech. 12:10) refer only to Israel. At Pentecost, the Spirit came only upon Israelites, yet one of those texts that refer only to Israel was not chosen by the Spirit for quotation through Peter. Pentecost was not the fulfillment, either for Israel or for all flesh. However, Joel's prophecy may have been chosen by the Spirit because the blessing was going to go beyond these Jews, even to Gentiles whom God would save during the present period.

Kenneth L. Barker applies to the words "this is that" the notion of progressive fulfillment of prophecy, the objective of this being to have OT prophecies partially fulfilled now. Thus, he claims:

The latter expression certainly appears to be asserting that "this" at least partially fulfills Joel's words. Here I agree with Carson: "This is not an identity statement, since the antecedent of 'this' is the set of phenomena associated with that first Christian Pentecost, not the prophecy itself. The statement really means, 'This fulfills what was spoken by the prophet' [D. A. Carson, *Exegetical*

25. "Peter makes the Spirit's manifestation the fulfillment of the Jewish prophecy by Joel, . . . Pentecost was the fulfillment of their own prophecies," *The Wesleyan Bible Commentary*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, vol. 4, p. 507, 1977. Another says, "Contrary to Peter's interpretation -- viz., that Pentecost fulfilled Joel's prophecy . . .," G. L. Bahnson and K. L. Gentry, Jr., *House Divided*, Tyler: Institute for Christian Economics, p. 75, note 30, 1989. A very strange thing appears in the "dispensationalist" Dallas Seminary Faculty commentary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Wheaton: Victor Books, p. 358, 1983: "This clause does not mean, 'This is like that'; it means Pentecost fulfilled what Joel had described. However, the prophecies of Joel quoted in Acts 2:19-20 were not fulfilled. The implication is that the remainder would be fulfilled if Israel would repent." The last sentence is just imagination. Does this not sound similar to the 'ultradispensationalist' view of Acts 2? And it violates the fact that the church is not the subject of the OT prophecies.

26. I. H. Marshall, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

27. F. F. Bruce, *The Books of the Bible*: Eerdmans, p. 68, 1955.

Fallacies (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 61].<sup>28</sup>

Is it right, that when Joel says “**upon all flesh**” and at Pentecost it was **upon Jews only**, to claim: “This fulfills what was spoken by the prophet”? The “antecedent of ‘this’ is” the pouring out of the Spirit upon Jews only! I suggest that Scripture is being forced, here, in deference to a theological figment about “progressive fulfillment of prophecy.” And do we not see here the commission of an exegetical fallacy? Does upon all flesh = upon Jews only? -- or is the fact rather that “this is that” means having that character? It reminds me of the Arminian we noted that, in effect, said impossible = almost impossible, and the loose Christian who, in effect, said partaker = partial partaker. Recall, also, that the Spirit did not cause Peter to use one of the other Scriptures about the future effusion of the Spirit that spoke only of the Jews, but selected the one in Joel about all flesh -- as if to cut off this erroneous attempt.

#### THE DAY OF THE LORD

The wonders and signs will occur “before the great and gloriously appearing day of [the] Lord comes” (v. 20). Though “before,” it is correct to say that the wonders and signs just precede that day. We might pause to note that those “dispensationalists” who say the day of the Lord is inaugurated at the rapture are therefore incorrect. Such signs will not precede the rapture. It is the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory that ushers in the day of the Lord (which includes the millennium and the dissolution of the present heavens and earth) and the wonders and signs will occur after the rapture.

#### CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD

“And it shall be that whosoever shall call upon the name of [the] Lord shall be saved” (v. 21). What a blessed fact, cited again in Rom. 10:13. Peter quoted from Joel up to this verse, which, while Joel has reference to the last days, also has an application now. This he desired to bring before his hearers so that they might repent and be saved. The citation from Joel concerning the Spirit answered the charge of drunkenness. The application of v. 21 would meet their deep need. O. T. Allis remarked:

But the words themselves are clearly applicable to that mystery church. . . .<sup>29</sup>

Verse 21 is indeed applicable now. That fact, however, does not prove that the church is the subject of prophecy. Verse 21 illustrates how something can be “applicable” without it being the fulfillment and without the mystery being a subject of prophecy. Moreover, v. 21 applies to individuals.

The notions of the antidispenationalists cited are

notions characteristic of their approach to Scripture. It is just such a way of distorting (I do not say intentionally) Scripture that is required in order to support the idea that the church is the spiritual Israel and that the church is a subject of OT prophecy.

28. In Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 326 (1992).

29. O. T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 135.



## *The Baptism in the Spirit; Matt. 3:11 And Joel 2:28*

Some *Covenant Pretribulationists* hold that Joel's prophecy was fulfilled except for what is cited in Acts 2:19, 20. Thus, there is a hiatus between vv. 18 and 20. It is claimed that Matt. 3:11 refers to Joel's prophecy and Matt. 3:11 was fulfilled at Pentecost, at least the part referring to the baptism in the Spirit. This is part of the agenda to have presently a Davidic aspect of the kingdom. The conclusion is:

The Spirit's coming at Pentecost was nothing less than the fulfillment of the Old Testament promise of the messianic outpouring of the Spirit.<sup>30</sup>

This, of course, isolates the pouring out of the Spirit in Joel's prophecy from the other OT Scriptures (Isa. 32:15; 44:3, 4; Ezek. 36:27; 37:14; 39:29; cp. Isa. 59:21; Zech. 12:10). If it be said that Joel 2:28 will have an application in the future, note that that is merely a reversal of the fact; namely, that the fulfillment is future but Peter referred to it to show that what was happening is illustrated by it -- or not inconsistent with it.

The kingdom spoken of by John (Matt. 3:2) was the same kingdom to which the Apostles referred in Acts 1:6 -- the kingdom under the reign of Messiah, predicted by the prophets (the millennium). Consequent upon the sin against the Holy Spirit being committed in Matt. 12 (signifying His rejection), the Lord introduced the subject of a kingdom not foreseen by the prophets, hence it is the kingdom in *mystery* (Matt. 13). This is the form of the kingdom now and it has no Davidic character. The Lord is on the Father's throne (Rev. 3:21). He will have His throne of glory later (cp. Matt. 25:31). I suggest that just as Matt. 3:2 refers to the predicted kingdom for Israel, so Matt. 3:11 refers to the baptism in the Holy Spirit and in fire that is still future. One refers to the future pouring out of the Spirit and the other to the pouring out of judgment. The Pentecostal baptism in the Spirit is not the fulfillment of Matt. 3:11 or of Joel 2:28. In Acts 1:5, the Lord referred to John by way of *contrast*. John's baptism was with water. The baptism to occur not many days after was spiritual in nature. There are three considerations that show that Pentecost is not the fulfillment of the O. T. Predictions of the outpouring of the spirit.

### THE POSITION OF CHRIST WITH RESPECT TO THE TWO BAPTISMS

Christ's position is altogether different with respect to the Pentecostal baptism in the Spirit and the future one.

- The baptism in the Spirit at Pentecost requires Christ's absence from earth and His presence in Heaven (John

16:7; 7:39; Acts 2:32, 33).

- Israel's future baptism in the Spirit will occur after Christ has come in glory and Israel has been regathered (Ezek. 36:24-32) and the two houses, Israel and Ephraim, have been reunited (Ezek. 37:11-14).<sup>31</sup> The feast of the blowing of Trumpets is typical of Israel's future regathering, which will take place on the first of the month, namely the 1320th day from the middle of Daniel's 70th week. The fulfillment of the day of atonement for Israel will be on the following 10th of the month (cp. Lev. 23), namely, the 1330th day from the middle of Daniel's 70th week.<sup>32</sup> Perhaps on this day (cp. Zech. 12:10-12) will occur the pouring out of the Spirit on Israel (Isa. 32:15; 44:3). And Joel 2:28 says it will come to pass "afterwards"; clearly, after the regathering and unification of Israel. But Christ will already have come in glory before that regathering. Thus, his position with respect to the two cases is entirely different. And these two positions relate to the respective objectives.

### THE OBJECTIVES OF THE TWO BAPTISMS

In accordance with Christ's two positions, noted above, there are two objectives related to those positions.

- The Pentecostal outpouring has in view the gathering out of this world a people for heaven, persons united in one body to the Head in heaven. It is connected with the inauguration of the church.
- The future pouring out is for the workings of God's purpose and grace regarding the earthly sphere where Messiah's reign will be inaugurated. It is connected with the inauguration of the Kingdom.

In the millennium, Christ will head up both the heavenly and the earthly (Eph. 3:10).

### THE CHARACTER OF THE TWO BAPTISMS

Just as the positions of Christ, and the objectives, in the two cases differ, so the character differs.

- The Pentecostal baptism in the Spirit comes from the Father (John 14:16) and the Son (John 16:8), consequent upon His glorification in heaven (John 7:39; Acts 2:32, 33).
- In the future it is from Jehovah. Of course the Father, Son and Spirit are Jehovah, but in that day God will

30. Robert L. Saucy, *The Case For Progressive Dispensationalism*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 178 (1993).

31. Since the future pouring out of the Spirit is after the regathering of Israel, which regathering occurs after the Lord's appearing in glory (i.e., after the introduction of the day of the Lord); and since the occurrences noted in Acts 2:19, 20 occur before the introduction of the day of the Lord; it is evident that what is described in Acts 2:19, 20 will occur before what is described in Acts 2:17, 18.

32. The 1335th day brings in the blessedness (Dan. 12). It is the 15th day of the month, the feast of booths -- when the millennial blessedness is fully realized under Messiah.

stand in relationship to the earth in a character suitable to his purpose and grace regarding the earthly sphere, in which His ways in government are displayed as well as His grace.

### *The Baptism in the Spirit Is Not Continuous*

There could be no subsequent baptism in the Spirit for the body of Christ because that formed the body; and the body is only formed once. Somewhere J. N. Darby remarked:

As to 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13, it is aorist . . . and therefore says nothing of continuity . . .

The Spirit is characterized in Eph 1:13 as the *Holy Spirit of promise*. That characterization accords with the fact that the Spirit's coming resulted from the promise of the Father (John 14:16, 26; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4). The coming of the Spirit required Christ's absence here (John 16:8) and He said that He (Christ) would send the promise of the Father (Luke 24:49). When glorified, He received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit and then He poured out the Spirit (Acts 2:32, 33). This is a once-for-all act -- from the Head in heaven -- forming the body (1 Cor. 12:13). We are added to that once-for-all formed body when we are *sealed* with that same *Holy Spirit of promise*. Thus, we are brought into the good of 1 Cor. 12:13. There are no continuous baptisms in the Spirit. It was a corporate thing, not an individual thing. This is not a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy.

"And such as the heavenly [one], such also the heavenly [ones]" (1 Cor. 15:48). The body is heavenly, as is the Head in heaven to which that body is united by the Holy Spirit of promise -- Covenant Pretribulationists notwithstanding!

The attempt to make the entire quotation from Joel be fulfilled certainly leads to ludicrous explanations -- in spite of being put forth with theological seriousness. It is a question, however, whether or not such a view is more consistent than treating the phrase "this is that" as if it said "this is partially that." But this is how some take it, confining the phrase's application to the pouring out of the Spirit and asserting it means 'this fulfils what the prophet said.' That view is favored by the Covenant Pretribulationists.

### *The Nation of Israel And The Holy Spirit Put in Them*

The baptism in the spirit at Pentecost formed the body of Christ (1 cor. 12:13) united to the Head in heaven (Eph. 4:15), forming what 1 Cor. 12:12 calls "the Christ." This indicates the Head and the members seen in union.<sup>33</sup> This "the Christ" was not spoken of in the OT, and was formed when

the Spirit **came** (John 15:16; 16:13) in *the special capacity* consequent upon the Lord's taking His place above (John 7:39; Acts 2:32, 33). He will be taken out of the way (2 Thess 2, i.e., the restrainer) in connection with *that special capacity* for which He came, when the last member is added to that body. The rapture will take place. He indwells the believer (1 Cor. 6:19) and the church (1 Cor. 3:17) but does so in connection with Christ's present position above. Thus, the baptism in the Spirit is a heavenly thing, an action in connection with the absence of the Lord from earth, while concealed in heaven.

In Ezek. 36:25-27 we read: "I will put my Spirit within you." That will not be, as now, to join them into one body to the Head in Heaven, which required the Lord's absence from earth. It will occur consequent on His appearing in glory and presence on earth. It is for their establishment in national unity, on earth, composed of twelve tribes, but with each Israelite saved (Rom. 11:26), for they have a national adoption (Rom. 9:3-5).

Their cleansing by the sprinkling of clean water reminds us of Num. 19:17-19. The new birth is spoken of here as the giving of a new heart and spirit. No doubt the Lord Jesus had in mind texts such as this when he spoke to Nicodemus, who He rebuked as "the teacher of Israel" (John 3:10) for not knowing that such a thing was necessary. The new birth is necessary for the blessings of Israel, under Messiah, in the millennium. The Lord called what He said to Nicodemus "earthly things" (John 3:12), distinguishing that from "heavenly things." All of the children of God from Adam onward have experienced the new birth. While a Christian does also, that is not what constitutes the spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:3; 2:6; etc.), which are heavenly things.

The blessing of Israel under the new covenant (Jer. 31:31; Heb. 8) is very much greater than OT Israel had, thought it is earthly blessing. The idea of millennial blessing is not, as alleged by antidispenationalists, a downward step from the church's blessing. The objection betrays that the church is, in effect, viewed as an earthly thing. See that the church is heavenly, that "this age" is the age begun with the law; see that the church is not an age, is not part of the development of God's ways in government in the earth; see where God says it is (Eph. 1:3; 2:6; etc.); and it becomes plain in viewing the development of God's ways in government in the earth that the millennium is a immense upward step for the saints whose portion is in the earth.

33. What think you; does this **union** make the Head earthly, or does it make the members heavenly?

## Chapter 4.3

### *Acts 2:30-36: Is Christ on David's Throne Now?*

Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn to him with an oath, of the fruit of his loins to set upon his throne; he, seeing [it] before, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that neither has he been left in hades nor his flesh seen corruption. This Jesus has God raised up, whereof all we are witnesses. Having therefore been exalted by the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured

out this which ye behold and hear. For David has not ascended into the heavens, but he says himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I have put thine enemies [to be] the footstool of thy feet. Let the whole house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him, this Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:30-36).

#### *The Promise of The Spirit*

Opposers would like to connect v. 33 with the OT prophecies of the effusion of the Spirit <sup>34</sup> as if this was a fulfillment. One hardly has to look there. Luke 24:49 and John 14:26 are near at hand. And when we are sealed with the Spirit Who formed that body once-for-all formed at Pentecost, we are sealed with the same Spirit Who formed that body, "the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13). How simple this is; and in accordance with Rom. 16:25, 26; Col. 1:24-26; Eph. 3:9.

The Lord Jesus received the Spirit two times. The first time the Spirit came upon Him in the form of a dove. This was in accordance with the perfection of His person. He needed no application of blood first, as we do. And then when glorified (cp. John 7:39), He received the Spirit from the Father, as glorified Man, to baptize in the power of one Spirit, into one body (1 Cor. 12:13), those who were cleansed by His precious blood, and were waiting below (Acts 2:32, 33). Thus were they one body with the Head in heaven. And thus was the promise of the Father fulfilled concerning His sending the Spirit.

#### *Peter's Message*

We now come to the OT Scripture Peter quoted. Did he quote it in order to tell the Jews that David's earthly throne had just been transferred to heaven? -- and that Christ was just seated on David's throne? -- and that the prophesied reign was changed from a kingdom on earth to a spiritual reign in heaven? Well, anti-dispensational theology thinks to load this passage with all that freight.

His message was not those things but that the very Jesus that had just been slain was raised from the dead by God. The OT showed that the Messiah would die and be raised. He cited words from David that could not be true of David, but true of Messiah. His soul was not left in hades nor did his flesh see corruption. This meant resurrection. This was true of One Who was to fulfil the promise to David that of the fruit of his loins, one would sit on David's throne. And there He sits awaiting the time when God makes Christ's enemies His footstool (Psa. 110:1), made now both Lord and Christ.

#### *What Throne Is Christ on Now?*

##### HOW THEOLOGY ANSWERS

There is a theological process that involves "spiritualizing" the OT prophecies so as to have the church be the subject of those prophecies -- leaving the OT curses for literal Israel and the promises of blessing for the spiritual Israel (i.e., allegedly the church). That is the general framework for handling such passages as we are considering. In the process of this spiritual alchemy, the passage we are considering must mean, therefore, that Christ is on David's throne now, even though no NT text has been produced that states it. This process involves:

1. Transferring David's earthly throne to heaven and changing David's throne from an *earthly* to a *heavenly* throne;
2. Making the church the house of Jacob (Luke 1:32);
3. Begin the reign of Christ at Pentecost;
4. Ignore the fact that Christ says he is now on the Father's throne (Rev. 3:21);
5. When Christ speaks of sitting on His own throne, move

34. O. T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 136.

that to the eternal state.

### WHAT PETER DID NOT SAY

In Acts 2 we do not find Peter stating or implying what is found in points 1-3 above. These points are mere theological assertions. Peter was proving from the OT that Messiah would die, be resurrected and sit down at God's right hand. It was this that reached the conscience of some of Peter's hearers (Acts 2:37). There is not a word here, or anywhere else, that Christ is now occupying David's throne.<sup>35</sup>

### CHRIST DISTINGUISHED HIS THRONE FROM THE FATHER'S THRONE

He that overcomes, to him will I give to sit with me in my throne; as I have overcome, and have sat down with my Father in his throne (Rev. 3:21).

Here, our Lord distinguished His own throne from the Fathers' throne.<sup>36</sup> He is not on His own throne of glory now. Yet we are told that He is reigning now on David's throne. What does Scripture say regarding Christ's reign? Psalm 110:1, 2 says:

Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I put thine enemies [as] footstool of thy feet. Jehovah shall send the scepter of thy might out of Zion: rule in the midst of thine enemies.

*With respect to His enemies* Christ sits at God's right hand, where He now is, UNTIL His enemies are made the footstool of His feet.<sup>37</sup> But by the spiritualizers His enemies are, in effect, told He is reigning now. When will He rule in the midst of His enemies? When Jehovah makes them Messiah's footstool -- when Jehovah sends the scepter of Christ's might out of Zion. Clearly, the reign upon David's throne is in the millennium.

The Psalm does not speak of the extermination of the enemies, though some will be (Rev. 19, etc.). Some will feign obedience (Psalm 18:44; 66:3). But such shall come to their end in the little time when Satan is loosed from the abyss and deceives them, if not before then.

The Psalm does not say that while Messiah is at Jehovah's right hand, Jehovah is making, gradually, or in any other way, Christ's enemies His footstool.<sup>38</sup> He is now gathering His co-heirs for heaven. After the rapture He will

form a remnant (which the Psalms and the Song of Songs are about). And when He is manifested, we will be manifested with Him in glory (Col. 4:3) when He comes in glory and the armies in heaven with Him (Rev. 19). That is when Jehovah will set the blessed King of Psalm 2 upon His holy hill of Zion. That is when Jehovah will send the scepter of Christ's might out of Zion. Then the people (the Jewish nation) "shall be willing in the day of thy power" (Psalm 110:3) for He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob and so all Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:26). He will bring them into the bond of the covenant (Ezek. 20); for that covenant belongs to Israel (Rom. 9:4), Paul's kinsmen according to the flesh (Rom. 9:3); but with all rebels purged out they shall all be righteous (Isa. 60:21) kinsmen. Then indeed they will be willing (Psalm 110:3).

It is at that future time that Christ will take His own throne, the throne of David. It will then display its power over the whole earth when Christ heads up both the heavenly and the earthly spheres (Eph. 1:10) for God's glory. Meanwhile He has set Himself down at the right hand of the greatness on high (Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 12:2). At any rate, we have the express statement that it is the Father's throne on which Christ sits now, in contrast to His own throne (Rev. 3:21). Let us now consider His own, future throne.

## Covenant Pretribulationists Are Covenantists

In keeping with their agenda to remove the heavenly position and portion of the Christian and the church, and make the church a phase of the Davidic reign of Christ, two leaders in this effort, write, concerning Acts 2:22-36:

{Peter} then argues that this enthronement has taken place upon the entrance of Jesus into heaven, in keeping with the language of Psalm 110:1 that describes the seating of David's son at God's right hand.

. . . the Davidic nature of Christ's present activity . . .

. . . every New Testament description of the present throne of Jesus<sup>39</sup> is drawn from Davidic promises . . .

. . . the Bible itself describes the present position and activities of Christ in terms of the promises covenanted to David.<sup>40</sup>

Think about that last statement quoted. It means that Christ's position as Head of the Body is described in terms of the promises covenanted to David. Just so is it with the Lord as the second man, and also as the last Adam. All his glories in connection with these titles are lowered. And this is true of Him as "the Son of man" also, a title the bearing of which we

35. See W. Kelly, *The Second Advent of Christ*, Glasgow: Allan, 1868, p. 67. Also, *The Bible Treasury* 17:173, etc., for a reply to postmillennialism.

36. Incredibly, P. Mauro, *The Patmos Visions*, Swengel: Reiner, 1971 reprint, p. 138 says, "This needs no comment." R. J. Rushdoony (the father of reconstructionism) a postmillennialist, *Thy Kingdom Come*, Presbyterian and Reformed, 1971, p. 127, says essentially nothing. W. Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors*, Tyndale: London, p. 79, 1940, places Christ's throne "in the hereafter," in heaven (p. 191).

37. *With respect to His work on Calvary*, Christ will never get up (Heb. 10:12). Sitting until His enemies are made the footstool of His feet is no more valid an objection to His coming for His own at the pre-tribulation rapture, than is Heb. 10:12 a valid ground of objection. He is also seen standing in Acts 7 to receive Stephen.

38. This is dealt with in *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 8:5-15.

39. {There is no such thing as a "present throne of Jesus." It is a theological figment.}

40. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, Wheaton: Victor Books, pp. 177, 180, 182, 186 (1993).

will consider a little, below. No wonder that they have joined the chorus that contradicts Rom. 16:25, Col. 1:26 and Eph. 3:9. They are engaged in a systematic effort to undermine the truth of the heavenly position and portion of the Head and His members. Writers such as these declare themselves incapable of seeing the difference between Rev. 3:21 and 1 Chron. 17:13, 14 and Psalm 89:26. Their system lowers the saints now to the level of millennial saints -- with Christ reigning over them now in a spiritual way. Such is the Christianity of what they call "Progressive Dispensationalism."

### *The Glories of The Son of Man*

Following is a few quotations regarding the fact that Christ's glories as the Son of man are far higher than those as the Son of David. The Lord Jesus is not know carrying out His function as the Son of David, but as David's Lord.

His government and headship over creation are not to be confounded. The government laid on His shoulder is not His headship over creation. His being born a King is not His headship over creation either. And, though it be the Messiah who is set over all things, it is not as Messiah, but as Son of man; and as Son of man, it is not till after His death that all power in heaven and in earth is, by God's act of devolution, laid on Him. Till then, though the person was there who was to have it, man and the Jews were put to the test; and until Christ was rejected, the time was not come for Him to take this place.

But we have another truth here: the Son of man was to re-enter heaven as Man, to be Head over all things. As Son of God He has been appointed Heir (Heb. 1); He is such as Creator (Col. 1), but also as Man and Son of man, according to God's counsels. (Psalm 8, quoted in Ephesians 1, in 1 Corinthians 15, in Hebrews 2 -- passages which develop clearly His place in this respect.) Proverbs 8 teaches us that He who was Jehovah's delight before the foundation of the world, rejoiced then in the habitable parts of the earth, and His delights were in the sons of men. The angels (Luke 2) recall this truth, or rather the proofs which His incarnation gave of the thoughts of God in this respect; they speak of this incarnation as the manifestation of God's good pleasure in men. As then He has been the manifestation of God upon earth, He enters as Man into the glory of God on high. He will reign over the earth as Head of the creation, gathering together all things under His authority (Col. 1); but here we speak of heavenly things. The Son of man takes His place on high to be Head over all things (1 Peter 3: 22; John 13:3; 16:15).<sup>41</sup>

Following up the lecturer's remarks {W. Kelly's},<sup>42</sup>

which introduce the reader to a very different atmosphere from that of conventional scholarship, we may develop these by reference to the *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible* by Mr. J. N. Darby. The second Psalm, he explains, in the light of Acts 4:25 ff., as exhibiting to us the Son of God, rejected in His character of Messiah the eighth as setting Him forth "the Son of man," with a higher glory (cf. John 1:49 ff, 12:23, 34). In Mark 9, Peter having confessed Jesus as *Messiah*, the Lord thereupon *drops* that title for the time being, to introduce His sufferings as *Son of man*. In Ezekiel the title "suited the testimony of a God who spoke outside of His people" {just so in Daniel also}. "It is Christ's own title, looked at as rejected and outside of Israel. He would not, thus rejected, allow His disciples to announce Him as the Christ, for the Son of man was to suffer" (*ibid.* 2:370). "He could not be rejected as Christ without His having a more glorious place destined to Him" (*ibid.* 2:78). On Dan. 7 the same writer remarks: "It is not now the Messiah, owned as King in Zion, but ONE in the form of the Son of man, a title of far greater and more wide significance. It is the change from Psa. 2. to Psa. 8 brought about by the rejection of the Messiah" (*ibid.* 2:437).

In his Lectures on *Matthew* W. Kelly has remarked, with reference to the use of this title in Acts 7:52-56, that when the Lord "was refused as Messiah, Stephen, finding that the testimony was rejected, is led of God to testify of Jesus as the exalted Son of man at God's right hand" (p. 352).

Attempts are made to divorce the Synoptic from the Johannine treatment of the Lord's ministry in general; but a comparison of Mark 14:64 with John 10:36 would show what a link this title forms between the three first and the fourth Gospels. Cf. Schanz, *A Christian Apology* 2:521. Thus in John 6:27 we are told that in His baptism (Mark 1:10 f. and parr.) the Lord was "sealed " as Son of man. Moreover, not only in John's, but in all the other narratives the distinction between the titles "Christ" and "Son of man" is maintained. This is especially noticeable in Luke 9:26 (cf. Matt. 10:23), but we meet with it also in Mark 9:21 f. See also 12:34, and compare Westcott's note on p. 34 of his *Commentary on John*.

In all four Gospels the sufferings of the Son of man, as well as His exaltation, are spoken of; His being future Judge (John 5:22) is but one form of the latter.

Outside the Gospels, besides Acts 7:52 ff., already mentioned, reference may be made to 1 Cor. 15, Eph. 1, and Heb. 2, and, of course, to Rev. 1:3 and 14:14. On Matt. 9:6, Bengel connects "on earth" with "Son of man" (as here). Cf. John 3:13. Neander also accepts the idea of the connection with heaven in the title itself. The Lord, he says, indicated thereby "His elevation above all other men, the Son of God in the Son of man" (p.

41. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 33:164, 165. See also 33:204n, 234; 24:41; *Notes and Comments* 2:416; *Notes and Jottings*, pp. 41, 238-240.

42. See the remarks by W. Kelly in his *Exposition of the Gospel of Mark*, at the end of Chapter 2 regarding the Son of man being Lord of the Sabbath as well as his comments in Chapter 8 where the Lord forbid them to say that he (continued...)

42. (...continued)  
was the Messiah.

100).<sup>43</sup>

This is an assize {Dan. 7}. The thrones are not overthrown, but placed. The Ancient of days sits in judgment; myriads of myriads are there before Him. The books are opened. But as yet the Son of man does not appear, but only the Ancient of days, in another sense Christ is Himself the Ancient of days, but here, a little farther on in the chapter, He is presented to Him (the Ancient of days) as the Son of man.

In the Apocalypse, when John sees (Rev. 1) the Son of man, it is with all the attributes of the Ancient of days. But here the ancient of days is seen Himself apart in vision, because Christ, in this book, is always considered as the Messiah, or as the Son of man, in His own separate and proper character as such, as the Anointed One (and thus also as man), because it was under this character that He was known to the Jews, or as inheriting the rights of man on the part of God in this world.

Herein we have the distinction in the expression Messiah and Son of man, and this difference may be particularly traced in the gospel by Matthew. In His quality of the Anointed One, He appeared as king down here. When He came thus as Messiah, He was rejected the Messiah, we are told, was cut off, and had nothing; Dan. 9:26 (margin). But when God at a future period shall set up His throne (we are not speaking of His heavenly glory, for that is already accomplished), it will not be only as the Messiah. It is not the way of God to re-establish that which has been spoiled. Such a procedure would be unworthy of God: if Satan spoils God's work, He is not satisfied with simply mending it. Whenever the folly of man and the malice of Satan have perverted any passing blessing which God has given to man, God establishes something infinitely superior. We have a striking instance of this in Jesus Christ Himself. Man was placed in innocence upon the earth. This state of things was soon altered by the folly of man tempted by the devil. Does God re-establish again an innocent man on the earth? No. He sets up His own Son, a glorified man in heaven and earth. Thus God, in allowing the things which He has presented or confided to man to be corrupted, afterwards Himself establishes something infinitely superior according to His own purpose.

In this manner the Messiah was offered as king of the Jews. Faith, indeed, confessed Him as the Son of God; but as the Son of David, if He had been received, He would have possessed the throne of David. Man, being a sinner, would not receive Him; but when He returns, it will not be as Messiah, or as the Son of David only. He is gone to receive a kingdom from the hands of His Father {Luke 18}, an inheritance over all things, not only as Messiah, but as the Son of man; for God has decreed, that "all things shall be subdued unto him," 1 Cor. 15. It is for this reason that He is seen coming with the clouds of heaven as Son of man.

When Christ presented Himself to the Jews as Messiah, and even to the Gentiles under Pontius Pilate, He was rejected; after which God does not establish Him as Messiah alone, but as Heir of all things. Is this done by the will of man? By no means. Christ has been presented to the good-will of man, but He was received with hatred and disdain. They crucified Him. He will be established by the decree of God.

Now when this little horn {Dan. 7} speaks great things -- when all its insolent pride is manifested -- when it has come to its height, then the thrones are placed, and God begins to exercise His power. When power, as confided to man, is turned into rebellion against God, it is time for God to act, and for the thrones of judgment to be placed, for the books to be opened, and for man to give account to God.

The result of this judgment on the part of the Ancient of days is to give the kingdom to the Son of man. It is a question here of this power -- these rights of the Ancient of days. It is the demonstration that He who had possessed the rights from the beginning to the end, although He had been concealed, was He who gave the power to the one and to the other.

God had been hidden, so to speak, during the time of the other beasts, nevertheless His providence acted. The Babylonians were replaced by the Persians, and these last by the Greeks. All this was done, as things are done even now, by the arrangement of that providence which governs the world, because the Ancient of days (whose rights, notwithstanding, cannot be annihilated) was not yet sitting to execute judgment on account of the acts which had been committed against Him. But it will not be thus at the end. As yet the open revolt had not taken place. The fourth beast had not yet said, Isaiah 47:8, "I am, and none else beside me." Compare what is said to the prince of Tyre, "Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God?" (Ezek. 28:9). The judgment of this fourth beast will be as against man in a state of open rebellion against God.

Now the attention of Daniel (7:11) is entirely taken up with the little horn. "I beheld, then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake; I beheld even till the beast was slain; and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame." He is amazed to hear there, in the very presence of God, this horn speaking blasphemous things. He wondered that God should permit it; but he saw the beast slain. This was the result. Then he says, "As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time"; that is, after the dominion had been taken from Babylon, it continued to subsist for some time, as did the Persian likewise; but the destruction of the fourth beast shall be entire. To the others a prolongation of life had been granted after the fall of the empire; but here the judgment and the destruction go together.

Consequent upon all this is a third vision (Dan. 7:13, 14). It is the Son of man presented to the Ancient of days. "Behold, one like the Son of man came with the

43. E. E. Whitfield in W. Kelly, *An Exposition of the Gospel of Mark*, London: Race, p. 248, note 30 (1907 ed.).

clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him." "And there was given him dominion, and glory . . . that all people . . . should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion," etc., etc. (v. 14). This is the kingdom which will be confided to Him, and which He will administer for the subjection of all things to God Himself.<sup>44</sup>

### *The Throne of the Son of Man*

Now however confidently this may be affirmed {that Christ is now on David's throne}, as it sometimes is, the reader has only to compare Peter's words with what he is represented as saying, to perceive that *says* no such thing. *He does not say*, "that the promise to David of Messiah's succession to his throne had received its intended accomplishment." *He does not say* "that His first exercise of regal authority *from the throne of Israel* was to send down the Spirit as had that day been done." If the objector infers these things from Peter's words, it does not authorize him to put his inferences into Peter's lips, and affirm that Peter said these things. The reader may see for himself that the apostle did not say these things. He says that David knew that God had sworn to him, of the fruit of his loins to raise up Christ to sit on his throne; and he refers to this, and to David's being a prophet, to show that when he (David) said in Psalm 16., "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," &c., he did not speak it of himself, but of "the resurrection of Christ"; that *His* soul was not left in hell, neither *His* flesh did see corruption. He then gives his own and his fellow-apostles' testimony to the fact, "This Jesus hath (God raised up"; but he does not say, "and placed upon David's throne." So far from this, he declares the exaltation of Jesus to a seat, *which he does tell us David never occupied!* "For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool." How David's throne can be meant by a seat in the heavens, whither, we are carefully told, David has not ascended, it must be left for those to explain who lay any stress upon such an argument.

Rev. 3:7 is another passage referred to in connection with Isaiah 22:22, as proving "that when Christ claims to have the key of David's house,"<sup>45</sup> His meaning is, that He has that anti-typical authority in David's house which Eliakim's robe, girdle, and key faintly shadowed forth; that He is *now* exercising this power of the key; and that *the house of David* -- as Christ is ruler in it, at least -- *can be none other than the Church of the living God, under the redeemer's regal administration.*" To this argument we need only reply that at the end of Isaiah 22 we find that "the nail fastened in a sure place" (Eliakim) was to "be removed, and to be cut down, and to fall"; "and the

burden that was upon it," says the prophet, "shall be cut off: for the Lord hath spoken it." Understand this of Christ's relation to the literal Israel, as king, and it is easy to understand. Messiah, the king of Israel was "cut off; hut not for himself" (Daniel 9). "The burden" of Jewish hopes and prospects which hung upon that nail, was "cut off" along with it; though in resurrection, as we all know, the whole is yet to be made good. "The key of David" is in the hand of His risen Son; but it is still "the key of David," and it is as such that it is seen in the hands of Jesus in Rev.3:7-12. It is as opening into a new dispensation, in which He will be known in this character, that He addresses the church of Philadelphia, promising to keep them from "the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth"; and assuring and exhorting them, "Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." These are evidently points in the address to Philadelphia, which can only find their place, if we regard that address in its prophetic character; and then, Christ's possession of the key of David, as opening into that new dispensation in which His glory as David's son, and the heir of David's throne, will be displayed, is in perfect harmony with the whole. But this affords no proof of Christ's "now exercising" the power of which "the key of David" is the distinctive symbol and expression.<sup>46</sup>

It is not a question of the efficacy of His sacrifice reaching backward and forward in God's mind, no Christian doubts it, or rather there is no backward and forward there -- nor if the love of God be the source of life. It is a question of special positions, taken in time, and which attach themselves to His manhood, and are exercised in it: Christ was a King when a man on earth. He witnessed a good confession to it before Pontius Pilate. But He did not take His kingdom; He sat on no throne; He was accomplishing a far more important work. And after having, as necessarily faithful to promise, presented Himself to Israel, a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, He forbids His disciples to say He was the Christ (saying, "the Son of man," a much larger title, in which He passes from Psalm 2 to Psalm 8, "must suffer"), and so, riding in on the ass, passes from that to the cross. Remark here how He shows that, in the literal interpretation of the prophecies as to the kingdom, the Jews did not deceive themselves. He is King as to His title now, but He has not taken His kingdom; He is not sitting on His own throne, but on His Father's; and He Himself makes the difference. To him that overcometh will I give to sit down on My throne, as I have overcome, and am set down on My Father's throne. To Him alone, the Son, it appertains in righteousness to sit on His Father's throne. it would be blasphemy to set us there. He glorified God His Father and is glorified with Him; we with Himself when He takes the kingdom. He is gone to receive the kingdom and to return.

To say the Father's throne is David's throne, is nonsense. God was to raise up one of David's seed to sit

44. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 5:142-144. See also 33:149, 204; Synopsis 3:14. See *The Bible treasury*, New Series 8:217-219 for a summary and classification of the Scriptures that speak of our Lord as the Son of Man.

45. Concerning the key of the house of David, see also *Collected writings of J. N. Darby* 11:551 (Morrish ed.) and W. Kelly, *The Second Advent*, p. 66 (also found in *The Bible Treasury*, vol. 1).

46. W. Trotter, *Plain Papers on Prophetic and Other Subjects*, London: Morrish, pp. 544, 545.

on David's throne, and that means, they tell us, the Father's (p. 139). Cannot a child see the perversity of such an interpretation. The royalty is not, and is never said to be, to save (p. 186 and following), unless in outward deliverance by power. If it be, let Dr. B {David Brown} quote the passage. He saves, in giving life as Son of God, in redeeming by His precious blood, in the exercise of His priesthood, from weaknesses. But salvation of souls is not attributed to His royalty, nor is He King over His church. On the contrary, Scripture declares that when He reigns, we shall reign with Him. It is in vain to use large words about it. There are those who must have Scripture testimony for what they believe. Nor does a teaching which makes the Father's throne David's throne, commend itself to those who have received their teaching from Scripture. Neither the apostles nor the Lord seek to overthrow the prophecies of the kingdom. They give something better. The Lord sanctions the expectations of His disciples when they speak of restoring the kingdom to Israel. They ask, Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel {Acts 1:5, 6}? What is His answer? "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power." Is that the times and the seasons for not doing it at all, or for doing it? It is impossible that a child could not see that it is to be done, but that the time was not revealed, and that the Lord gives them another work to do now. But He explicitly sanctions their expectations. So Paul declares that the restoration of Israel will be by the Redeemer going forth out of Zion {Rom. 11:26}. The object of the New Testament is not the kingdom in Israel; but a rejected glorified Christ and the church, and our present condition. But the prophecies of the Old Testament are expressly sanctioned. "Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

**When once the place of the church is seen, and its place with Christ in heavenly glory, all falls into its scriptural place, and the church itself is not reduced to an improved Judaism, as it is by these teachers.**<sup>47 48</sup>

The restoration of the kingdom of Israel, under the Son of David, is the special fruit of the resurrection of Jesus; the ascension serves the uses of this present dispensation (Eph. 4:8). Accordingly St. Peter makes a distinction between these things, telling us that the resurrection was required because of the promises made to David's throne, and that the ascension was required because of the promise of the Holy Ghost to the church (Acts 2). The prophets, in accordance with this, commonly present the hopes and revival of Israel under the figure of resurrection (Isa. 26:19, Ezek. 37, Hos. 6:2); and it appears that the Jews regarded the Messiah, the resurrection, and the kingdom, as substantially one and the same thing (see John 11:25-27, Luke 23:42).

47. {I have emphasized this. Systems, such as the one espoused by David Brown in J. N. Darby's day, "reduced to an improved Judaism" the church. I have said that the covenant pretibulationism reduces the saint to the level of a millennial saint, which means an improved Judaism.}

48. "Work of the Rev. D. Brown, D. D.," *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 11:354, 355.

Resurrection, in these observations, I advisedly distinguish from ascension. In many senses I know they are treated in scripture as the same. But here, by resurrection, I mean our blessed Lord's return from the grave to the earth; and, by ascension, His return from earth to heaven. It would have served the purposes of this dispensation had the Lord at once gone from the grave to heaven; for it is in Him, as in heaven, that the church finds her direct and immediate interest (Rom. 5:10, 2 Cor. 4:10, Eph. 4:8, Col. 3:1, Heb. 3:1, 4:14, 7:25, 10:12, 1 John 2:1). She is maintained and is to come to her full stature by the virtues of the ascended Jesus; for as such He is the head of life, and dispenser of the Spirit to His members; but it is the kingdom of Israel which is to manifest the direct fruit of the resurrection, inasmuch as it is to witness Christ on earth again, the head of the nation., the restorer of the earthly human system -- the Son of David.

Our Lord Jesus clearly recognized Himself as Son of David, for He answered every appeal made to Him in that Character. But He was more than David's Son, He was also David's Lord. Into this condition, however, He did not formally enter as to dispensation, till He ascended and was glorified at the right hand of God. (Matt. 22). But then he did; and the saints, having association with Him as thus ascended, sit with Him in His glory as David's Lord; and will therefore judge the world . . .<sup>49</sup>

Matt. 25:31-34 says:

But when the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit down upon his throne of glory, and all the nations shall be gathered before him; and he shall separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and he will set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on [his] left. Then shall the King say to those on his right hand, Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from [the] world's foundation.

The Son of Man has never yet come in His glory, and all the angels with Him. This, then, must be future. If Christ is not on David's throne now, then it is very likely that this throne of glory is David's throne. Here we see Christ acting as Solomon did in 1 Kings 1-3. Indeed, it requires both David and Solomon as types of the future actings of great David's greater Son. When the Lord Jesus comes in His glory, there is a short period when He smites the enemies of Israel (typified by David) just preceding the millennial reign (the reign typified by Solomon).

The twelve apostles will have a special place with Christ when He shall sit down upon His throne of glory:

And Jesus said to them, Verily I say unto you, That ye who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit down upon his throne of glory, ye also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28; cp. Luke 22:30).

49. *The Bible Treasury* 17:86.



The regeneration refers to the millennial reign. See also Matt. 20:21, where a mother wanted her two sons to sit, one on the right and one on the left, of Himself in His kingdom. But the Father has prepared that place for whom He will. That place will be in the millennial kingdom, not in the eternal state. The twelve apostles did not sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel after Pentecost, nor now, there being no such thing as a partial fulfillment of this. They will do so during the “regeneration.” “The force of the word is a change of position; a new state of things. The word is only used here {Titus 3:5}, and in Matt. 19:28 for the Savior’s coming kingdom” (J. N. Darby). But if one rejects the truth of the future millennial reign of Christ, then this must be relegated to the eternal state.<sup>50</sup>

See, then, how spiritual alchemy works in covenant theology. The promise to David regarding the sitting of Messiah upon David’s throne (Jer. 33:14-18; cp. Micah 5:2; Luke 1:32, 33) is transmuted from an earthly throne to a throne in heaven *now*; while asserting that when the Lord Jesus referred to His throne of glory, He is speaking of the eternal state. This is necessitated by amillennialists asserting that Christ is reigning *now*.

Spiritual alchemy is also at work in Covenant Pretribulationism, which has, in reality, changed the nature of the throne of David by moving it to heaven, where David had never sat on his throne, without the slightest Scripture reason for it. The notion is driven by rapprochement with covenantism. David’s throne is connected with the development of God’s ways in government in the earth. It has to do with the earthlies, not the heavenlies. Now, this foundation line of dispensational truth (i.e., the development of God’s ways in government in the earth) does not appear in the Scofield system<sup>51</sup>

Observe, once again, that the true view of this accords with the fact that Scripture lays it down quite expressly that the church was not the subject of the OT prophecies (Rom. 16:25, 26; Col. 1:24-26; Eph. 3:8-11). The true view accords, too, with the fact that the death of Christ provided for the salvation of that future righteous nation (John 11:51, 52), for our blessed Lord was “a minister of [the] circumcision for [the] truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers”; and not that alone, but also “that the nations should glorify God for mercy” (Rom. 15:8, 9).

Joel’s prophecy will then be fulfilled. Isaiah says:

And the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed;  
for Jehovah of hosts shall reign on mount Zion, and in  
Jerusalem, and before his ancients in glory (Isa. 24:23).

Then will Jehovah-Jesus have the throne of David, rule over the house of Jacob (Luke 1:32) and over the whole earth in the administration of the fullness of times (Eph. 1:10).

A Jew reading the OT prophecies concerning the throne of David and the Messiah would rightly have believed that that throne was here on earth. Just so would Peter’s hearers understand it. Notice that Peter did not spiritualize these prophecies. He did not state that Christ was reigning now. He did not state that His enemies were going to be gradually put under His feet over a long period of time (cp. Psalm 110:1-3). He did not tell his hearers that the throne of David, which had been on earth, in Jerusalem, was now transferred to heaven. And this brings us to the next passage for consideration, Acts 3:19-26, where we shall see that the Jews must repent for “the times {seasons} of refreshing” to come; i.e., the reign of Messiah upon David’s throne in Jerusalem.

There are some OT Scriptures that speak of David’s throne in four instructive ways, to which another text is added:

- “the throne of David” (1 Kings 2:24, etc. etc.)
- “the throne of Israel” (2 Chron. 6:10, 16)
- “the throne of Jehovah” (1 Chron. 29:23)
- “the throne of the kingdom of Jehovah” (1 Chron. 28:5)
- “at that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah” (Jer. 3:17)<sup>52</sup>

The reader should steadily keep before him that the governmental power of the throne of David was transferred to the Gentile (Dan. 2) and is with the Gentile for the duration of “the times of the Gentiles.” These times are depicted by the image of Dan. 2 and run until the destruction by the smiting stone, which represents the appearing of Christ in glory to set up the earthly kingdom. *Then* the governmental power will be taken by Christ. That David’s throne exists now in any sense is theological fog clouding the mind to (not merely the true character of the throne of David but) the true glory of Christ now, and lowers the church to the level of a millennial saint. Chapter 8.3 contains a lengthy quotation from J. N. Darby regarding the conditions under which Israel became Lo-Ammi (not my people), how reinstatement will be brought about, how this all bears on the development of God’s ways in government, how the governmental power was transferred to the Gentiles, and how this affects the question of “the people of God.”

50. H. N. Ridderbos relegates this to “the new world . . . Rev. 21:1-5,” (*Matthew*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p.360, 1987) as does W. Hendriksen, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Grand Rapids: Baker, p. 730, 1973) who confounds confusion by asserting, “Ranged, as it were, around the throne (cf. Rev. 4:4) there will be twelve other thrones.” What imagination!

51. Another foundational truth, the end of the testing of the first man at the cross, does not appear either. These truths are set out in my *J. N. Darby’s Teaching Regarding Dispensations, Ages, Administrations and the Two Parentheses*, available from the publisher.

52. W. Kelly remarked:

The gospel is not the throne of Jehovah. The throne of Jehovah means the governmental power, according to His name, Jehovah, put forth over the whole earth. Jeremiah promises this, and Zechariah (chapter 14) also shows us very distinctly the character of that throne . . . *Jeremiah*, London: Hammond, p. 17 (1930 ed.).



## Chapter 4.4

### *Acts 3: 19-26: The Times of Refreshing and of the Restoration of All Things*

Repent therefore and be converted, for the blotting out of your sins, so that times of refreshing may come from [the] presence of the Lord, and he may send Jesus Christ, who was foreordained for you, whom heaven indeed must receive till [the] times of [the] restoration of all things, of which God has spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets since time began. Moses indeed said, A prophet shall [the] Lord your God raise up to you out of your brethren like me: him shall ye hear in everything whatsoever he

shall say to you. And it shall be that whatsoever soul shall not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people. And indeed all the prophets from Samuel and those in succession after [him], as many as have spoken, have announced also these days. Ye are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant of God appointed to our fathers, saying to Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. To you first God, having raised up his servant, has sent him, blessing you in turning each one [of you] from your wickedness (Acts 3:19-26).

The questions to be answered are these:

1. What are the times of refreshing, the times of the restoration of all things, and “these days”?
2. When do they begin?

#### *What Are These Times?*

The answer is: the millennium and the reign of Christ (Isa. 44:3; 59:20; Ezek. 34:26). Now, there is a very important, related question; and that is, does the repentance in v. 19 refer only to the repentance of some of the Jews, or does it require the repentance of all of them to realize all these blessing? It is true that an individual Jew who repented would have his sins blotted out, but that would hardly be the cause of God sending Jesus Christ. This fact indicates that a national repentance is connected with God’s sending Jesus Christ.

The prophets spoke of “these days” (Acts 3:24). They spoke of the reign of Messiah on earth. “These days” are the “times of refreshing” and “[the] times of [the] restoring of all things.” These expressions refer to characteristics of the days of Messiah’s millennial reign. Their arrival depends on the national repentance of Israel.

#### **THE NATIONAL REPENTANCE OF ISRAEL**

While, of course, an individual repentant person has his sins blotted out, the passage has in view the national repentance of Israel. Peter preached: repent . . . so that this and that will come. Individual Jews repented, but the nation has not,

and Christ has not yet come. His appearing in glory is bound up with the future of the nation as such.

For I say that Jesus Christ became a minister of [the] circumcision for [the] truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers; and that the nations should glorify God for mercy . . . (Rom. 15:8, 9)

. . . Jesus was going to die for the nation; and not for the nation only, but that he should gather together into one the children of God who were scattered abroad. (John 11:51, 52).

. . . my brethren, my kinsmen, according to flesh; who are Israelites; whose [is] the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the lawgiving, and the service, and the promises; whose [are] the fathers; and of whom, as according to flesh [is] the Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. (Rom. 9:3-5).

When turning over our Lord to the civil power for execution, the leadership said, “We have no king but Caesar” (John 19:15).

Rom. 11:26 teaches that all Israel shall be saved; as Isa. 60:21 declares that they shall all be righteous. What was a Jew supposed to understand by Isa. 60:21; that the church would be all righteous?

God will destroy the wicked out of the land (Zech. 13:8) and the wicked of Israel outside the land will not enter

therein (Ezek. 20). What remains will compose the righteous nation. The national restoration is dependent upon national repentance. What is meant by national repentance is that the entire body of persons composing the nation will repent of their own sins and the sin of Israel in rejecting their Messiah (cp. Zech. 12:10-14).

There is a great fulfillment of the day of atonement (Lev. 16 & 23) ahead for the people thus born in a day (Isa. 66:8). There is coming for Israel what answers to the last three feasts of Jehovah (Lev. 23). The blowing of trumpets signifies the regathering of the people (on the first of the seventh month). The feast of booths (the fifteenth day of the month) signifies the inauguration of the kingdom. In between will be the 10th of the month -- the day of atonement. Israel's entry into its significance as never felt before will result from God's outpouring of "the spirit of grace and of supplications," when the restored nation, composed of all the righteous, shall be bowed before Jehovah (Zech. 12:10 - 13:1). This is a national owning of sin.

There is also such a thing as a **national adoption** and it belongs to Paul's "kinsmen, according to flesh; who are Israelites; whose [is] the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the lawgiving, and the service, and the promises" (Rom. 9:3, 4). Christ had died "for the nation" (John 11:51) and our Lord "become a minister of [the] circumcision for [the] truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers; and that the nations should glorify God for mercy" (Rom. 5:8, 9).

Perhaps Psalm 51, occasioned by David's great sin, looks on to Israel's repentance for the blood guiltiness of killing their Messiah. Then will they all run into the city of refuge, though not before.

Some think our Lord's prayer, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" was answered in early Acts. It seems to me that it will be answered in connection with the national repentance of Israel. Our Lord said "them." That is the nation. The Gentile power, implicated of course in the death of Christ, was the instrument of the leaders of Israel to slay their Messiah.

## *The Times of Refreshing*

### WHAT ARE THE TIMES OF REFRESHING?

When considering Acts 1:7, we observed that "times" (*chronos*) refers to duration or date of occurrence chronologically, while "seasons" (*kairos*) refers to characteristics of the chronological periods. In Acts 1:7, these two words apply to the same events, not to two differing periods. In Acts 3:19 we read of "times (*kairos*) of refreshing. W. Kelly translates:

Repent, therefore, and be converted for the blotting out of your sins, so that seasons of refreshing may come from the

presence of the Lord, and He may send forth Him that hath been foreappointed for you, Jesus Christ, Whom heaven must receive till times of restoring all things . . .

While our blessings are in the heavenlies in Christ (Eph. 1:3), these **seasons of refreshing** refer to the blessing here on earth under Messiah's reign. For example, consider the feasts of Jehovah spoken of in Ezek. 40-48, which chapters speak of Millennial worship. The Jews will, of course, have begun sacrifices which will be carried out for part of Daniel's 70th week -- since the coming Roman prince will cause them to stop in the middle of the week (Dan. 9:27). No doubt other aspects of the Jewish seasons will also be in force. Indeed, the Beast (Rev. 13:1-7) will change "seasons and the law" (Dan. 7:25). But in the restoration of all things, the seasons of refreshing will be enjoyed under Christ's beneficent reign.<sup>53</sup>

### WHEN WILL THESE SEASONS OF REFRESHING OCCUR?

Look again at what the Scripture states:

Repent, therefore, and be converted for the blotting out of your sins, so that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and He may send Jesus Christ . . . (Acts 3:19, W. K.).

Repent why? -- for three things:

- blotting out of your sins
- so that seasons of refreshing may come
- and God may send Jesus Christ

All three are dependent on the repentance. It is not merely individuals here and there, repenting. No. The sending of Jesus Christ is dependent on the repentance of which Peter spoke. Presently, if an individual repents, his sins are blotted out and he may sense refreshment, but God sending Jesus Christ has nothing to do with that individual thing. So, the attempt to apply "seasons of refreshing" to the present, thus individualizing it, really disjoins what God has here put together as interconnected.

O. T. Allis says: "This is a difficult passage." Do you think it was a difficult passage for Peter's Jewish listeners? Do you think they said, 'He probably means that I will have times of refreshment, and someday God will send Jesus Christ; and as to what the times of restoration of all things

53. F. F. Bruce said:

. . . the expression suggests rather "moments of relief during the time men spend in waiting for that day (*The Acts of the Apostles*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, p. 143, (1990, third ed.)). Some of the "Progressive Dispensationalists" have joined in this sort of view, as they did in separating times and seasons in Acts 1:7. In their case, the seasons of refreshing are a part of the allegedly present Davidic reign of Christ (Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, eds., *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, pp. 56-58). However, another leader in this retrogression, Robert L. Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism*, p. 271, dissents from this and applies it to Israel's future.

might be, I will ask an amillennialist'? I believe it is a very simple passage if we jettison the notion that this is an O. T. prophecy about the church. Theology must have at least some of this apply presently, hence O. T. Allis reasons:

Consequently, it seems proper to conclude that the apostle is speaking of two matters which are closely related: the immediate blessings resulting from the acceptance of the Savior who has died for sinners and the future blessings which will follow upon His return to the earth from which He had so recently ascended. It does not seem necessary to insist either that the seasons of refreshing must wait for a coming which may be remote, or that the coming must itself be very near at hand despite the plain intimation which is given to the contrary. The seasons of refreshing may begin at once and include as an important feature in their refreshing the assured hope of the coming of the One who has made them possible. So understood Peter's words refer to the entire inter-advental period which is to end with the advent, in other words to the entire Church age.<sup>54</sup>

The fact is that Scripture says:

Repent . . . so that times of refreshing may come from [the] presence of the Lord, and he may send Jesus Christ . . . .

The times of refreshing are not a refreshing for an individual anymore than the times of the restoring of all things are times for the restoration of individuals, although then individuals will be blessed with restoration and refreshing. This refers to the earth brought into blessing under the reign of Christ, with restored Israel at the head of the nations. His assertion is the exigency of a false system.

Besides, the repentance refers to the **nation** of Israel, as such, though, of course, each individual in Israel will have his sins blotted out.

### *The Restoration of All Things*

While speaking (erroneously) much about how "the time of refreshing" applies now to a believer, it is interesting to note the cavalier fashion in which O. T. Allis dismisses "[the] times of [the] restitution of all things":

The only warrant for finding in his reference to the "restoration of all things" the offer of the re-establishment of the earthly Davidic kingdom is to be found in the argument which has been already discussed that the kingdom promised to the Jews was such an earthly kingdom. But whatever this expression may mean it refers to a future event.<sup>55</sup>

What is so difficult for alchemists of the OT prophecies?

. . . whom heaven indeed must receive till [the] times of [the] restoration of all things, of which God has spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets since time began (Acts

3:21).

This Scripture states that the prophets spoke about the times of restoring all things. Those who say the prophecies are about the church ought to look into this -- for O. T. Allis tells us the times of the restoring of all things is future. In effect, he pushed the restoration of all things into the eternal state. Our Lord spoke of Elijah as having some part in restoring in a future day (Mal. 4:6; Matt. 17:11; Mark 9:12). What would that have to do with the eternal state? But their prophecies were not occupied with the eternal state. So what the prophecies spoke of is either the church or the future kingdom under Messiah. Now, he knew that the present did not answer to the restoring of all things. It seems to me to be so evident a fact that it would be the exigencies of a false theological system to assert that the present is the restoring of all things. But so is it the exigency of a false theological system to claim that the times of restoration of all things, of which God has spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets since time began, means their speaking about the eternal state. Only premillennialism does justice to this Scripture.

The two phrases we are considering refer to the same era but in two aspects: seasons of refreshing and restoration to a right condition before God. You should be able to see why O. T. Allis wanted to separate the two. The seasons of refreshing does not appear to be a phrase apply to the eternal state, and since he will not allow for the future kingdom it must be forced to fit now.

There is no teaching of ultimate salvation for all persons (universalism) in this passage. What will be restored is *all things that the prophets said would be restored*, not all the lost.<sup>56</sup>

The "regeneration" of Matt. 19:28 speaks of the same period, as does Rom. 8:20, 21, the administration of the fullness of times (Eph. 1:10). These scriptures, as well as the prophecies of the OT that spoke of "these days," look forward to a restoration both physical and spiritual.

Last century, Charles Stanley (of Rotherham) mentioned that this passage awoke many to the truth of the premillennial advent of Christ. And well it might, for we have the inspired declaration that the times of the restoration of all things was spoken of by the prophets. And Acts 3 shows it is future and bound up with the second advent. Thus the prophets spoke of the millennial kingdom, not the church; and so, Christ's advent is premillennial.

54. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 138.

55. *Ibid*, p. 141.

56. *The Harper Collins Study Bible*, p. 2064 (1993), says, "*Universal Restoration* is not the restoration of Israel's kingdom (cf. 1:6) but is roughly the equivalent of salvation itself." If true, this means that the OT prophets spoke of universal restoration, since time began. Absurd, but more importantly, wicked. Concerning universalism, see *Collected writings of J. N. Darby*, 31:75-134.

## *The Offer of The Kingdom*

In Acts 3:19-21 there is an offer of the kingdom. O. T. Allis objected:

For if the offer of this kingdom had already been postponed for the entire Church age, what right had Peter to offer it practically at once to Jews whose hands were red with the blood of their Messiah, and on exactly the same terms as those on which it had been offered to them some three years previously? If this is the meaning of Peter's exhortation, there was really no postponement of the kingdom offer. The kingdom was just as much "at hand" when he preached this sermon as it had ever been.

The answer is simple. The offer of the kingdom did not come to an end before the cross. The offer took two forms, however:

1. Before the cross the kingdom was preached as "at hand." Messiah had not died then. The Kingdom was offered in the Person of the lowly Lord Jesus and was contingent upon accepting Him. This was a moral test of the state of soul. But they wanted a belly-filler (John 6), not the bread come down from heaven. His crucifixion was the end of God's testing of the first man.
2. But by the time we reach Acts 3, He had died and gone to heaven. Consequently the form of the offer takes this change into account. The kingdom was not preached by Peter as at hand. This offer was contingent upon acceptance of the Lord Jesus in exaltation. And now a national repentance was needed concerning their guilt in killing Messiah. Certainly there was a change in the form of the offer. Moreover, His rejection as the exalted one in glory, through the stoning of Stephen, ended the year of **exposure** of their state.

Consider the parable of Luke 13:6-9. For three years the Lord came seeking fruit from the fig-tree, i.e., Israel as a nation. Note that for the following year the servant (i.e., the Holy Spirit) applied what was necessary in order to produce fruitfulness. It produced no fruit. But note that the Lord's work in respect to seeking fruit from Israel for 3 years was carried on by Another. And this corresponds to the two forms of the offer. We find the Spirit's testimony to Israel carried out as recorded in the beginning of Acts. He digs the ground and dungs it. Now, this parable teaches something or it does not. It teaches that this continuation of seeking fruit from Israel continued for a year after the Lord's ministry of three years.

We should ask when this added year of the Holy Spirit's effort concerning the nation ended. The parable of Luke 19:11-27 gives us the indication. The embassy that these citizens (Jews) sent after the man WHO WAS GONE was Stephen. They sent him up with the message of rejection to

the Man now gone to the far country. They listened to Stephen until he said that he saw the Son of Man in the glory. (Blessed thought: the Shekinah is linked with the Lord Jesus.)

Thus ended the year of grace during which God still sought fruit from Israel as a nation. In result it was a year of exposure of their awful state -- resisting the witness of the Spirit as Stephen charged them in Acts 7. The Man of God's purpose was seated in the glory for that whole year and they heard Stephen until he testified that he saw Him in the glory of God. Rapid changes then took place. The Ethiopians and Samaritans found Christ (ch. 8); the great apostle of the nations was saved (ch. 9); and Peter preached to Gentiles (ch. 10), etc.

We are offered another objection: if this is so, then the "Church age" might have terminated at its beginning<sup>58</sup> but this termination could not be so early according to Rom. 11:25.

We have already considered the synchronization of four "until's." The point is that God knew they would reject the offer. We have considered the morality of this elsewhere, and have observed that God may justly do this since He knows the end from the beginning. Man cannot make an offer based on complete knowledge of everything. God can. So God cannot be taxed with such a matter as man must be. Do not reason from yourself to what God can and cannot do.

## *Which God Hath Spoken by The Mouth Of His Holy Prophets Since Time Began*

We have seen from Rom. 16:25, Col. 1:26 and Eph. 3:9 that the prophets did not speak about the church. Moreover, it is instructive to note the different way in which Scripture speaks concerning the world in regard to the Jew, Gentile and Church of God (1 Cor. 10:32):

- Jew: Israel's blessings are **from** the foundation of the world (Heb. 4:3;<sup>59</sup> Rev. 13:8; 17:8).
- Gentile: their future blessing is prepared **from** the foundation of the world (Matt. 25:34; Rev. 13:8; 17:8).
- Church: our blessings are from **before** the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4).

58. *Ibid.*

59. Israel will enter into that rest in the millennium. It has an application for believers meanwhile.

57. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 140.

## Chapter 4.5

### Acts 4-14

#### *Is Acts 4:23-31 a Fulfillment of Psalm 2:1, 2?*

Concerning this passage, O. T. Allis says:

According to this passage the early Christians saw, in the sufferings of Christ and in the persecutions which they were being called upon to endure because of their loyalty to Him in the preaching of the gospel, a fulfillment of Ps. 2:1-2. Since Dispensationalists admit a partial fulfillment of Joel 2 in the events of the day of Pentecost, they should be ready to recognize at least a partial fulfillment of prophecy here also. Otherwise the citation from the Psalms would be neither applicable nor appropriate.<sup>60</sup>

We need not spend much space on this other than to say:

1. There was no partial fulfillment of Joel 2 at Pentecost.
2. There was no fulfillment, partial or complete, of Psalm 2 on this occasion. After all, the nations did not rage in connection with the death of Christ, nor on this occasion (cf. v. 25). The verse speaks of the nations being “gathered together.” Moreover, the kings of the earth were not at the crucifixion nor here on this occasion.
3. Yet the citation from Psalm 2 is both applicable and appropriate. The *spirit* noted in Psalm 2 was there, and in that sense there was an application of it. What was quoted from Psalm 2 will be fulfilled in the future.

#### *Acts 7:38*

O. T. Allis did not list Acts 7:38 in his chapter appealing to Acts to prove that the church fulfills the OT prophecies; nor is it found in his index. In a book by two converts to non-dispensationalism, we read:

In Acts 7:38 Stephen, in good Septuagint usage, refers to the Old Testament people as the “church.” Or as F. F. Bruce rightly says, “As Moses was with the old church,

Christ is with the new, and it is still a pilgrim church. . .”

\* Moses and Christ are over the same house (Heb. 3:5, 6), and the one house called the “church” in Acts!

(\*F. F. Bruce, *NIC New Testament: Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 152.)<sup>61</sup>

Because the word *ecclesia* (assembly) translated “church” is found in Acts 7:38 and Heb. 2:12, the mind that believes the prophets prophesied about the New Testament *ecclesia* believe that the OT saints were in the church. All of this sounds like a word game, a word game from which dispensational truth preserves us. But it does remind me of a remark that W. Kelly made, namely, that ‘though Noah was in an ark, and Moses was in an ark, we have not yet learned that they are the same thing.’ Of course they are not the same thing. And neither is “the assembly in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38) the same as the assembly which Christ said that He would build (Matt. 16:18). Nor did Christ say “I *am building* my assembly.”

Heb. 3:5, 6 says:

And Moses indeed [was] faithful in all his house, as a ministering servant, for a testimony of the things to be spoken after; but Christ, as Son over his house, whose house are *we*, if indeed we hold fast the boldness and the boast of hope firm to the end.

The above cited statement that Moses and Christ are over the same house is a marvelous statement. It is not only a brazen contradiction of the express distinction and contrast<sup>62</sup> of the two houses as noted in Hebrews, it shows (1) the blinding power of the spiritual alchemy and (2) its resultant Judaizing!

Not wishing to give this point any more space, I refer the reader to the pungent and solid remarks of W. Kelly in *The Bible Treasury* 6:222 and 218.

60. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 141.

61. Curtis I. Crenshaw and Grover E. Grinn III, *Dispensationalism Today, Yesterday, and Tomorrow*, Memphis: Footstool Publications, p. 40 (1989). The cover of this book says “Banner of Truth Magazine: ‘. . . this is the best discussion of the theology of dispensationalism so far written.’” Well, the reader has here a sample of the caliber of this book.

62. The contrast of the old and the new is characteristic of the book of Hebrews.

*Acts 7:48*

Here again O. T. Allis treats his readers to another of his dicta:

The statement, “howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands,” is clearly meant to be axiomatic. It suggests 1 Kgs. 8:27, but is directly supported by appeal to Isa. 66:1f., which as used by Stephen can only mean that an earthly temple has no proper place in the dispensation ushered in by the preaching of the gospel (cf. Acts 6:14). The conclusion is unavoidable that Stephen applies Isaiah’s words directly to the Church age.<sup>63</sup>

While it is true that an earthly temple has no place now, that does not follow from his argument, which, observe, proves too much -- for these words of O. T. Allis would show that an earthly temple had no place in the OT either. After all, Isa. 66:1f was true at the time Isaiah wrote. Thus what O. T. Allis says proves too much. The conclusion that is unavoidable is that refusal to bow to Rom. 16:25, 26, etc., has caused him to enunciate a false conclusion. W. Kelly has some excellent comments on this passage:

Here then, thought the Jew, must Jehovah restrict Himself to that ‘magnifical’ palace of His holiness. For unbelieving man must have an idol somewhere. ‘But the Highest dwelleth not in [places] made with hands; even as the prophet saith, The heaven [is] My throne, and the earth a footstool of My feet: what sort of house will ye build Me, saith [the] Lord, or what [is] My place of rest? Did not My hand make all these things?’ (vers. 48-50). Superstitious exaltation of the temple detracts from His glory Who gives it all its distinctive grandeur. Jehovah did deign to hallow and glorify it, so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of Jehovah had filled the house of God. But Solomon himself at that August consecration had owned that heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, much less the house he had just built! And so afterward spoke the prophet Isaiah (66:1), long before Babylon was allowed to burn and destroy the object of Israel’s pride. It was no afterthought to console the Jew in his subjection to Gentile masters: so had Israel’s king spoken to God; and so had God spoken to Israel long before the Chaldeans had become an adversary commissioned to chastise their idolatry.

It was right and pious to own the condescending grace of Jehovah; it was presumptuous to limit His glory to the temple He was pleased to make His dwelling. The Creator had created all and was immeasurably above the universe. From such a point of view what was Jerusalem or the temple? Who was now in accord with the testimony of Solomon and of Isaiah? The accusers, or Stephen? The answer is beyond controversy, and their enmity without excuse.<sup>64</sup>

*Acts 8:4-25*

Strangely, O. T. Allis says:

In fact we are told that “they preached the gospel” in “many villages of the Samaritans” (cf. 5:42, 8:4, 12, 25, 35). This incident reminds us that our Lord preached in Samaria apparently before He preached in Nazareth, and that the Samaritans received Him while the men of Nazareth sought to slay Him. How then could Scofield say that Acts 10:44 is “one of the pivotal points of Scripture” because “Heretofore the Gospel has been offered to Jews only”? Coming after the incidents of chap. 8 the words, “unto the Jews only” (11:19) suggest reproach or surprise. Prophecy is not appealed to. But the trio of Ezek. 16:53-55 strikingly parallels Isa. 19:24f. One is as comprehensive as the other.<sup>65</sup>

I say this is strange because it does not take into account the work on the cross, the resurrection and glorification of Christ and the consequent sending of the Holy Spirit. And why is all this omitted? -- to score a point? He wants to avoid the fact that in the apostolic preaching (consequent upon what happened at the cross after the Lord went through Samaria) this was indeed a pivotal point. The fact is stubborn: the gospel that the Lord Jesus had died, risen, and ascended above, with forgiveness of sins preached as a consequence, had, until this pivotal point, been preached only to Jews. Nothing here shows that the church is the fulfillment of OT prophecy.

R. Zorn claims:

In Acts 8:12 the equation of the Kingdom with the Gospel is again made.<sup>66</sup>

The verse reads,

But when they believed Philip announcing the glad tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized. . . .

W. Kelly translates,

. . . evangelizing about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.

We notice that there is no equation of the kingdom of God and “the gospel,” as amillennialists claim there is. It is a mere assertion. Just as others, these Samaritans needed to know the truth concerning the kingdom, its present and future phases, and that Jesus was the Messiah in Whom they must trust. See also the notes on Acts 1:3; 20:24, 25; 28:23, 28.

63. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 142.

64. *An Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*. . . , London: Hammond, p. 97, (1952).

65. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 142.

66. R. Zorn, *Church and Kingdom*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, p. 50, (1962).



## Acts 8:26-40

Forgive me for referring to this passage -- only because O. T. Allis refers to it:

Philip's preaching to the Ethiopian eunuch must be viewed in the light of the context. It was not merely a case of "individual work for individuals." The vast potentialities of the act, the conversion of a high official of the queen of Ethiopia, are clearly indicated; and this was brought about through the applying of Isa. 53 to those events upon which the Christian Church was founded.<sup>67</sup>

Something must be plain here to him, that is not so to me. Is he implying that because the OT prophets prophesied about the birth, life, death, resurrection and glorification of Christ, therefore the church is a subject of OT prophecy? If so, that would be as absurd as it would be desperate for proof. And since some brief remarks he makes under the heading "9. Acts 9:15" are even less relevant (if that is possible) we will omit them.

## Acts 10:34-43

This passage is supposed by some to show that the Lord Jesus had not preached concerning a temporal kingdom; that is, a kingdom on earth over which Messiah will reign. Hence, John Zens wrote:

Acts 10:34-43 -- "The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ . . . that word was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism that John preached." (vv. 36-37).

In this context Peter is preaching the gospel of "repentance and remission of sins" to Gentiles (Luke 24:47). This word, however, had its beginning when it *first* went to the Jews. This word began in the public ministry of Jesus after John's baptism. Thus this passage clearly reveals a continuity between the message that started with Jesus' preaching and that was now coming to the Gentiles. This one gospel is called "the kingdom of God."<sup>68</sup>

Observe that his conclusion rests upon an *assumption* and therefore has no more validity than that assumption. The assumption is that Acts 10:36, 37 means that there was only one thing that our Lord preached and therefore He did not preach about the temporal kingdom. Not only is that assumed, it is in conflict with the facts -- which we have previously considered.

There is another assumption involved and that is that "preaching peace" means preaching about a spiritual kingdom and reign.

But besides this, the statement regarding "continuity"<sup>69</sup> must be considered. The peace of a Christian sealed with the Spirit, knowing that He is in a forgiven position before God, could not be true of a person before the death, resurrection and glorification of Christ, with the Spirit consequently sent down (John 7:39; Acts 2:32, 33). The sealed saint is now one Spirit with the Lord (1 Cor. 6). Such was not true before the cross. Our Lord expressly stated that apart from His death He abode alone.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it abides alone; but if it die it bears much fruit (John 12:24).

This is to be in oneness with Himself as one plant with Him, as grains upon the resurrected stalk. This is oneness in life -- resurrection-life -- which is not at all to say that saints previously did not have divine life. Of course they did, but not in oneness with Himself. This latter is "life in abundance" (John 10:10).

Luke 15 causes us to think of peace. It contains one parable in three parts and looks on to the son in communion with the Father, in peace, at His table. But Scripture is clear that it is by the indwelling Spirit, which before the cross the children of God did not have (John 7:39), that we cry "Abba Father" (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6). Hence our Lord taught His disciples to pray "Our Father Who art in heaven. . .," which was suitable to their then state. Such address does not admit the same nearness that "Abba Father" does, which address Scripture shows requires the Spirit of Sonship. Thus we do not find the Son addressing 'my Father Who is in heaven' (or 'heavenly Father'), nor do we find such a mode of address used, or taught, in the Epistles.

Neither the word "continuity" nor "discontinuity" is appropriate.

Christians individually considered and the Church as a collective body are called by distinctively Jewish names: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2:28-29). Hence, it may be dogmatically and, dare we say, *eternally* proclaimed: "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11; Gal. 2:6, Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:11; 3:25; 1 Peter 1:17).<sup>70</sup>

With such arguments is the case to be proven? A true Jew is

67. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 142.

68. *Dispensationalism*, Presbyterian and Reformed, p. 29,

69. Charles F. Baker, *Understanding the Book of Acts*, Grand Rapids: Grace Bible College Publications, 1981, p. 64 says, "Next, Peter preaches exactly the same word which God had sent to the children of Israel. He was given nothing new or different to preach to the Gentiles." This evaluation is determined by his scheme to find the formation of the body of Christ in Acts 13. So "continuity" is used by him for a totally different purpose than that of J. Zens.

70. Greg L. Bahnsen and Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *House Divided*, Tyler: Institute for Christian Economics, p. 168, 1989.

a Jew (an ethnic Jew) in whom the typical meaning of circumcision is true. It is not merely in the flesh, but in the Jew's heart and spirit. The passage does not teach that a Christian is a spiritual Jew or a "true Jew." Rom. 2:17-29 is expressly address to Jews. A saved Jew is a "true Jew."

And what does the fact that God is not a respecter of persons prove? -- that God is a respecter of persons if a material temple exists? That is, does this fact prove that there can be no future material temple -- no future kingdom with such a temple -- and therefore the OT prophecies concern the church? If that is what is meant, would it not be so that in OT times while a temple stood, God was a respecter of persons? But see 2 Chron. 19:7 and Job 37:24. Unless we are to believe that God was once a respecter of persons and then He changed, the last sentence in the above citation is, at best, irrelevant.

And now we come to Acts 10:43: <sup>71</sup>

To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone that believes on him will receive through his name remission of sins.

You see how easy it is to find proof that the church is the subject of the OT prophecies? Does it not leap out of every page of the NT? And must not 'dispensationalists' be singularly dull to not see this abundance of (alleged) proof?

In reality, however, the OT prophecies refer to the millennium and its inauguration. The fact stated in Acts 10:43 is also true meanwhile. In this connection, consider Eph. 1:9-12:

. . . having made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself for [the] administration of the fullness of times; to head up all things in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; in him, in whom we have also obtained an inheritance, being marked out beforehand according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his own will, that we should be to [the] praise of his glory who have pre-trusted in the Christ. . . .

Eph. 1:10 refers to the time of the millennium when Christ heads up both the heavenly sphere and the earthly. But we now have an inheritance in Him (v. 11); we who have "pre-trusted in the Christ" (v. 12). 'Pre' what? We have trusted ahead of the period of the administration of the fullness of times. *Then*, everyone who believes on Christ will receive through His name remission of sins. However, there are many who have trusted in that name ahead of that time. They have "pre-trusted in the Christ" as Cornelius did. Thus, Acts 10:43 has an application now.

## Acts 13

### ACTS 13:27

. . . for those who dwell in Jerusalem and their rulers, not having known him, have fulfilled also the voices of the prophets which are read on every sabbath, [by] judging [him].

J. Zens remarked:

How can an understanding of the Old Testament that is designated as "blind" be taken as a proper hermeneutical [interpretive] method? <sup>72</sup>

We have considered this kind of reasoning previously. The Jews believed in a literal kingdom and killed the Lord Jesus -- therefore literal interpretation is supposed to be a false method of interpretation. However, I could suppose that the objector would say the literal interpretation would be correct regarding the prophecies concerning the birthplace, birth, life, death, resurrection and exaltation of the Messiah. Those who rejected Him expected a literal kingdom. They chose to believe what suited them and disregarded the rest (as many professed Christians do now). The Lord even rebuked the two on the way to Emmaus: "O senseless and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:25, 26). Those who had accepted the Lord Jesus did so because God granted them that faith (John 6:44), yet here we see a defective understanding even so. The "hermeneutical method" was correct, but the selective application of it (by those who rejected Christ) to suit their desires was their undoing. They did not "believe in *all* that the prophets have spoken!"

### ACTS 13:32-41

And we declare unto you the glad tidings of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this to us their children, having raised up Jesus; as it is also written in the second psalm, *Thou* art my Son: this day have *I* begotten thee. But that he raised him from among [the] dead, no more to return to corruption, he spoke thus: I will give to you the faithful mercies of David. Wherefore also he says in another, *Thou* wilt not suffer thy gracious one to see corruption. For David indeed, having in his own generation ministered to the will of God, fell asleep, and was added to his fathers and saw corruption. But he whom God raised up did not see corruption. Be it known unto you, therefore, brethren, that through this man remission of sins is preached to you, and from all things from which ye could not be justified in the law of Moses, in him every one that believes is justified. See therefore that that which is spoken in the prophets do not come upon [you], Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish; for *I* work a work in your days, a work which ye will in no wise believe if one declare it to you (Acts 13:32-41).

71. See O. T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 143, which need not be quoted.

72. *Dispensationalism*, p. 30.

Verses 32 and 33 do not refer to the resurrection of Christ.<sup>73</sup> The raising up of Jesus refers to His first advent, as Zacharias recognized (Luke 1:67-69).

In v. 23 we see the meaning of v. 33. Moreover, Acts 3:22, 26 and 7:37 say the same thing, namely, that God raised Him up -- not meaning resurrection. What God had fulfilled was not the OT prophecies concerning the kingdom, but the bringing forth of the Messiah.

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73. J. Zens, as others, says,

As we have seen, the Dispensationalists teach that Israel's real fulfillment lies in the future, when the alleged unfulfilled promises are confirmed after the rapture of the Church. But verse 32 points out that the "hope of Israel" has already been accomplished in the Resurrection (*Dispensationalism*, p. 30).

Commenting on the fact that Acts 13:32, 33 does not refer to resurrection, W. Kelly remarked:

Indeed it is surprising that any intelligent and careful reader ever understood the passage otherwise. For it is as certain as it is plain that, to God's raising up the Messiah according to promise and the prophecy of the second psalm, verse 34 appends as another and still more momentous truth that God raised Him up 'from the dead'. It is no mere reasoning on the verse before, no expegetic explanation, but a further teaching of the highest value. Hence it is thus introduced, 'And' or 'But that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return unto corruption, He hath spoken thus. . .'. Calvin accordingly is justified in his statement (*Opera* vi. Comm. *in loco*) that the word 'raised up' has a wider significance than where repeated just after. For it is meant that Christ was divinely ordained and as it were by God's hand brought forth into light that He might fulfil the office of Messiah; as scripture here and there also shows us kings and prophets raised up by the Lord. Acts 2:22, 26; 7:37, are clear cases of this usage of 'raised up' in the same Book; so that the Authorized Version in the wake of Tyndale is not safely to be defended in going out of the way to insinuate resurrection into verse 33. 'Raised up' is correct; 'raised again', might have been said, if the text had certainly pointed, as it does not really at all, to the resurrection. But 'raised up again' is unjustifiable. In any case the compound can only yield either 'up' or 'again', not both; and here we have seen on good and cogent grounds that 'up' is right, 'again' inadmissible, because rising from the dead is not intended in verse 33.

It would not have been necessary or advisable to spend argument on the question, if Dean Alford and Canon Cook, following Hammond, Meyer, and others, had not unwittingly played into the hands of enemies who ridicule this very misapprehension of Psalm 2:7, for which not Paul but his exponents are responsible. It has also been noticed that the addition of 'now' in the English Version of verse 34 is not only needless but misleading, as it might imply a previous turn to corruption. Here too Tyndale misled all the public Protestant versions since his day, even to the Revised one.

Psalm 2:7 is quoted then for Christ as Son of God in this world. It is neither His eternal Sonship, as some of the earlier Christian writers conceived, nor His resurrection, as the misapprehension of Acts 13:33 was used to teach. His birth *in time* as Messiah is the point, 'Thou art My Son: this day have I begotten Thee.'

(*An Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles, in loco*).

## ACTS 13:34-41

The claim is made that:

Further, the Resurrection is said to be a fulfillment of the "sure mercies of David." It is on the basis of this *recently accomplished promise* that the Jews are to repent and believe the gospel. God's dealings with Israel have not been "postponed." He has *at this time* fulfilled the promise "to the fathers for us their children."<sup>74</sup>

It is very bold to say that this scripture says that the *fulfillment* of the sure mercies of David was accomplished. It *says* no such thing. It is obvious on the very face of the text that Peter is citing *both* Isa. 55:3 (v. 34) and Psalm 16:10 (v. 35) to show that the Messiah would rise from the dead. It is a myth fathered by the alchemizing of the OT prophecies that Peter here, or anywhere else, was citing the OT to show the Jews that the OT kingdom prophecies were fulfilled or fulfilling. He was, as before, proving from Scripture that Jesus was the Christ and that the Messiah must needs rise from the dead. Of course, in God's purpose, the resurrection is a necessary element in God's eventual fulfilling of the sure mercies of David. Christ's work on the cross and His resurrection is the foundation of all blessing.

In v. 40, 41 Peter warned the listeners to beware lest judgment fall upon them as Hab. (1:5) had warned his hearers in his day concerning the execution of God's judgment upon them through His use of the Chaldeans. Our Lord had already warned of judgment upon Jerusalem (Matt. 22:1-14; Luke 19:43, 44; 21:20, 24; cf. 1 Thess. 2:14-16). Worse, of course, will be the future judgment to fall in the time of Jacob's trouble when worse shall befall them than what even Adolf Hitler has done (Matt. 24:21; Jer. 30:7; Dan. 12:1). There is nothing here that shows that the kingdom prophesied in the OT began at Pentecost.

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74. J. Zens, *Dispensationalism*, p. 30.



## Chapter 4.6

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### Acts 15: The Tabernacle of David

#### Introduction

We have now come to Acts 15 which has been quite a battleground. Its importance is evidenced by O. T. Allis, an amillennialist, giving to it over five pages. He remarked:

It is quite understandable that Darby and the Brethren seem to have regarded this passage as more of a liability for their parenthesis theory than an asset. They could admit only an analogy between the calling of the Gentiles in the Church age and the gathering of the Gentiles in the millennial age. But gradually it came to be regarded as of such great importance, that Scofield did not hesitate to say of it, as we have seen: "Dispensationally, this is the most important passage in the NT."<sup>75</sup>

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75. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 149.

Regarding the "analogy" view, the following comments are interesting.

Though the revised *Scofield Reference Bible* maintains the "plan of the ages" interpretation, it no longer claims that this is the most important passage for dispensationalism. And it has inserted the "analogy" interpretation surreptitiously alongside the other more famous interpretation. In the 1980 revision of his book *Millennialism*, Feinberg seems to vacillate on the passage. While leaving basically unchanged one favorable discussion of the Scofield interpretation, in another place he favors the analogy view of the earlier Brethren, saying it is "correct." Toussaint, writing in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament*, mentions the classic Scofieldian interpretation as a view "commonly held by premillennialists," but then he suggests the analogy view, which is presented by Sunukjian in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament* and by Elliott Johnson in the Walvoord *Festschrift*. While admitting analogy, all these expositors have consistently denied any real fulfillment of Amos 9 in the early church. Some other contemporary dispensationalists, however, have argued for some measure of fulfillment in the church which does not deny a future fulfillment of Amos 9 in the millennium.

Many other passages could be examined to show that dispensationalism is not a fixed set of confessional interpretations. Hermeneutical development is taking place. Obviously some hermeneutical consistency must exist in order for different expositors and theologians to maintain the name "dispensionalist" (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, July-September 1988, p. 263).

I suggest that the "hermeneutical development" is actually dispensationally (continued...)

Of course this is not the most "dispensationally . . . important passage in the N. T." For example, consider the importance of Rom. 16:25, 26, Col. 1:25, 26 and Eph. 3:9. Obviously, such scriptures settle most of these questions for those who bow to what they expressly state.

On the other hand, many anti-dispensationalists believe Acts 15 establishes the notion that (contrary to what the above three scriptures show) the OT prophets prophesied concerning the church. They believe that "the tabernacle of David" refers to the church. It is alleged that David's fallen tabernacle was rebuilt, or began to be rebuilt, at Pentecost.

#### What Is The Issue in Acts 15?

The reason for which this meeting at Jerusalem took place, the question which was before this meeting, was this:

And certain persons, having come down from Judæa, taught the brethren, If ye shall not have been circumcised according to the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved. A commotion therefore having taken place, and no small discussion on the part of Paul and Barnabas against them, they arranged that Paul and Barnabas, and certain others from amongst them, should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about this question (Acts 15:1-3).

The question, then, concerned whether or not the Gentile converts were to be under the law, to become, as it were, Jews, instead of being blessed apart from the law. James quoted Amos to bring before the brethren that God would bless Gentiles in connection with the Kingdom, without their being circumcised, and applied the principle of this to God's working now.

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75. (...continued)

retrograde in effect. The return by some to what JND taught on Acts 15 is commendable. What "dispensionalists" need to do is to leap-frog right over C. I. Scofield to dispensational truth as scripturally taught by J. N. Darby.

## James' Quotation For The Issue

In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David which is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the nations upon whom my name is called, saith Jehovah who doeth this (Amos 9:11, 12).

And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Brethren, listen to me: Simon has related how God first visited to take out of [the] nations a people for his name. And with this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written: After these things I will return, and will rebuild the tabernacle of David which is fallen, and will rebuild its ruins, and will set it up, so that the residue of men may seek out the Lord, and all the nations on whom my name is invoked, saith [the] Lord, who does these things known from eternity (Acts 15:13-18).

The answer to the issue, namely, should the Gentile converts be placed under the law, is this, as James said:

Wherefore *I* judge, not to trouble those who from the nations turn to God; but to write to them to abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood. For Moses, from generations of old, has in every city those who preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath (Acts 15:19-21).

The answer is *no*, the Gentile converts were not to be placed under law. **This is the subject**, not that the church is the rebuilt tabernacle of David. Neither Amos, nor other prophets who spoke of Gentile blessing, who spoke of God's name being invoked on Gentiles, indicated in any way that those Gentiles should be placed under the law. James quoted the passage for *one point alone*, i.e., "and all the nations upon whom my name is invoked" (Acts 15:17), for the application of it to confirm what Peter said. Amos 9:11, 12 is millennial in fulfillment as are all the prophecies of the kingdom. Having clearly seen what the issue was, we may now turn to examine what has been imported into the passage by antidispenationalism that sees the church everywhere in the O. T. prophecies concerning the kingdom.

After Peter, Barnabas and Paul showed how God had wrought, James noted what Scripture had to say relative to the dispute and did so in a way so as to give a judgment. He did not say that God visited the Gentiles (through Peter) in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. He did say that "with this **agree** the words of the prophets." Call it an "analogy," if you will. Often enough the prophets prophesied Gentile blessing and he selected one quotation in order to prove it, stating that the prophets agree. What we find in Amos 9:11,

12 is millennial. It is quoted in order to prove that there is such a thing as Gentile blessing without circumcision being imposed. What Peter said, says James, agrees with this. Therefore there can be no ground of objection to Gentile blessing *now*; and they are not to be placed under the law (as the postmillennialist Reconstructionists want to do with all Christians).

Furthermore, James, by the Spirit, came to a judgment (v. 19) regarding the subject of dispute (v. 1). On the basis of the quotation he judged that the nations must not be troubled about circumcision. How so? The prophets who spoke of Gentile blessing did not say that the Gentiles needed to be circumcised. "Wherefore *I* judge, not to trouble those who from the nations turn to God" (v. 19) he says. So he found that prophecy about the Gentiles in the millennium was relevant to the subject of dispute.

Observe that God's name has never yet been invoked upon the nations.

The four things written to the Gentile believer have to do with matters that pre-date the law. Excellent remarks on them are found in the *Synopsis* by J. N. Darby, vol. 4, pp. 40, 41 (Stow Hill ed.).

## Taking Out of The Nations a People For His Name

### THE DIFFERENCE IN THE WORK NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

God's present taking out from the Gentiles a people for His name cannot be the fulfillment of what Amos prophesied. No, it cannot even be a partial fulfillment because the character of the two works are different.

- Now. Though individual Gentiles had been brought into blessing before, Acts 10 records the first instance of God **taking out of the nations a people for His name** (Acts 15:13, 14). It should be noticed that *this describes the character of God's work now*.
- Future. Observe carefully that the quotation says, "and all the nations on whom my name is invoked." This shows that in the future the work is different than now. God will not at that time take *out of* the nations a people for His name. The Gentiles will generally receive blessing, but Israel will then be Ammi (my people) in the special sense, not so the Gentiles.

### IS THE PRESENT WORK AN INITIAL FULFILLMENT OF AMOS 9:11, 12?

How do Covenantizing Dispensationalists handle this in an effort to have a partial fulfillment under the allegedly present Davidic phase of the Kingdom? They blur the distinction just made by fastening on the fact that Gentile blessing is apart from the law in both cases. The fact that this is a common element does not prove their point, and certainly does not eliminate the essential distinction in God's workings in the

two cases. And that essential distinction means that the present work is not a fulfillment of Amos' prophecy. Amos did not prophesy that God was going to **take out** from the Gentiles a people for His name. James made an *application* of something to a matter before them.<sup>76</sup> We have the same phenomena here as we saw regarding pressing an initial fulfillment in Acts 2, where we saw that what resulted was -- upon all flesh = upon some Jews only. Here, it is -- take out of the nations a people for his name = all the nations upon whom my name is invoked. And so Darrell L. Bock wrote:

... (Acts 15:14). Such activity was seen to be a part and parcel of the plan of the eschatological kingdom, as reflected in Isaiah 49:6 and Amos 9:11-12 (see Acts 13:46-48; 15:14-18).<sup>77</sup>

Would we not expect him to refer to the strongest proofs from the OT To show that the prophets spoke of a calling out from the Gentiles a people for God's name? Read them. And Kenneth L. Barker wrote:

... what happened in Acts 15 constitutes a stage in the progressive fulfillment of the entire prophecy in Amos 9 (cf. Acts 15:12-15). It is an instance of direct fulfillment, but not the final and complete fulfillment....<sup>78</sup>

Now note well that if the calling out from the Gentiles a people for His name is "not the final and complete fulfillment, then God will do this also in a fuller way in the millennial Kingdom. And what confusion results? Why that God will have His ancient people before Him as Ammi (my people; Hos. 2:1) and also a people taken out from the Gentiles for His name. Thus there will be two peoples of God.

Moreover, if silence was not really kept in the OT concerning the mystery, then it also should be in accordance with the David covenant and be fulfilled in the millennium, while presently it is in partial fulfillment, and to have the final and complete fulfillment in the millennium. That would mean Jews and Gentiles in one body in the millennium when the nation of Israel is Ammi -- the people of God. But then there will also be a fulfillment of Amos' prophecy, which, in this system, is God taking out of the nations a people for His name. So there results two peoples of God, while at the same time they form one body. The notion of partial fulfillment for the purpose of lowering the heavenly church down to earth, and

making all Christ's activities Davidic in character, is at the root of the utter confusion. But there is an attempt, based on the words "this" and "agree," that we must look at before leaving these points.

The only likely antecedent to "this" is the reference in verse 14 to the Gentile inclusion that Simeon had expressed.<sup>79</sup>

This is a statement meaning that we have here a partial fulfillment of Amos -- though, of course, in none of the cases claimed do we read that "this is a (partial) fulfillment." The fact is that the prophets nowhere said that God would do a work of calling out from the Gentiles a people for His name.

Calling attention to the word *agree* (*sympshonousin*):

... means "to match," "harmonize," or "to fit" (Matt. 18:19; 20:2, 13; Luke 5:36; Acts 5:9; related terms are in 1 Cor. 7:5; 2 Cor. 6:15)....<sup>80</sup>

He believes that this indicates an initial fulfillment. However, the agreement, the harmony, consists only in the fact that the name of the Lord is called upon those whom God is calling out of the Gentiles to be a people for his name and, in the millennium, on "all the nations on whom my name is invoked."

So, the calling out of the Gentiles now is consonant with, in harmony with, but not an initial fulfillment of, what the prophets spoke of as the invocation of God's name upon Gentile nations when Messiah reigns. This leaves untouched the fact that a calling out from the Gentiles a people for His name is not a work spoken of by the OT prophets.

Also note well how God's activity is described. He is **taking out** of the nations a people for His name, thus leaving the nations where they were. It is contrary to the postmillennial scheme wherein, in effect, all the nations become a people for His name before Christ returns. Rather, God's people are now taken out of the nations. This is separative.

## *The Tabernacle of David (v. 16)*

Using language typical of spiritual alchemy, R. Zorn says:

James, therefore, makes the building of the tabernacle of David, not a future kingdom, but a reference to Christ's present rule upon the throne of David as the rule began with His exaltation and now comes to expression in His Church and its labors for Him. "Edom," too, no longer appears in James' quotation as it does in the original since, in consonance with the manner of James' interpretation, it has symbolic reference to the enemies of God's people, or the Gentiles in general, who were now by conversion becoming a part of new Israel. With this principle of interpretation established, we may also understand the rest of the prophecy as a reference to the Messianic age, which is not a future Millennium, but the present dispensation.

76. Observe how Robert L. Saucy, a Covenantizing Pretribulationist, slides past the distinction Scriptural makes:

Amos looked forward to the times of the Messiah, which included the salvation of Gentiles without their becoming part of Israel. These times have arrived with Jesus, and the new work of God indicates that salvation is going out to the Gentiles apart from keeping the law. All this is evident in God's having rebuilt the fallen dynasty of David in Jesus as the Christ (Ac 2:36) (*The Case for progressive Dispensationalism*, p. 79).

These writers, like those who espouse covenant theology, have not bowed to Rom. 16:25, Col. 1:26 and Eph. 3:9 -- which would have preserved them from covenantizing.

77. *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism*, p. 256.

78. In, *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, p. 327.

79. Darrell L. Bock in *A Case for Premillennialism*, p. 196.

80. *Ibid.*,

Once more we have an example of symbolic language (verse 13) and concepts of religious significance current with the prophet (verses 14-15) by which he clothed the spiritual realities of the messianic salvation with its glorious prospects.<sup>81</sup>

Is that what Amos meant by what he said? Did Amos understand His words to speak of the Church? or of literal Israel? And were his hearers meant by God to understand by this a prophecy of the church? The answer is no (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:26). In this alchemizing system one would think that OT prophecies had no function for OT hearers. What benefit were the hearers to derive from the prophecies? None, if the prophets spoke of the church -- about which they could know nothing.

W. Kelly remarked:

On the other hand Jehovah has not yet raised up the tabernacle of David; nor is this at all intimated by James's quotation of the passage. Neither he nor any other apostle ever says that the church of God is the same thing as the booth of David. The whole system which identifies them is foreign and opposed to scripture. It is only the allegorical habit of the fathers which invented the fiction that Zion or Jerusalem, that Judah or Israel, mean the church. But this error lowers our own dignity, and deprives the ancient people of that hope for which God's providence reserves them spite of their actual unbelief. Assuredly God will bless the Jews by and by, and His name will be called upon the Gentiles. Even the most obstinate of Pharisees could not gainsay James's proof of this. If then God were pleased to call His name on Gentiles now by the gospel, who can deny the principle if he believe the prophets? Their own scriptures agree to this, and oppose the narrow-mindedness which would convert them practically into Jews in order to be called by His name. No Israelite could have conceived that God had then raised the fallen hut of David; but he could not gainsay that God spoke of all the nations on which His name should be called when that day comes. It was not inconsistent but in keeping with this, if as Gentiles they were called by His name now. James does not speak of this or any other prophetic citation being fulfilled at present. He simply quotes the broad fact from the Septuagint version, as agreeing with the principle generally laid down by the prophets that all the nations should be called by Jehovah's name. This is indeed the characteristic of the millennial day, when all Israel shall be saved, and shall inherit the remnant even of their bitterest foe as well as of all the Gentiles. Undoubtedly, when it is fulfilled, the subjection of the nations will be for ever, and the kingdom of Jehovah over all the earth, though it be of course the kingdom of the heavens. The apostle cites this then only for present use in sanctioning the reception of Gentiles without circumcision, which it did unanswerably.<sup>82</sup>

The fallen tabernacle of David will be restored at the *restoring of all things*, the things spoken of by the prophets (Acts 3:19-26). Amos said its breaches would be closed up. It refers to the Kingdom when the "Lord God shall give to Him the throne of David His Father; and he shall reign over {not the church,

but} the house of Jacob (Luke 1:32, 33). Meanwhile, he is on the Father's throne (Rev. 3:21). The Son of man's throne is future (Matt. 25:31). All the talk about Christ being on David's throne now is baseless and flies in the face of what Scripture does say about His throne.

As to the breaches, one of them is the division of the tribes when Rehoboam was King. Another breach was the setting up of Dan and Bethel as places of worship -- undermining the truth that there was one center for Israel's worship.

### *What About The Words "After This"?*

It is a mistake to take the words "after this" as if Amos was speaking of the present calling out of the Gentiles, and that "after this" calling out, then so and so would happen. Amos did not prophesy about the church. Nor was James setting forth a sequence of what God was doing. None of these things has anything to do with the issue.

The Septuagint (Greek translation of the OT) has replaced the words in the Hebrew of Amos 9, "in that day" with the words "after these things I will return" as a number of commentators point out. For James, the Septuagint was sufficient for his use concerning the point at issue. The phrase "after these things I will return" has no bearing on his point. Nor is this passage an endorsement by James of the Septuagint in all its deviations from the Hebrew text, but he cited it as sufficient for his point.

Moreover, that phrase has another meaning than that Amos is speaking of the present period.

And it shall come to pass, after I have plucked them [Israel] up, I will return, and have compassion on them, and will bring them back . . . (Jer. 12:15).

If verses 8-10 of Amos 9 are read with Amos 9:11, 12, the parallelism with Jer. 12:15 should be obvious. It is *after* God's governmental ways have done their work on Israel that He will *return* to them in blessing. It is after the Lo-Ammi period pronounced by Hosea. Then shall the tabernacle of David be rebuilt, and the breaches thereof be closed up.

Many quotations of the OT in the NT are used as this one from Amos 9 is used. It is in the gospels that we principally find a different use of quotations from the OT; namely, to show a fulfillment. A few examples are Matt. 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 8:17; etc. Acts 1:16 is one of the latest. However, subsequently OT passages are cited for a principle, or for something analogous. Thus, Acts 15:14-18 is not said to be a fulfillment. Such passages show that what has transpired is not inconsistent with the OT; or that the OT leaves room for what God is now doing, though the OT prophets did not foresee this. The passages themselves are millennial in fulfillment. See Rom. 15:8-12, for example.

81. R. Zorn, *Church and Kingdom*, p. 106.

82. *Lectures Introductory to the Study of the Minor Prophets*, pp. 162-164.



## Chapter 4.7

### Acts 16-28

#### Acts 19:8

And entering into the synagogue, he spoke boldly during three months, reasoning and persuading [the things] concerning the kingdom of God (Acts 19:8).

We have observed elsewhere that the faithful remnant who had accepted the Lord Jesus were expecting the establishment of the Kingdom. The death of the Lord Jesus had dashed their hopes as we see in Luke 24. But He spoke to the two on the way to Emmaus regarding the sufferings and the glory to follow (Luke 24:25-27). These Jews to whom Paul preached in the synagogue, I suggest, heard the same truth. Christ must suffer first and the kingdom will yet come. W. Kelly remarked:

This involved his opening to them the sufferings of Christ and the glories after these. It never occurred to his mind to disparage that kingdom, still less to deny it, because of higher possessions and richer grace in the great mystery as to Christ, and as to the assembly (Eph. 5:32) meanwhile revealed for the Christian. Even salvation as now opened in the gospel of God's grace has depths beyond the kingdom.<sup>83</sup>

#### Acts 20:24, 25; 28:23, 31

But I make no account of [my] life [as] dear to myself, so that I finish my course, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the glad tidings of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom [of God], shall see my face no more (Acts 20:24, 25).

And having appointed him a day many came to him to the lodging, to whom he expounded, testifying of the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and the prophets, from early morning to evening (Acts 28:23).

... preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, with all freedom unhinderedly (Acts 28:31).

R. Zorn asserts that:

These three references [Acts 20:24,25; 28:23; 28:31], therefore, as do all in Acts without exception, make the Kingdom of God synonymous with the rule of Christ now begun and coming to consummation only at His second

advent. . . .<sup>84</sup>

Long ago, W. Kelly wrote:

It will be noticed that the gospel is here designated 'the glad tidings of the grace of God.' This appears to be the most comprehensive title given to it in Scripture. Elsewhere the apostle speaks of it as 'the gospel of the glory of Christ', where its heavenly side is meant to be made prominent. Again, he speaks of it as 'the gospel of God', when its source in divine love is pointed out. Furthermore, we hear of 'the gospel of Christ', where He is in view through Whom alone the glad tidings become possible from God to man. In the Gospels we read of 'the gospel of the kingdom', looking on to Messiah in power and glory: in the Revelation, of the 'everlasting gospel', the revelation of the bruised Seed bruising the serpent's head. Each has its main or distinctive meaning; but as none can be, apart from Christ, so none of them appears to be so full as 'the gospel of the grace of God.' Nor is any other designation of it more than this last in keeping with the Acts of the Apostles, as well as with that apostle's heart who was now addressing the Ephesian elders. The person and the work of the Lord Jesus are fully supposed although not expressed by it; for in whom, or through whom, can God's grace shine out, save in Him or by Him?

'And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom<sup>85</sup> [of God], shall see my face no more' (ver. 25). It is his farewell. His work, as to presence in their midst, was ended.

Here we have another and distinct topic, and one that is apt to be overlooked in modern preaching, viz., 'The kingdom.' He who examines the Acts of the Apostles will find how large a place it occupies in the preaching, not of Peter only but of Paul, and, we may be assured, of all the other servants of the Lord in those early days. It is a grave blank where the kingdom is left out as it is now. Nor is it only that the future according to God is habitually lost to the faith of saints through the unfaithfulness of modern preachers, but thereby the gospel of God's grace also suffers. For in that case there is sure to be confusion, which, mingling both characters,

84. *Church and Kingdom*, p. 51.

85. The best and oldest MSS. and Versions, save the Vulg. etc., read simply 'the kingdom.' Others add 'of God', which is meant if not expressed; others 'of Jesus', and 'of the Lord Jesus'.

83. *An Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, p. 281.

never enjoys the simple and full truth of either: <sup>86</sup> for the kingdom will be the triumph of righteousness by power when Christ appears in His glory. A truth it was, most familiar, to those who were bred in the constant and glorious vision of Old Testament prophecy. Christianity, though it open to us heavenly things, was never intended to enfeeble this prospect; rather should it enable the believer to taste its blessing more, as well by imparting a deeper intelligence of its principles as by bringing in the heavenly glory. We can enjoy it in an incomparably larger and more distinct way; and we have its principles explained by a deeper and fuller view of its basis in the reconciling work of the Lord Jesus on the cross.

. . . Twice at least (vers. 20, 27) he disclaims expressly that reserve which some bearing the Christian name have not been ashamed to avow as a merit learnt from Him Whose death rent the veil, and Who puts all true followers of His in the light of life, the light which makes everything manifest. Walking in darkness now that the True Light shines is a walk in the flesh without God. With such doctrine no wonder that 'the hungry sheep look up and are not fed.'

It is a mistake that 'all the counsel of God' means no more than the plan of God for saving men unfolded in the gospel. 'The gospel' is indeed the preaching of salvation in a dead and risen Savior; 'the kingdom', whether morally or in its fully manifested form, has its own distinct force in God's reign, as we have seen; 'all the counsel of God' rises still higher and embraces His purpose in its utmost extent (e.g., Eph. 1:9-12). <sup>87</sup>

### *Acts 24:14,15*

But this I avow to thee, that in the way which they call sect, so I serve my fathers' God, believing all things which are written throughout the law, and in the prophets; having hope towards God, which they themselves also receive, that there is to be a resurrection both of just and unjust (Acts 24:14, 15).

I have pointed out that anti-millennialists Judaize. Regarding the above text, J. Zens asserts:

The Jews were accusing Paul of being an apostate Israelite. But Paul confounds them by asserting a close continuity between his life as a Christian and the Jewish hope. Paul worships the same God, holds to the same canonical books, and cherishes the same hope of resurrection as the Jews. The apostle saw that Christianity was nothing but the genuine fulfillment of all that was promised to the Old Testament fathers. <sup>88</sup>

I hold to dispensational truth, yet I serve the God of Paul's fathers, believe all things written throughout the law, and in the

prophets, having hope towards God that there is to be a resurrection both of just and unjust. I see also that it is spiritual alchemy to say that "Christianity was nothing but the genuine fulfillment of all that was promised to the Old Testament fathers." Obviously, the above text offers not an atom of proof for J. Zens conclusion. And this brings us to an objection of O. T. Allis, based on what Paul did not say. This objection, taken together with J. Zens' comments, illustrates the capacity of the anti-millennialists to wring blood out of a stone. O. T. Allis wrote:

If Paul really believed that the Church was a mystery parenthesis unknown to the prophets, here would have been a fine opportunity to preach Dispensational truth. He might have explained to Felix and the notables who were present just how the Church age was to be fitted in, as such a parenthesis, between the Davidic kingdom of the past and the promised kingdom of the future. It would certainly have made things much easier for him, had he been able to declare that what he was preaching, however offensive to Jewish pride, was simply a temporary interruption of the fulfillment of the kingdom promises to Israel. Why did he not do so, if he really believed this to be the case?

Well, if Paul does not say what O. T. Allis thinks appropriate, why, then, clearly, it is not the truth. With such interpretive principles as we see at work in these two writers, anti-millennialism will clearly be triumphant. But, then, so will many other doctrines and notions fare equally well. At any rate, mystery truth was hardly suitable fare for the governor or for the occasion. Where, in Acts do we have a record at all of the preaching of the mystery? Why demand it *here*, then, unless for a theological figment? Let us simply receive the Word as God has given it.

### *Acts 26:6-8*

And now I stand to be judged because of the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers, to which our whole twelve tribes serving incessantly day and night hope to arrive; about which hope, O king, I am accused of [the] Jews. Why should it be judged a thing incredible in your sight if God raises the dead? (Acts 26:6-8).

Reading v. 8 one can understand why some would think that "the hope of the promise" referred to resurrection <sup>89</sup>. But I do not think that is correct. Acts 13:32, 33 says:

And we declare unto you the glad tidings of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this to us their children, having raised up Jesus; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten thee.

"Having raised up Jesus" refers to His coming into the world, not resurrection. The hope noted in Acts 26:6,7 is the Messiah:

And also the Hope of Israel will not lie nor repent; for he is not a man, that he should repent (1 Sam. 15:29)

86. Thus Calvin (*Opera* 6, 186): 'Regnum Dei iterum vocatur evangelii doctrina, quae regnum Dei in hoc mundo inchoat, homines renovando in imaginem Dei, donec tandem in ultima resurrectione compleatur.' (The doctrine of the gospel is again called God's kingdom, which begins God's kingdom in this world by renewing men into God's image, till at length it be complete in the last resurrection.) Calvin was a pious and able man; but the value of his commentary on scripture has been extravagantly overrated. Of course, not a little turns on the spiritual intelligence of him who speaks.

87. W. Kelly, *An Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 305-307.

88. *Dispensationalism*, Presbyterian and Reformed, 1978, p. 17.

89. Certainly not "primarily to the Abrahamic covenant, with its definite promise of blessing."

In Acts 13:34 Paul speaks of the resurrection of Christ and then he quotes an OT prophecy that bears on this. And in Acts 26:8 he speaks of the resurrection also. He then proceeds to tell how he saw Christ in the glory. Neither in Acts 13 nor Acts 26 do we get the subject of the kingdom introduced, whether spiritual or material.

Certainly Israelites were hoping for the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, but that is not the point here. The Hope of Israel is Jesus, "Jehovah, Savior."

Of course, it was the purpose of God that this Messiah would be the sin-bearer, thus laying the righteous basis for all blessing that comes from Him. This necessitates, too, His resurrection; and so the sure mercies of David will be made good to the house of Israel.

### Acts 26:22, 23

Having therefore met with [the] help which is from God, I have stood firm unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying nothing else than those things which both the prophets and Moses have said should happen, namely, [whether Christ should suffer; whether he first, through resurrection of [the] dead, should announce light both to the people and to the nations (Acts 26:22, 23).

Now we have arrived at a text triumphantly put forth as:

. . . a clear proof that the gospel proclaims nothing that was not foretold by the prophets.<sup>90</sup>

Going for the jugular vein of dispensational truth, O. T. Allis wrote:

Here again was a splendid opportunity to preach the mystery doctrine of the Church. Paul not merely does not do this; but he declares emphatically that he has been *preaching nothing which Moses and the prophets had not foretold*. What clearer illustration could be found of the need of giving heed to Paul's words, "as it hath now been revealed" (Eph. 3:5), when he speaks of the mystery?<sup>91</sup>

Do you see the construction he put on Eph. 3:5? In other words, the mystery is what the OT prophets prophesied. Why then did the mystery need to be revealed? Well, this is the result of refusing the express statements of Scripture. Notice how he picked on Eph. 3:5 which he thought he could make it say that the mystery is the subject of OT prophets. He did not pick the following Scriptures:

Now to him that is able to establish you, according to my glad tidings and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to [the] revelation of [the] mystery, as to which silence has been kept in [the] times of the ages, but [which] has now been made manifest, and by prophetic scriptures, according to commandment of the eternal God, made known for obedience of faith to all the nations (Rom. 16:25, 26).

. . . and to enlighten all [with the knowledge of] what is the administration of the mystery hidden throughout the ages in God, who has created all things, (Eph. 3:9).

. . . the mystery which [has been] hidden from ages and from generations, but has now been made manifest to his saints (Col. 1:26).

These scriptures, received into the soul as God gave them, destroys the anti-millennialist position. How *dare he* assert, in defiance of the express statements of Scripture that Paul "had been preaching nothing which Moses and the prophets had not foretold." And listen to what he said concerning J. N. Darby.

In commenting on this passage in Acts, all Darby has to say is this: "He does not speak of the assembly [the Church] -- that was a doctrine for instruction, and not a part of his history." That a man of Darby's mentality should have offered so lame and arbitrary an explanation is convincing proof that Paul's words on this memorable occasion cannot be made to square with the doctrine of the Pauline mystery Church as it is held by Dispensationalists. What was Paul's whole ministry if not a ministry of instruction? What was the doctrine of Gentile salvation and equality with the Jews if it was not instruction? Was not the history of Paul's career the story of the way in which his insistence on this instruction had finally made of him a prisoner on trial before the Roman governor? Here Scofield was wiser than Darby. Instead of adopting Darby's lame defense he attempted none, leaving chap. 26 without footnote and vss. 22-23 almost without comment.<sup>92</sup>

He did not understand JND and also left out JND's next sentence:

He does not speak of the assembly -- that was a doctrine for instruction, and not a part of his history. But everything that related to his personal history, in connection with his ministry, he gives in detail.<sup>93</sup>

The truth is, the meaning is too obvious for JND to spend more words on the matter because of the general brevity of the *Synopsis*. If there is a problem of lameness, in view of excellent mentality, O. T. Allis would have done well to look closer to home. Coming to the context of v. 23, F. G. Patterson wrote:

But the Jews being his accusers, and king Agrippa being one who knew the prophets and was versed in the Jewish Scriptures, the statements of the verses quoted (vv. 22,23) rather show that he was saying nothing contrary to the testimony of God in the Scriptures, which the Jews who accused him professed to accept.<sup>94</sup>

Those who have no animosity against JND ought to see the agreement of this with his quoted remark about Paul's history.

### Acts 28:20, 23-25, 28

For this cause therefore I have called you to [me] to see and to speak to you; for on account of the hope of Israel I have this chain about me (Acts 28:20).

And having appointed him a day many came to him to the lodging, to whom he expounded, testifying of the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus,

92. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 151.

93. *Synopsis* 4:70.

94. F. G. Patterson, *Scripture Notes & Queries*, (Oak Park: Bible Truth Publishers, 1961).

90. P. Mauro, *The Hope of Israel*, p. 29.

91. O. T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 151.

both from the law of Moses and the prophets, from early morning to evening. And some were persuaded of the things which were said, but some disbelieved. And being disagreed among themselves they left; Paul having spoken one word, Well spoke the Holy Ghost through Esaias the prophet to our fathers, saying . . . (Acts 28:23-25).

Be it known to you therefore, that this salvation of God has been sent to the nations; they also will hear [it] (Acts 28:28).

This is the last text in Acts to which O. T. Allis devoted a section,<sup>95</sup> but it adds nothing. We already saw, above, that “the hope of Israel” is the Messiah Himself. It was on account of Paul’s service to Christ that he was bound. This is useless to prove that the prophesied kingdom is a spiritual kingdom now. But, citing v. 23, P. Mauro claims that:

Inasmuch as those Jews were thoroughly indoctrinated with the then current Jewish teaching, it needed, of course, much exposition and persuasion, and the enlightenment of the Spirit of God besides, to make evident to them that what Moses and the prophets had foretold was a spiritual kingdom, which was to be established through the sufferings and death of the expected Messiah of Israel.<sup>96</sup>

Then after citing vv. 25-27 he concluded:

By this it appears that *the hope of Israel, the kingdom of God and the salvation of God* are three different names for one and the same thing.<sup>97</sup>

And also the Hope of Israel will not lie nor repent, for he is not a man that he should repent (1 Sam. 15:29).

Long before, W. Trotter had correctly written:

He is the seed of Abraham, to whom the promises were made. He is the Son of David, the hope of Israel and of David’s house.<sup>98</sup>

These writers are just as wrong about the hope of Israel as they are in their notion that “Moses and the prophets had foretold” a spiritual kingdom.

Speaking of the apostles, P. Mauro says,

Accordingly they were given to know, through the subsequent revelations of the Holy Spirit, that the promised kingdom was of spiritual character. . . .<sup>99</sup>

Why did the apostles need revelations to tell them, if Moses and the prophets had already said so? Paul persuaded them from Moses and the prophets, not from subsequent revelations. These subsequent revelations allegedly saying that the kingdom promised in the OT was spiritual, are a figment of his imagination.

J. Zens, however, understands that Christ is the hope of Israel. He says:

But Dispensationalists must claim that the essence of Israel’s hopes are still *future*. They still await (1) a land, (2) a throne, (3) a king, and (4) a kingdom (Chafer, *Syst. Theo.*, Vol. 4, p. 7). Was Paul accused of the Jews because he preached these future “hopes” for Israel? He preached an exalted Messiah, and the necessity of repentance (26:20).

Further, in light of the Dispensationalist’s claims that the Jews have different promises and a divergent destiny than the church (see p. 33), how can this be reconciled with Paul’s claim that his hope and Israel’s are one and the same? It would be to the Dispensationalist a contradiction *par excellence* for a Christian to be jailed for believing a Jewish hope. Yet this was why Paul was in chains.<sup>100</sup>

Why does he say that Paul was in chains “for believing a Jewish hope”? not in chains because he preached that there would be no such kingdom. In Eph. 3:1 he stated that he was “prisoner of Christ Jesus for you nations.” How so? When giving an account to a crowd of Jews, Paul said, “And he said to me, Go, for I will send thee to the nations afar off.”

And they heard him until this word, and lifted up their voice, saying, away with such a one as that from the earth, for it was not fit that he should live (Acts 22:22).

The Jews would not bear the thought of such Gentile blessing. It is clear that Paul was in jail on account of his message to Gentiles, not on account of “believing a Jewish hope.”

Concerning J. Zens remarks about “Paul’s claim that his hope and Israel’s are one and the same,” the fact is that the same Person is at the center of Israel’s blessings and the Church’s blessings. The hope of Israel is Christ. He is also Christ Jesus our hope (1 Tim. 1:1).

Christ will head up both the earthly sphere (in which Israel has a special place) and the heavenly sphere (in which the Church has a special place) (Eph. 1:10).

The fact that all centers in Christ and His glory (manifested in two spheres) and that Christ is Israel’s hope and the Church’s hope, hardly begins to show that the OT prophets predicted a spiritual kingdom now. These anti-millennialist reasons are very superficial.

## Conclusion

I judge that it is safe to conclude that O. T. Allis did not make good his thesis that the book of Acts shows that the church is the fulfillment of the OT predictions regarding the future of the people of God. Not only have we found no evidence of such a notion, but we also desire to acknowledge Rom. 16:25, 26, Col. 1:26 and Eph. 3:9 in their express statements. Such Scriptures, received into the soul, tell us how to view the OT prophecies and that we ought not to have expected to find their fulfillment in the Church, even as the book of Acts shows.

95. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 152.

96. *The Hope of Israel*, p. 30.

97. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

98. *Plain Papers on Prophetic Subjects*, p. 160.

99. *The Hope of Israel*, p. 179.

100. *Dispensationalism*, p. 18.

## *Part 5*

# *The True Jew, The Israel of God and the Seed of Abraham*

In Part 5 we will consider a number of expressions used by anti-dispensationalists in support of the idea that the church is the continuator of Israel, is the spiritual Israel, and that the church is the subject of OT prophecy. These expressions include, “true Jew,” “the Israel of God,” and “the seed of Abraham.” Most space will be given to the subject of the seed of Abraham and so we shall review all of Galatians 3.

If the Lord will, we shall proceed in the following way:

Ch. 5.1. Romans 2:28, 29: Is the Christian a True Jew?

Ch. 5.2. Who Are The Israel of God?

Ch. 5.3. Gal. 3:1-9: The Principle of Faith as Seen in Abraham is the Way of Blessing.

Ch. 5.4. Gal. 3:10-14: The Law OR Faith.

(a) Gal. 3:10-12: The Law Curses and Cannot Justify.

(b) Gal. 3:13,14: Christ Made a Curse in Order to the Blessing of the Nations and in Order to the Sealing with the Spirit.

Ch. 5.5. Gal. 3:15-18: The Law Cannot Set Aside Promise.

Ch. 5.6. Gal. 3:19-25: Under the Law.

(a) Gal. 3:19-22: Function of the Law.

(b) Gal. 3:23-25: The Law as a Tutor up to Christ.

Ch. 5.7. Gal. 3:26-29: In Christ and Consequently Abraham's Seed.



## Chapter 5.1

### A True Jew and The Israel of God

For he is not a Jew who [is] one outwardly, neither that circumcision which is outward in flesh; but he [is] a Jew

[who is so] inwardly; and circumcision, of the heart, in spirit, not in letter; whose praise [is] not of men, but of God (Rom. 2:28, 29).

#### Who Is a True Jew?

It is interesting that those who understand Scripture dispensationally are accused of Judaizing because they say that animal sacrifices will be reinstated in the millennium, for Israel; but the same objectors might claim that a Christian is a true Jew.<sup>1</sup> The idea that a Christian is a true Jew comes from the idea that the church is the spiritual Israel, the continuator of Israel. Coupled with this is the notion that the church is “the Israel of God.” This scheme is Judaistic and so what such designate “the moral law” is said to be the rule of life.<sup>2</sup>

In actuality, those who say that a Christian is a true Jew and part of the Israel of God have assumed what needs to be proved. Rom. 2:1-16 is addressed to Gentiles while Rom. 2:17-29 is addressed to Jews. To many Christians it is an unacceptable procedure to find in Rom. 2:17-29, that God is saying that a Gentile Christian is a true Jew.

But if *thou* art named a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast in God . . . (Rom. 2:17).

If, in the face of such explicit address, persons may find in vv. 28 & 29 that Gentile believers are true Jews, then there will be no end of what one finds in texts in order to support a theological system. It is obvious that the passage is

addressed to, and concerns, Jews. The law cannot make a Jew answer inwardly to the meaning of circumcision. He is only a Jew “outwardly” (v. 28). *He* is a true Jew who is an Israelite that answers spiritually to the meaning God had in view concerning circumcision. However, although a Gentile believer answers spiritually to the meaning of circumcision, it does not follow that he is “a true Jew.”

We will consider the meaning of circumcision and then return to the distinction between a true Jew (one of “the Israel of God”) and a Gentile believer. A helpful summary of the meaning of circumcision is given in *Morrish's Bible Dictionary*, pp. 170,171:

**Circumcision.** The rite appointed by God to be a token of the covenant that He made with Abraham and his seed, and also the seal of the righteousness of his faith. Every male in Abraham's house was to be circumcised, and afterwards every male of his seed on the eighth day after birth. It signified the separation of a people from the world to God. During the 40 years in the wilderness this rite was not performed, but on entering God's land all were circumcised at Gilgal, when the reproach of Egypt was rolled away. Jos. 5:2-9. Circumcision became a synonym for Israel, so that they could be spoken of as ‘the circumcised,’ and the heathen as ‘the uncircumcised.’ Jud. 14:3; Eze. 31:18; Acts 11:3. Contrary to the design of God, circumcision became a mere formal act, when the covenant itself was disregarded, and God then speaks of Israel as having ‘uncircumcised hearts.’ Stephen charged the Jewish council with being ‘uncircumcised in heart and ears.’ Lev. 26:41; Acts 7:51. In Rom. 4 Abraham is shown to be ‘the father of circumcision,’ that is, of all that believe as the truly separated people of God.

Hence circumcision is typical of the putting off the body of the flesh by those who accept the cross as the end of all flesh, because Christ was there cut off as to the flesh: see Col. 2:11: “In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the [sins of the] flesh by the circumcision of Christ”; and again, “We are the circumcision which worship God by the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” Phil. 3:3. “Mortify

1. “Only those who are Jews inwardly, only believers. . .” R. B. Yerby, *The Once and Future Israel*, Swengel: Reiner, 1978, p. 56 and see p. 61. L. De Caro remarked, “Even if we were to exclude the Christian connotation . . .,” *Israel Today: Fulfillment of Prophecy?* Presbyterian and Reformed, 1974, p. 120. So if you cannot put the Gentile into vv. 28,29, you can at least have the connotation!

C.E.B. Cranfield wrote: “It is clear that in these verses Paul is in some sense denying the name of Jew to those who are only outwardly Jews and not also secretly and inwardly and at the same time according it to those who are secretly and inwardly Jews but not outwardly Jews at all,” *Romans, A Shorter Commentary*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985, p. 59.

2. In reality, the NT does not make the distinction between the moral and ceremonial law.

therefore your members which are upon the earth” Col. 3:5.

A true Jew is an Israelite who answers spiritually to the meaning of circumcision. A Gentile believer also answers spiritually to the meaning of circumcision. Thus all believers, whether Jew or Gentile, answer spiritually to the meaning of circumcision. Hence, Paul, speaking of all Christians in contrast to others who trust in flesh, wrote:

See to dogs, see to evil workmen, see to the concision. For we are the circumcision, who worship by [the] Spirit of God, and boast in Christ Jesus, and do not trust in flesh (Phil. 3:2, 3).

Because Paul wrote of all believers, “we are the circumcision,” it does not follow that all believers are true Jews. Some believers are true Jews (Jews) and some believers (Gentiles) are not.

### *Who Are the Israel of God?*

Use is made of Gal. 6:16 by those wishing to show that “the church is the new Israel.” It is claimed that the phrase “the Israel of God” means the church. There is no necessity to so understand the phrase.

And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace upon them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16).

A. Marshall translated v. 16 as follows:

And as many as by this rule will walk, peace on them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.<sup>3</sup>

Walking by “this rule” means walking by *the rule of the new creation*, Christ Himself, not the law. When you read Gal. 6:16 and look for the rule, go to v. 15, not Exodus.

Christians are not always only viewed as those united to Christ as His body; though, of course, every saint sealed with the Spirit is, in fact, united to Christ as His body. Such are also viewed in other ways. Gal. 6:16 is an example of this:

Q. -- Gal. 6:16. Does this scripture give any sanction to the idea that we, believers from among the Gentiles, are now “the Israel of God”? What is the true force?

A. -- The verse plainly intimates two classes, the general one of the saints who walk as Christians by the rule of the new creation in Christ, and the specified one, not of Israel now no longer for the time God’s people, but such of them as were true to the Christ they were baptized unto (where is neither Jew nor Greek, but all are one in Him), who are therefore designated “the Israel of God.”<sup>4</sup>

The distinction is also seen elsewhere as in Rom. 2:28 where we saw that a Jew was one who was so inwardly. Think of the Lord’s commendation of Nathaniel: “Behold [one] truly an Israelite . . .” (John 1:47). Rom. 9:6 also shows that there are true Jews of Jewish blood. Rom. 11:7 clearly distinguishes the believing Jews,<sup>5</sup> designated “the election,” from “the rest”

who have been blinded. Why not understand that such alone are “the Israel of God”?

Moreover, the fact is that in the NT Israel means Israel, *always*, never the church. Theology imposes upon the word “Israel” the meaning of church and then says: see, there is proof that the church is Israel and was a subject of the O.T. prophecies.

The way in which the church is transmuted into the Israel of God in this passage is by translating “*even* (καί) upon the Israel of God.” John Eadie asked if καί can be understood as a word linking a noun to its explanation (instead of being a link of two nouns). He concluded that there is no other example that would be as “peculiarly distinctive” as Gal. 6:16 would be if understood that way. He went on to write:

2. The simple copulative meaning is not to be departed from, save on very strong grounds; and there is no ground for such a departure here, so that the Israel of God are a party included in, and yet distinct from, the *οοοι*.

3. The apostle is not in the habit of calling the church made up of Jews and Gentiles -- Israel. Israel is used eleven times in Romans, but in all the instances it refers to Israel proper; and so do it and Ἰσραηλιτῆ in every other portion of the New Testament. In the Apocalypse, the 144,000 sealed of Israel stand in contrast to “the great multitude which no man can number,” taken out of the Gentile or non-Israelitish races. Rev. 7:9. The “Israelite indeed” is also one by blood. John 1:47; comp. 1 Cor. 10:18. The *οοοι* may not be Gentile believers as such, and opposed to Jewish believers, but the entire number who walk according to this rule; while Paul finds among them a certain class to whom his heart turns with instinctive fondness -- “the Israel of God.” Jatho’s distinction is baseless -- the one party being those who, warned by this epistle, should renounce their error and walk according to this rule; and the other, those who had uniformly held the sacred and evangelical doctrine. It may be said indeed, on the one hand, that the apostle has been proving that the Jew, as a Jew, has no privilege above the Gentiles, that both Jew and Gentile are on a level, so that both believing Jews and Gentiles may therefore be called Israel. It may be replied, however, that the apostle never in any place so uses the name, never gives the grand old theocratic name to any but the chosen people.

4. To the apostle there were two Israels -- “they are not all Israel which are of Israel,” -- and he says here, not Israel *κατὰ σάρκα*, but “the Israel of God,” or the true believing Israel; his own brethren by a double tie -- by blood, and especially by grace. Was it unnatural for the apostle to do this, especially after rebuking false Israel -- the wretched Judaizers -- who certainly were not the Israel of God?<sup>6</sup>

5. (...continued)

James designates Christians as “the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad” (James 1:1). Peter calls the Christians to whom he writes, the “diaspora” (Gk., 1 Peter 1:1),” Greg L. Bahnsen and K. L. Gentry, Jr., *House Divided, The Breakup of Dispensational Theology*, Tyler: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989, p. 169.]

6. *The John Eadie Greek Text Commentaries*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979 reprint, pp. 416,417.

3. The Interlinear *Greek-English* New Testament, London: Bagster, 1964, p. 757.

4. *The Bible Treasury* 20:252. See also 12:366.

5. Postmillennial reconstructionists may wax rather wild on this subject, stating that:

(continued...)



## Chapter 5.2

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### *Galatians 3:1-9: The Principle of Faith as Seen in Abraham is the Way of Blessing*

#### *The Issue in Gal. 3*

Troublesome “law-teachers, not understanding either what they say or concerning what they [so] strenuously affirm” (1 Tim. 1:7) had been influencing the Galatian saints (Gal. 1:7-9; 3:1; 4:9,17-21; 5:7-10; 6:12-13). Thus, Galatians deals with the fact that being under the law profits the Christian *nothing*. One of the issues is whether or not the inheritance is ours by law or by promise. In Gal. 3 we see the effect of the law upon one who is under it (Gal. 3:10). The other thing we see is the absolute contrast between law and promise, it being established that the inheritance is by promise and cannot be by law, and so in his paper, “Not Law, but Promise, Galatians 3,” J. N. Darby wrote:

The law and promise in grace are brought before us as two systems, both of God, but contrasted in their nature and opposite in their effects, and absolutely exclusive one of the other; existing at separate times, though the second could not disannul the first, and whose co-existence, as the ground of man’s standing with God, is in their very nature impossible. Both are positive dealings and revealed ways of God with man, each of its own kind. . .

The Galatians were not rejecting the promise or Christ; but they were adding the law to Christ as completing God’s will. This it is that the apostle resists, and declares the incompatibility of the two. Not that the law was against the promises (for if a law had been given which could have given life, righteousness would have been by it); but that the one system was in fact opposite in its principle to the other. They were two distinct ways proposed for having life, righteousness, and the inheritance. One brings a curse and nothing else; the other a blessing after God’s own heart, and nothing else. One is founded on man’s responsibility, the other on God’s gift, when man had failed altogether under that responsibility.<sup>7</sup>

Christ in glory and the Spirit sent down consequently (Acts 2:32, 33) characterize Christianity, while law characterizes OT Judaism.

#### *Common Blessings And Special Privileges*

In view of the confounding and confusing all blessings as is characteristic in antidispenational views we should observe the fact that there are common blessings for all saints and special privileges for those saints who are members of the body of Christ. W. Kelly observed:

There are certain privileges that we share in common with every saint. Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. We too believe and are justified. Substantially, faith has so far the same blessings at all times. We are children of promise, entering into the portion of faith as past saints have done before us; and this is what we find in Galatians, though with a certain advance of blessing for us. But if you look at Ephesians, the great point there is that God is bringing out wholly new and heavenly privileges. This is in no respect what is taken up in Galatians. There we are on the common ground of promises. “If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” But in Ephesians there are certain distinct and superadded privileges that Abraham never thought nor heard of: I mean the formation of the Church of God, Christ’s body, the truth that Jews and Gentiles were to be taken out of earthly places, and made one with Christ in heaven. This was the mystery concerning Christ and the Church, hidden from ages and generations, but now revealed through the Holy Ghost. So that, in order to have a right view of the full blessing of the Christian, we must take the Ephesian blessing along with the Galatian. The special time is while Christ is on the right hand of God. Even as to the millennial saints, do you think they will enjoy all that we have now? Far from it. They will possess much that we do not, such as the manifested glory of Christ, exemption

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7. *Collected Writings* 21:299,300.

from sorrow and suffering, &c. But our calling is totally different and contrasted. It is to love Him whom we have *not* seen; to rejoice in the midst of tribulation and shame. If a man were to form his thoughts of Christianity from Galatians only, he might confound the saints now with those of the Old Testament, always remembering the difference that we find here, that the heir as long as he is under age differs nothing from a servant; whereas we are brought into the full possession of our privileges. But there are other and higher things in Ephesians, called, or at least flowing from, the eternal purpose of God. So that it is well to distinguish this double truth -- the community of blessing through all dispensations, and the specialty of privilege that attaches to those who are being called now by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.<sup>8</sup>

In the above quotation it was pointed out that "Galatians never takes up<sup>9</sup> the standing of the church properly" (though referred to in Gal. 3:28) and that this epistle does not go "beyond the inheritance of promise." In connection with the fact that the inheritance of the promise is a subject of Galatians, W. Kelly also remarked:

Another writer, . . . referred to Rom. 11 and Gal. 3 in proof that the Church actually existed as such in Old Testament times. But this is evidently to confound things that differ, because the inheritance of the Abrahamic promises, of which their chapters treat, is not identical with the enjoyment of the Church's privileges; whereas their identity is assumed in the argument. It is allowed that the New Testament saints do inherit those promises, but that is an essentially different thing from the blessings revealed, *e.g.* in Ephesians. The olive {Rom. 11} is not the heavenly Church, but the earthly tree of promise and testimony, of which the Jews were the natural branches. Instead of the broken-off unfaithful branches, Gentiles are now grafted in; but, on their unfaithfulness, excision is the sure threat of God, and the Jews will again be brought into their own olive-tree, *i.e.* for the millennial inheritance. This is the plain teaching of Rom. 11; and, though as Gentiles we may be grafted in, and as individuals we may be Abraham's seed, the special position of Christ's body, as made known in 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, &c. is too distinct to require argumentation. When "the body" is spoken of, there is no cutting off nor grafting in.<sup>10</sup> There is in it

neither Jew nor Gentile. All is above nature there.

What is the inheritance? Rom. 4:13,16 gives us the answer. The reader should also see *Letters of J. N. Darby* 3:241-243.

### *Senselessness (v. 1)*

O senseless Galatians, who has bewitched you; to whom, as before your very eyes, Jesus Christ has been portrayed, crucified [among you]? (Gal. 3:1).

Someone wrote:

We learn here the particular form the apostle's ministry had taken in those parts. Considerable variety in style is to be remarked in Paul's labors. Among the Thessalonians the Lord's coming was a very prominent theme; among the Athenians, stress was laid upon man's original relation to God as His creature; in Galatia and in Corinth the cross was to the front. It will be noticed that sometimes we read in the New Testament of the blood of Christ, sometimes of the death, and in other places of the cross. This is not in vain. The Spirit has a different line of truth for our souls in each of these varied expressions. The blood is particularly found (though not exclusively) in Hebrews, where the main theme is the atonement and its mighty results; the death of Christ is dwelt upon in Romans as the end of His life below, in which faith finds the end of the old man and all that pertains to him; the cross is before us in Galatians as an emblem of shame. The cross pours contempt on man and all his efforts, and is thus to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness (1 Cor. 1:23).<sup>11</sup>

"Paul, apostle, not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ . . ." (Gal. 1:1) did not come to them preaching Adam, the first man (1 Cor. 15:47). He set before them One Who had been cast out from the earth by the first man under law.

He censured any who proclaimed glad tidings other than what had been announced to them by saying: "let him be

8. *Lectures on the Epistle of Paul . . . to the Galatians*, London: Morrish, n.d., pp. 116,117.

9. What is meant by "never takes up" is that the subject of the standing of the church is not *developed* in Galatians. The new creation is, of course, mentioned.

10. . The Calvinist and amillennialist, O. T. Allis wrote:

There is, Paul tells us, one good olive tree. Some of the branches are broken off. Branches from a wild olive are grafted in among the branches which remain, that they "may partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree." The new branches represent Gentile Christians. It would be difficult to state more clearly that the Gentiles in entering the Christian Church become members of a body, a church or theocracy, which has its roots in the Abrahamic

(continued...)

10. (...continued)

covenant and to which all true descendants of Abraham belong. The tree represents the true Israel. Faith is the bond of union. Some of the *natural* branches have been broken off because of unbelief. Branches of a *wild* olive are grafted in among them (*i.e.*, among the good branches that are left) on the basis of faith. From this Paul draws two important and weighty inferences. The first is that, since unbelief caused the breaking off of some of the natural branches, the branches of the new graft owe their present status, their participation in the root and fatness of the olive tree, solely to faith. If they become unbelieving, they will be cut off. (*Prophecy and the Church*, Presbyterian and Reformed, 1947, pp. 108,109).

It follows that the whole nation of Israel was in the olive tree and were "the true Israel" which is obviously false. Present participation, he claims, is "solely to faith." But "if they become unbelievers" sounds quite Arminian to me. A member of Christ's body does not "become" an unbeliever. Notice also that he equates "members of a body" with a "theocracy." The truth is that he does not understand what the olive tree is on account of his system that finds the church in O. T. prophecy.

11. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 1:201.

accused" (Gal. 1:9). Evil in doctrine rather than in behavior is before the apostle. Such evil teachers may be ever so nice personally and appear godly in conduct, but they fall under this censure. And, "a little leaven leavens the whole lump" (Gal. 5:6).

In 1 Cor. 1 Paul did not commend anything in the walk of the Corinthians. Rather, 1 Cor 1:4-9 commends *the grace of God given to them*. In Gal. 1 there is not even this.<sup>12</sup> Such is the mind of the Spirit concerning fundamental doctrinal evil compared to moral evil, which also is leaven, of course (1 Cor. 5:6).

In v. 1, Paul says "O senseless Galatians." In v. 3 he says, "so senseless." The senselessness consisted not in lack of native intelligence but in dullness of heart and mind in spiritual matters. Law-works seem to bind many professed Christians in a spell as appeared to be the case of the Galatians under the influence of Judaizers; hence the word bewitched, used figuratively.

The law addressed the old "I." Under the law the old "I" had a standing (in Adamic responsibility) before God. Here is what Paul had written about "I" :

For *I*, through law, have died to law, that I may live to God. I am crucified with Christ, and no longer live, *I*, but Christ lives in me; but [in] that I now live in flesh, I live by faith, the [faith] of the Son of God, who has loved me and given himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness [is] by law, then Christ has died for nothing (Gal. 2:19-21).

In whatever degree law is taken up by a Christian, to that degree he sets aside the grace of God. "Who has bewitched you?" asked the apostle. He had graphically portrayed Christ crucified before their eyes and now they had diverted their eyes from that as insufficient and were looking at the law. No doubt the hand of the Enemy was in this (*cf.* 2 Cor. 11:13-15).

### *Receiving The Spirit (v. 2)*

This only I wish to learn of you, Have ye received the Spirit on the principle of works of law, or of [the] report of faith? (Gal. 3:2).

Observe that Paul begins with the effect of an accomplished redemption. The Spirit was never received on the principle of works of law; *never*. The Spirit is received as power for a Christ honoring walk, which is the fruit of Christ's death, resurrection and glorification above to be head of the body formed at Pentecost (1 Cor. 12:13, Acts 2:32, 33, etc.), which we will consider in some detail when we come to v. 14. Faith, as the basis of a standing before God, has replaced the law (Gal. 3:23-25). The law addressed the first

man, man in his Adamic standing and responsibility. God has established the second man (Christ) and the trial of the first man ended in the cross. Hence the change denoted in Gal. 3:23-25) where Christ displaces the law. The Spirit, as indweller, could not be received while the first man, in the persons of the Jews, were under testing, under law. The reception of the Spirit, then, is evidence of the fruitlessness of the principle of works of law. Paul had not gone into Galatia preaching Christ and law, faith and law. Those who believed the gospel received the Spirit. Subsequently, Judaizers were preaching law to them. But:

The law applied to life in the flesh and its obligations. The cross declares its condemnation and end in death, and death to it. They had not received the Spirit by law but by faith. They had the Spirit, and begun in it when they had not the law at all, and they were now looking to be made perfect through the latter, but this was by the flesh; for the law supposed flesh to be alive and applied to it.<sup>13</sup>

They were sealed with the Spirit apart from works of law. Was that seal defective and insufficient that they must add works of law? Observe also that the Spirit is not now received by "tarrying" or "rushing" or any other way but by faith in the Person and work of Christ.

The reader should note that the word "the" does not appear before the word "law" in this verse. The words "on the principle of works of *the* law" does not carry quite the same sense as "on the principle of works of law." "*The* law" would indicate *the* law of Moses; whereas without the word "the," what is presented to the mind is law as a principle. Thus, the Spirit is not received on such a principle as law. This, of course, includes *the* law, but is a wider statement dealing with the whole idea, or principle, of law. On such a basis as law, the Spirit cannot be received. What goes with law is *flesh*; and that brings us to v. 3.

### *Made Perfect in Flesh (v. 3)?*

Are ye so senseless? having begun in Spirit, are ye going to be made perfect in flesh? (Gal. 3:3).

Were they *so* senseless, so devoid of spiritual discernment?

The Spirit and Christ's glorification above (Acts 2:32, 33) go together while law and flesh go together. The law addressed man in his Adamic standing and responsibility, man before God, *in flesh*. To bring in the principle of law is to fail to recognize that God has set aside, judged and displaced the first man in the work of Christ on the cross. Taking up law is, in effect, setting up again the flesh. Adding law to the Spirit is seeking perfection *in flesh*, seeking perfection on that principle, and doing so via the ministry of condemnation (2 Cor. 3:9). They thought to

12. The oft repeated notion that Paul always began his epistles by commending what he could in the walk of the saints is false.

13. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 21:300.

bring to perfection that which began in Spirit. In practice that, in effect, is a denial of the possession of the Spirit for power in walk. How senseless for a Gentile Christian who had never been under law to seek perfection from what had not profited the Jews under it for over 1400 years, whose great father Abraham profited nothing by law. Paul wrote to the Colossians:

For in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and authority, in whom also ye have been circumcised with circumcision not done by hand, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of the Christ . . . (Col. 2:9-11).

*In Christ*, the flesh is gone from before God, that very flesh addressed by the law. “But if the ministry of death, in letters, graven in stones . . .” (2 Cor. 3:7) kills (2 Cor. 3:6) and is a ministry of condemnation (2 Cor. 3:9) also, how is it the rule of life for one complete in Him? Kill, death and condemnation are words that denote what that graven in the two tables of stone does. It cannot produce practical sanctification.

### *Suffering in Vain (v. 4)?*

Have ye suffered so many things in vain, if indeed also in vain? (Gal. 3:4).

It was not their intention to set Christ aside but rather to add to Christ. God will not have that. He looks at it as setting Christ aside. In view of that, the apostle asks if they had suffered “in vain” (to no effectual result). The indication is that they had suffered for what they had believed (*cf.* Acts 14:22) but would now set aside that for which they had suffered.

### *Which Basis, Law or Faith (vv. 5, 6)?*

He therefore who ministers to you the Spirit, and works miracles among you, [is it] on the principle of works of law, or of [the] report of faith? Even as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness (Gal. 3:5, 6).

In v. 2, Paul directed their thoughts to the start of their pathway as Christians. In v. 6, he directed their thoughts to their experience in that pathway. At the start, they received the Spirit. In the Christian path, the Spirit (not the law) was ministered to them. That would be a ministry embracing, for example, what is brought before them in Gal. 5:13-26. He who brings before God’s saints such things ministers to them the Spirit. Teaching that Christians are under “the moral law” is not ministering the Spirit.

There were miracles wrought in Galatia by Paul (Acts 14) but v. 6 indicates that miracles continued to be wrought in Galatia, thus by others. I suggest that those who were

able to work miracles did so because the Apostle conferred the power to do so upon them, as implied by the characterization of miracles in 2 Cor. 12:12.<sup>14</sup> All of this is founded on faith, not on the principle of works of law.

The Judaizers directed the eyes of the Galatians to Moses. Paul said they must look at Abraham, not Moses. Abraham’s belief of what God said to him was reckoned, or accounted, to Abraham as righteousness.

Abraham was not only justified before God before the law was given, but also before he was circumcised (Gen. 17:24), which, in the ways of God anticipated the blessing of Gentiles, apart from law or circumcision, on the principle of faith.

### *Abraham’s Sons by Faith (v. 7)*

Know then that they that are on the principle of faith, these are Abraham’s sons . . . (Gal. 3:7).

Paul is speaking here imperatively: know then! Know what? Why, those on the principle of faith (not law) are Abraham’s sons.

### *The Glad Tiding Announced Beforehand (v. 8)*

Gal. 3:8 is explicit about what “the glad tidings” “announced beforehand” was:

In thee all the nations shall be blessed.

This will be fulfilled in the millennium. And here it is important to see the force of Eph. 1:12:

. . . that we should be to [the] praise of his glory who have pre-trusted in the Christ.

During the time of the heavenly parenthesis, Jews are trusting in the Christ -- before the millennium. They are trusting ahead of that time -- pre-trusting.

“In thee” means in Abraham as characterized by faith in God’s promise.

Note also that Scripture can see (“the Scripture, foreseeing”), because Scripture is God’s Word and God sees all. What Scripture says, God says; and as someone said, He does not stutter. Scripture sees right through all arguments against inerrancy and right through all hankering after the law in whatever form.

In connection with the gospel being preached to Abraham, A. Cole wrote:

In one sense, no Christian could speak of the gospel

14. The miracles are “signs indeed of the Apostle,” a characterization that indicates the Spirit gave this gift to others mediately through the Apostle. The Apostle imparted both the Spirit (Acts 19) and gifts (*cf.* 2 Tim. 1:6).

being preached before Calvary. In another, here is an anticipation of it. Indeed, it is more than an anticipation in that God's ways of dealing with men are eternally the same. For the turn of speech, we may compare John 8:56, where Christ speaks of Abraham having seen His day.<sup>15</sup>

To this misunderstanding I add Donald Guthrie's:

With this thought may be connected the words of Jesus, 'Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day; he saw it and was glad' (Jn. 8:56). Both our Lord and his apostle recognize that there is continuity between Abraham's faith and the Christian era.<sup>16</sup>

Concerning Abraham's seeing Christ's day, I understand the two writers quoted above to mean "my day" designates the Christian era. Not so; it refers to the millennium, when the promises will be fulfilled. Phil. 1:6 speaks of that day as still future as 1 Cor. 1:8 and 5:5 and 2 Cor. 1:14.

W. E. Cox, an amillennialist, wrote:

Paul says that the gospel which he preached also had been the means of Abraham's salvation (see Gal. 3:8).<sup>17</sup>

Such erroneous notions are the result of the attempt to find the special and distinctive blessings of the church in the OT. Paul not only preached what the 12 apostles did, regarding the gospel (1 Cor. 15:11), but went far beyond that. He had special revelations. The starting point for his ministry was seeing the Lord in the glory (Acts 9) along with being *caught up* to the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:2). He preached "the gospel of the glory of Christ (2 Cor. 4:4) and what he called "my gospel" (Rom. 16:25; Gal. 2:2). And when he associated others with himself, he called it "our gospel" (1 Thess. 1:5; 1 Thess. 2:14).

"Gospel" means "good news." The "good news" to Abraham was "In thee all the nations shall be blessed" (Gal. 3:8). Was Paul's gospel the object of Abraham's faith? The faith of OT saints rested in what God *then* said, before redemption was accomplished and the saint rested in the heavenly lies.

It is tedious to deal with these assertions. Consider this by two reconstructionist, postmillennialist leaders:

James designates Christians as "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" (James 1:1). Peter calls the Christians to whom he writes, the "*diaspora*" (Gk., 1 Peter 1:1).<sup>18</sup>

Put the word *Jewish* in front of the word Christians and you will have the sense. Why pretend that Christians, as such, are twelve tribes, or are a diaspora, unless you have a

troublesome theory you are pushing?

### *Blessed With Believing Abraham (v. 9)*

So they who are on the principle of faith are blessed with believing Abraham (Gal. 3:9).

The principle on which Abraham was blessed is faith. The principle on which believers are blessed now is faith. Abraham and we are blessed on the same basis: faith. That is what this text says. "*Blessed with*" does not mean we have the identical blessing, but that the blessing we have is via the same principle: faith.

The Galatians had received the Holy Spirit through believing the report (Gal. 3:2). Abraham had believed God (Rom. 4:3; Gal. 3:6; James 2:23) and it was counted to him as righteousness (Gal. 3:6). This belief by Abraham was apart from law or circumcision (Gen. 15:6).

In connection with the establishment of the *principle of calling*, God made Abraham the root of blessing. In him all the nations would be blessed (Gal. 3:8; Gen. 12:3; Acts 3:25) for from him would come the Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:19), the Seed of the woman (Gen 3:15), the mighty Blesser in Whom the purpose of God is carried out.

Grace and faith worked in God's saints before the call of Abraham. We see this noted in Heb. 11. But Abraham was called to separation in a way no other had been. True it is that Enoch walked with God. But Abraham was called to leave country, relatives, and father's house. He was called to display pilgrimage -- being sustained by the promises of God.

Abraham represents *calling* as well as election and promise. W. Kelly wrote:

Abraham is the first sample of God's call as a public principle. Whatever the secret working of grace in all the saints heretofore, as in Abel, Enoch, Noah, no one had ever been called by God to quit his country, kindred, and even father's house, as Abraham was. It was the great and new fact of separation to God, and in a land which he would show, sustained by His promise of blessing to himself, yea, of blessing in him to all the families of the earth. It was the more remarkable, because after the deluge God had instituted government to repress evil; and in the days of Peleg the earth was divided by the sons of Japheth, Ham, and Shem, after their families and tongues, in their lands and nations. In Abraham's time even Shem's progeny served other gods -- an evil most portentous, and unknown before the deluge. Out of this was Abraham called of God. The rest of the world was left to itself. God called the man of His choice, not to attack or reform the evil, but to Himself and a land He would show him with blessing assured. Separation to God on the call of His grace we see in the man, the family, the nation in which He will be magnified for ever.

This, if believed, involved obedience at once; and so it is here written. The old relationships remained for all but Abraham, in the sphere of divine providence, as of

15. *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970, p. 93.

16. *Galatians*, London: Oliphants, 1977, p. 96.

17. *An Examination of Dispensationalism*, Presbyterian and Reformed, p. 58.

18. Greg L. Bahnsen and Kenneth L. Gentry Jr, *House Divided*. . . , Tyler: Institute for Christian Economics, p. 169.

judgment at the end of the age. But the separated man was to follow as God in grace led. He is the depository of promise, and thus his faith was tested, not at the start only but continuously. The land to be shown in due time was as yet unknown, so as to cast him on simple-hearted confidence in God. He went out in subjection to God's promise, not knowing whither he went. God would show the next step when Abraham took the first. He did not ask, Whither? He trusted God implicitly. Thus his faith was unmixed with calculations of self, resting solely but fully on His word who loves and never deceives.

It was the wise and wonderful working by ways suited to His glory in a world departed from God into idolatry, where present ease, wealth, honor, power, are the bribes of the enemy for all misled by him. Faith gives up all at God's word with not one thing gained for the moment, but the certainty of His guidance and ultimate blessing in the richest manner.<sup>19</sup>

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19. W. Kelly, *Hebrews*, pp. 207,208.

## Chapter 5.3

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### *Galatians 3:10-18:*

#### *The Law OR Faith*

##### *Gal. 3:10-12: the Law Curses and Cannot Justify*

For as many as are on the principle of works of law are under curse. for it is written, Cursed is every one who does not continue in all things which [are] written in the book of the law to do them; but that by law no one is justified with God [is] evident, because The just shall live on the principle of faith; but the law is not on the principle of faith; but, He that shall have done these things shall live by them (Gal. 3:10-12).

You cannot add law to Abraham's faith; no, not even "the moral law." "The just shall live on the principle of faith; but the law is not on the principle of faith." Is Paul saying that "the *ceremonial* law" is not on the principle of faith -- so as to leave the Christian under "the *moral* law," *i.e.*, the ten<sup>20</sup> commandments? Why not bow to what the text says, namely, "the law" and "all things which [are] written in the book of the law."

Moreover, it is not said that one who breaks the law is cursed; but he who is on that principle before God. J. N. Darby wrote:

And remark more than this: not only is the blessing by faith, not by law, not on this principle, and the accomplishment by oneself or another of the law, but as many as are on this principle -- as many as stand on the ground of their obligation to keep the law -- are under the curse. "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." The works of the law are not bad works; they are right works, loving God and our neighbor, and not breaking the commandments which forbid sin. But they that are of the works of the law (that is, that are placed or place themselves under the obligation of the law, of doing these works) are under the curse. He does not say he who has broken the law, he who sins, he who has done evil, but he who is of the works of the law, who goes upon the principle of being under its obligation, and bound to

accomplish it, is under the curse.

Nor is there a hint of any one's keeping it for us, so that we should not be under the curse when we are under the law. All that are of the works of the law ARE under the curse; because, according to its declaration, everyone is so that has not kept it. And no man under it has kept it, for he is in flesh; and this is not subject to it nor can be. He must get off this ground to escape its curse. But this can be only by death. The Jew was under it, and all else would have been condemned as lawless had they not come under it then; but, for every one who believed of those who were, Christ took the curse on the cross. It is not pretended that He kept it for them, so that the curse was not needed for their breaking it, because another had kept it for them, for then He had not needed to bear its curse. No: the curse of its head remained there and was borne on the cross; and thus they were redeemed from it, and then, the whole system of God under law being closed and the middle wall of partition broken down, the blessing of Abraham (which was of faith) could flow forth on the Gentiles who had faith. It could not till then. While God maintained the obligation of the law as a dispensed system among men, the Gentile must have submitted to its obligation, while God maintained it. But the dispensation of law had now closed by the death of Christ, and the blessing of the promise by faith could flow forth to them who believed.<sup>21</sup>

The reader should read J. N. Darby's answer to his adversaries in *Collected Writings* 10:61-65 regarding the notion that Christ "kept the law for us, so that it should be imputed to us, I defy all my adversaries to show from Scripture" (p. 60).

Another wrote:

The quotation here is from Deut. 27 and is very striking. There Moses instructs the people that they were to set up and plaster great stones when they had gone over Jordan, and write upon them all the words of the law, setting them up in mount Ebal. There we get that six tribes, Simeon, etc., were to stand upon mount Gerizim to bless

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20. And then pervert the Saturday Sabbath into a Sunday Sabbath as advocates of putting Christians under "the moral law" do, so as to have 10 -- for only 9 would spoil their system.

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21. *Collected Writings* 21:300, 301.

the people, and six tribes upon mount Ebal to curse. The Levites were then to say with a loud voice unto all the men of Israel, "Cursed," etc. But where are the blessings? Not to be found in the chapter at all. Many have sought to get over the difficulty by blending chapter 28 with 27; but this is confusion. The following chapter proceeds on a different ground altogether, and speaks merely of governmental blessings and curses of a temporal character. The two portions are entirely distinct. Why then are the blessings from mount Gerizim not named? Because God well knew they would never be wanted. Persons under the law are necessarily under the curse, so complete is the ruin and depravity of flesh. . .

Moreover, law and faith cannot be blended, being entirely different principles. "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but the man that doeth them shall live in them" (vers. 11, 12). Here we are carried back to Habakkuk (chap. 2:4). The prophet in his sorrow over the ruin of His people, and the (to him) mysterious dealings of Jehovah in not hastening deliverance, was told that "the just shall live by his faith." The word is used three times in the New Testament, and each time for a different purpose. If Rom. 1 be consulted, it will be seen that the emphasis is on "just"; in Heb. 10 on the word "live"; in Gal. 3 on "faith." The law does not speak thus, but in a precisely opposite way -- the man that doeth shall live. How vain then to try and mix the two principles! and yet this is done from one end of Christendom to the other. It is the exception to find souls that are not under law in one way or another. So little has the Epistle to the Galatians been heeded! <sup>22</sup>

So, not only did the law pronounce the curse, on the one hand, but on the other hand the prophet brings before them that the just shall live by faith.

### *Gal. 3:13,14: Receiving Blessing Through Faith*

Christ has redeemed us out of the curse of the law, having become a curse for us, (for it is written, Cursed [is] every one hanged upon a tree,) that the blessing of Abraham might come to the nations in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (Gal. 3:14, 15).

#### **REDEEMED US**

Of whom is Paul speaking when he wrote "redeemed us"?

Notice carefully the "us." This is important in many of his Epistles. He and his Jewish fellow-believers had been under law, but had been brought out from hence by the Lord Jesus. The Galatians had never had to do with it, being Gentiles. Consequently they were not included in the "us." The same thing may be observed in chap. 4.

"Even as we, when we were children, were in bondage." This means Jewish believers. As to Gentiles, "when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods." This would not be true of Jews. Thus are both distinguished as to their former state. Look also at Col. 2:9, "blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." He does not include the Colossians in this statement, but shows the former condition of Jewish saints, and the deliverance through the work of Christ. <sup>23</sup>

The covenant of the law was made with Israel, not with Gentiles (*cf.* Rom. 2:12-16). Those under the law were under the curse of the law but in grace Christ bore the curse of the law that those under that curse might be redeemed out of the curse. The result is that the way is open, consequently, for the blessing of Abraham to come on all who believe.

We noted in the quotation above that "us" means the Jewish believers. The distinction between Jewish and Gentile believers is often made in this epistle. It is a plain fact. "Christ has redeemed us out of the curse of the law" was a necessary step in the ways of God in connection with grace going out to the nations. God is a God of order. But there are other aspects to the work of Christ such as in 2 Cor. 5:21, which speaks of sin as a root principle within us from which spring the acts, sins, of which 1 Peter 2:24 speaks. Christ was made sin for Gentile as well as Jew.

#### **THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM**

The blessing of Abraham is "the blessing of sovereign grace through faith." It is through our Lord Jesus Christ that the blessing of sovereign grace, through faith, came to the nations and this is the basis upon which we receive the promise of the Spirit. Both for Abraham and ourselves, blessing is apart from law. What Paul is demonstrating is the law -- not in OT times, nor for the Galatians.

#### **THE NATIONS**

A result of the work of Christ is that "the blessing of Abraham might come to the nations in Christ Jesus." In the millennium all the nations will be blessed in Abraham. Meanwhile, during the time of the heavenly parenthesis, there are those who trust in Christ ahead of the millennial time. We are pre-trusting in Him, i.e., ahead of that time:

. . . that we should be to the praise of his glory who have pre-trusted in the Christ (Eph. 1:12).

Those who have pre-trusted in Christ have "received the promise of the Spirit through faith."

#### **THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT**

Christ has died in order that we might receive the promise of the Spirit. Is it not obvious that the promise of the Spirit is

22. *The Bible Treasury, New Series* 2:216,217.

23. *The Bible Treasury, New Series* 2:217



received only after Christ's death? Is that not what the text plainly indicates? But the spiritual alchemy that turns the church into the spiritual Israel can also circumvent the thrust of this.

The book, *Dispensationalism Today, Yesterday, and Tomorrow*, Memphis: Footstool Publications, by Curtis I. Crenshaw and Grover E. Gunn III, 1989, is touted by the *Banner of Truth* magazine as: ". . . the best discussion of the theology of dispensationalism **so far written**." Listen to the character of this book and the proof that the OT saints were in the church:

In fact there is an argument that the dispensationalists use to prove that the church was not formed until the future. It was originally formulated by S. Lewis Johnson and runs like this: the church is formed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13); this Spirit baptism began at Pentecost (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4; 11:15-17), therefore the church began at Pentecost. The argument, as it stands, seems sound to me. The assumptions, though, are that the baptism was not retroactive and that Old Testament saints were saved apart from union with Christ, for Spirit baptism places one in union with Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). Mr. Gunn has adequately analyzed the union with Christ issue (A masterful job!). The other assumption is a false one. The baptism of the Spirit, like the death of Jesus, was retroactive. How do I know? Two reasons: Theologically, from the analogy of faith, we know there is no salvation apart from union with Christ. Therefore, all those who would be saved must have been in union with Him so that His death was effectual for them. And if they were in union with Him, by definition they were in the church (p. 42).

Let pass the erroneous statement that S. Lewis Johnson "originally formulated" that and come to their thesis:

1. "Spirit baptism places one in union with Christ (1 Cor. 12:13)";
2. "there is no salvation apart from union with Christ";
3. "Therefore, all those who would be saved must have been in union with Him so that His death was effectual for them";
4. "And if they were in union with Him, by definition they were in the church".

And that is a wonderful example of how theology works. #2 is bald-faced assertion, and nothing more.

I do not know what he means by the idea that the "Spirit baptism" was "retroactive." The meaning of his line of reasoning, however, leads to the result that all OT saints actually experienced "Spirit baptism":

1. OT saints, he says, "were in union with Him."
2. "Spirit baptism places one in union with Christ."

It follows from their assertions that OT saints received "Spirit baptism."

Well, these are among the methods how anti-dispensationalists place OT saints in the church. In truth, however, it exposes much ignorance of what Christianity really is, lowers its character, and Judaizes the church.

In Gal. 3, one of Paul's points is that the Spirit was not imparted, as Indweller of the saints, in connection with the law. It could not be for those under the law. We receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (Gal. 3:14). "But faith having come, we are no longer under a tutor" (Gal. 3:25). Faith, *as the ground of blessing, publicly declared*, came as a result of the finished work of Christ. The promise of the Spirit could not be received until after that work was completed. Now, this is clear from Gal. 3 alone. But Scripture makes this grand fact abundantly clear.

The Lord Jesus had promised His own that when He was gone He would send the Holy Spirit (John 16:7). Not only would He send the Spirit but He would ask the Father to give His own the Spirit (John 14:16) and the Father would send the Spirit in Christ's name (John 14:26). (Cf. Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 5). Thus the Spirit was promised both by Himself and the Father. The fulfillment of the promise of the Spirit awaited the glorification of Christ at the Father's right hand, as triumphant Man. It is as glorified Man that He became the Head of the body.

But this he said concerning the Spirit, which they that believed on him were about to receive; for [the] Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified (John 7:39).

. . . being assembled with [them], commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to await the promise of the Father, which [said he] ye have heard of me. For John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit after now not many days (Acts 1:4, 5).

Having therefore been exalted by the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which ye behold and hear (Acts 2:33).

The glorified Man received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit and then that glorified Man poured out the Spirit upon those who had believed (John 7:39) on Him. Thus the Spirit came from both of Them. Christ Himself is thus the Baptizer (Matt. 3:11) and the Holy Spirit thus poured out by Him united the saints in one body (1 Cor. 12:13) and joined them to the Man in the glory (1 Cor. 6:17). This is how and when "the assembly, which is His body" (Eph. 1:22, 23) was formed.

Of course, before Pentecost, those who had believed on Him did not have the Spirit, as Scripture states (John 7:39). It is by the indwelling of the Spirit that we are in union with Christ, the Head. Those who had believed on Him were born of God but that is not the same as union with Christ, theology notwithstanding.

Moreover, the formation of the body is as a once-for-all

act. The body is not begun again over and over. We today are joined to a body formed at Pentecost and existent ever since. The baptism in the power of the Spirit into one body (1 Cor. 12:13) took place once. We today are joined to a body already formed and existent. How?

. . . that we should be to [the] praise of his glory who have pre-trusted in the Christ: in whom *ye* also [have trusted], having heard the word of the truth, the glad tidings of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, ye have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. 1:12, 13).

We are sealed with that same “Holy Spirit of promise.” We receive the Spirit as seal and are thus identified with what was wrought at Pentecost. The baptism in the power of the Spirit into one body was a corporate action, never to be repeated, as the body is never formed over again. Individual “Spirit baptisms” is a false notion. No one is baptized *into* the Spirit. Christ was the baptizer of His own and He baptized them into one body by the mighty power of the Spirit sent down to join those who had believed on Him into one body and to Himself as Head in heaven. There could be no body until the Man was in glory. All of this is entirely apart from law.

## Chapter 5.4

### *Galatians 3:15-18: The Law Cannot Set Aside or Supplement Promise*

Brethren, (I speak according to man,) even man's confirmed covenant no one sets aside, or adds other dispositions to. But to Abraham were the promises addressed, and to his seed: he does not say, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed; which is Christ. Now I say this, A covenant confirmed beforehand

by God, the law, which took place four hundred and thirty years after, does not annul, so as to make the promise of no effect. For if the inheritance [be] on the principle of law, [it is] no longer on the principle of promise; but God gave it in grace to Abraham by promise (Gal. 3:15-18).

#### *No Conditions Can Be Added To a Confirmed Covenant*

Brethren, (I speak according to man,) even man's confirmed covenant no one sets aside, or adds other dispositions to (Gal. 3:15).

In human affairs the adding of dispositions to an already confirmed covenant is not tolerated. One of the parties cannot later add conditions to a covenant previously agreed upon. The grand point is that the Law cannot in any way modify or add to the promises made to Abraham.

God had made promises to Abraham in Gen. 12. It was *confirmed* in Gen. 22; *i.e.*, regarding those promises concerning *the nations*.

#### *Promises to Abraham And His Seed (v. 16)*

But to Abraham were the promises addressed, and to his seed: he does not say, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one. And to thy seed; which is Christ (Gal. 3:16).

Promises were addressed to Abraham in Gen. 12:2, 3, 7; 13:13-17; 15:18-21; 17:1-14; 22:17,18. Some of these promises apply to the natural seed of Abraham, *i.e.*, Israel. But the promise to Israel is not what forms the subject matters of Gal. 3. J. N. Darby wrote:

These "promises" were made after sin came in, but before the giving of the law. Sin came in before ever "promise" was heard of. When Adam had failed in the garden, before anything was said to Adam of the foulest sin in his

mind, after he had said, "the woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (he had not only committed sin in disobeying God's command, but he had dared to reproach God); before anything was said of that, as soon as the evil was traced up to its source, God, in pronouncing sentence on the serpent as the author of it, gave "promise." But He did not give "promise" to Adam in sin -- to man in that condition (now the law was given to man in that condition), but in the last Adam. Before there was the slightest dealing on the ground of responsibility, "promise" was made in Christ, as the Second Man, the "Seed of the woman." Not a word of it was spoken to Adam personally, yet it was that on which his soul might rest, on which faith could lay hold.

Well, before the Second Man came, before He was revealed, the law was given to shew the effect and consequence of man's being under responsibility. "The law was added [came in by the bye] because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman [the seed came], made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

But there was another step, then, which was this: the promises made to Abraham and his seed (chap. 3:17) were confirmed of God in Christ. When Isaac had been offered up (in figure) and raised (in figure), God spake and said, "By myself have I sworn, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee... and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," Gen. 22. Now Isaac was not the true "seed," Christ, the true

"seed," was typified by Isaac, in whose offering the promise was confirmed. "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ," v. 16. The promises are settled on Isaac, after (in figure) he had died and risen again from the dead; and that is what the grace of God has done for us in Christ. Christ came here and lived, accomplishing in the face of Satan, all that the spiritual man could offer to God in his life. But "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Though Christ Himself, as man, might have had the promises, yet He could not have taken up anything with us except through death and resurrection. He could not have had connection with man in the old Adam. Well, He dies, and (having accomplished the work of redemption, done everything, set aside the consequences of responsibility for man, as risen from the dead, in the power of a new and endless life -- "the seed" to whom the promises were made) He takes up these promises.<sup>24</sup>

W. Kelly remarked,

I must decidedly adhere to the conviction that "Christ" is here to be understood personally, and not mystically. I am aware that the difficulty of catching the point of the Apostle's argument has driven not a few (from Beza down to our friends) into the mystical hypothesis; but, in my judgment, without good reason. For the doctrine of the Church's unity, the head and members being together viewed as constituting one body, naturally accounts for the exceptional use of "Christ" in this way in 1 Cor. 12:12, whereas no such thing applies here. Again, there is the grave objection that, according to the hypothesis itself, Abraham is one of his seed (that is, Christ mystical, the body of true believers), whereas the text itself distinguishes him from his seed. I am satisfied accordingly that there is no reason for taking Christ here mystically, as in 1 Cor. 12 and that it even involves self-contradiction.

What is wanted then is more light, taking the word "Christ" in its usual historical application. The Apostle, I think, alludes to Gen. 12:3, "in thee (Abram) shall all families of the earth be blessed," and to Gen. 22:18, "in thy seed (Isaac) shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." The order of the Greek ought to have been better observed in English: "Now to Abraham were the promises made, and to his seed," would be more exact. He is speaking not of the mere Jewish promises, but of those which insured Gentile blessing. Now these were made to Abram in Gen. 12 and to his seed in Gen. 22 after he had been typically offered up, and received from the dead in a figure. The Jewish blessing, as to the land, power over enemies, &c. is to an expressly numerous seed, as the stars and the sand; whereas not a word of a multiplied seed appears where all the nations of the earth are to be blessed. On this absence of reference to others than Isaac, the one seed of Abraham and type of the Lord sacrificed and risen, does the Apostle argue here, as in

Heb. 7, upon the absence of genealogy or succession in Melchizedek. In other words, the Spirit, in recording the promises of Gentile blessing, carefully restricted them to Abraham and to his seed alone, though as expressly he connected the Jewish blessing with seed as many as the stars and the sand; in the former, his eye was really on Christ, the true and sole seed of promise, save as afterwards by grace associating others, and even Gentiles, with Him.<sup>25</sup>

There is something to add yet regarding the promises and Isaac figuratively dying and rising. W. Kelly remarked:

The apostle draws attention to the fact, that this early oracle does not connect the numerous seed when God spoke of blessing the Gentiles, but the one seed, Isaac, as the type of Christ, and of Christ after He had been under death and had passed into resurrection. The importance of this is immense; because, while Christ was upon the earth, He was under law Himself. Risen from the dead, what had He to do with law? The law does not touch a man when he is dead. The apostle argues that the Christian belongs to Christ in resurrection. When any one is baptized into Christ, this is what He confesses: -- I belong to Christ dead and risen, taken out of my old place of Jew or Gentile. The Jews had to do with a Messiah who was to reign over them on the earth; the Gentiles in that day shall be the tail and not the head, and kings shall be the nursing fathers of Zion, and queens the nursing mothers, bowing down to the earth and licking up the dust of Israel's feet; but we, Christians, begin with Christ's death and resurrection. All our blessing is in Christ raised from the dead.<sup>26</sup>

The promise of blessing to Abraham and his seed Christ (Gen. 12:3; 22:18; Gal. 3:16,17,18) concerning Gentile blessing are millennial. Meanwhile however we are blessed with Abraham on the principle of faith through which blessing accrues in all ages. There is an application of this promise now for we are believing Gentiles just as well as believing Gentiles of the millennium.

### *The Law Can Not Annul The Promise (Gal. 3:17)*

Now I say this, A covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which took place four hundred and thirty years after, does not annul, so as to make the promise of no effect (Gal. 3:17).

The law cannot annul the promise. This promise is that of the inheritance (v. 18) which God gave to Abraham in grace (and therefore unconditionally) by promise (v. 18). The promise was made to the Seed (v. 19) who is Christ (v. 16). What the apostle is impressing on the Galatians, who were being imposed upon by law teachers, is that the promise of Gentile

24. "Man's Responsibility and God's Promises: Gal.3," *Collected Writings* 12:234,235.

25. *The Christian Annotator* 3:290.

26. *Lectures on the Epistle of Paul . . . to the Galatians*, London: Morrish, n. d., p.74.

blessing (Gen. 12:36; 22:18) was *unconditional*. IT WAS A PROMISE! And furthermore, all is secured in the one Seed, Christ. The giving of the law was separated in time so greatly as to leave no doubt that it had no connection with the Abrahamic promises in such a way as it could add conditions to what evidently is unconditional. It is impossible that the law can modify the promises in any way. The law was a conditional covenant and cannot modify an unconditional covenant. Besides, v. 15 shows that the idea of subsequently adding terms to a confirmed covenant is intolerable. C. I. Crenshaw and G. E. Gunn III wrote:

Exegetically, Gal. 3:17 says: “the law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God *in Christ* so as to nullify the promise.” (the words “in Christ” are in the majority text of the Greek New Testament). The covenant God made was the promise of salvation in the Messiah, and Abraham was a partaker of this promise. For Abraham to be a partaker of the promise and not to be in Christ, is ludicrous, for Paul says, referring to Jews as well as Gentiles, “you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). And the Jew Paul is using for his example is Abraham!<sup>27</sup>

The words *in Christ* are in the KJV. *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*<sup>28</sup> reads, for Gal. 3:17, εἰς Χριστόν (*unto Christ or to Christ*) as does the Textus Receptus. Besides that weakening of the argument based on *in*, we do not accept that εἰς Χριστόν is part of the original text. Moreover, these writers have no Scripture for the claim that Abraham was in Christ, but they do have their misguided reasoning for it. Because Jew and Gentile are, since the cross and the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost, all one in Christ Jesus, does it follow that OT saints were also? Such reasoning is as pitiful as the assertion that Paul used Abraham as an example of being in Christ. Further, Christ,

Who is God *and* man in one Person, was not Christ until the incarnation. No one could be “in Christ” before the incarnation and until the work was accomplished and that Man was seated in the glory of God. “In Christ” there is neither Jew nor Greek (Gal. 3:28). In the OT the distinction was not only kept up, but enforced. But now:

For *he* is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of enclosure, having annulled the enmity in his flesh, the law of commandments in ordinances, that he might form the two in himself into one new man . . . (Eph. 2:14, 15).

It is a *new* man, because it did not exist before. It is “*in himself*.” What is the character of a theological system that overthrows the basic facts of Christianity as distinct from Judaism? Had such bowed their reasonings down before Rom. 16:25, 26, Col. 1:26 and Eph. 3:9, they would have been helped.

### *On What Principle Do We Obtain the Inheritance (Gal. 3:18)?*

For if the inheritance [be] on the principle of law, [it is] no longer on the principle of promise; but God gave it in grace to Abraham by promise (Gal. 3:18).

If the inheritance is on the principle of law then it is not on the principle of promise. What is the law about? It requires something from man, *by man*. It is *conditional*. Now is it not obvious that law and promise are here contrasted? Surely they are contrasted, and the contrast is this: that one is conditional and the other is unconditional. If the inheritance would be obtained on the basis of law, then it would be earned and not given in grace; “but God gave it in grace to Abraham by promise.”

27. *Dispensationalism Today, yesterday and Tomorrow*, Memphis: Footstool Publications, 1989, p. 42.

28. Nashville: Nelson, 1982, by Zane Hodges and Arthur Farstad, p. 575.



## Chapter 5.5

### *Galatians 3:19-25: Under the Law?*

#### *Galatians 3:19-22: Function of the Law*

##### WHY THEN THE LAW (V. 19)?

Why then the law? It was added for the sake of transgressions, until the seed came to whom the promise was made, ordained through angels <sup>29</sup> in [the] hand of a mediator (Gal. 3:19).

The words “it was added” indicate that the law was not there before Moses, spite of theologians who claim Adam had the law. <sup>30</sup> Adam had *a* law. *The* law came by (was given by) Moses (John 1:17), not by God to Adam. The law was added to the course of trial of the first man.

But law came in, <sup>31</sup> in order that the offense might abound (Rom. 5:20).

The function of the law was to convict man of his total ruin. Scripture, referring to the law says:

For the letter kills, but the Spirit quickens. (But if the ministry of death, in letters, graven in stones . . . For if the ministry of condemnation . . . (2 Cor. 3:6-9).

The letter killing means the law, called here a ministry of death and condemnation.

Theology would also say that the law was given to restrain transgressions. <sup>32</sup> We just looked at two Scriptures which contradict that notion. Obviously, those who state such notions are ignorant of the character of the trial of the first man. J. N. Darby explained:

“The law was added, because of transgressions.” This is constantly cited as if it meant to restrain them. But it really means, I have not the least doubt, to introduce them -- thus convincing man of his perverse and wicked will. The law could not be added to restrain them, because there were none until it came; for where no law is, there is no

transgression. It was added to turn evil in man’s heart into transgression by positive commandment, and give the knowledge of sin to the easy conscience of man. It is important to distinguish between the law as a dispensed government of a single people, and law, the effect of law, on the human heart. The English Authorized Version will help us little as to this, though the great body of the Apostle’s argument is founded on the nature and effect of law on the human heart.

God’s intention then in law was as to spiritual things to bring in transgression and convict of sin -- man being already and hopelessly lost. As an outward dispensation for the Jews, it doubtless tended as a civil system to repress grosser evils: but then God was king of the country and people, and the people governed by it, and that in early times, emerging out of heathenism, before Christ came and was rejected. The Gentiles have nothing to say to it in this sense. It was a schoolmaster up to the time of Christ; then faith came and Judaism ceased. The only way a Gentile can be under law is as a principle of personal responsibility, in which he has to answer for himself, and which ground it is a ministry of death and condemnation (2 Cor. 3), the strength of sin, and useful only to bring guilt on his conscience, and the sense that he has no power to free himself, or any possibility of his being freed from the power of sin while on this ground.

It should be clear to the reader that there can be no transgression unless there is law to transgress. The giving of the law was a stage in the exposure of the total ruin of the first man, up until, and the consummation in, the crucifixion of Christ.

Before the giving of the law sin was in the world. It entered through Adam (Rom. 5:12). Sin was in the world between Adam and the giving of the law (Rom. 5:13). “But where no law is neither is there transgression” (Rom. 4:15). Adam had *a* law and transgressed that law. It is necessary to have law in order for transgression of law to exist. Between Adam and the giving of the law there was no transgression of *the* law. Yet, sin was there between Adam and the giving of the law. After the law was given, sin expressed itself in the form of transgression.

29. {See Acts 7:53 and Heb. 2:2. Cf. Psalm 68:17. Moses was the mediator (Deut. 5:5). The law was ordained through angels but that does not mean they were mediators. See *The Bible Treasury* 2:159.}

30. See *Collected Writings* 10:149 for why that idea was invented. See also 10:99, 100 and *Notes and Comments* 5:7.

31. See *Collected Writings* 10:4.

32. I was surprised and sorry to find this taught in the Dallas Theological Seminary’s *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Wheaton: Victor Books, p. 599 (1983).

33. *Collected Writings* 13:385.

Sin is not the transgression of the law.<sup>34</sup>

Sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4).

Lawlessness, acting without reference to the will of the Creator, indifference to it, was in the world from Adam to Moses. The law brought it out in the form of transgression of positive prohibition.

Now, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Thus was told out the love and grace of God as well as the righteous demands of His justice. When all of man's resources were exhausted, God showed His resources. He fell back upon His grace and provided the Lamb for a burnt offering and was completely satisfied and vindicated concerning the question of sin. Then could He come out in the fullness of His grace to the sinner and be just in justifying him. (Yea, then the mystery, the secret kept from ages and generations (Rom. 16:25, 26) was unfolded.) But the law must come between the promise and the fulfillment of the promise that man might learn on what basis he is blessed. I should add that we do not have the fulfillment of the promise now. That fulfillment is millennial, but there is an application meanwhile because we are Christ's. We are heirs of the promise, but as we have already seen, there is much beyond that which we have meanwhile as members of the body of Christ.

Another wrote:

It [the law] was not given till more than four centuries after the promise to Abraham (Gal. 3:17). Abraham then was never under it, nor did God ever put Gentiles under it (Rom. 2:14; Gal. 4:3-5), as the council at Jerusalem distinctly owned (Acts 15:14-21). Wherefore then serveth it? "It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made" (Gal. 3:19). It "entered that the offence might abound" (Rom. 5:20). It has not its application to righteous people, but to lawless, etc. (1 Tim. 1:9, 10). It could not give life, so righteousness could not come by it (Gal. 3:21), and "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse" (Gal. 3:10), and the righteousness which is of the law is clean contrary to that which is of faith (Rom. 10:5-10). Further, it has dominion over a man only as long as he liveth, and those once under it as Jews, were, if Christians, dead to it by the body of Christ, to be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead to bring forth fruit unto God (Rom. 7:4).<sup>35</sup>

The function of the law is here traced by J. N. Darby:

The law was added because of transgressions till the Seed should come and the promises be made good. To Him they were confirmed, and if we are His, consequent on the work of redemption, we are heirs according to promise; but the inheritance is not of law at all, it is of promise in contrast with law, which cannot affect the unconditional

and confirmed promise. But it will be said that, though no formal law was given, the law must be an enactment of it, the authority of the lawgiver intervening. That the contents of the law were holy, and just, and good, is nothing to the purpose; that the natural conscience acquired by the fall saw many things contained in it to be right, is true; but to have a transgression and a law there must be a formally given commandment. Since the law given to Adam, God never gave a law till Sinai came, unless we except the condition of not eating blood to Noah. It was *never* given to have righteousness by; for man was a lost sinner before it was given, and Christ's death needed. It was given to make the offence abound, to bring in the conviction of the helpless condition of sin man was in more definitely and distinctly. It was never meant to be the means of having righteousness, it came too late for it: if a law had been given which had given life, then man in that life had wrought the righteousness, and righteousness would have been by the law. But such was not God's plan, and He took care to show it, and gave the promise on which the blessing depended before any law at all, confirming it to the Seed -- Christ; and then, when He had established the blessing otherwise than by law, He gave the law.

Now if I am to take the use and application of law, I must take it as God used and applied it, and that was not to produce righteousness but to make the offence abound, having previously given the blessing in a way which excluded any bringing in of the law for it. Justification and righteousness then are declared to be in another way than by law, and by a way with which it is impossible to connect the law, because nothing can be added to the promise confirmed to Christ. Adding the law, setting it up again, when we have gone to Christ, the promised Seed, for justification, is frustrating the grace of God; for if righteousness came by law, Christ is dead in vain. But if we are righteous by Christ's keeping the law, it does come by the law, and Christ's death is in vain. The inheritance is not by law, says the apostle; righteousness is not by law: the doctrine which teaches that it is, is a subversion and denial of Christianity as Paul taught it. The apostle's reasoning is careful and reiterated on this point; it is his great thesis as to justification. That is, his great thesis as to justification is to deny and denounce what my adversaries insist on, and in the chapter which follows the one to which I have alluded the apostle carefully shows that the two principles of promise and law cannot go together, that the scripture declares that the bondwoman and her seed must be cast out.

What does he say in the Romans? "For the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith"; that is, the righteousness of faith is not by law at all. "For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of none effect." Yet we are told it must be by law and so only, and Christ's keeping it; that is, righteousness is in a work done according to our responsibility in flesh, and accomplished before any redemption is wrought by

34. See *Collected Writings* 10:98,155,159 and 24,60,150 and *Notes and Comments* 4:46,65. the mistranslation is "an abominable error," *Notes and Comments* 5:35.

35. *The Bible Witness and Review* 3:317.



blood; whereas we are all called to reckon ourselves wholly dead as regards that life, yea, told we are dead, and so justified or freed from sin, and alive now to God as risen in Christ, taught not even to know Christ after the flesh. And what consequently am I called upon to believe in order to righteousness being imputed to me? On Him who raised up Christ from the dead, who was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification. I am not called upon, the law being in question, to believe He kept it for me that I might have righteousness imputed to me; I am told the promise does *not* come in that way, but to believe that He was delivered for my offenses and raised again for my justification. It is to a Christ raised from the dead I am called to look. It is not to His keeping the law that God teaches me to look for my justification. I am taught that my righteousness does not come by law or that His death is vain.

If I go a step farther, I find not only that Christ died for me and rose again, but I am dead and risen with Him so as to have no existence in relationship to that to which law applied. Law applied to a man alive; but I have died. I am become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that I might be to another, to Him who is raised from the dead. "When we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members; but now we are delivered from the law, having died in that in which we were held." The law has power over a man as long as he lives, but our old man is crucified with Christ: the whole footing we are on now, not in the life in which we are born of Adam, to which as long as it lived law could apply, but created again in Him who is raised from the dead, passed out of the region to which law applies, not by enfeebling it, but by dying as to the nature and state to which it applies and to sin at the same time, and being a new creature, accepted in the Beloved and belonging to another, so that we cannot live to the old, nor admit the claim of law over us, and so be to another while we are to Christ.

If we turn to the Ephesians, where the subject of our place in Christ is fully viewed, we find man, Jew or Gentile, viewed as dead in trespasses and sins, and Christ Himself as Head. God's power raises Him up and gives Him to be the Head of the body; we, by the very same power, when dead in trespasses and sins, have been quickened together with Him, and raised up together -- Jew or Gentile, under law or without law, near or far off, alike children of wrath -- and made to sit together in heavenly places in Him. Under law? Surely not; but brought out wholly from the place, state, and condition we were in before, were it under law or lawless, by the power of the new creation, in union with Christ as sitting at God's right hand. It is not a making good the duties of the old state or creation, but holding all as dead and ruined in it, and forming a new, which has its duties -- good works which God has afore prepared. We were predestinated, the whole place and glory too, before the world, and the works afore prepared as suited to the new place, even to be "imitators of God as dear children," and not, as Paul says, to build again the old thing out of which we have been delivered.

This alone gives a just estimate of what Christianity is. I do not say that every truly converted person has laid hold of this. A man may be a Christian and only just know that he is forgiven -- blessed knowledge too. But the doctrine I oppose denies the truth I am speaking of, builds up again that out of which we are delivered, makes Christ a restorer of the old man, not the beginning to us of the new in the state into which He is entered as risen. The making Christ a keeper of the law for us as being under it is destroying the very truth and nature of Christianity as scripture teaches it. Was then the breach of the law by those under it held to be of no account and immaterial? In no wise. Christ took its curse so as to maintain all its authority in the highest way, but not to put Jews back, and Gentiles for the first time under it; but, having risen after having died as bearing the curse, to introduce both into a wholly new place founded on the power of divine life in resurrection, where neither Adam innocent nor Adam fallen, nor the Jew under law nor the lawless heathen, ever were, one more than the other, different as their states might be. Taken even in their highest character, the duties of man as man are not the manifestation of God; and this last is what we are called on to follow and imitate. Christ was perfect as come in the flesh, and born under the law; but by redemption He has placed us on a new ground, where we are not in the flesh at all nor put under the law. We are sons in the power of resurrection, not servants. Christ has perfectly glorified God as regards the old position, both in His own walk and in bearing the curse due to our failure in it; but He has not put us into it and met our failures in it as now under law by keeping the law, but delivered us out of it by redemption, and given us a part with Himself in the new place into which He is entered, and no other.

People make this great mistake, that because the moral law is in itself good and perfectly holy, therefore man is necessarily and always under it. This is not so. It was not the case at the beginning: men were distinctly placed under promise as contrasted with law, and the law's use and place is distinctly stated in scripture. Man was under a law when innocent, a specific law which only tested obedience, and required no personal knowledge of right and wrong. He failed and became a sinner. To give him a law then as a way of righteousness and life would be only condemnation and death.

But God showed that He did not mean putting man under law to be the way of righteousness. His order of dealing was this: an absolute unconditional promise, to which the blessing was attached, and which was irrevocable and unchangeable, was given. The question of righteousness was not raised by it. God promised and of course would give the blessing as promised. This promise was confirmed to the Seed -- Christ; and, if we look closer into the figure, confirmed to Him after being offered in sacrifice and raised. However, it was confirmed to the Seed, that is, to Christ. After this the law is added, enters, but cannot change the promise. It raised the question of righteousness, and put it on man's accomplishment to shew that he could not make it out, and to the Seed came, to whom the promise was made.

The administration of law, its use with man, was special and occasional. Christ, the seed, was to be life and righteousness, and the One through whom the Spirit was to be received, not the law. But He comes in connection with man's position in flesh. Though He knew no sin, He was in the likeness of sinful flesh, "born of the seed of David according to the flesh" -- *γενόμενος* of a woman; *γενόμενος* under the law. This was man's and Israel's place as a sinner; Christ's place sinless, and in a sinless way. He glorified God in it, as man had dishonored Him. But He works redemption and takes a new place, taking believers out of the old, so that now we say "when we were in the flesh," "ye are not in the flesh." Promise confirmed to the Seed; law till the Seed came; the Seed come; the time of the law closed, and the redemption of him who was under it valid for every believer, who thereon receives the Spirit: such is the divine order of God's dealings. He who puts us under law, or makes law so universal as to hinder promise being first (when man was a sinner and law only brought in for important purposes by the by), upsets the revealed order and principle of all God's dealings with man.<sup>36</sup>

#### A MEDIATOR

But a mediator is not of one, but God is one (Gal. 3:20).

J. N. Darby pointed out:

This is on the ground of the contrast between promise and law. When the law was given, there was a mediator needed, because there are two parties, God and the people to whom the law is given. The stability of promise depends on the faithfulness of One: there is no need of two. Under law, God does not reveal Himself. He reveals what He requires of man, but there is no love and no grace in love. The mediator Moses reported the words of God to the people. The thought in this verse, "A mediator is not of one, but God is one," is not about Christ, the Mediator, as in 1 Timothy 2, but rather the abstract notion, that if you have a mediator you must have two parties; whilst, by contrast, a promise is given from one. God giving promise and Christ receiving it are one -- God is one. The church, as such, was never the subject of promise. It was hidden from ages and generations, and revealed now. That which makes obscurity in the passage is that the conclusion is not drawn, though the premises are laid down.<sup>37</sup>

Thus, the promises are unconditional -- there was only one party, God, sovereign promising blessing, whereas the law was a conditional covenant. But this brings up the subject of whether or not if a covenant has a mediator, is it *ipso facto* a conditional covenant. It may be; or, it may not be.

Covenant in scripture is different from covenant as understood by us in common language. It is the form of dealing God takes with man, not an agreement between God and man, or man and God. The church gets all the spiritual blessings of the new covenant, because in Christ. Thus we have all the moral blessing of the new covenant, in the Spirit, though not in the letter. "The blood of the everlasting covenant" in Hebrews 13 is that which is finished and done with, and will go all the way through, and is available for all. The blood will never lose its value. It is the groundwork of all God's dealings with man in all ages.<sup>38</sup>

#### THE LAW OR PROMISE (vv. 21, 22)?

[Is] then the law against the promises of God? Far be the thought. For if a law had been given able to quicken, then indeed righteousness were on the principle of law; but the scripture has shut up all things under sin, that the promise, on the principle of faith of Jesus Christ, should be given to those that believe (Gal. 3:21, 22).

In view of what Paul had written regarding the function of the law, namely, that it was added for the sake of transgressions (i.e., to bring sin out in the form of transgressions), the question may be raised: Is the law against the promises of God? No. The Scripture, using the law, shut up all things under sin in order that blessing would come on the principle of faith, not of works. The law cannot quicken, cannot give divine life. Righteousness cannot be obtained on the principle of law.<sup>39</sup> It is obtained on the principle of faith:

For [it was] not by law that the promise was to Abraham, or to his seed, that he should be heir of [the] world, but by righteousness of faith. For if they which [are] of law be heirs, faith is made vain, and the promise made of no effect. For law works wrath; but where no law is neither [is there] transgression. Therefore [it is] on the principle of faith, that [it might be] according to grace, in order to the promise being sure to all the seed, not to that only which [is] of the law, but to that also which [is] of Abraham's faith, who is father of all (Rom. 4:13-16).

36. *Collected Writings* 10:63-67.

37. "Thoughts on Galatians 3," *Collected Writings* 34:401. See also *The Bible Treasury*, New Series, 3:48. This note appeared in *The Christian Annotator* 1:74:

Galatians 3:20, p. 7. -- I refer your readers to a very scholastic writer in the "Vindication of Protestant Principles," Parker, 1847. Herrman assures us there were 304 interpretations of these words; and in 1821, Weigund had examined 243 of them. Thomas Myers.

38. *Collected Writings* 34:402.

39. "Christ's righteous law keeping" is not put to our account. We are made the *righteousness of God* in Him (2 Cor. 5:21). They are not the same thing.

### *Galatians 3:23-25: The Law as a Tutor Up to Christ (vv. 23-25)*

But before faith came, we <sup>40</sup> were guarded under law, shut up to <sup>41</sup> faith [which was] about to be revealed. So that the law has been our tutor up to Christ, that we might be justified on the principle of faith. But, faith, having come, we are no longer under a tutor; for ye are all God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:23-25).

These verses are not meant to imply that there was no faith previous to when Christ was here.

By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before [his] translation he has the testimony that he had pleased God. But without faith [it is] impossible to please [him] (Heb. 11:5, 6).

"Before faith came" means faith as God's declared ground of blessing in finished work of Christ. Compare John 1:17 and Gal. 4:1-3.

Christ is the Second Man (1 Cor. 15:47). The law was for the first man in his Adamic standing and responsibility. The first man, in the persons of the Jews, was under the tutor, the law. The *lesson* that the tutor was teaching is resented by the first man, the man who does not want to believe that no good thing dwells in him.

"We were guarded under law" does not mean under 'the moral law.' It does not say "under *the* law," but "under law," referring to the character or principle of it, before faith came. The guarding indicates a hedging in, no liberty (Cf. Gal. 4:9 and 5:1, "bondage"). <sup>42</sup> The regenerate man of Rom. 7 who was under law in his conscience finally realized he was brought "into captivity to the law of sin" (Rom. 7:23) and cried out for deliverance (Rom. 7:24). In Christ he was set free (Rom. 8:2; cf. 2 Cor. 3:17).

Note that "the law has been our tutor up to Christ"; not, to bring us to Christ. It is a statement of the end of the tutor's time. It was not the law's function to bring the Jews to Christ. We have previously considered the function of the law. Justification is not possible through law but is on the principle of faith. And by faith in Christ Jesus "ye are all God's sons." Notice the change from "we" (we Jews) to "ye all." Ye Galatians, ye all are God's sons, as is the reader of these lines, apart from the tutor. Ye sons of God, ye are not under the tutor; no, not even as the rule of life. The tutor is

not the rule of life. The same book that shows that the faith that has come and displaced the tutor also tells us what our rule is: "the law of the Christ" (Gal. 5:2):

But far be it from me to boast save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom [the] world is crucified to me, and I to the world. For [in Christ Jesus] neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision; but new creation. And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace upon them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God (Gal. 5:14-16).

Regarding the law, it is asserted by anti-dispensationalists that:

Its purpose was to bring us to Christ (Gal. 3:24). <sup>43</sup>

Without it, we would never have arrived at Christ. <sup>44</sup>

In view of the fact that Gentiles never were under the law (Rom. 2:14; Gal. 4:3-5; Acts 15:14-21) these remarks betray grave ignorance of the ways of God and the testing of the first man.

Theology says that the law is a transcript of the mind of God. J. N. Darby well said that the law was a transcript of what the first man ought to be. <sup>45</sup> Christ's walk was far above the law, which law did not require sacrifice for sinners or the bearing of a sinners' curse; and more, the law was not the manifestation of the Father, etc., etc. <sup>46</sup> The law was a tutor up to Christ. It was not two tutors. There was only one tutor. Anti-dispensationalists divide the law into two parts, the ceremonial (which is supposed to be done away) and the moral law (the 10 commandments - which are for the Christian as his rule of life). However, it is clear that there is not a ceremonial tutor and a moral tutor so that the ceremonial tutor was up to Christ and then is gone, but the moral tutor continues on and tutors Christians now. Is not the anti-dispensational scheme a two tutor scheme? We are not under a tutor:

But faith having come, we are no longer under a tutor; for ye are all God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:25).

As those "in Christ," in the new creation (Gal. 6:15) we walk by the "rule" of the new creation (Gal. 6:16), "the law of the Christ" (Gal. 6:3). Grace and truth came by Him (John 1:17). The Scripture of Truth teaches us the *truth* that we are taught by *grace*, not by a supposed moral tutor:

. . . that they may adorn the teaching which [is] of our Savior God in all things. For the grace of God which carries with it salvation for all men has appeared, teaching us that, having denied impiety and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, and justly, and piously in the present course of things, awaiting the blessed hope and

40. {"We" means we Jews. The Gentiles were not under the law.}

41. {The translation of "up to" is discussed by W. Kelly in *The Bible Treasury* 19:380. The passage does not teach that the law brings us to Christ. It was a tutor up to Christ. After that it is no longer such.}

42. "Obedience the Saints Liberty" is a paper written by J. N. Darby, *Collected Writings* 28:103-107. Christian liberty is freedom to do the will of God in the power of the Holy Spirit by those having the seed of God (1 John 3:9).

43. *The Wesleyan Bible Commentary* 5:348.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 349.

45. *Collected Writings* 7:285; see also 10:16 and *Notes and Comments* 5:7, 30, 65, 67.

46. See J. N. Darby, *Notes and Comments* 5:38.

appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all lawlessness, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous for good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise thee (Titus 2:10-15).

Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17). We believe that grace teaches us (Titus 2:10-15). We are sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal 4:1-7). Such are not looked at as in their minority, under a tutor, but as in their majority, brought into sonship, walking according to “the law of the Christ” (Gal. 6:2), the rule of the new creation (Gal. 6:15,16) of which Christ is the Head. For so believing what the Scripture **states**, those who in effect divide the tutor into two tutors (ceremonial and moral) and place the Christian under the moral tutor (the moral law) label us antinomians. Now, if that charge is false, where does that leave those who say so?

## Chapter 5.6

### *Galatians 3:26-29: All One in Christ Jesus*

#### *Galatians 3:26-29*

For ye, as many as have been baptized unto Christ, have put on Christ. There is no Jew nor Greek; there is no bondman nor freeman; there is no male and female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus: but if ye [are] of Christ, then ye are Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise (Gal. 3:26-29).

The connection of baptism <sup>47</sup> with what has been before us in Gal. 3 is that baptism means death:

Are you ignorant that we, as many as have been baptized unto Christ Jesus, have been baptized unto his death (Rom. 6:3).

The law had to do with the first man, man in his Adamic standing and responsibility. In the death of Christ the first man is judged and ended. Hence Paul could write to the Galatians, who were being influenced by representatives of the tutor (the law):

For *I*, through law, have died to law, that I may live to God. I am crucified with Christ, and no longer live, *I*, but Christ lives in me; but [in] that I now live in flesh, I live by faith, the [faith] of the Son of God, who has loved me and given himself for me (Gal. 2:21, 22).

The law did not die, but the Christian is dead and the law does not apply to him. See also Gal. 3:1; 5:24 and 6:14 where Paul brings crucifixion before them. He did so with the carnal Corinthians also because they were indulging the flesh; but the Galatians were going to perfect the flesh with the law. The first man has been set aside in the crucifixion.

. . . knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with [him], that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin. For he that has died is justified from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him, knowing that Christ having been raised up from among [the] dead dies no more: death has dominion over him no more. For in that he has died, he has died to sin once for all; but in that

he lives, he lives to God. So also ye, reckon yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body to obey its lusts. Neither yield your members instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but yield yourselves to God as alive from among [the] dead, and your members instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over *you*, for ye are not under law but under grace (Rom. 6:6-14).

Gal. 3:26 refers to water baptism. Whenever the baptism in the Spirit is meant the Scripture *says* so. The baptism in the Spirit formed the body of Christ and was a once-for-all thing.

J. N. Darby somewhere remarked:

As to 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13, it is aorist . . . and therefore says nothing of continuity. . . .<sup>48</sup>

The first point is that the Galatians did not experience the baptism in the Spirit, which only took place at Pentecost, nor did the Romans. Water baptism is *unto* (*eis*) Christ's death (Rom. 6) identification with His death. In Gal. 3:27 baptism is *unto* (*eis*) Christ. This does not mean *into* Christ <sup>49</sup> any more than the Israelites were baptized into Moses (1 Cor. 10:2).

The second point is that the baptism in the Spirit is *in* the Spirit; i.e., in the power of the Spirit. That does not mean *into* the Spirit. Christ is the Baptizer (Matt. 3:11). What He baptized *into* was into one body, in the power of one Spirit:

For also in [the power of] one Spirit *we* have all been baptized into one body (1 Cor. 12:13).

Water baptism means death; and we are identified with Christ in His death, in baptism. The law is not for a dead man. Of course, I do not mean that every one who is baptized has faith and is Christ's. We are considering the meaning and it signifies death in connection with the removal of the first man

47. See A. C. Brown, *Baptism*, available from Present Truth Publishers.

48. See chapter 1 in my book *The Word of God Versus the "Charismatic Renewal,"* obtainable from Present Truth Publishers.

49. The Acts 13 ultradispensationalist, E. R. Campbell, *Galatians*, Silverton: Canonview Press, 1981, p. 89 translates, "baptized into Christ." Wanting to get rid of water baptism for Christians, that is not surprising.

from before God. A baptized person ought not to be seeking anything from the law which addressed the first man -- who now has no standing before God. This is why baptism is introduced here in Gal. 3:26. In baptism we are not identified with the law again in some form -- such as "the rule of life." It was the rule of life for the first man.<sup>50</sup> "Have put on Christ" means identification with Him -- in an external way, of course, for vital, eternal connection with Him is only through faith. And that brings us to verse 28 which speaks of being "in Christ" a position that has nothing to do with circumcision, but rather new creation (Gal. 6:15).

The so-called Christian feminists seem to like Gal. 3:28 more than most of Scripture, to pit it against other scriptures. This is not the place to enquire into this<sup>51</sup> other than to note the caliber of the reasoning upon it. A young Christian of eleven years of age may say that since there is neither male nor female in Christ, then there is no child and parent in Christ; and then reason that a child does not have to submit to a parent!

The Second Man (1 Cor. 15:47) is the head of the new creation (and the beginning of it -- Rev. 3:14), begun with His rising from the dead. We are in this new creation as our position before God, in Christ. This does not set aside earthly relationships as parent and child, husband and wife, master and servant, etc. which have their proper conduct according to God's Word. Gal. 3:28 is not brought in here to support feminism but just the opposite. Feminism is just that very flesh which was judged by God on the cross. Feminism is that same flesh which was under trial under the law. A person who is in Christ ought to know that the flesh has been judged and set aside by Christ and judge its activity in oneself. Gal. 3:28 is brought in here so that we clearly see that our position before God, *in Christ*, is one with which the law has nothing to do. The new creation is a sphere of no distinctions in the flesh, neither national, social nor natural. Our acceptance in Christ does not depend on any distinction in the flesh. On the other hand, our bodies are not yet in the new creation.

We are Christ's. A baptized Christian "has put on Christ" and if he is "in Christ" then he is Abraham's seed. The point the apostle has been making is that blessing is entirely apart from the law. We are one with Christ, the Seed, in Whom all the promises of God are yea and amen (2

Cor. 1:20), and so we are the seed of Abraham since He is the Seed of Abraham (v. 16). The blessing of being the seed of Abraham is not the highest. Among other helpful articles<sup>52</sup> and comments<sup>53</sup> is this:

### *What the Church Consists Of*

If certain views as to what "the church" consists of are asked to be clearly stated, I cannot better fulfil this request than by giving the following extracts from a writer deeply versed in these subjects: --

The Word of God presents to us a church formed on earth by the power of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven when the Son of God sat down there in glory, having accomplished the work of redemption. This church is one with its Head; it is the body whereof Christ, ascended on high and seated on the right hand of God, is the Head. (Eph. 1:20-23; 2:14-22; 3:5-6; 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12, 13; John 12:32, 11:52.) . . . The same Spirit, who, by the means of those whom God chose, had called sinners and communicated life to them, has also united them in one body, whose Head is the glorified Christ, and of which the Spirit Himself is the bond with Christ, and in which He serves as the bond between the members one with another . . . the church, then, is a body subsisting in unity here below, formed by the power of God, who gathers His children in union with Christ its Head; a body which derives its existence and unity from the work and presence of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven as the consequence of the ascension of Jesus . . . What is described in Ephesians, and defined as the church, is a state of things impossible to exist before the death and resurrection of Christ as its basis, and the presence of the Holy Ghost as its formative and maintaining power. Any definition we could give of it, according to Ephesians, supposes these two things. The Spirit of God, there, treats Jews and Gentiles as alike children of wrath, speaks of the middle wall of partition broken down by the cross of Jesus, the actual exaltation of Jesus above all principality and power, and us raised and exalted with Him; and both Jew and Gentile reconciled in one new man, in one body by the cross, and builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit; so that there is one body and one Spirit. It is declared, consequently, that "now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places is made known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." . . . There are two great truths dependent on this doctrine: the church united to Christ in glory accomplished hereafter; and meanwhile, as far as existing or developed on earth, the habitation of God through the Spirit. This is its calling, of which it is

50. But the flesh being what it is (Rom. 8:7), the law turned out to be a rule of death.

51. F. F. Bruce, (Open-Brethren), *Commentary on Galatians*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, p. 191 (1982), wrote:

If in ordinary life existence in Christ is manifested openly in church fellowship, then, if a Gentile may exercise spiritual leadership in church as freely as a Jew, or a slave as freely as a citizen, why not a woman as freely as a man?

See my *Deportment of a Christian Woman*, now in a second, enlarged edition, obtainable from Present Truth Publishers.

52. "God's Promises to Abraham, and His grace to the Church," *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 8:343-345, 359-361; "The Israel of God, and Abraham's Seed," *The Bible Treasury* 12:366-368.

53. W. Kelly, *Lectures on the Second Coming and Kingdom* . . . , London: Broom, pp. 153, 154, (1865) for comments on the seed of Abraham and the olive tree (Rom. 11), as W. Trotter, *Plain Papers on Prophetic and other Subjects*, London: Morrish, revised ed., p. 150; "What is the Church? Do Old Testament Saints Form Part of it?" *The Bible Treasury* 2:231-235.

to walk worthy; a calling clearly impossible from its very nature, till the descent of the Holy Ghost made it such an habitation.

That the saints will all be gathered into everlasting blessedness as partaking of Christ as their life, and redeemed by His blood, according to the counsels of God, and conformed to the image of His Son, is owned. They are all redeemed by blood, and all quickened by divine life. But the doctrine insisted on is this: that, Christ having broken down the middle wall of partition by His death, and ascended up on high, and sat down on the right hand of God, and thus presented the full efficacy of His work in the presence of God, the Holy Ghost has come down and united believers in one body, thus united to Christ as one body; which body is in Scripture designated the Church, or assembly of God, and is His habitation through the Spirit. In this, as founded on the risen and exalted Savior and united to Him, as seen on high, by the Holy Ghost, there is neither Jew nor Greek. Christ, as exalted, is entirely above these distinctions; Jew or Greek are alike brought nigh, as having been children of wrath, by the blood of that cross by which the middle wall of partition has been broken down. Hitherto God had saved souls. At Pentecost He gathered His children into the assembly on earth; He added daily to the Church such as should be saved. It is no longer salvation merely, nor even the kingdom. God begins to form His Church here below (Acts 2).

To make the Church a company of believing Jews, with Gentiles added to them, and Abraham's seed their proper definition, entirely shuts out this divine teaching, because the position given to the Church in Ephesians entirely precludes their being looked at as Jews; and the character of "Abraham's seed" comes in merely to show they are true heirs of promise, because they are Christ's, who is the seed of Abraham and Heir of the promises. But, most clearly, this is altogether the lower ground on which to speak of Christ, in comparison with His glorious exaltation at the right hand of God, on which the Church as such is founded . . . . No one can read the Ephesians attentively without seeing that the Church, as one body existing on earth, though heavenly in privilege and character, takes its place consequent on the work of the cross, the exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of God, and the coming down of the Holy Ghost. Hence to give any definition of the Church which implies its existence (other than in the counsels of God), which speaks of its existence on earth (*e.g.*) during the life of Christ on earth, or previous to His exaltation and the descent of the Holy Ghost), denies its nature, and sets aside its character . . . . Those who compose the Church have other relationships besides. They are children of Abraham . . . . But these latter characters do not weaken what has been stated, much less do they annul it . . . . 1 Cor. 12 describes the Church. . . as one body on earth. So Eph. 1:4; Col. 1:2 . . . . While then one would sympathize with the godly dread some may feel at anything which seems to affect the salvation of all saints from the beginning, and the electing love of God in respect of them, it is well, on the other hand, to call things by their right, *i.e.* scriptural, names.

The Spirit of God is infinitely wiser than man, and our business is to see, follow, and admire His wisdom, as in other matters, so here. He has restricted the title "Church of God," in a New Testament sense, to those who are baptized with the Holy Ghost.

Such is a brief exposition of the views in question, which, to my mind, carry scriptural proof along with them. But what I contend is, that the view which makes the church of God embrace believers in all dispensations is wholly devoid of such proof. It is in vain to reason, against the plainest and fullest testimony of God's word, that "all saints are equally and similarly justified by faith . . . alike called saints . . . the names of all written in one book, the Book of Life." These similarities, which are not denied, are by no means inconsistent with the place of the church as the body and bride of Christ. But when it is pronounced that "the new Covenant Church" (a term not found in Scripture) "has no higher place assigned it than participating in the blessings of faithful Abraham," the entire teaching of Scripture, above referred to (in Eph., Col., etc.) is set aside. It really then becomes a question of spiritual intelligence, if not worse. This objection is ignorance of or opposition to Scripture.

As to Heb. 12:22, 23, we must adopt not only with some of the best critics, but with the most ancient versions, as the Syriac, Vulgate, etc., the punctuation *καὶ μυριασιν, ἀγγέλων πανυγυρεῖ, καὶ ἐκκλησία, πρ. κ. τ. λ.* [sic] It is confessedly required by the structure of the whole portion of which every paragraph is commenced by *καὶ*. So that the attempt to make this passage show "the general assembly" and "the church" as identical is a failure. No doubt we read of "the church in the wilderness." But *ἐκκλησία* simply means an "assembly" or "congregation." In Acts 19:32, 39, 41, the confused meeting of the Ephesians cannot mean the church of God, yet it is called *ἡ ἐκκλησία*. So "the church in the wilderness" ought rather to have been "the assembly" there. It means, unquestionably, not the church of God, but the congregation of Israel, almost all of whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, and to whom God swore that they should not enter into His rest. It is said again: "Besides, He was slain from the foundation of the world." A comparison of this passage (Rev. 13:8) with Rev. 17:8, where the same persons and circumstances are referred to, makes it evident that "from the foundation of the world" should be connected, not with "the Lamb slain," but with "the names written in the book of life." It is thus plain that the arguments, whether of one adversary or of another, have no weight when examined. And yet they are among the principal ones against the view which, in my opinion, Scripture so plainly sets forth, viz. that the body of believers, gathered from the day of Pentecost until the time when Christ shall come to take His heavenly people to Himself, has, while sharing many fundamental blessings with all the redeemed, a distinct calling and privileges of its own, and alone has the title assigned to it of "the church of God"

or Christ's body <sup>54</sup>

### *Abraham's Seed*

H. N. Ridderbos, an amillennialist, wrote:

Paul called the believers the seed of Abraham (verses 7-9) to whom the promises were spoken (verse 16). Now he can postulate this with even more force, now that he has spoken of being one with, and belonging to, Christ of *all* believers. If so, they also belong to the seed of Abraham, and consequently are heirs according to the promise. According to the promise: that is, according to the nature of it, not by works of the law, but by the gracious and effectual word of God. *Heirs*, originally thought of in connection with the right to the land of Canaan given to the seed of Abraham, and now comprehensive of the history of salvation in general. With this last link in the chain, it becomes clear in what sense Christ could be called the seed of Abraham (verse 16): in a corporative sense, that is, as Head of the body and of the new covenant. Always and again this one thing is reconfirmed: that belonging to the seed of Abraham is not determined by physical descent, but by faith. Essentially, in principle, the seed of Abraham is spiritual seed. <sup>55</sup>

There are most important errors here among a few true statements, errors flowing from the notion that the church is the spiritual Israel.

1. Christ is not the seed of Abraham in the corporate sense of being Head of the body. That body was formed 50 days after Christ's resurrection. It was not at that point in time that He became the Seed of Abraham, but rather by incarnation. However, we cannot be one with Him in incarnation but only through His death and resurrection.

I am not aware that there is an express Scripture which states that "there were spiritual seed of Abraham before Christ died and rose again," but I suggest that there were spiritual seed.

Not however as though the word of God had failed; for not all [are] Israel which [are] of Israel; nor because they are seed of Abraham [are] all children: but, in Isaac shall a seed be called to thee. That is, [they that are] the children of the flesh, these [are] not the children of God; but the children of the promise are reckoned as seed. For this word [is] of promise, According to this time I will come, and there shall be a son to Sarah (Rom. 9:6-9).

Finally, in seeking to show that the true seed of Abraham existed before Christ came, consider this:

For [it was] not by law that the promise was to Abraham, or to his seed, that he should be heir of [the] world, but by righteousness of faith. For if they

which [are] of law be heirs, faith is made vain, and the promise made of no effect. For law works wrath; but where no law is neither [is there] transgression. Therefore [it is] on the principle of faith, that [it might be] according to grace, in order to the promise being sure to all the seed, not to that only which [is] of the law, but to that also which [is] of Abraham's faith, who is father of us all . . . (Rom. 4:13-16).

Merely because one was a Jew under law (v. 14) did not constitute one an heir. But "the promise being sure to all the seed" (v. 16) is a phrase that applies to those who had faith.

Is this not telling us that Isaac is seed of Abraham and that Isaac was a child of God? Not all the seed of Abraham (those who are physically sprung from him) are children of God. <sup>56</sup> But Isaac was so; and he was one of "the children of promise."

While I would certainly strongly object to calling the Son of God a child of God <sup>57</sup> (a designation indicating the effect of the new birth), He is called the Seed of Abraham, the promised One, and was so in incarnation, not as a result of His glorification. He is also the seed of David (Rom. 1:3; John 7:42; 2 Tim. 2:8). May we not rightly connect His being the seed of David and the seed of Abraham with Matt. 1:1? However, we are in the line of blessing consequent upon His death, resurrection, glorification and His sending the Holy Spirit of promise. My point is that one may be the seed of Abraham apart from the indwelling of the Spirit and union with Christ via the seal of the Spirit, as Isaac was (and others <sup>58</sup>) as will be Israel in the millennium.

2. It is true that "Essentially, in principle, the seed of Abraham is spiritual seed." No doubt this is so worded because it is undeniable that the Jews *were* the seed of Abraham physically. But he wrote, "belonging to the seed of Abraham is not determined by physical descent, but by faith": this is a statement meant to also say that there is no future for national Israel as understood by taking the OT prophecies literally.

O. T. Allis, in his polemic against dispensational truth, stated this:

The Old Testament prophecies if literally interpreted cannot be regarded as having been fulfilled or as being capable of fulfillment in this present age. <sup>59</sup>

What here concerns us is the phrase "thy people." From the Old Testament standpoint this passage like Jeremiah's

54. *Bible Witness and Review* 1:359-361.

55. *The Epistles of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, p. 150 (1953).

56. Cf. John 8:39.

57. Acts 4:27, 30 should read "servant."

58. Perhaps Luke 13:16 and 19:9 implies something deeper than merely physical seed.

59. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 238.



[Jer. 30:7] might be regarded as referring exclusively to Israel. But we have seen that the New Testament gives a larger meaning and scope to Old Testament prophecies which seem to be restricted to Israel . . . .<sup>60</sup>

The OT Jew had no other way to interpret the prophets than literally. So the OT prophecies could, as a matter of fact, be “literally interpreted.” The godly Jew really had no other choice. It is the New Testament which allegedly gives a larger meaning and scope. OT prophecies might be regarded as referring exclusively to Israel. And how was the godly Jew to know that it only *seems* that way and there was going to be a New Testament that would give a “larger meaning and scope”? If the meaning and scope were enlarged, what was the meaning and scope in the OT before it was enlarged in the New Testament? What was Daniel to understand by “thy people” (Dan. 9:24) before this term was allegedly enlarged? This raises the question -- was God deceiving Daniel and the Jews? So, after all, God did tell the OT Jews that there would be a literal kingdom, and the expectation of it was right.

A. A. Hoekema takes a similar tack to reach his particular results:

When, in the light of this New Testament expansion of Old Testament thought . . . .<sup>61</sup>

The New Testament widens these concepts.<sup>62</sup>

“Might be regarded,” “seems to be restricted,” “gives a larger meaning,” “expansion,” “widens,” etc. are the trade-in-stock expressions of spiritual alchemy that wants to claim that the O.T. prophesied of the church (in direct defiance of Rom. 16:25, 26, Col. 1:26 and Eph. 3:9), and yet cover all texts with these expressions where they happen to feel that a matter was not exactly, say, actually prophesied. Such methods can prove any end result desired. It is on such processes that antidispensationalism rests.

The express statement of Scripture is that Israel *will* have a future place:

For I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, of this mystery, that ye may not be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the nations be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved. According as it is written, The deliverer shall come out of Zion; he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is the covenant from me to them, when I shall have taken away their sins. As regards the glad tidings, [they are] enemies on your account; but as regards election, beloved on account of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God [are] not subject to repentance. For as indeed ye [also] once have not believed in God, but now have been objects of mercy through the unbelief of *these*; so these also have now not believed in your mercy, in order that *they* also may be objects of mercy (Rom. 11:25-31).

Israel will yet be the object of mercy (cf. Luke 1:32, 33, 55, Rom. 15:8-12). The calling of the nations is not subject to repentance. It is, of course, true that they shall be both a physical and a spiritual seed; but it is essential for their national adoption or sonship that they be Paul’s kinsmen *according to flesh*, thus Abraham’s physical seed:

. . . my brethren, my kinsmen, according to flesh; who are Israelites; whose [is] the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the law-giving, and the service, and the promises; whose [are] the fathers; and of whom, as according to flesh, [is] the Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen (Rom. 1:3-5).

So in the millennium the nation will be composed of true Jews,<sup>63</sup> all the Israel of God, all the seed of Abraham, necessarily both physically and spiritually the seed of Abraham. We are seed of Abraham via connection with Christ, apart from being physical seed. Moreover, they will be *heirs* of the land as both the physical and spiritual seed of Abraham.

We close this chapter with the following from W. Kelly, once again reminding ourselves that there is a great distinction between the inheritance of promise (being the seed of Abraham) and the mystery:

The Epistle to the Galatians never takes up the standing of the Church properly, not going beyond the inheritance of promise. There are certain privileges that we share in common with every saint. Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. We too believe and are justified. Substantially, faith has so far the same blessings at all times. We are children of promise, entering into the portion of faith as past saints have done before us; and this is what we find in Galatians, though with a certain advance of blessing for us. But if you look at Ephesians, the great point there is that God is bringing out wholly new and heavenly privileges. This is in no respect what is taken up in Galatians. There we are on the common ground of promises. “If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” But in Ephesians there are certain distinct and superadded privileges that Abraham never thought nor heard of: I mean the formation of the Church of God, Christ’s body, the truth that Jews and Gentiles were to be taken out of earthly places, and made one with Christ in heaven. This was the mystery concerning Christ and the Church, hidden from ages and generations, but now revealed through the Holy Ghost. So that, in order to have a right view of the full blessing of the Christian, we must take the Ephesian blessing along with the Galatian. The special time is while Christ is on the right hand of God. Even as to the millennial saints, do you think they will enjoy all that we have now? Far from it. They will possess much that we do not, such as the manifested glory of Christ, exemption from sorrow and suffering, &c. But our calling is totally different and contrasted. It is to love Him whom we have

60. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

61. *The Bible and the Future*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, p. 279 (1979).

62. *Ibid.*, p. 211.

63. The meaning of a true Jew was discussed in a previous article (Vol. 6, #6, p. 188-192). Paul uses “seed of Abraham” to describe himself (2 Cor. 11:22) in that sense -- both the physical and spiritual seed.

*not* seen; to rejoice in the midst of tribulation and shame. If a man were to form his thoughts of Christianity from Galatians only, he might confound the saints now with those of the Old Testament, always remembering the difference that we find here, that the heir as long as he is under age differs nothing from a servant; whereas we are brought into the full possession of our privileges. But there are other and higher things in Ephesians, called, or at least flowing from, the eternal purpose of God. So that it is well to distinguish this double truth -- the community of blessing through all dispensations, and the specialty of privilege that attaches to those who are being called now by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.<sup>64</sup>

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64. *Lectures on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians*, London: Morrish, pp. 116, 117, n.d., reprint.

## *Part 6*

### *Zion and the Jerusalems*



## Chapter 6

### *Zion and the Jerusalems*

#### *Galatians 4:21-31*

Tell me, ye who are desirous of being under law, do ye not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons; one of the maid servant, and one of the free woman. But he [that was] of the maid servant was born according to flesh, and he [that was] of the free woman through the promise. Which things have an allegorical sense; for these are two covenants: one from mount Sinai, gendering to bondage, which is Hagar. For Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which [is] now, for she is in bondage with her children; but the Jerusalem above is free, which is our mother. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that barest not; break out and cry, thou that travailest not; because the children of the desolate are more numerous than [those] of her that has a husband.

But ye, brethren, after the pattern of Isaac, are children of promise. But as then he that was born according to flesh persecuted him [that was born] according to Spirit, so also [it is] now. But what says the scripture? Cast out the maid servant and her son; for the son of the maid servant shall not inherit with the son of the free woman. So then, brethren, we are not maid servant's children, but [children] of the free woman (Gal. 4:21-31).

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter we read of "the Jerusalem above" (v. 26) but without the indicators found in Heb. 12:22 and Rev. 21 that show us that in Revelation the "holy city, Jerusalem" is "the bride, the Lamb's wife," [i.e., the church] while Heb. 12 distinguishes the "assembly of the firstborn" [i.e., the church] from the "heavenly Jerusalem." "The Jerusalem above" is "the heavenly Jerusalem." This is not the church. Rather this is the heavenly home of the redeemed saints of the O. T. and now. It is a figure of speech for the dwelling of the saints. However, besides that which is common blessing, the church also has a distinct place symbolized by the "holy city, Jerusalem" of Rev. 21.

The teaching of Gal. 4:21-31 is clear in that law is contrasted with grace and that the two women speak of two covenants, while their respective sons represent those born according to flesh, in one case, and born according to promise (grace) in the other case. The following chart of the passage illustrates a great number of contrasts found in these verses as law and promise (grace) are contrasted.

**HAGAR AND CHILDREN**

- v. 23 a) maid-servant (slave)  
b) her son according to flesh
- v. 24 this represents a covenant
- v. 25 a) from mount Sinai  
b) gendering to bondage  
c) Jerusalem which now is  
d) Jerusalem in bondage with her children
- v. 27 children of her that has a husband
- v. 29 a) Ishmael born after the flesh  
b) persecuted Isaac  
c) the flesh persecutes now
- v. 30 a) cast out Hagar  
b) Hagar's offspring shall not inherit

**SARAH AND CHILDREN**

- v. 23 a) free woman  
b) her son through promise
- v. 24 this represents a covenant
- v. 26 a) Jerusalem above  
b) Jerusalem above is free
- v. 27 children of the desolate
- v. 28 Galatians are children of promise
- v. 29 a) Isaac born according to Spirit  
b) Isaac was persecuted  
c) children of promise are persecuted now
- v. 30 the son of the free woman inherits
- v. 31 Galatians are children of the free woman

Thus those who were listening to law teachers were given to know that slavery, flesh, earthly Jerusalem as she now is, bondage, persecution, and no inheritance go together, while freedom, Spirit, Jerusalem above, promise and inheritance go together.

W. Kelly wrote:

Every religious system which takes its stand upon the law, invariably assumes a Jewish character. We need not look round far to understand this, nor to apply it. Why is it that men have magnificent buildings, or the splendor of ritual in the service of God? On what model is it founded? Certainly they are not like those who gathered together of old in the upper-room. The temple is clearly the type, and along with this goes the having a peculiar sacred class of persons, the principle of the clergy being founded upon the notion of the Jewish priesthood. The service, where that is the case, must depend upon what would attract the senses -- show of ornament, music, imposing ceremonies, everything that would strike man's mind, or that would draw a multitude together, not by the truth, but by something to be seen or heard that pleases nature. It is the order of what the word of God calls the "worldly sanctuary." Not that the tabernacle or temple had not a very important meaning before Christ came; but afterwards their shadowy character became apparent, and their temporary value was at an end, and the full truth and grace of God were manifested in the person of Him who came from heaven. When Christ was rejected from the earth and went back to heaven, all was changed, and the heart-allegiance of God's children is transferred to heaven. The true sanctuary for us is the name of Christ. What the Old Testament connected for an earthly people with the temple, the New Testament does with Jesus. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" {Matt. 18:20}. If there were ever so

few true to that, they would reap the blessing. It is of great importance to trace things to their principle. When the apostle wrote to the Galatians, only the germs were showing themselves; they had not got to the length of consecrated buildings and castes of men, with all the pomp and circumstance of religious worship suited to the world, which we see around us now, the result of the gradual inroads of error upon the Christian professing body. But still there was the beginning of the mischief, the attempt to bring in the principles of the law upon Christians. And what is the effect? You only fall into the position of Ishmael, out of Isaac's. To be thus identified with the law is to be an Ishmael, to forfeit the promises and to become a mere child of the bond-woman. This is the argument that the apostle uses to deal with the Galatians, who were flattering themselves that they had made immense progress; but it was really a slip out of liberty into bondage.<sup>1</sup>

**GAL. 4:21**

Tell me, ye who are desirous of being under law, do ye not listen to the law?

There are many who desire to be under law. Notice that the word "the" is not before the first use of the word law. The difference is that without the word "the," the reference is to law as a principle of standing before God. "The law" as used in the N.T. often refers to the law of Moses; or, as in v. 21, it refers to the five books of Moses. So, you who are desirous of being before God on the principle, or basis, of law, do you not listen to what the books of Moses say?

1. *Lectures on the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*, London: Morrish, pp. 113, 114, n. d.

**GAL. 4:22, 23**

For it is written that Abraham had two sons; one of the maid servant, and one of the free woman. But he [that was] of the maid servant was born according to flesh, and he [that was] of the free woman through the promise.

God had promised Abraham a son (Gen. 15:4), but as time went on and the promised son was not given, a custom was resorted to. Sarah gave her maidservant to Abraham to have an heir that would be hers (Sarah's) (Gen. 16:1, 2, 3). This was not what God intended. This was not His promise. Rather, it was a resort to a fleshly scheme when faith was tried. How like this we are, we must confess. However, God was over all and brings to pass His purposes of grace in spite of what we are.

This again illustrates the principle given in 1 Cor. 15:46: "But that which is spiritual [was] not first, but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual" of which, of course, Adam and Christ are the great fulfillment. But the principle is characteristically seen in Genesis where the firstborns did not receive the blessing.

So here we have the great contrast between Sarah, the freewoman, and her son born through the promise, and Hagar, the maid servant and her son born according to flesh. A Jew thinking of this might have thought of the contrast between himself and the Gentile, a grave mistake indeed, as Paul had shown in Rom. 9:

Not however as though the word of God had failed; for not all [are] of Israel which [are] of Israel; nor because they are seed of Abraham [are] all children: but, In Isaac shall a seed be called to thee. That is, [they that are] the children of the flesh, these [are] not the children of God; but the children of the promise are reckoned as seed. For this word [is] of promise. According to this time I will come, and there shall be a son to Sarah. And not only [that], but Rebecca having conceived by one, Isaac our father, [the children] indeed being not yet born, or having done anything good or worthless (that the purpose of God according to election might abide, not of works, but of him that calls), it was said to her, The greater shall serve the less: according as it is written, I have loved Jacob, and I have hated Esau (Rom. 9:6-13).

Isaac was a child of promise, yet he had a son who was not a child of God. And so it might be with the Jew. Not every Israelite after the flesh was a true Israelite. However, the law did not make a distinction between the children of God and those who knew not the Lord. The law addressed the covenant people in their Adamic responsibility. The nation was not a manifested community of the children of God but rather a mixed community. Now, of course, it is God's thought that His children take that place openly and together (John 1:11-13; 11:51, 52) as an acknowledged family of children before Him in confidence and consciousness of their relationship, founded on the finished work of Christ with which He is satisfied.

**GAL. 4:24-26**

Which things have an allegorical sense; for these are two covenants: one from mount Sinai, gendering to bondage, which is Hagar. For Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which [is] now, for she is in bondage with her children; but the Jerusalem above is free, which is our mother.

**The Two Covenants.** Clearly, the two women represent two covenants. One represents the covenant of law and the other the covenant of promise to Abraham. The New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-10) is also a covenant of promise but that is for the houses of Judah and Israel. The Gentiles were "strangers to the covenants of promise" (Eph. 2:12), where the plural word indicates that there is more than one covenant of promise. The promises spoken of in Galatians are those made to Abraham in contrast to law (Gal. 3:15-21). In this we see the contrast of law and grace because the covenant of promise <sup>2</sup> was God acting in sovereign grace. Sarah, "the free woman" (v. 23) represents that grace, whereas Hagar, "the maid servant," represents bondage. We are plainly taught in Gal. 4:23-31 that flesh, law and bondage are joined together, while in contrast Spirit, promise and freedom are joined.

Phillip Mauro, who thought that the church was the spiritual Israel, wrote:

The period when Ishmael and Isaac were both under one roof and the former still had the status of a son and heir of Abraham, *answers to the time from Pentecost to the destruction of Jerusalem*. For during that period the natural Israel, "the son of the bondwoman," still occupied the holy land and city, and "persecuted" the true Israel (Gal. 4:29; 1 Thess. 2:15).

But that era of the overlapping of "the two covenants" was of short duration. For "what saith the Scripture? *Cast out the bond woman and her son:* for the son of the bond woman *shall not be heir with the son of the free woman*" (Gal. 4:30). and the next verse gives us the application of the incident: "So then, brethren, we are not the children of the bond woman, but of the free." <sup>3</sup>

The implication of this notion is that between Pentecost and the destruction of Jerusalem, (A.D. 70) the Jews still had "the status of a son and heir of Abraham." Now, surely the reader knows that such a thought is clean contrary to Scripture. For example, according to Romans 9 the natural branches were broken out of the olive tree; obviously before A. D. 70.

What he has done is to use the persecution of Christians by the Jews (Gal. 4:29; 1 Thess. 2:15) to claim that what answers to Ishmael has a place until A.D. 70. The fact is that the persecution of a child of promise took place already in Abraham's house. There were children of God under the law and often these also were persecuted by the Jews as

2. Note that Gal. 3:17 calls it a covenant.

3. *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, p. 244.

Heb. 11:32-40 amply proves. At the cross those born after the flesh persecuted the great Seed of Abraham unto death. Then the casting out of Hagar and Ishmael took place at the cross. However, the fact is that just as it was in Abraham's house, so it was also in Paul's day.

Can you imagine the Galatians reading Gal. 4:30 and wondering when the bondwoman would finally be cast out; and how? But Paul was arguing from what was already true, and since they belonged to Christ they were seed of Abraham and children of the free woman.

P. Mauro has credited the Roman legions (of A.D. 70) with doing what in reality the work of Christ on the cross accomplished.

**The Two Cities.** Besides the two women representing two covenants, they also represent two cities: the Jerusalem which now is -- in bondage here on earth; and, the Jerusalem above, free, and which is our mother. This again figures, by contrast, law and promise (grace); bondage and liberty.

Many able expositors believe that the Jerusalem above and the city in Heb. 12 and Rev. 21 are all the same. I think that W. Kelly's comments on the city in Heb. 12, distinguishing it from the church, is correct. The city of Hebrews 12 signifies the dwelling of the redeemed including the O. T. worthies, while the city of Rev. 21 is the bride, the Lamb's wife. Concerning Gal. 4:26, W. Kelly wrote:

The truth is that this scripture disproves the hypothesis [that the church is Israel], instead of giving the least warrant to construe Jerusalem of the church.<sup>4</sup>

You will recall that in the article *Not Sinai, But Zion . . .*, W. Kelly pointed out that the city in Hebrews (11:10,16; 12:22; and cf. 13:14) did not refer to the city of Rev. 21 (contrary to what many expositors think). He pointed out that "the Epistle [of Hebrews] never rises to the mystery in the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians." It may be replied that neither does the Revelation. However, the city of Rev. 21 is expressly stated to be the bride, the Lamb's wife -- but the city is described as the seat of millennial government, a view entirely consonant with the character of that book. Moreover, the O. T. saints do not constitute part of the bride of Revelation. But there were those that looked for that permanent abode above.

Heb. 11:10 says that Abraham "waited for the city which had foundations, of which God is [the] artificer and constructor." And v. 16 says, "for he has prepared for them a city." Such saints are not part of the holy city, new Jerusalem, the bride (Rev. 21), yet they have part in this city, no doubt the same as in Heb. 12:22, the city of the

living God, heavenly Jerusalem.<sup>5</sup>

The city, then, in Hebrews, signifies the place of permanency and fellowship above, with the living God. All brought there are brought there by sovereign grace. It is the dwelling place above of the redeemed of all ages resulting from sovereign grace which is seated there; though in addition to that, the church has also a special place.

The Jerusalem above, the heavenly Jerusalem, is the seat of grace, the sphere and scene of the fruits of grace, the company of the redeemed in heaven in the presence of the living God, followed and worshiped here below in transient life, but then enjoyed, and adored in permanent dwelling with Himself. It is the city prepared for faith.

Sarah figures this system of grace. Grace is not bondage but freedom, and is our mother, by which we receive our new nature, and it forms us according to its own character.

W. Kelly made the following instructive observations on Galatians:

The Epistle to the Galatians never takes up the standing of the Church properly, not going beyond the inheritance of promise. There are certain privileges that we share in common with every saint. Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. We too believe and are justified. Substantially, faith has so far the same blessings at all times. We are children of promise, entering into the portion of faith as past saints have done

5. I confess surprise at J. N. Darby's opposite view. In *Notes and Jottings* (one vol. ed.) p. 134, we read:

*Ques.* But did not Abraham look for that city [of Rev. 21]?

Yes; not that I believe he has it, but he looked for the blessing that accompanied that state of things."

Here, JND has explained looking for the city as looking for the blessing that accompanies it. No doubt this is an effort to explain it in keeping with the fact that silence was kept in O.T. times concerning the church.

No doubt Abraham did look for the blessing that accompanied that state of things; but I believe that when Heb. 11:16 says, "for he has prepared for them a city," it means that they and Abraham do have a city (but not the city of Revelation 21. It is a figure, of course, not a literal city, but signifies that place of permanency above with the God they worshiped while here. Naturally, then, JND would also regard the Jerusalem in Gal. 4 as the church also. See also *Collected Writings* 34:88; *Notes and Jottings*, p. 391; the *Synopsis*, etc.

No doubt F. W. Grant felt the difficulty of Heb. 11:16 also, judging by this comment:

The mention of a city is very striking, if it means that this was actually, as such, before Abraham's sight. It may mean that this it is in which Abraham's faith will, in fact, find its consummation, or it may be that God had revealed to him much more than we have knowledge of; for even the earthly Jerusalem was not then existent as the city of God; so that the type even was wanting, except it were Melchisedec's Salem; and the city here is certainly the heavenly one. The mention of "the foundations" brings before us the very city of the Apocalypse, with its twelve jeweled foundations . . . (*Numerical Bible*, Hebrews to Revelation, p. 63).

Distinguish the city in Hebrews and in Gal. 4 from that in Rev. 21, as W. Kelly did, and many difficulties are removed.

4. *An Exposition of the Book of Isaiah*, London: Hammond, p. 52 (1947 reprint).



before us; and this is what we find in Galatians, though with a certain advance of blessing for us. But if you look at Ephesians, the great point there is that God is bringing out wholly new and heavenly privileges. This is in no respect what is taken up in Galatians. There we are on the common ground of promises. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." But in Ephesians there are certain distinct and superadded privileges that Abraham never thought nor heard of: I mean the formation of the Church of God, Christ's body, the truth that Jews and Gentiles were to be taken out of earthly places, and made one with Christ in heaven. This was the mystery concerning Christ and the Church, hidden from ages and generations, but now revealed through the Holy Ghost. So that, in order to have a right view of the full blessing of the Christian, we must take the Ephesian blessing along with the Galatian. The special time is while Christ is on the right hand of God. Even as to the millennial saints, do you think they will enjoy all that we have now? Far from it. They will possess much that we do not, such as the manifested glory of Christ, exemption from sorrow and suffering, &c. But our calling is totally different and contrasted. It is to love Him whom we have *not* seen; to rejoice in the midst of tribulation and shame. If a man were to form his thoughts of Christianity from Galatians only, he might confound the saints now with those of the Old Testament, always remembering the difference that we find here, that the heir as long as he is under age differs nothing from a servant; whereas we are brought into the full possession of our privileges. But there are other and higher things in Ephesians, called, or at least flowing from, the eternal purpose of God. So that it is well to distinguish this double truth -- the community of blessing through all dispensations, and the speciality of privilege that attaches to those who are being called now by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.<sup>6</sup>

The Jerusalem above signifies that there is a sphere of blessing above for all the redeemed who have passed into the heavenly scene. The literal Jerusalem on earth, chosen also by sovereign grace, will be peopled by a saved, earthly company -- and all shall be under Christ's headship. Additionally, the bride, the Lamb's wife, will have her distinctive place also. The church has certain blessings common with all the redeemed, but others that are unique.

### *Galatians 4:27-31*

#### W. KELLY'S TRANSLATION OF GAL. 4:25-31

W. Kelly's translation of Gal. 4:26, 27 has a little different punctuation than that of J. N. Darby's, which appears to me to be of assistance in understanding v. 27. We will use W. Kelly's translation of Gal. 4:27-31 for the remainder

(asking the reader to compare vv. 26, 27 with JND):

For Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, but correspondeth with the existing Jerusalem, for she is in bondage with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, which is our mother, for it is written, "Rejoice, thou barren that barest not; break out and cry, thou that travailest not; for the children of the desolate are many more than of her that hath the husband." But we, brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. But as then he that was born according to flesh persecuted him that was according to Spirit, so now. But what saith the scripture? "Cast out the maidservant and her son. For in no wise shall the son of the maidservant inherit with the son of the freewoman." Therefore, brethren, we are not children of a maidservant, but of the freewoman.

There was a time when Israel had a husband under the covenant of the law. Jehovah was her husband (Isa. 54:5) but she committed adultery (Hosea 1:2) and was put away (Hosea 1:9). When married she had born some children (saints), but compared to God's purposes in grace, not many. At the present time (the earthly) Jerusalem is barren -- not bearing children.<sup>7</sup> However, under Christ's future reign, Jerusalem is again pictured as bearing children.

The future, earthly Jerusalem will be established by sovereign grace acting through Christ. At the present time, we Christians are blessed by sovereign grace, through Christ. Blessing based on sovereign grace is common to both. This does not make the Church the spiritual Israel. *Promise* is the expression of sovereign grace acting. We Christians are Abraham's seed *because we are of Christ* (Gal. 3:29). In Gal. 4:28 we are seen as children of *promise*. Well, certainly so since we are Abraham's seed, as Isaac, the child of promise, was; not as Ishmael was -- because Ishmael was born according to the flesh (v. 29), not promise. Christ is in the line of promise, so we as being His are accounted to be children of promise and Abraham's seed. But there are other and greater blessings which are ours -- such as being members of Christ's body and participating in the mystery.

#### GAL. 4:27

This scripture is quoted from Isa. 54:1 and is a prophecy that will be fulfilled in the millennium. Gal. 4:21-31 is not the unfolding of the mystery, hid from ages and from generations. Because we are Christ's we are the seed of Abraham and also children of promise. It is not in that fact that we are constituted to be members of the body of Christ, a thing unknown in previous ages or by previous generations. Commenting on Isa. 51:1, W. Kelly wrote:

When the prophecy is fulfilled in the millennial day, God will count those who now believe to be Jerusalem's

6. *Lectures on the Epistle to the Galatians*, London: Morrish, pp. 116, 117, n. d.

7. In another sense, the earthly Jerusalem and her children are in bondage, but they are not the Lord's.

children, as well as the race to come in that day. Doubly thus it will be verified that more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife. . . .

It is important to see on the one hand, that though it is according to scripture to regard Christians mystically as the children of desolate Jerusalem far outnumbering those of her married estate of old, the church, on the other hand, is not yet presented by God's word as being in the relationship of the wife, either desolate or married. The marriage is future and on high. The bride, the Lamb's wife, will not have made herself ready till she has been caught up to heaven glorified, and the harlot Babylon, the anti-church, has been judged of Jehovah God. The real position of the church meanwhile is that of one espoused; her responsibility is to keep herself as a chaste virgin for Christ. The marriage will be in heaven, just before the Lord and His glorified saints appear for the destruction of the Antichrist and all his allies. (Compare Rev. 19.)

On the other hand, it is undeniable that the Jews, or Zion if you will, had the place of nearness to Jehovah which is represented under the figure of the marriage-tie, that she had been faithless and played the whore with many lovers (even the idols of the Gentiles), and that in consequence she was divorced, becoming a widow and desolate under the righteous dealing of God. Adultery was her sin, rather than fornication. No one in the least familiar with the prophets can have failed to notice this and more said of Israel. Then it was she became barren and did not bear. Praise is still silent for God in Zion; but the vow shall yet be performed to Him (Psa. 65:1); and the barren one shall sing and be no more barren but bear, astonished to find during those days of literal barrenness such an abundant offspring in the saints glorified on high, whom grace has been the while actively bringing in.<sup>8</sup>

The time will come when the future, earthly Jerusalem, set up on the basis of sovereign grace (not law), will look back upon the time of barrenness and be able to count the children of promise, born now, as her children. GRACE is the key to this. She, barren now, then restored by grace, will look at what grace wrought during her barrenness,<sup>9</sup> and count those children of grace as her own. Jerusalem on earth will then be composed of children of promise (grace), and she will view the children of promise now (because they are Christ's) as hers. So all the seed of Abraham are reckoned to herself as set up on the foundation of sovereign grace, and rejoice in the great ingathering of children of promise during her barrenness. But none of this touches the subject of the mystery, though, of course, the mystery also

exists as the fruit of grace. What blessedness is there that is not the fruit of sovereign grace? The fruits of grace are wonderfully variegated. Some fruits are common to Israel and the Christian, but the Christian's greatest blessings will not be enjoyed by Israel.

### OT SAINTS ARE CHILDREN OF GOD

The OT does not teach that the OT saints were children of God. It was necessary that Christ should die before the children had the right to take that place, consciously as a visible community of children (John 1:11-13). Before His death the children of God were scattered; i.e., they formed no visible community of children. There was no manifested oneness. Indeed, the law did not address the children of God, as such; rather it addressed the first man, man in his fallen Adamic standing and responsibility, in the persons of the nation of Israel in *external* nearness, compared to Gentiles afar off (Eph. 2:17). Christ, then, had to die to form the basis for the gathering together into one the children of God.

But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, Ye know nothing nor consider that it is profitable for you that one man die for the people, and not that the whole nation perish. But this he did not say of himself; but, being high priest that year, prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation; and not for the nation only, but that he should also gather together into one the children of God who were scattered abroad (John 11:49-52).

We see from this that OT saints were children and were scattered. Rom. 9:6-13 also shows that OT saints were children of God.

Such were born again and the Lord Jesus expected that Nicodemus should have known of the necessity for such a thing -- before the cross (John 3).

The OT children of God are referred to as just men in Heb. 11:40, which text also indicates that OT believers will be made perfect when we are; namely, at the resurrection and rapture of the saints. "Just men" refers to such as those named in Heb. 11. Note well that this goes back beyond Abraham, right to the beginning. However, I am not aware that it would be correct to designate the just men, the children of God, before Abraham, as "children of promise." Children of promise are "the seed of Abraham." But grace will bring all of the OT children of God to heavenly glory, whether or not all are classed as children of promise and seed of Abraham.

### OT SAINTS NOT PART OF THE CHURCH

A point to be emphasized is this: just because all OT saints are children of God and were born again, does not mean that they were children of promise and seed of Abraham. A second point is that just because in the OT times there were children of promise and spiritual seed of Abraham, and we

8. *An Exposition of the Book of Isaiah*, London: Hammond, pp. 347, 348 (1947 reprint).

9. Here barrenness does not refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Galatians was written before A.D. 70 and declares Jerusalem barren. I suggest that the period called the times of the Gentiles is the period of barrenness. It turned out that Christianity occurred in part of this barren period.

are that also, that therefore they are part of the church which is Christ's body.

The Jerusalem above is not a designation of the church. It designates that which is figured as a city in Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:22; (cf. 13:14). It is the capital seat of grace where the children of promise will be who have passed off this scene. The entire first resurrection will reign with Christ (Rev. 20:4). This is "the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14), which, note well, describes not a point in time but rather *a class of persons*. As to OT saints, they will be made perfect when we Christians are (Heb. 11:40). The tribulation martyrs have their part also in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4).

Meanwhile, we have nothing to do with the now barren Jerusalem; which tells us we have nothing to do with the law for justification or for sanctification, whether "moral" or "ceremonial."

### PERSECUTION BY THE FLESH

We may observe, yet, that at the weaning of Isaac, Ishmael, perhaps 14 or 15 years old, mocked. I doubt Eliezer mocked, or any of Abraham's servants. This son of the maidservant dared to do this. This mocking is here called "persecution," a thing worth noting to check the fleshly tendency within us to mock. Let us teach our children, while we judge ourselves, that Scripture refers to mocking as persecution. And if we are mocked as Christians, those that live godly will thus experience persecution.

The one born according to flesh persecuted him that was born according to Spirit. And think of what the flesh did to the great Seed of Abraham whose very conception was by that mighty operation of the Spirit (Luke 1:35). Moreover, it was flesh pretending to honor the law. It was flesh that cast out the Heir (Matt. 21:38). But what said the Scripture? Cast out the maidservant and her son.

### CAST OUT THE MAIDSERVANT AND HER SON

Hagar, we saw, corresponds to Sinai, gendering to bondage (v. 25). She has a son and Ishmael, born according to the fleshly course taken by Abraham, figures the flesh. The law is for the first man. Grace is for the true children. The time of the trial of the first man was completed at the cross. The maidservant and her son have been cast out.

When we considered Gal. 3:25, we observed that there was no such thing as a moral tutor and a ceremonial tutor. Likewise, there is no such thing as a moral Hagar and a ceremonial Hagar so that you can place the children of Sarah under the moral Hagar. In effect, doing so is giving the flesh a place, little as you may be aware that that is what it is. You would be allowing Hagar and her son back into the house again. They come and go together.

### CHILDREN OF THE FREEWOMAN

Therefore, brethren, we are not children of a maidservant, but of the freewoman (Gal. 4:31).

The maidservant speaks of bondage and law. We are rather the children of grace. It is grace that caused our birth and it is grace that nurtures and teaches us.

For the grace of God which carries with it salvation for all men has appeared, teaching us that, having denied impiety and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, and justly, and piously in the present course of things, awaiting the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all lawlessness, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous for good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise thee (Titus 2:11-15).

Christ has set us free in freedom; stand fast therefore, and be not held again in a yoke of bondage (Gal. 5:1).

We have been brought into *liberty*.

Now the Lord is the Spirit, but where the Spirit of [the] Lord [is, there is] liberty. But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by [the] Lord [the] Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17, 18).

This is freedom from self and self-will to do the will of God, which grace teaches us.



## *Part 7*

# *Is the Christian Heavenly and Is the Church Heavenly?*

Particularly in view of the recent rise of what I have referred to as “Covenant Pretribulationism” (alias “Progressive Dispensationalism”) which inherently denies that the church is heavenly, the following helpful articles are included.



## Chapter 7.1

### *On the Heavenly Calling, and the Mystery*

*From The Present Testimony, vol. 1, 1849*

#### **Introduction**

I. What is meant by “THE HEAVENLY CALLING,” and what is its practical bearing upon the WALK and WORSHIP of Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ?

II. What is meant by “THE MYSTERY,” and what connection is there between it and “THE HEAVENLY CALLING”?

#### **LOVE AND OBEDIENCE**

The knowledge of that infinite grace which has brought us, as redeemed sinners, nigh to God, through the precious blood of Christ, is the strongest appeal to our souls to render obedience unto Him who has shown such wonderful love to us. And in proportion as our hearts are touched with a sense of this love, shall we love in return; “We love Him because He first loved us.”

Love will ever produce a fervent desire to please and meet the mind of the object of its affections.

“If ye love me, keep my commandments” said our blessed Lord. But however true and sincere the heart may be, yet if there be ignorance as to the commands of the Lord, there must be failure in obedience. Love is not sufficient to enable us to walk so as to glorify God. A true heart and right desires are not enough. A true heart is of vital importance; but an instructed mind as to what the will of God is, is needed to regulate and guide the warmest heart: the want of this often leaves the Lord’s people open to much sorrow, when really seeking to serve Him.

Mary’s heart was true and warm enough -- but she passed through much sorrow, because she “knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead” (John 20:9).

We are not only called into fellowship with the Father and the Son, in the joy and peace of the Holy Ghost, but also to “be filled with the knowledge of His will, in *all wisdom*

and *spiritual understanding*; that we might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing” (Col. 1:9); and that “love may abound more and more in *knowledge*, and in *all judgment*” (Phil. 1:9).

Knowledge without charity, we are taught, “puffeth up”; but knowledge and love must be combined and work together, or we shall fail in rendering real service unto God.

It maybe said, that God often leads His children far beyond their spiritual intelligence. This is true (and happy for us that He does so) but are we to make this an excuse for our foolishness and ignorance, because His grace and goodness abound? It is not what we have any right to expect or reckon upon; for this reason, that He has given a full revelation of His mind and will, and His Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth, that we might know His will. The word is the instrument by which He accomplishes His gracious purposes in us.

We are begotten by the word of truth (James 1:18).

We are born of the word (1 Peter 1:23).

By the word we grow (1 Peter 2:2).

By the word we are cleansed (John 15:3; Eph. 5:26).

By the word we are kept undefiled in the way, and from the paths of the destroyer (Psa. 17:4; 119:9).

By the word -- “the sword of the Spirit” -- we are able to stand against the wiles of Satan (Eph. 6:17).

It is by the word, known in the power of the Spirit, that our practical sanctification is carried on. “Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth,” was the prayer of Jesus for His disciples (John 17:17).

The written word, then, contains full and ample instruction whereby we may, in all things, have a sure guide, and learn from it how to glorify God -- how greatly we need rightly to divide it, and understand what the will of the Lord

is; not merely with reference to our personal walk, as individuals, but according to the design of God concerning the Church, and the character of its testimony, as well as position in the world.

There are certain characteristics of God's people, common to them in all ages, and under all dispensations; such as Faith, Hope, Love, and Obedience.

But the form and manner in which obedience is to be manifested vary, according to the character of the calling, at different periods.

"Be ye holy, for I am holy," is a word of universal application, addressed alike to the Jew and to the Christian; for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." But a Christian would walk very far below his vocation, if he were to walk like a Jew, however great his attainments in holiness and godliness.

What would be obedience in one, would be ignorance, and oft disobedience in the other, and for this reason :God has been displaying his own character and ways at different times, and in different manners. His dealings with His people have varied according to his design and purpose respecting them. The Israelites were called to serve God in the enjoyment and abundance of all *earthly blessings*; Christians are called to be content with food and raiment, to be poor and despised, but blessed with all *spiritual blessings* [in the heavenlies]: -- the one was set in a dispensation of righteous government, the other in a dispensation of grace.

#### UNDERSTANDING THE PURPOSE OF GOD

Hence, it is evident, that the saints need the clearest understanding as to the purpose of God concerning them (the grace in which they are set!) and as to the character of their blessings and promises, or they will be unable to walk so as to meet the mind of God. Ignorance of those principles which correspond to the character of their calling will lead them to confound God's arrangements; and, mistaking His mind, they will be found acting upon principles, which at one time and under different circumstances were lawful, but are now condemned: a simple illustration of this is presented in Matt. 5:21, etc. How often this is the case with dear children of God! Many who have great peace, zeal, and devotedness and who are indeed a sweet savor of Jesus, are yet so ignorant of the character of their calling, that they are systematically found in fellowship with an evil world, drawn into its course, acting upon its principles, seeking its patronage, and helping on its delusions and false expectations: thus marring their testimony, while they bring weakness, sorrow, perplexity, and disappointment upon their own souls.

The Lord has of late years taught many of His saints to see this, and has opened from His own blessed word much truth concerning "*the Heavenly Calling*" of the Church; and while there is doubtless much more to be learned, the

practical power and blessing from that which has been seen have been extensively felt.

In considering the subject of the Heavenly Calling, <sup>1</sup> I have felt the need there is to keep before the mind, not only its prominent truths and grand features in detail, but also its scope and character as a whole.

A partial view of "*the Heavenly Calling*" will lead only to partial results, and, it may be, to an opposite line of conduct in two saints.

For instance, one person sees that the Church is called to a heavenly hope, and consequently that earthly rest and establishment are not now to be desired, but strangership and separation from the course of this world.

Another sees how all the types and shadows of the law, ordinances of divine service, priestly services, and formal ceremonies, have been fulfilled and taken up in Christ; and this delivers him from confounding law and gospel, and from all formal worship.

But while the walk of one and the worship of the other have been set right, the limited view each has of "*the Heavenly Calling*," may leave both to pursue a line of conduct altogether at variance with it, and yet each suppose that his ways are regulated by its principles. Hence the importance of understanding what the scope of the truth is, and what it really embraces.

I will endeavor to point out the form which this truth assumes in my own mind. Further I cannot go.

### *What is Meant by "The Heavenly Calling"; and What is its Practical Bearing upon the Walk and Worship of Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ?*

"The Heavenly Calling" of the Church will be better understood as it is compared with the earthly calling of Israel; -- the contrast between the two, and the distinguishing character of the blessings, promises, and worship, each serves to mark more definitely what is involved in this truth.

Converts from among the Hebrews were the most suitable persons to address upon the subject. Their history,

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1. At a meeting of brethren in the Lord, at Liverpool, in November, 1843, much light appears to me to have been given upon this subject, which I have ever since found to be most profitable, and a cause for much thankfulness. The distinguishing features between "*the Heavenly Calling*" treated of in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and "*the Mystery*" unfolded in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, were very definitely brought out.



and all the appointments under the old Covenant, furnish so many materials for explaining their new position. The scriptures, at once, could be referred to; which could not be the case when addressing Gentiles, who might not though converted, be so familiar with the scriptures as to make that mode of conveying instruction the most expressive to them.

The expression, “the Heavenly Calling,” occurs only once in scripture (in Heb. 3:1); but the whole argument of that Epistle refers to it.

The subject appears to me to bear practically upon two positions of believers.

1. That which refers to their **Walk** in the world.
2. That which refers to their **Worship** before God.

### *Our Walk*

A brief consideration of Israel’s history, keeping before the mind the *calling, hopes, habits, and associations* of that people, from whom the parties addressed were converted, will enable us to perceive the force of the arguments of this Epistle, and the light which the Heavenly Calling casts upon our *walk*.

Passing over the call of Abraham, and their bondage in Egypt, it will suffice to take them up at Mount Sinai. They were there acknowledged by God, as His peculiar people -- a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation (Ex. 19:5, 6).

He promised to bring them into it place which he had prepared for them, and to bless them there with everything that gives delight and happiness to the natural desires and affections of the heart of man (Ex. 23:20-26, etc.; Deut. 28:1-13).

He sought for rest and refreshment in them, of which the Sabbath was the sign (Ex. 31:17). His rest in Creation had been broken by the sin of man; it was proved a second time, by Noah’s failure, that there was no rest yet for God in the earth; but, again seeking it in Israel, the renewal of the Sabbath was appropriate and expressive of the earthly character of their dispensation.

They were then [outwardly] *a redeemed people* journeying through *the wilderness*, but with every provision made by God for them by the way -- the visible token of His presence, and the most complete directions relative to His will and worship given to them. They had, too, *the promise* of a rich inheritance and rest, to animate and cheer their hearts amidst the weariness, conflicts, and perils of the wilderness.

The faithful, full of confidence and rejoicing in hope, spurned the thought of rest in the desert, and were content to be pilgrims and strangers till they possessed the land. The unbelieving and distrustful became fearful of heart, and were ready to return to Egypt, despising the glorious prospects God had set before them.

Israel’s position in the wilderness then answers to the position of Christianity in the world. Redeemed to God, called to count the world in which they are as a wilderness, and to be strangers and pilgrims in it, but with a blessed and glorious *hope* before them.

The difference is this -- that Israel was called to *earthly* blessings and an earthly hope; Christians are called to spiritual blessings and a *heavenly* hope. But the Hope separated their hearts from all around -- gave the character to their walk and position in the wilderness; and thus, where faith was in exercise, they serve as a pattern and example to the saints now; or their unbelief serves as a warning lest any should fall, and so come short of God’s rest.

Seeing then, as believers in the Lord Jesus, as “*partakers of the heavenly calling*,” what kind of hope is given to us, we are taught that our place is “without the camp bearing His reproach” (Ex. 13). The principles of our calling will surely lead to separation from this evil world, not merely from its ungodliness, excess, and folly, but from its whole course and current, its schemes, politics, and glory, knowing that all is soon to be dissolved, and that our kingdom is one that cannot be moved.

We learn from this Epistle what power this heavenly hope had over the lives and conversation of these early Christians; they “endured a great fight of afflictions. . . were made a gazing-stock, both by reproaches and afflictions. . . . took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing” that they had “in heaven a better and an enduring substance” (Heb. 10:32-34).<sup>2</sup>

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2. The statements made concerning “*the rest*” in [Hebrews] chapters 3 and 4 and in chapter 11 are well worthy of notice.

The Lord brought Israel into the Promised Land, and blessed them in it, notwithstanding their forfeiture of every blessing by making the calf, and their subsequent rebellions; but for all that, it was not “His rest,” nor could it be upon the terms and covenant they agreed to take it, conditional upon their obedience; for He can find rest alone in the provisions of His own grace. This rest of God in them and the Land is yet future, and cannot be till Israel is restored, and all the promises made to Abraham are fulfilled, through the blood of the Mediator of the New Covenant.

This is yet future, as well as the heavenly inheritance of Christians, so that it can be said to us, “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.”

But of Israel it might be asked, Had they not rest when brought into Canaan? They had in measure; but it was not *God’s rest*; “For if Joshua had given them rest, then would he [David] not have spoken of another day” (Heb. 4:8); and this was spoken by David at least four hundred years after Joshua had brought them into the Land, proving that God looked upon the rest as yet future. So David himself felt at the close of his career: -- “For we are strangers before Thee, and sojourners as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding” (1 Chron. 29:15). And the faith of many of the saints from Abraham onwards seemed to have looked beyond the *dispensational* and *national promises* to Israel to a heavenly hope, “a better country, that is, a heavenly” -- “a city which hath foundations” -- “a better resurrection,” and so walked individually as pilgrims and strangers, suffering from the world, despising its pleasures and glory, and thus become a more direct example to us; but if these are not enough, let us “consider Him,” even Jesus, the Prince of faith, who for

(continued...)

## Our Worship

The second division of the subject leads to the consideration of the bearing which the truth of “*the Heavenly Calling*” has upon our *worship*.

Here again we must remember the prominent features of Israel’s worship, and the very strong hold which all the offices and ordinances connected with it had over their minds and affections. We can well understand this: --

1. Because they were of Divine appointment, and sacred in their eyes.
2. They were the tokens of God’s special favor to them as His nation and people.
3. Thirdly. They were associated with every domestic and social thought and feeling from infancy.
4. From the strong hold which outward ordinances have over the natural mind -- the tendency of the human heart, when at all exercised in conscience, to seek satisfaction and relief in that which is obvious to sense. And this is often the case, even after the soul has been long exercised, and found, through bitter experience, that it is not by works of righteousness that man can be made meet for the presence of a Just and Holy God; yet the poor heart, clinging to everything but simple faith, will turn and seek to find its rest and meetness for God in ordinances. Such was the case in the early Church. Circumcision was maintained by some to be necessary to salvation; and in our day Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are declared to be as necessary -- the mind of the Lord in these institutions being mistaken altogether.

Remembering, then, this tendency of the flesh, and the former habits and associations of these Hebrews, at once we see the danger they were in, if *faith* declined, to turn again to those shadows and beggarly elements as they are called, and to forget how they were fulfilled and taken up by Christ in His Person, Sacrifice, and Offices.

That there were symptoms of this declension is very evident from the whole character of the Epistle, and from the solemn warnings and searching exhortations given unto them; but the Apostle does more; he takes the greatest pains to enlighten their understanding, and to give a right direction to their deep-rooted associations in all those points connected with their consciences and service.

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(...continued)

the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

We have then to bear in mind, “that this is not our rest, it is polluted,” and walk accordingly, not in self-enjoyment and establishment, but hastening through the world, thankful for the rest our souls have now by faith in Christ, but still waiting for the rest of God.

## Conducting the Worship

### THE POINTS INVOLVED

It will be well to notice what these points were, which were so essential and absolutely necessary for conducting the worship according to the order of the tabernacle established by God.

They were as follows, though the first and indeed the last were not immediately requisite in the routine of the worship, part of the Priest’s service being to inquire of the Lord.

1. A **Prophet** who communicated the word of the Lord to them.
2. A **High Priest** who appeared before the Lord for them -- the priests who ministered subordinately.
3. A **Tabernacle** wherein the priests ministered and wherein the Lord appeared.
4. The **Sacrifice and Blood**, the ground of the priest’s appearing before God for them.
5. The **Altar** which sanctified every sacrifice and gift.
6. A **Mediator**, the Securer of all their hopes and blessings.

Now the Apostle does not weaken one of these associations in connection with the worship and service of God -- all would be lifeless and powerless without them; but he explains and points out to them how the *sacrifice* had been met by Christ, that He had become their Great *High Priest*, and that the place of his ministration for them was not in the *earthly* tabernacle, but *in heaven* where they must now by faith draw nigh and worship God through Him.

This will be more clearly seen by following the argument of the Apostle upon each of these points.

### 1. PROPHET OR APOSTLE

God had in times past spoken by the Prophets: in these last days He had spoken by His Son.

He, who was the brightness of God’s glory, the Creator, Sustainer and Heir of all things, came from Heaven to declare the “great salvation.” He was God’s Apostle: hence the increased responsibility believers are under to give heed to what is spoken, and the force of the exhortation, “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of *the Heavenly Calling*, consider the Apostle . . . of our profession Christ Jesus.”

God *had* communicated His will from the *Earth*, but now from *Heaven*; so much sorer the punishment shall those be thought worthy of who turn away from such grace and condescension.

“See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on Earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from *Heaven*” (Heb. 12:25). God speaking from Heaven by

His Son as Apostle, is the first truth of “*the Heavenly Calling*.”

He may still be considered as speaking from Heaven; for that which He first spoke by the Lord was confirmed by those who heard Him, “God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost” (Heb. 2:3, 4).

## 2. HIGH PRIEST

A clear understanding of what Priesthood really is, is deeply necessary for our souls’ daily experience.

The communication of the word of the Lord by a *Prophet* or *Apostle* is one thing; but the worship and intercourse between the people and the Lord is another: this was effected through the *Priest*.

The Prophet speaks to man from God -- the Priest speaks to God for man -- the Prophet had oft to plead for God with man; but the Priesthood to plead for man with God.

But the most simple definition of Priesthood is given in Heb. 5:1, 2. A Priest is one “taken from among men and ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins, who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.”

A few more passages cast additional light upon this office:

“Take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to me in the Priest’s office . . . And they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons” (Ex. 28:1, 4). “Aaron shall bear their [the children of Israel’s] names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial” (v. 12) also he “shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart when he goeth in to the Holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually” (v. 29). The plate of gold upon the mitre “shall be upon Aaron’s forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the Holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord” (v. 38).

And the Lord said unto Aaron, “Thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the Tabernacle of Witness” (Num. 18:2).

“Thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest’s office for every thing of the altar, and within the vail; and ye shall serve: . . . and the stranger that *cometh nigh* shall be put to death” (ver. 7).

Those only “whom he hath chosen will he cause to *come near* unto him” (Num. 16:5). “No stranger which is not of the seed of Aaron [shall] *come near* to offer incense before the Lord” (v. 40). “*Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh* the tabernacle of the congregation” (Num. 18:22).

While all the priests had constant access into the Tabernacle, the High Priest alone entered within the vail where the Lord appeared in the cloud upon the mercy-seat; and that only once every year, when reconciliation was made, “because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel” (Lev. 16).

These will suffice to shew us that the priests were a favored class of the people; they had nearer access to God than the people; they made reconciliation for them, presented their gifts. The High Priest bore their burdens, carried them on his heart before the Lord, hallowed, their holy gifts; that they might be accepted -- decided who were clean (Lev. 13 and 14); pronounced the blessing upon them (Lev. 9:22, and Num. 6:22-27); in fact, was the one through whom their worship and service were presented to God, and who stood as their representative before God. No wonder, then, that an Israelite should so look for and lean upon the service of the Priest. The Apostle would not weaken this dependance, but leads their minds to Christ their High Priest in the Heavens, and shows them how it is no earthly priesthood now they have to do with, “For if he were on earth he should not be a Priest.” The believer, delivered now from the law, knows of no priest or order of men between him and God, or that he stands in need of any one service being performed for him.

How forcible then the exhortation, “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of *the Heavenly Calling*, consider the . . . *High Priest* of our profession, *Christ Jesus*.”

A few words as to his qualifications for this office: they are well calculated to meet the feelings, and to give confidence and comfort to the souls of believers, especially to Hebrew converts.

The Son laid aside his Glory and became a man to be an Apostle. This was also needful to fit him to be a Priest; for a priest is one “taken from among *men*.” He has gone back into Glory, still a man, to be a Priest.

Having passed through all the circumstances of suffering which sin had entailed upon man, “made flesh and blood,” “encompassed with infirmity” and weakness; “tempted though without sin,” “tasted death,” “having learnt obedience by the things which he suffered,” known what it was to “offer up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears”; he is in every respect personally qualified for his office, for “he *can have* compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way”; and thus in all things made like unto his brethren, can be reckoned on as a merciful and faithful High Priest.

An Israelite could have had no confidence in a priest not “called of God.” “So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a High Priest.” . . . but was “called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec” (Heb. 5:10). There was much in this high order of Priesthood to give more confidence and security to the believer than in Aaron’s.

In the first place, it was of higher order; for

Melchisedec was greater than Abraham. He was both King and Priest -- it was an unchangeable Priesthood -- therefore able to save to the end, "*ever living* to make intercession" -- made "after the power of an endless life" by the oath of God (7) -- the surety also of a better covenant than that of the Law.

The poor weak failing or defiled Israelite had often to turn to the Priest, to be cleansed and fitted to resume his place in the camp, or his service before the Tabernacle; and oft indeed has the believer in Jesus to turn to him, his High Priest in the heavens, for sympathy and grace to help, for healing and restoration of soul, and renewed communion with God.

The heavenly Priesthood of Christ is the second prominent truth of "*the Heavenly Calling*."

### 3. TABERNACLE

But *where* does Jesus exercise this service of Priesthood? Not upon earth: "for if he were on earth he should not be a Priest" (Heb. 8:4); but "on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the *Heavens*; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the *true tabernacle*, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb. 8:1, 2); "he is passed into the *heavens*" (Heb. 4:14). The Lord no longer appears in the cloud in the earthly tabernacle (Ex. 25:22; 39:43-45; 40: 34-38; Lev. 16:2). His Glory has been withdrawn from thence, where he was wont to meet his people (Ezek. 1 and 10); and now the only meeting-place is in *heaven*, where in faith the worshiper through Jesus must draw nigh.

### 4. THE SACRIFICE AND BLOOD

But there is now an essential point to be considered in connection with this office. What was his *title* to stand in the presence of God for others? The proof that their sin was put away. Lev. 16 explains all this in type, and Hebrews 9 is the application of that chapter to Christ and his work.

The High Priest under the Law had **every year** to make atonement for the sins of the people, and he could only appear within the vail before the Lord with blood, which he sprinkled upon the Mercy-seat: but Christ entered in **once** by His own blood, having obtained redemption, not for a year, but *eternal redemption* for us. "Once in the end of the world [age] hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

Jesus the Son of God, in virtue of his own righteousness, had ever free access into Heaven and the throne of God; but if he is to appear there as the representative of others, he must produce the proof of their sins being put away, that the sacred Holiness of God may be maintained while he thus deals in mercy with the sinner. Hence the need of atonement and the accomplished redemption of the people, before the priest could appear in the presence of God for them.

Jesus' own blood is his full and perfect title to exercise this position and service for his people before God, and by it He will also reconcile the heavens and the earth (Heb. 9:23; Col. 1:20).

There is still another point that the soul of the worshiper

needs to be set at rest about. He maybe satisfied as to the perfect qualifications of Christ for the office -- that he was duly "called of God" to it -- of its high order, dignity, and peculiar power -- of his full title to execute it; but what is all this to one who is in any uncertainty about his own personal condition before God. This was felt under the law: the conscience had not rest, neither of priest nor people, "it could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to *the conscience*" (Heb. 9:9). They never made "the comers thereunto *perfect*, because, if *once purged*, [they] should have had no more conscience of sins" (Heb. 10:1, 2).

Now, how is this met? We learn from Acts 26 who the sanctified are, "sanctified by faith that is in me." Whenever there is faith in Jesus, that person is sanctified. By the will of God "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all," and for *ever*. "For by one offering he hath perfected for *ever* them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:10, 14).

Here we learn who are sanctified -- those who believe in Jesus; through what means they are sanctified -- the offering of His body; and then, lest a fear might arise as to the loss of this blessing, it is written, "*perfected forever*." The conscience purged, and the testimony of the Holy Ghost, "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

Then these two things are provided for the worshiper. The blood of Jesus as his personal confidence to enter; and Jesus Himself, with all the proof that He has put away sin, standing there ready to receive him. Oh then the force of the word, "Let us draw near with a true heart, in *full assurance of faith*, having our beam sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed in pure water." Let us as duly consecrated priests, enter even within the veil, and, through our great High Priest, worship our God with reverence and godly fear.

### 5. THE ALTAR

Every sacrifice and gift, under the law, was brought to the altar. It was there the blood was shed, and from thence the sweet savor ascended. It sanctified every gift -- Whatsoever toucheth it shall be holy (Exod. 29:37; Matt. 23).

Now the Apostle shows that those who serve the Tabernacle have no right to the Altar, which the believer in Jesus has communion with. That He might sanctify the people by His own blood, He suffered without the gate. Jesus Himself is the altar now; and He it is that sanctifies us, and every gift that is presented to God. No worship or service of any amount is accepted but through Him and His work. His is the true altar: "By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually; that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name; but to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. 13:10-16).

### 6. MEDIATOR

A few brief remarks before closing upon the Mediatorship of Christ.

We read that a change in the order of the priesthood necessarily made a change of the law; that there was a disannulling of it, because it made nothing perfect; but then there was the bringing in of a better hope (Heb. 7:12, 18, 19). This is secured in Jesus -- a Priest after the order of Melchisedec -- who has entered within the veil, and is made the surety of a better covenant.

The Jews ought to have been expecting this new covenant: for, if a *new* was spoken of, they should have been prepared for the passing away of *the old* (Heb. 8:6). This covenant was strictly made with the *house of Israel*, and with the *house of Judah*<sup>3</sup> (Heb. 8:8); and in whatever measure Christians may share some of its blessings, it applies to Israel, and will be confirmed to them upon their restoration, "when the Redeemer shall come to Zion." The Apostle appears to refer to it here to draw the minds of the Jewish converts away from the old covenant and its ordinances, and to lead them to see that Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant; "and that, by means of death [His death] for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they who are called might receive the promise of *eternal inheritance*."

I have now gone through what appears to me to be the prominent characteristics of "*the heavenly calling*," and have endeavored to show its practical bearing both upon the walk and worship of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

How entirely this truth grounds our souls in grace. We are exhorted to hold fast grace, and encouraged to put confidence in God as the God of grace, under all afflictions, contradiction of sinners, and chastenings of his loving hand; and to remember that we are not come unto the mount where He was displaying Himself as a consuming fire, and in all the tokens of terrible majesty; but that we are come "unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God the *heavenly Jerusalem*" etc.

It gives, then, the character to our supports and consolations under affliction and suffering -- furnishes us with clear principles to regulate our walk; and while it forbids us to think of rest or settlement in the world, and points out our path as pilgrims and strangers in it, without the camp, bearing Christ's reproach, it presents to us, as our hope, a kingdom which cannot be moved -- a heavenly inheritance.

### SOME PRACTICAL POINTS

We are called, then, to walk by faith, and to worship God in faith. When this is understood, there will be no attempt to frame the worship after the pattern of Jewish observances.

Those who minister the word will neither wish to take, or

be forced into, the position of the priests of old, and form a distinct class, or order of men between the congregation and God; but all worship together in the privilege of that universal priesthood and liberty, alike common to all believers.

The feeling of veneration towards the building which affords convenience to the assembly, will vanish along with its usual appellation, "the house of God;" and the thoughts will be carried upward, within the veil, to the building not made with hands -- even heaven itself, the throne of the Majesty on high. No visible altar will be needed. Christ within the veil hallows the worship; and by Him we offer praise and thanksgiving and good works, the only sacrifices which we know are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Many of the Lord's people do not see the injurious tendency of these external things; but I am satisfied they tend to weaken faith in invisible objects. They may assist the imagination, and produce feelings of veneration, but will not quicken the conscience in the presence of God. Without them, the worship will doubtless be less imposing and attractive to the natural mind, but will be more "in spirit and in truth."

The Heavenly Calling overturns them all, by presenting to our faith the Object to which they point.

If this blessed truth is clearly understood, the perfect acceptance and everlasting security of the believer are known, for the priesthood of Christ involves them; also, full deliverance from the law, whether as to justification, or as a rule of life -- Christ being, not only our Savior, but perfect pattern and example. May we know more of Him, and what it is to be "partakers of *the Heavenly Calling*"!

## *What is Meant by "The Mystery" and What Connection is There Between it and "The Heavenly Calling"?*

From the remarks which have already been made, it has been shown that the calling of God's people derives its character from the nature of their blessings, and from the nature of the hope set before them.

The earthly blessings and promises given to the Israelites, made theirs an *earthly calling*.

The spiritual blessings in *heavenly* places, and the *heavenly* hope of believers in the Lord Jesus make theirs a *heavenly calling*.

But there is a truth relating to the Church, and its relationship with Christ, and standing before God *in Him*, of a very special character opening out privileges and of even a *higher order* than are spoken of in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

3. {Those Christians who practice spiritual alchemy transmute the house of Judah and of Israel, in this passage, to mean the church of God. With such a type of "interpretation," a totally different meaning than intended can be foisted on this passage.}

These also necessarily make the calling of the Church heavenly, though that precise term not found in those scriptures which refer to it.

It is called “**the Mystery**”; and I am perfectly satisfied that the true character of the Church cannot be known if there be not a clear perception of the distinctive truths involved in this term.

I will endeavor briefly to point out, under different heads, what appears to me of deep practical importance to observe relative to “*The Mystery*.”

1. The character and high standing of the Church are involved in it.
2. The *highest* motives to a holy and spiritual *walk* are drawn from it.
3. *Worship* and *Ministry* are set in their true light by it.
4. The interpretation, and right application of scripture, depends upon attention to its distinct features.

The Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians contain the fullest and most direct statements concerning the mystery, though it is also referred to in other scriptures.

The truths embraced by it I would now consider.

In Eph. 1:8, etc., we read that God “hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us **the mystery of his will**.” What this is, is explained in the tenth verse, viz.: “That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in *heaven*, and which are in *earth*; even in him.” Thus, “*the mystery of his will*” embraces God’s complete purpose of blessing in both of these spheres.

But the apostle speaks, after this, of Christ and the Church, and saying, “this is a great mystery” (Eph. 5:32); and throughout these Epistles, and other scriptures, where he uses this term, it is with reference to those truths immediately connected with the Church. Let us examine this:

### 1. THE CHARACTER AND HIGH STANDING OF THE CHURCH ARE INVOLVED IN THE MYSTERY

These Epistles declare, in common with other scriptures, the redemption, reconciliation, forgiveness of sins through the blood of the cross, and heavenly hope of believers in Christ, but upon peculiar and distinct ground -- not merely that Christ died for us, but that we died with him, and are risen with him.

“*Buried with him* in baptism, wherein ye are also *risen with him* (Col. 2:12).

“If ye then be *risen* with Christ . . . For ye are *dead*, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is *our life*, shall appear” (Col. 3:1, 3, 4).

God “hath *quickened us together* with Christ; . . . and hath *raised us up together*, and made us *sit together* in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:5, 6; see also Col. 2:13, 20).

We learn from these scriptures, that the Church is spoken of as having died with Christ, risen with him, and made to sit in heavenly places in him -- made alive with him, yea, that he is our life. This is the essential and prominent feature of the mystery. *Life* in Christ -- *one* with our risen Lord.

“We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones . . . They two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church” (Eph. 5:30-32).

“He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit” (1 Cor. 6:17).

The blessings of the Church are *spiritual*, her portion in *heavenly* places in Christ” (Eph. 1:3).

She is a witness of the manifold wisdom of God, to principalities and powers in *heavenly* places” (Eph. 3:10).

Her spiritual conflicts are with wicked spirits in *heavenly* places (see margin Eph. 6:12). These mark her heavenly character; but there are other privileges to notice : --

The church was chosen in Christ *before the foundation of the world* -- before *time* commenced its course (Eph. 1:4; see also 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 1:2): not merely an elect body, but her election traced to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 3:11).

“Predestinated unto the adoption of children” (Eph. 1:5). Before God in all the perfectness and love of Christ. “Complete in him” (Col. 2:10). “Accepted in the beloved” (Eph. 1:6).

Sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, unto the day redemption” (Eph. 1:13, and 4:30).

“Builded together for *an habitation of God* through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:22).

These are the wonderful privileges of the Church, opened to us by the revelation of the mystery. Christ is presented to us in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in all our circumstances of weakness and sorrow down here; or ministering for us in heaven above, while we are passing through the wilderness; but, by the revelation of the mystery, we learn we are one with Christ in life and blessing, and set in him in heaven above; this, while a fact, is known to us by faith.

Paul was the chosen instrument to make known this “Mystery” to the Church. To him was committed this dispensation of the grace of God, as the following passages declare : --

“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given *to me* for you, to fulfil the word of God; even *the mystery* which **hath been hid** from *ages and from generations*, but *now* is made manifest to his saints” (Col. 1:25, 26).

Again, (Eph. 3:2-5) “If ye have heard of the *dispensation of the grace of God* which is given me to youward: how that by revelation he made known unto me *the mystery* . . . which in other ages was **not made known** unto the sons of men, as it is *now revealed* unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.”

He was to make all men see what was the “fellowship of *the mystery*, which from the beginning of the world **hath been hid**

in God.” But there is another feature of the mystery, which the apostle takes special pains to make clear, and which, if overlooked, would leave us with a defective apprehension of the character of the Church, and of the scope of the mystery.

It is this: Who are the parties which constitute this body, brought into union with the Lord Jesus Christ? And to answer this satisfactorily, we must consider past and future purposes of God with reference to Israel; it is by the strong *contrast* between Israel’s order of blessing and the Church’s, that the distinct character of the latter stands out in its preeminence before the mind.

It was clearly revealed, that Israel was to be the centre of all God’s dealings and arrangements with the *Earth*, (Deut. 32:8). We have seen how they were acknowledged by God as His peculiar people (Ex. 19:5, 6); of the dominion promised them over other nations, and the earthly character of their blessings (Deut. 28:1-13).

And though now they are “Lo Ami,” and scattered over the world, it is distinctly revealed they shall be restored, forgiven, and every promise made to them fulfilled. “The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob” (Isa. 59:20, 21). Israel shall then stand in pre-eminence of glory as a nation, Gentiles shall bow down before them, and serve them, and the nation that will not serve them shall perish” (Isa. 9:12). Jerusalem shall also be the centre of true worship. “And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3). “My tabernacle also shall be with them, yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore” (Ezek. 37:27, 28). Pre-eminent in national greatness and glory, pre-eminent in religious privileges, they will still remain a *distinct people*, while the truth and blessing flows from Jerusalem, and “the Earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” -- “And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious” (Isa. 11:10).

I need not multiply passages, as this is a truth extensively acknowledged. Christ is the source of all this blessing both to Israel and the Gentiles. “He is the Redeemer of Israel,” the Mediator of the New Covenant to them; but He is also given to be “a light to the Gentiles,” and God’s salvation to the ends of the Earth (Isa. 49:6, 7).

The Prophets of old speak expressly upon these two points. *This is the order of the future blessing* -- the distinction still existing amidst the universal blessing, and ever maintained between Jew and Gentile.

Now the peculiar character of “*The Mystery*” sets all this aside during the dispensation of the Mystery.

Israel, having rejected Christ, is cast down from her high privilege for a season, and stands upon the common level of all sinners.

“The preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery” addresses all, Jew and Gentile, as lost sinners; and gathers from both parties a body of believers, who are brought into the same privileges, partakers of the same Life, of the same promises in Christ, of the same body, and are all alike fellow-heirs. Those who were afar off [Gentiles], and those who were near [Jews], have now equal access through Christ “by one spirit unto the Father”: He “hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition . . . for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace: and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them which were nigh,” etc. (Eph. 2:14-17). Now therefore ye [Gentiles] are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”

Not brought into Jewish privileges, but both now fellow-citizens in those new blessings just before described. All this was strange to the ears of the Jewish believers, ah, even at first to the Apostles; it was so contrary to the order of blessing they looked for.

They were slow to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles at all. Peter was led to do it by the vision of the sheet and his interview with Cornelius, and was afterwards called to an account for it by the Church at Jerusalem, though subsequently they rejoiced “that God had also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life” (Acts 11:18).

This makes it additionally clear that *The Mystery* was not known to the early pentecostal Church. The Gospel declaring the death and resurrection of Jesus, and His exaltation as Lord and Christ, salvation through His name, forgiveness of sins, and the promise of the Holy Ghost to all who believed, was preached; but it was reserved for Paul, after Jerusalem had rejected the testimony presented to her, to unfold the high and peculiar privileges into which believers were now brought.

The prominent features of The Mystery, then, which constitute the real character of the Church are: partakers of the Resurrection-life of Christ, risen with Him, *seated in heavenly places* in Him, blessed with all *spiritual* blessings in *heavenly places* in Him, witness to those in *heavenly places*; conflict with wicked spirits in *heavenly places*; the Hope of *heavenly* Glory; the distinction between Jew and Gentile gone, both of one body, and that body the dwelling place of the Holy Ghost.

These are points which cannot be neglected without impairing the integrity of “*The Mystery*.”

Most blessed is the truth taught us in the Epistle to the Hebrews; in many respects more necessary for our daily experience than any other part of Scripture, yet the full privileges and peculiar character of the church are not taught there: for instance, while it treats so largely of the “Heavenly Calling,” not one principle or truth connected with it would be affected or weakened, had no Gentile been brought into its blessings.

But the Gentiles form one of the constituent parts of “*The Mystery*,” and the place they occupy in it must be marked, to enter into its character.

## 2. THE HIGHER MOTIVES TO A HOLY AND SPIRITUAL WALK ARE DRAWN FROM IT

Because we learn by it, that we are *dead* and *risen men* -- that we are one with Christ -- "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"; that we possess a life, a new nature, which can find fellowship alone with him "who is our life." We are called then to walk as heavenly men, yet upon earth. How forcible is the Scripture upon this point.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, *seek those things which are above*, . . . *set your affections* upon things *above*, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God . . . Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth" (Col. 3:1-5; see also Rom. 6).

If the apostle exhorts us not to lie one to another, it is upon the ground of the nature of the new life and of the oneness of the body -- "seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3:9, 10) . . . "which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore put away lying . . . for we are members one of another" (Eph. 4:24, 25).

Again, Christ's love to the church and his oneness with it as his body, is the blessed motive urged upon the husband to love and cherish his wife as his own flesh. The submission of the church to Christ is the pattern presented to the wife of subjection to her husband (Eph. 5:22, etc.).

The Church being the habitation of God through the Spirit and our bodies the temple of the Holy Ghost, what a motive to glorify God in our body and spirit, and with what care and godly fear should we walk lest we grieve the Holy Spirit whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption (1 Cor. 6:18, 19; Eph. 4:30).

We learn specially by "The Mystery" the sovereign grace of our God. We are brought into its blessings "to the praise of the glory of his grace . . . according to the riches of his grace . . . By grace ye are saved." Consequently the principles of grace are to regulate our walk here -- praying for our enemies, doing good to them who hate us, resisting not evil, forgiving injuries, "even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven" us.

From what has been advanced, it will be seen how this truth bears upon our walk in every respect. What a separative power there is in it, if we have learnt by the principles of "The Heavenly Calling," that our path in the world is that of pilgrims and strangers, that we can take no part in its politics and schemes, how much more when we learn we are dead to the world and are heavenly men, though in it.

It does not take us out of the relationship in which God has set us, or teach us to be recluses and not perform the duties assigned us, but to act upon God's principles in doing them. It is true that we shall not be able to carry his principles into fellowship with the world; the men of this world will not care for us if we were to attempt it: we could

not unite with them without lowering the holy standard given to us; but, standing apart from its course and energy and baseless expectations, our minds will be kept free from its confusion and distractions, and be better able to express Christ in all our ways, Christ being ours in "*the High Calling of God*," therefore condemns earthly-mindedness, sensual enjoyments, and teaches us to have our conversation in heaven; from whence we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:14).

It is "*a Holy Calling*" (2 Tim. 1:9): "God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (1 Thess. 4:7).

It is a *calling to glory*: "whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2:14) -- "Walk worthy of God who hath called you into his kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:12).

## 3. WORSHIP AND MINISTRY ARE SET IN THEIR TRUE LIGHT BY THE MYSTERY

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the worshipers are called to draw nigh to the Living God, as purged from sin, having boldness through the blood of Jesus, the One who has made reconciliation for them, and is not ashamed to call them brethren, standing in the presence of God for them as their High Priest.

Wonderful and blessed is this, the creature brought nigh to the Living God, his Maker. But we draw nigh in a still more blessed character and relationship as taught by "The Mystery"; as children we have access to God as our Father. "Accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:6), "in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him" (Eph 3:12). "What manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons [children] of God" (1 John 3:1). Thus, while we should draw nigh in the spirit of adoption in childlike confidence, our hearts alive to all the happy affections and thoughts associated in that relationship, yet with reverence and awe, never forgetting that while sons we are still creatures in the presence of Him who is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises -- the Eternal God!

The Holy Ghost is the power of our worship. "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2:18). "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Eph. 4:18).

Praying in the Holy Ghost (Jude 19). We can discern now, by the light of the Mystery, the drift of the Lord's conversation to the woman of Samaria, when he was speaking of the true character of worship and the gift of the Spirit.

But the basis of all worship is reconciliation and peace with God. How fully this is established by "the Mystery." If one with Christ, quickened and risen with him, then the question about acceptance is for ever settled. When faith has not apprehended this, and the finished work of Christ is not seen, the flesh will work and seek to find something else to rest in.

It would appear the Colossians needed to be warned



against any who might beguile them with enticing words; and he shows how the truth of “the Mystery” overthrows all their reasoning.

He had great conflict for them, “that their hearts might be comforted, being *knit together* in love unto all riches of the *full assurance of understanding*, to the *acknowledgment of the Mystery of God*, and of the Father, and of Christ.”<sup>4</sup>

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. 2:2, 8).

We may consider this warning under four distinct heads.

1. Philosophy, or human wisdom and reasoning.
2. Vain deceit -- Superstition.
3. Tradition, or the commandments of men.
4. Rudiments of the world -- Ordinances.

1. **Philosophy** would determine what is or is not pleasing to God by human reasoning, instead of receiving in humble faith what God has revealed. It seeks to exalt the powers of man’s mind, and in pride of heart would hide from itself the corruption of human nature and the miserable ruined condition into which sin has plunged him.

2. **Vain deceit.** Superstition admits perhaps the ruin; but devises a way of its own to remedy the evil. Philosophy tends to infidelity, though it may end in superstition, if conscience becomes alarmed.

“Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.”

This is the way superstition works -- great apparent humility -- veneration for angels. God says, He is the only One to be worshiped. Christ is the only Mediator; and of Him it was said, “Let all the angels of God worship him;” but superstition, vainly puffed up by its fleshly mind, turns to worship and seek the aid of those who are said to be “ministering spirits”; and in worshipping them would fain persuade itself it is exhibiting humility -- but Christ is slighted in it all. Another form superstition assumes is neglecting or punishing the body; but enough has been said to mark its character and workings; it is altogether intruding into things not seen -- it has a show of wisdom in will-worship, but springs from the depraved heart “to the satisfying of the flesh” (Col. 2:18-23).

The advocates of such a system may appear to be of deep sanctity, and the severity of their discipline and self denial, and their solemn and imposing worship, calculated to produce an effect and excite the veneration of the natural mind; but the spiritual man discerns its true character “the flesh,” and

knows that it is all in the place of Christ and His work, and the absence of simple faith in Him and His precious blood.

3. **Tradition**, or the “commandments of men,” may either enforce what God once appointed, the ordinances of the Law; or seek to make that binding for which there is no authority in Scripture. The Lord gives its character and results in Mark 7.

Let anything of man become authority, and binding upon the conscience; however simple and harmless it may appear, that moment it takes the place God and His Word should have in the soul, and becomes vain worship, weakens the authority of God’s Word, and prepares the mind for laying it aside, and for formality (Mark 7:1-8). But mark the next stage that tradition leads to. Having put the commands of men upon a level with the commands of God, it soon lays aside the latter, and ends in establishing something which is in direct contradiction to God’s Word, making it of none effect, and rejecting the commandment of God, that the commandments of men may be observed. The two come into collision. God commands children to honor their father and mother: tradition says, “No, we are free to help them or not” (Mark 7:1-13).

4. **Rudiments of the world, ordinances.** Enough has been said before to show the strong tendency of the heart, and the reason it so cleaves to ordinances.

The Apostle appears to have before his mind a statement very prevalent in those days: “Unless ye be circumcised and keep the Law ye cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1). Mark how the truth of the Mystery at once delivers the soul from such teaching. Why, “*Ye are circumcised . . . by the circumcision of Christ . . . buried with Him . . . risen with Him . . . quickened together with Him*, having forgiven you all trespasses. Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances . . . and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross” (Col. 2:11-14). What a triumphant answer to such teachers! Meats, drinks, holydays, new moon, or sabbaths, all disposed of by the same truth; they are the shadows of things to come; but the body is of Christ. “Ye are complete in Him,” He is the great ordinance, and “If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances” (Col. 2:20)?

In considering the light which the Mystery casts upon *Ministry*, there are two things to be borne in mind.

1. The fullness of Christ, the *Head* of the body the Church.
2. And that the Church is the habitation of God through the Spirit.

1. *Christ is not only Head of the Church, but Head over all things to the Church.* Having triumphed over all powers, He is the Head of all principality and power, and “in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Eph. 1:21, 22; Col. 2:9, 10).

“When He ascended up on high He led captivity captive,

4. {J. N. Darby’s translation of this reads: “. . . unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to [the] full knowledge of the mystery of God: in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge.”}

and gave gifts unto men.” He “ascended up far above all heavens, that *He might fill all things*, and He gave . . . Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the saints,” etc., for their preservation from seducers, and for their growth up to Him in all things, who is the Head. “From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love” (Eph. 4:8-16).

The same in Col. 2:19, we see how every thing for the nourishment and unity of the body and for its increase with the increase of God, flows from Christ the Head. When this is not known, or as soon as faith becomes weak, human power, wisdom, and qualifications are exalted; and instead of faith in the fullness of the Head, men lean upon them.

2. *There is one body and one Spirit.* -- The Holy Ghost dwells in the body; and it is from His energy and operations, “dividing to every man severally as he will,” by His immediate and direct action, that all ministries flow.

The operations of the Spirit are more fully taught in 1 Cor. 12; while in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians we are led to see more of the fullness of the Head.

The basis of all ministry then, is: *the fullness of the Head*, and the *development of the operations of the Holy Ghost* dwelling in the body.

There is such an intimate connection between the real character of the Church and Ministry, that defective views of the one would be very likely to lead to imperfect views of the other.

#### 4. THE INTERPRETATION AND RIGHT APPLICATION OF SCRIPTURE DEPEND UPON ATTENTION TO ITS DISTINCT FEATURES

It cannot be denied that the Scriptures give us the history of a holy faithful people, suffering for righteousness’ sake, who cannot be standing in the privileges of the Church. If it were said, These Scriptures refer to the exercise of some of God’s people previous to Christ; well, mark their distinct character: They feel God’s hand is heavy upon them, that they are suffering for their iniquities (though now most true in heart to God); they call upon Him not to cast them off for ever, no longer to hide his face, but to purge them from their sins; clearly they are not standing in the position or knowledge of reconciliation and acceptance. At once, then, we see how unsuitable such language would be in the lips of those who stand in union with Christ, and in all the favor and acceptance which The Mystery teaches us we are set in. While we may derive much instruction and profit, and learn much of God and his ways in them, if our experience answered to theirs, we should have got off the ground of grace altogether. Hence the necessity of holding fast the principles of our calling, that we do not misapply such scriptures to the injury of souls.

Further, they pray for vengeance upon their enemies --

call down God’s righteous judgment upon them. All this is the very opposite to the state of heart of those who know God’s grace, and are commanded even to act in grace to all, and to pray for their enemies.

Their hopes are **earthly** -- the fulfillment of God’s promises made to the Fathers. These are not what sustain our souls in affliction, but the **Heavenly** Hope set before us. We see what the expectations of a godly Jew were in Zechariah’s praise, and what he looked for by the truth of Christ (Luke 1:68-79). We look for his coming again to receive us unto himself, to enter the Father’s mansions. While he tarries, ‘tis the time of tribulation: it may vary as to intensity; but the characteristic portion of the Church as to earth is tribulation. “In the world ye shall have tribulation.”

Now if what I have said concerning certain Scriptures in their application to saints of old, if they describe the experience of saints who are yet to use them previous to the appearing in glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, and who find deliverance and acceptance at his coming -- how careful we must be not to confound them with the Church, nor conclude because of their faith and devotedness that they are one with the Church. I allude specially to the Prophets and Psalms, though there are other scriptures that these remarks apply to, which will be readily discerned by those exercised upon these. I have now gone through what appears to me to be necessary to note and keep before our minds in relation to the Heavenly Calling and the Mystery. By the light of the latter, we see what was in the Lord’s mind in his conversation with his disciples, as recorded by John, and the additional instruction, specially chapters 14-16 concerning the presence and office of the Holy Ghost in the Church, which we need well to consider in connection with worship and ministry.

The first epistle of John is all in harmony with this subject, leading us to the spring of all our blessings, God’s Love, and the knowledge of it, and our oneness in Christ, the power and spring of the new commandment in us.

*The Present Testimony*, vol. 1 (1849).

## Chapter 7.2

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### *The Calling and Hope of the Christian*

#### *Eph. 1:3-14*

The right application of the truth of the Church in both its calling and its hopes depends, more than many Christians are aware, upon the spiritual condition of the soul. I doubt not, indeed, that spiritual condition has much to do with all apprehension of divine truth, but of this beyond all others, for the simple reason that the Church's privileges are so boundless and so special that the mind of man and even the heart of the believer find no small difficulty in accepting them simply in their integrity. The very conscience of the believer makes a difficulty unless there be a child-like acceptance of the word and grace of God. We can easily understand this; for it is natural even to the believer to mingle the question of his own feelings of acceptance with the reception of the truth of God. He examines himself, but finds only unworthiness; he feels painfully, humiliatingly, day by day, his own shortcomings and positive faults. Such being the fact, it looks a hard thing to receive the astonishing truth that grace has given even him oneness with Christ.

Yet the great distinctive feature of the Christian's calling is found in these very words, "Together with Christ." Sovereign grace can alone account for it. As God claimed and exercised the title, at all times, to bless according to His good pleasure, so now He puts the members of Christ's body in the place that seems good to Him. He looks for unqualified submission in our hearts. And in proportion as we are simple in bowing to God, His grace and truth open far more largely and more distinctly on our souls. Now the bearing of this will soon be seen as I make a few remarks upon the scripture just read. The subject is the Church's calling and hopes -- the latter, of course, in connection with the coming of the Lord. The Holy Ghost opens the subject with a kind of allusion to Israel's place. They were the chosen people, but it was on earth and for the earth. I do not deny that there were elect men in Israel, upon whose hearts brighter hopes dawned. No doubt Abraham was but a sample of the faithful. And indeed in the dealings of God, before there was a people called, there were those who looked by faith beyond the earth, who saw

what is brighter than earthly hopes. But here we have a different character of blessing: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." The heavenly 'places are clearly in contrast with Israel's earthly place. Now Israel looked, and rightly looked, to be thus blessed here below; indeed, it is to disparage the word of God to lose sight of this: God will make it good to them in a future day.

But we ourselves are in the same place as these believers, addressed by the Apostle Paul, -- "Blessed with all spiritual blessings . . . *in Christ*." That little word, "in Christ," is the key to it all. In one sense a Christian is nothing in himself; in Christ he has everything. Let my heart only get hold of this precious truth. Christ now shows what a Christian is in the presence of God. No doubt, besides being the risen man, He is also God, the object of worship, equal with the Father. He has a divine right to all, yet is He pleased to possess all as the glorified man by right of redemption. He came into this world. He had the only claim as man, for He alone had accomplished God's will. He was the perfect manifestation of what man ought to be to God under law, and He was the perfect manifestation of what God is to man in love, He was above law -- it was grace. If the law dealt with evil, it must destroy. Grace takes the supremacy. It shows grace to those who do not deserve it. Christ as under law shewed perfectly what God's will was. Then He manifested what God is to man. It was His place to manifest perfect grace and truth. Christ takes the inheritance neither as man or God only, but as Redeemer. He suffered on the cross that He might have others to share it, others to any, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." It was only in resurrection that the Lord Jesus took all things. When upon earth He did not take the inheritance; He took sorrow, He took shame, He took suffering -- every kind of hatred from man. He took God's judgment about sin. In this He was alone upon the cross, because there the wonderful problem was being solved, how sin could be put away. Christ

abolished sin that God might justly justify, that God might manifest all His character.

Here, however, it is a larger measure than merely justifying. God blesses with all spiritual blessings in Christ. He had never uttered such language before. In the Old Testament there is not such a thought as Christ having members. You have a king reigning in righteousness, and nations blest through Christ that blessed One who will take all things from God. What we have here is quite different. It is God not only pardoning, and not merely justifying, but making Christians to be the members of Christ, of His flesh, and of His bones. Here we have language rising above everything that believers had before redemption. There is no disparagement of the privileges of saints before, but what I am anxious to shew is that Christians are not generally alive to their own privileges.

The first thing to point out is this, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Mark the language. It is God acting in this especial manner of relationship. He means to bless the believer as He blesses Christ. That is, not as Christ is blessed as a divine person -- that would be blasphemy. Here we have what is bestowed upon Him as man in heaven. "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them" is a kindred truth. Christ as the risen man is exalted on high, having glory conferred on Him as the risen man that by the grace of God had died. The risen man is also God, but we must never confound His deity with His humanity. As thus risen He said, "I ascend unto my God and your God, unto my Father and your Father." Here we have His and our God and Father, and the apostle shows that we reap infinite blessing from each of these relationships. As God of our Lord Jesus, He gives us to partake in the divine nature, holy and blameless before Him in love. He means to have men in heaven along with Jesus. To have that blessed glorified man there is not enough. He gives Jesus companions. These companions of His must have, of course, the divine nature morally (2 Pet. 1).

Again, angels are servants: they never rise above the nature of servants. The archangel even never rises above the place of a servant. The angels are called the sons of God in a certain sense, as all men are by virtue of creation. Angels are a spiritual class of beings, but they have not the intimacy of those born of God, the place of children, the Spirit of adoption, &c. Now I call your attention to this, because it is but feebly understood by Christians in general. It is not presumption to know that our sins are forgiven. I would ask any person who knows the name of Christ, who loves Him, on what ground is it that you take the place of a believer? On what ground have you received favor from God? Do you believe in Jesus as One that suffered for sins? I ask you, Has He done the work perfectly or has He not? There is no believer who would not at once answer, Yes -- perfectly. Then as surely as you are a believer, you have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins. If you have

not this forgiveness, *when* can you have it? Christ will not suffer again. Suffering and offering go together. They most go together in the mind of God. Once purged is the word for a Christian -- once, because it has been done perfectly, done for ever. Now, I maintain that it is done for every Christian. Every Christian owes it to Christ to believe unhesitatingly that He has done *perfectly* the work of putting away sin. There may be failures. Far would I be from saying that a believer should not confess failure always. Daily failure calls for daily humbling before God. Still the fact of redemption remains unchanged. Take the case of a child: he may offend and offend grievously, but he remains your child all the same. The more you enforce on him that he is your child, the more is his failure felt, as it is the worse in itself. In the same way, instead of the holding fast our relationship, really weakening the sense of sin, it is the very and only ground of judging it aright. It is that which makes sin to be most exceedingly sinful.

We have here the full roll of Christian privilege. How striking it is in all this passage there is not a word said about our original condition as sinners. In the Epistle to the Romans it is quite another method. In Ephesians 2 we have a deeper character of sin than we have even in Romans -- "*dead in trespasses and sins,*" etc. But first we find God unfolding His counsels which refer to the Christian. It was a purpose of God in Christ before the foundation of the world, entirely apart from man's condition upon earth. We find here the very blessed truth that redemption is no mere remedy, it was the first choice of God. God counseled and determined in Himself, before there were any creatures at all; He determined to have beings in heaven capable of fellowship with Himself and with His Son. Then He allowed man to be *tried* upon earth. This took place with Israel, &c. When the wickedness of the world rose to its height in the cross of Christ, at that very moment when Jew and Gentile united to kill the Lord of glory, God answered their awful conspiracy by bringing out His richest grace. God shewed through and in His Son a salvation that not only meets man ruined upon earth, but that would give man an everlasting portion with Christ in the presence of God. The Church consists not merely of persons pardoned and saved, of people looking to heaven; it has a deeper character of relationship; it implies union with Christ in heaven. This is what God imparts to believers now.

The next thing taken up here is that God not only brings us into this astonishing place of blessing, but opens His secrets: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will." Thus, first of all, He makes us holy in Christ; next, He gives us the place of sons to Himself; and then He makes known to us what He is going to do. And what is that? To put the entire universe under Christ, to have all in heaven, all on earth, put under the glorified man. This is the first part of the secret of God's will; the next is, that the believers now -- all believers in Christ -- are made joint-heirs with Christ over this inheritance. Not that we are the inheritance: the Jewish

people will be a part of the inheritance; but the peculiar character of Christians, that is, they are *heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ*.

As to this, the simple question is, What does scripture say? What is the teaching of God on this head? It is said to be a mystery, which means that which could not be found out by the wit of man, but what can be understood when revealed. "The mystery of Christ" consisted in this -- Christ, the center of all God's dealings, and believers now united to Him. There is nothing wonderful in the Son of God being over all things. God the Father could not be said to confer anything upon God the Son as such: it would deny His supreme deity. But yet it is perfectly certain from scripture that Jesus now receives all from God the Father. A man is at the right hand of God! -- a man is the object of heaven's delight and adoration! But more. By the Holy Ghost the Church is united with this glorified man, the spiritual Eve of the last Adam. The Church is the bride, the Lamb's wife, as it is the body of the glorified Christ who is Head over all things. Thus it is written at the end of this chapter. Christ is said to be "Head over all things to the church, which is his body." The Church is really associated with Christ over all things, "the fullness of him that filleth all in all."

The wonderful mystery is here made known -- the Church called into oneness with Christ. Into this one body we are baptized by the Spirit now;<sup>5</sup> and now is the time that the believer is responsible to receive it into his soul, and to manifest it in his ways. Of course it is a matter of faith; for, as to his body, he is the same as any other man. He can only triumph through Christ; but he has Christ in glory not only as his righteousness but his life, yea, one with Him. All that God confers upon Christ, Christ shares with the Church. The effect is immediate and immense. Suppose a person were to wake up to the fact that he was the queen's son, would it not have a mighty influence practically on him? So, to be given now to know not merely that a person is saved, but that he shares with Christ all that He possesses, that he is a member of His body, that he is viewed now as perfect by God in Christ: such is the position of a Christian. It is not that one does not take into account a Christian's failure: I do, but the way to feel our failure most is to hold fast our relationship to Christ. Upon Christian doctrine is rounded Christian practice.

As the believer even now is set in this blessed place of enjoyment, God has sent down the Holy Ghost to dwell in him, in such a sort as never was before. There never was a time when the Holy Ghost did not work; He beyond all doubt is the effective agent in all the dealings of God from creation downwards. There could be no power of God at work in man

without the Spirit of God. But not the less do I maintain along with this, that the Lord Jesus Christ prepared the disciples for a greater blessing than either they or others had ever known before. He told them "it is expedient for you that I go away," etc. What could make up for such a loss? The answer is, "if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." It is contrary to Scripture or even sense to suppose that it was merely prolonging something they possessed before. Nay, there was a deeper blessing. It was the same Spirit that had made them born anew, but He was now for the first time sent down from heaven to dwell in the saints.

Who had ever been thus blessed before? Yes, there was One who had enjoyed Him thus. Who was that One person who had been the temple of God upon earth? It was Jesus. Upon Him the Holy Ghost came not as a flame of fire, but as a dove, the witness of the perfect spotlessness of Jesus. The humanity of Jesus being absolutely pure and holy (Luke 1:35), there was not the least hindrance to the dwelling of the Holy Ghost in Him. We can understand Jesus being bodily the temple or habitation of the Holy Ghost; but how could it be true of us, evil and defiled as we are by nature? Christ has so perfectly put away the sin and sins of a believer, that it is as though the evil, root, branch, and fruit, had never been. Hence the Holy Ghost has come down from heaven, and actually now dwells in the believer, as the proof and result of the perfect putting away of sin by Christ's sacrifice.

The saints of old were waiting for what was coming; they knew there were good things to come. "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost; sent down from heaven" (1 Peter 1:12).

Manifestly then there is a special blessing in the gift of the Spirit consequent upon redemption. When we know and weigh what redemption is, there will be less difficulty. It is a poor partial notion of redemption as an accomplished fact that makes people ask, Why should not God always act in the same way? The right understanding of its infinite work teaches us, that God sees such virtue in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ that He reserves a special blessing for that hour. The believer now is blessed with, and will share, His supremacy over all things.

What makes us members of the body of Christ? We are made so by the Spirit, and not by faith only. Of course, no one but a believer has this place; but it is nowhere said to be by faith, but by the baptism of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 12:13). The saints of old time were not baptized into this one body. There was nothing of the kind. The Jew preserved his separate place; the Gentile might come in (as a proselyte), but there was no identity: still less was either one or [the] other made one with Christ. In Christianity these distinctions disappear. There was faith among the Old Testament saints, but there was no "one body" yet; not even when our Lord

5. {The baptism in the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13) took place once for all at Pentecost. This formed the body and the believers subsequently were added to the body once for all formed at Pentecost. We are added to it by being sealed with the same Holy Spirit of promise with which those baptized in the Holy Spirit were also sealed. See Eph. 1:12,13.}

was upon earth. He told the disciples that He was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The cross of Christ, on man's side of it, was a joining of all men (Jew and Gentile) in wickedness; on God's side it led to a joining of Jew and Gentile in common blessing by grace. In Matthew 16, Peter answers Christ's demand with the confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Christ says, "Upon this rock I *will* build my Church." What does He mean by this? Peter confesses His glory not only as Messiah or the Christ, but as Son of the living God. He was marked out the Son of God by resurrection from the dead. "He is the head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead.

What hope is suited to such a calling? Jesus says, "Let not your heart be troubled. I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go, I will come again and receive you unto myself." The portion that Christ has is the portion of a Christian. Even now He is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. As He took our portion on the cross, so we have His portion in glory. He will bless the Jews on earth. God promised to do so. Whereas, He has in title blessed us with Christ in heaven. Some think the mystery was that the Gentiles were to be called, but this [I. e., that Gentiles would be called -- in for the millennium] is plainly referred to in the Old Testament. The mystery goes much farther, namely, that all who now believe, Jews and Gentiles, should be united together as the one body of Christ, head over all things.

Our hope is for Christ to come and take us to be with Himself in the Father's house {John 14:1-3}. This implies the highest scene of enjoyment even in heaven. Can any place there be too high for Christ? Assuredly not. The Father manifests His love for His Son thus. If God gives us such a place in Christ, we ought to believe it; and this is not merely for ourselves, but for every believer, for every Christian. This, and nothing less than this, is the portion of all who believe the gospel. Christ will come Himself, that where He is, there we may be also. We shall be with Himself, in that glory which is entirely above the world. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come" (Rev. 22:17). To say "Come," depends not on great knowledge, but on His great salvation and love.

It cannot be too much insisted on that there is no difference between the standing of one believer and another. When you come to a question of faithfulness, there are degrees; but to suppose a difference in the whiteness of the robe, or the righteousness we are made, is to suppose a various value in the blood of Christ, or uncertainty in the power of His resurrection. There is no difference as to sin in one sense, all being equally dead in trespasses and sins. So there is no such thing as one saint being brought nearer to God by redemption than another; it denies the work of Christ. All believers now are equally, I. e., perfectly made nigh as to standing, though bad teaching does much to darken the truth, and lack of spirituality hinders holy enjoyment, even where the truth may have entered. Besides, we are made one with Christ, but for this the gift of the Spirit was requisite.

*The Bible Treasury* 7:89-92 (1868).

## Chapter 7.3

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### *What is it to be Seated in the Heavens in Christ Jesus?*

It may not be too much to say that the whole of the epistle to the Ephesians is but the development of chap. 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." In this ascription of praise there are three things. First, that all the blessings into which we are brought flow to us from God as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; to us as brought now into the same relationship to God, on the ground of redemption, as Christ Himself enjoys; that is to say, God is now our God and Father, because the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (John 20:17). Secondly, that all these spiritual blessings are made ours as being in Christ. And lastly, that the place in which they are possessed and enjoyed is in the heavens. Let the reader prayerfully seek to understand these several points, if he would intelligently read this portion of the word of God.

To answer the specific question at the head of this paper, we must first enquire what is meant by Christ being in the heavens. This is fully explained to us at the end of Eph. 1. The apostle prays "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 (heart) being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, *and 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 heavens,*" &c. (Eph. 1:17-20). We are here taught that the mighty power of God was displayed in the resurrection of Christ, that God came in and took Him out of the grave wherein He lay, raised Him up, and set Him down at His own right hand in the heavens, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named; and then, more wonderful still -- more wonderful because of those who were the objects of this perfection of His grace -- that His power to us-ward was "according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ." And if Eph. 1 gives us the

effect of this mighty power in relation to Christ, Eph. 2 shows us the effect on His people. The chapter thus commences: "And you, who were dead in trespasses and sins." And the apostle then points out that the exceeding greatness of God's power met us in the place where we lay dead in sins (for Christ indeed in grace had come down to us -- down to the very depths of or condition of death); and that God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us . . . quickened us together with Christ, and raised us (both Jew and Gentile) up together, and made us (Jew and Gentile) sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus {Eph. 2:6}. Christ, for the glory of God, in the accomplishment of His purposes, having identified Himself with His people, God, in response to the One who thus endured all for His glory, came in and wrought, and the effect is seen in a twofold way -- in the place Christ occupies, and in the place we occupy in Him -- seated in Him in the heavens.

But it is objected that we are only in Christ Jesus in the heavens in the sense of being seen in Him as the head of the new race. In the first place, Christ is never spoken of as the Head of a race in this epistle: as the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all, He is; and we are also told that all things, whether in heaven or in earth, will be "headed up" in the Christ; but this is a very different thing. Secondly, this would imply that we are blessed with all spiritual blessings *through*, rather than *in*, Christ. Of course He is the only medium through which blessings flow to us, as indeed He is God's only vessel of blessing for us; but, as united to Him, members of His body -- and this is the teaching of Ephesians -- we are blessed as in Him. This statement, however, is met by the allegation that the members of the body of Christ are on earth, not in heaven. This is not true in the teaching of Eph. 2. There everything, being on God's side, or, as we often say, on the side of purpose, is complete. The counsels of God are accomplished, and He has before Him, in Christ, His whole Church, Jew and Gentile alike, all distinctions abolished, seated in Christ. He reveals this to us to show us our true place, the character of our blessings, and the scene in which

in spirit He would have us live and move. It may be furthermore objected that Christ is seated at God's right hand, and that, as this place belongs only to Him, we could not be said to be seated in Him where He is. True, most blessedly true, is it that the right hand of God is the pre-eminent place of our blessed Lord, the place which God delighted to give Him, and the place which the saints rejoice to recognize as His alone. But this in nowise militates against the fact that believers are in Christ where He is. His place at the right of God is positional -- the token of His supreme exaltation; and it would indeed be unholy presumption to intrude a claim to this. But while asserting this, is not Christ before God? And is He not there as the head of His body? And are not saints actually united to Him? And is it not true, therefore, that God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, has quickened us together with Christ, raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus? There is the whole Church now before the eye of God, and He has it there, "that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness towards us through (in) Christ Jesus."

The effect of this new doctrine is to confound the distinctive teachings of the several epistles, to obscure the heavenly character and calling of the Church, as well as to undermine the truth of the believer's position.

E. Dennett, *The Christian Friend* 1884, pp. 204-207.

## "Heavenly Places"

[*Ephesians 2:6*]

We have . . . reached Canaan already, as being in Christ; it is then, and only then, that we have found the world a wilderness to us. I do not think we ever really find it so, until we are conscious of our place and possessions on high "in Christ" -- united to Him by the Spirit of God. I do not say that with all it is so known; many think the wilderness of life has to be traversed before the soul is conscious of its place on high -- but this is not God's way. "Not as the world gives" gives He unto us. He brings us into all that Christ possesses as a Man before Him -- and this is a present thing. There is no experience at all in learning this. Much experience had brought the soul to the consciousness of powerless fear, and such exercises of the heart and conscience that it might learn God as a Savior -- delighting to save!

But God has brought a *Man* into glory, and seated Him on the throne of God. Faith tells us that there is a Man in heaven -- faith which is based upon the testimony of the Scriptures. *They* tell us that this is the new place for man by redemption. If I look upon Him as the forerunner, He has entered in for me. If I look upon my union with Him in that new place, then I am united to Him who is there. If I was alive in sins, He shed his blood and put them away. If I was

dead in sins, He died for my sins. If He was raised, God has raised us together with Him. If He is gone up on high, we are raised up together and seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. There never was such a thing as a man being united to Christ in heaven before the Holy Ghost came down from heaven to dwell in our bodies. There never was such a thing as the Holy Ghost dwelling in a man whose conscience was not purged, and this could never have been until after the work which purges the conscience was done. Hence no saint before the cross ever knew all his sins put away, and his conscience purged. He knew of certain sins being forgiven. Nathan is sent to tell David of his horrible sin in the case of Uriah being put away. But no one ever knew God in the light of His presence within the rent veil, and that the very blow which rent the veil had put him in God's presence without one single sin! As a consequence, the Holy Ghost never was given till Jesus was glorified. (See John 7:36-39).

The Holy Ghost inspired the prophets; came on them for a time, and then left them. He did this even on men who were not converted to God at all, as Saul and Balaam. He guided and taught the saints, and quickened the souls of sinners; but He must have the conscience purged of every sin before he could dwell in our bodies.

The Spirit of God wrought in souls, and they were born again of the Word and Spirit of God. They had a new nature, which longed for complete deliverance before the cross made it possible that God could make known to any that all their sins were there put away. The children of God were then in bondage, hoping for a Savior, and a salvation which they needed. Still none of them had the Spirit of adoption -- the Spirit of His Son, whereby they could cry "Abba, Father," given them. Now, it is true (since the cross) that "Because ye are sons (already, by faith in Jesus Christ; Gal. 3:26), God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6). We stand thus consciously in relationship to God as our Father, which no saint of God ever did; although they were born of God, this relationship as sons never was known. *Confidence* in God characterizes the Old Testament and before the cross; *relationship* characterizes the New.

The people of God before the cross were under the "*forbearance*" of God. When the cross came and discharged all God's claims, and purged their sins, they are on another footing altogether. They now stand as those who have been righteously forgiven and justified. Rom. 3:25, 26, brings this truth out very plainly; "Whom God hath set forth a propitiation (or mercy seat) through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the *passing over* (*margin*), of sins that are *past*, through the *forbearance* of God; to declare *at this time*, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Suppose a man owed a debt which he could not discharge. Well, some kind person says he will be security for that debt. Then his creditor *forbears* with him; he does



not press his claim. Still the creditor's claim has not been settled, nor is the debtor relieved, the debt hangs over him still.

But suppose the rich man has kindly discharged the debt himself, unknown to the other. How very kind! you exclaim. But still the debtor's mind is not relieved; he thinks he is still under the forbearance of his creditor. Then someone comes with the news that all has been discharged, and that the creditor wishes to assure the person that he wishes him to know it, and not be afraid to meet him any more.

Now this forbearance with the state of the saints before the cross -- they confided in God -- trusted His promises. They knew that some day or other these promises would be fulfilled. They thus lived and died in confidence in God. God was looking on towards the cross, and the Son was in the heavens; the One who had presented Himself to come some day and do all God's will (Psa. 40:6--8). Thus God *waited*, and His people were under "the *forbearance* of God;" and the Son was security, so to speak, for their sins; one day or other He would take up the claim and discharge it. At last came the Son of God; in holy love He took up the work -- "bore our sins" on the tree, discharging every claim. He died and rose, and went on high. From the heavens which He entered by His own blood (Heb. 9:12), He sent down the Holy Ghost with the message that the sins were borne and put away, and thus our consciences are purged in receiving His testimony to us (Heb. 10:15-17); then having believed this testimony to us, He then comes to dwell *in* us, uniting us to Him who has purged our sins, and then making us members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones!

But more. Then comes out all God's delight, and the purposes of His love. He gives us the same place, and joys, and blessings, and inheritance with His own Son! He had become a Man, and as a Man -- the firstborn amongst many brethren -- He took His place in glory, and God set us in Him there on high. He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Eph. 1:3). He has quickened us together with Christ; raised us up together, and seated us together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6).

Thus His people have, by sovereign grace, this new and wondrous place, and they should be the exponents of a heavenly Christ, on earth, by the Spirit of God. The Church of God, looked upon in the truth of it, is the reflex on earth, produced by the power of the Spirit of God, to the glory of Christ in heaven.

We will now examine this a little more in detail. Forty years' endurance brought Israel up to the plains of Moab, and Jordan lay before them. The wilderness is a subject of deep interest to our hearts. In no place do we so clear the sympathies and tenderness of Christ as there, where faith and patience are tried and tested -- where God leads and feeds, and trains His people in obedience and brokenness of will, for the heavenly warfare of the land. This is not properly the

subject of these papers . . . They had been safe from judgment forty years before in Egypt, on the night of terror. They had *come out* of it by redemption, never to return by that way again. Still they were not *come in* to the Canaan which God had purposed to bring them; and there rolled the barrier to the land. The Jordan is commonly taken as a type of death, and very justly. But it is not death physically -- or in other words the death of the body. It is the fact of Christ's death and resurrection being counted to us in grace, and so used that it is death and resurrection morally to us, leading us "in Christ," into a new scene altogether; it place where we know no man after the flesh, yea, if we had known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know Him thus no more (2 Cor. 5:16).

We read in Joshua 3, that the Ark of God -- borne by the Levites -- was first to pass down into the waters of death, the last token of the enemy's power. There was to be a space between it and the [Lord's] Host which followed after. Then the feet of the priests touched the brim of the waters, they stood upright on an heap, and all the Host of the Lord passed over into the land in which the Lord delighted, at the other side of Jordan. *God* had passed over them when He was judging Egypt. *They* passed over here, when it was a question of sovereign grace bringing them into the land in which He chose to dwell.

None could pass that way till Christ first was there. He must dry up that mighty stream of death in which God's judgment was expressed. He must thus end human life, which the enemy could touch, before He introduced us into the life beyond it all. The water compassed Him about, and flowed over His head. Deep called to deep as they reached His soul. But all was borne, and the bed of the river of death proved, as His people traversed it with dry-shod feet, that all had borne down upon Him; "All thy waves and billows passed over me."

The priests "stood firm," bearing the Ark; and "the people passed over right against Jericho." There was the organized strength of the Enemy in unbroken power -- the seven nations of Canaan were also there. Thus has the Lord died and risen; ascended on high He has entered, as Man, into a new sphere for man, and has introduced us into life on the other side of death, and given us all that He possesses as Man.

In Eph.1 this new place is unfolded according to the counsels of God. It is remarkable that there you have an allusion, not only to the Passover and Red Sea; that is the judgment of sin, and redemption of the people of God; but we have also in it the Ark in and out of the Jordan, and our Canaan -- the heavenlies. Thus, the whole wilderness is dropped; fulfilling most fully in the antitype the statement of God's purposes to Moses in Ex. 3:8, and the full result of those counsels in introducing man into His presence on high. Thus we read (Eph. 1:7), "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the

riches of his grace.” The blood of Christ, on the ground of which we have this forgiveness and the redemption which is in Christ, is the way into those counsels of His grace, and purposes in Christ before the world began. Then we read (Eph. 1:19) of “The exceeding greatness of his power to usward 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 heavenly places.” Thus the true Ark of the true Ark of the Covenant has been in the waters, and in the next chapter (Eph. 2:3-6), the people of God have passed through. “Even when we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us together in [with] Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

We have thus been introduced into this new land. We might say in the language of Psa. 114:3, “The sea saw it and fled: Jordan was driven back.” As the Psalmist links together the deliverance out of Egypt of the Red Sea, and the entrance into the land through the Jordan; so does the breadth of the purposes of that God, “who is rich in mercy,” take in, in Eph. 1, 2 our present introduction into “heavenly places in Christ Jesus,” as the people whom He has cleansed and redeemed.

F. G. Patterson, *Words of Truth*, New Series 3:95-98, 118-120.

## *The Church*

People say (and that there is moral ground for such a word, and reasonableness in it to all our first impressions, I deny not), that others have been more devoted to Christ, and suffered more for him, than many whom we put specially into the Church or Body of Christ; and that therefore we ought not to speak of a special place being reserved for the Church, or for the saints gathering in this age.

But, though reasonable, there is a mistake in this. If we ourselves were connected with two persons, one of whom had

greatly served our interests in life -- even at his own loss; and the other never had had an opportunity or power to do so, but was more the companion of our thoughts and tastes and pursuits, more kindred in mind and character with us, I ask, which will lie the nearer to us? The services of the other could not be forgotten, but had in constant thankful remembrance; but it is not true that this latter would be nearer to us. And so it is with Christ and the Church. It is her *endowment by His Spirit* that makes her the special thing she is. She knows *His* rejection in the world, taking part with it, having His Spirit in her, and is not merely like Abraham or David, faithful and true to Him.

This is illustrated, and that, too, very strikingly and convincingly, in Martha and Mary in Luke 10. Martha was *serving* the Lord, carefully, diligently serving Him with her best, laying out her care and provisions upon Him. He valued this, as He still does, though she did not fully know this. But Mary was nearer to His mind, Mary was nearer to Him, as when the due occasion came, He lets us know. But Mary was not serving Him, as Martha was doing. Mary was listening to Him. Mary was in company with His mind -- she was the rather kindred in spirit, in taste and pursuits with Him. She had an opened ear and an instructed mind and an heart in unison. And this was more important to Him than all the services of the diligent and careful Martha.

What a moment this was! What an occasion for hearing the mind of Christ! To think that Jesus has to set aside the one that was *serving* Him! He would not have done so, had not she led Him to it. He cannot but let us know, that this devotedness of soul, sympathy, and the fellowship of mind and spirit, is more to Him, as to us, than all mere services.

And the peculiar exaltation of the Church is fully implied in Eph. 1:21 -- her exaltation *above other heavenly powers and dignities* in the age of the millennial glory. . . .

*Words of Truth*, New Series 3:98, 99.

## Chapter 7.4

### Conflict in the Heavens

#### Canaan and the Armor of God

*Eph. 6:10-20*

It might seem strange at first sight that in this epistle, where there is the fullest unfolding of the privileges of the children of God, *conflict* should be brought out; but we are often not aware of the character of the conflict from not knowing our privileges. Here it is found we are specially in conflict, and in a conflict that is neither known nor got into until we realize the privileges which *this* epistle specially unfolds.

In Galatians there is conflict, but it is a conflict between flesh and Spirit -- the flesh lusting against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; but in Ephesians it is *not* flesh, but spiritual wickedness in high places (or "wicked spirits in the heavenly places" margin). We *have* to overcome flesh, and there is a very close connection between these two conflicts; still they are distinct.

In Ephesians it {the context} is a new creation {Eph. 2}. Christ has ascended up on high -- "He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." So completely has He taken us out of the power of Satan that He can make us the vessels of His service. He has taken us out of the world {Eph. 2:6}, and then sent us into it; and if we thus stand associated with Christ (which is the privilege of every Christian, though all do not *realize* it), we must expect all the conflict associated with the place into which we are brought. In *proportion* as we *realize* that we are the vessels of heavenly service, we get this *special* character of conflict.

You cannot cross Jordan<sup>6</sup> without finding the Canaanite and the Perizzite in the land. There are the trials and perils of the wilderness, which test our hearts -- all know more or less of the weary way testing our hearts and discovering what is in them; but wilderness experience is not the same as conflict in the land. When Joshua got into the place of the privileges of the people of God, he was *in* the place of conflict. God has set Christ as a Man in the glory, because He (as a Man) has perfectly glorified God as to sin. Christ has not only died for our sins, but we have died with Him (dead with Christ is what

Jordan is),<sup>3</sup> and we are raised up and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: thus associated, *dead* and *risen* with Him, we are brought into the place where all the conflict is. It is most valuable and precious to get *distinctly* hold of this. Many a Christian has not realized it. There is many a one still in Egypt, holding the value of the blood on the door-posts, but knowing nothing of the deliverance accomplished at the Red Sea. Israel had to stand still and see the salvation of *God*; this answers to the death and resurrection of Christ. I am out of Egypt; the *judgment* which fell on the Egyptians has *saved me*. God has raised up Christ and given Him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God. Just as every poor sinner has been driven out of the earthly paradise because *sin* is complete in the first Adam, so am I taken out of this world into the heavenly paradise {places} in the last Adam because righteousness is complete. God raising up Christ and giving Him glory proves that the question of sin has been all settled in Christ on the cross, and in virtue of this He is sitting where He is, at the right hand of God. The passage through the wilderness is to humble and prove us. Our perseverance is tested by God leading us through the path in which Christ was found implicitly faithful. Israel went through that great and terrible wilderness where were the fiery serpents and scorpions and drought, where there was no water. God brought them water out of the rock of flint, fed them with the manna to humble them and prove them, to do them good at their latter end. They come to Jordan, they pass it, they get into the land, they eat the old corn, and the land is theirs.

In the wilderness and Canaan we get two characters of Christian experience -- one, the life down here; the other, the position in the heavens. We are not only a testimony to the world, but also to principalities and powers in the heavens -- "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God." He "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places;" but though that is all true as to *title*, as to *fact*, the Canaanite and the Perizzite are still in the land to dispute the possession. We have our place in the power of the Spirit of God, Christ having gone before, our place is sure to faith; but the Canaanite is not yet destroyed -- Christ's enemies are not yet put under His feet,

6. {The significance of crossing Jordan is not the death of a Christian physically.}

so conflict characterizes the place of the Lord's redeemed people. When Joshua got into the land, he met a man with a drawn sword. Fighting was to characterize their possession of the land, and when Joshua asks, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" the answer was, "Nay, but as Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." They were the redeemed of the Lord -- the Lord's host -- so completely the Lord's, that He uses them as His servants in conflict to subdue His enemies.

They must "be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might," and they cannot fight the Lord's battles if the flesh is at work. With an Achan in the camp there can be no victory, and therefore we must be *practically* dead to fight successfully; not merely reckoning ourselves dead, but be always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our body.

Paul, as a servant, always carried with him the sense of this, not as a title merely, but "Paul" was kept completely down, *always* bearing about in His body the dying of Jesus; nothing of Paul [Paul's flesh] appeared, it was Jesus only {Gal. 2:20}. As soon as they crossed the Jordan (Jordan is death and resurrection with Christ), they were circumcised -- death is practically applied; and in like manner after they had crossed the Red Sea they had to drink of the bitter water -- really the salt water; they had been *saved* by it, they must not drink it. "By these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit" (Isa. 38:16).

As soon as we get into heavenly places we get the "old corn" {Josh. 5:11} -- we find Christ there, we feed on Him; but we have to be circumcised, *practically*<sup>7</sup> putting off the body of the flesh. Israel got into the land, and had to be circumcised; their *title*<sup>8</sup> they knew, but they had not taken the ground of being practically dead and risen (from Egypt).<sup>9</sup> If a man is practically dead and risen, what has he to do with this world? A man dead, and thus taken out of the world, has to go through the world and live in it again if God so will it. We have to run across the wilderness to glory. As one associated with the Lord, I am the witness and testimony to the world of what a *heavenly* Christ is. I am to be an imitator of God. I shall be seeking other souls to enjoy it with me. If we are endeavoring to serve the Lord, shall we not find hindrances? If seeking to maintain the Lord's people in the place of fidelity to all this, do you think Satan will let you alone? There will be the wiles of Satan to get saints into his power, and we have to withstand his stratagems even more than his power.

Infidelity, superstition in its various forms, are opposed

to us, consequently we need the whole armour of God the *moment* we come in. We shall not get through in our own strength; we need the strength of the Lord, and the power of His might; we need the whole armour, not one piece must be wanting. The armour must be of God, human armour will not ward off the attacks of Satan; confidence in that armour will engage us in the combat to make us fall before an enemy stronger and more crafty than we. Let us see what this complete armour is.

"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with **truth**." This is the first thing, looking at what we call the *subjective* part. Our *state* comes first, and there is no divine activity until the heart is perfectly in order. The loins are the seat of strength when duly girt, but represent the intimate affections and movements of the heart. The figure is taken from the habits of the country where these instructions were given; they wore long garments, which hindered their working unless girded up. We get the expression in Job 38:3, "Gird up now thy loins like a man;" that is, to see what he had to say to God. It is the power of truth applied to everything that takes place in the heart; it is not doctrine [abstractly], but truth *practically applied*. The Lord said, "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth." God has sent into the midst of the world all that can judge man according to what God is. Christ is the centre of the word; He was the light of the world, He revealed the thoughts of many hearts. He was here as a man, and revealed what God was, and the world was judged by it. He comes, and brings all that is divine and heavenly in a man (Christ) in direct contact with all that is contrary to God in this world. Satan, as the God of this world, led man against Christ. Some fancy that he has ceased to be the god and prince of this world; but though the cross broke his title, it was not until the cross (where man openly ranged himself under Satan against God) that he became its *prince*.<sup>10</sup> Truth came into the world -- Christ Himself, *the* truth. The truth of God brought right to men's hearts discovers their thoughts and intents. Now, when I get this word *effectually* applied to me, I get the **girdle of truth**.

When all that God has said in His word, and the unseen realities He reveals, have their true force and application to my heart, my loins are *girt*, my garments are not dragging in the mire of this world, my thoughts are not wandering, and the condition of my heart is, so to speak, tucked up ready for service, whatever that may be. We do not get into this conflict until we get into this place. We get the conflict of the old man, but that is Egypt. In order to get the victory over Satan and carry on the Lord's battles, I must realize my position according to the truth, just as Israel overcame by realizing the promises of God.

First thing of all, my heart must be completely tested and

7. {The writer means that we have to apply the meaning of circumcision to our life, in practice, in our walk.}

8. {They had the land in title, but had not conquered it.}

9. {Israel's journey through the wilderness is a type, as is their entry into the Land. Physically, they must do this sequentially. However, the Christian is viewed as in the wilderness (cp. Peter's epistles) at the same time that he is viewed as in the heavenlies (cp. Ephesians).}

10. {The Lord Jesus called Satan "the prince of the world" before the cross. Satan was not called, in the Word, "the God of this age," until after the rejection of the Lord Jesus.}

subjected to a *heavenly* word. The Lord said, “No man hath ascended up to heaven.” Christ brings this heavenly truth before us, and says, Does what is in your heart correspond with this? When this word becomes a positive delight to us, we get the taste and appreciation of heavenly things -- the things that are lovely, and of good report -- which He has brought to us. I get on the one hand judgment of all flesh in me, and on the other the blessedness of what Christ is. Wherever the loins are girt about with truth, there will be confidence of heart, and the soul will be steadfast, there will be no turning back in the conflict to judge ourselves; our souls, so to speak, will be naturally with God, there will be occupation of heart with Christ, and there will be the Holy Ghost taking of the things which are Christ’s, and showing them to us.

The result of this girding of the loins is, that a man’s *condition* is the effect of truth. It was Christ’s condition. He *was* the truth, and my condition will be like Christ’s in proportion as the truth is in effect on my heart; the affections and heart right, I pass through the world in spirit with Him. “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the **breastplate** of righteousness.” All this, mark, is practical righteousness; we do not want armour with God, we want it against Satan.

If I am an inconsistent man, going to serve God without the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left -- without practical godliness -- Satan will be sure to bring it up. In preaching, for instance, if your walk is not consistent, the world will say you are no better than they, and Satan will then have power against you. If you are walking according to Christ because your heart is according to Christ, you have on the breastplate of righteousness; but unless a man has a good conscience, he will be a coward, and afraid of being detected. With a good conscience we can go on boldly; the condition of the soul where Christ is revealed is truth, and the walk of the man is all right -- there is nothing for Satan to lay hold of. The loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, I have then to see that my feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. I pass through the world with my feet shod. “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace.” In this path there is no selfishness; selfishness is for maintaining its rights, but that is not having my feet shod with peace. Self is subdued if I am following Christ. “Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.” Learning of Christ, he carries peace with Him -- the soul is at peace with God, the conscience at rest, his feet are shod with peace, and he carries through the world the spirit and character of Christ.

He has on the breastplate of righteousness. What was the path of the blessed Lord? There was nothing in question as to His state. He went untouched with all that man could bring against Him; His feet were shod. So with him who follows Christ; he can bring out the spirit and character of Christ wherever he goes. It may raise hatred, as it did with Christ --

His perfect love brought out the hatred of [from] man; but a subdued, godly, upright man will be a peaceful man in passing through the world, and although man may not speak peaceably to him, as much as lieth in him, he is to live peaceably with all men. Thus we get it in both aspects -- the path is characterized by the spirit of grace and peace, and there is righteousness and truth. The state of the heart first right, loins girt with truth, righteousness for a breastplate, and feet shod with peace, the soul subjectively right, I can then take up the **shield of faith**. Subjectively right, I have not to think of myself. A man walking with nothing on his conscience is free; if not walking right, he will be occupied with himself. The mere existence of an evil nature does not suppose a bad conscience, but *yielding* to it does. We are not told to confess sin, but sins. It is easy to confess sin, easy to say, “I am a poor sinful creature,” but that generally is to excuse *sins*. I have failed to keep the flesh down. Of course I can never say I have no sin, but if am not bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, practically dead, the flesh will surely play me false. We want these first three elements of the armour, and then we have not to think about ourselves. Practically in the light,<sup>11</sup> as He is in the light, the heart right, I then get the *shield of faith*, wherewith I shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. This shield supposes I can look up with entire blessed confidence in God. “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty ... He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust: *His truth shall be thy shield and buckler*. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the *arrow*, that flieth by day.”

God is above Satan. Satan may shoot his arrows, but they cannot break through the shield of faith. In Christ the victory has been won in man and for man. Satan did his worst against Christ -- first to seduce and afterward to deter Him -- but he was completely overcome. All the power of Satan is broken and gone. Christ has gone through death and conquered him who had the power of death. Christ has not only put away our sins, but as a man standing for us, He has completely overcome the devil. We are not told to overcome, but to “resist” the devil, and he will flee from us. If resisted, he meets Christ in us, and runs away. Human nature cannot resist, it will acquiesce. It is not a question of power on our part, but of simple faithfulness and looking to Christ; it is not that we are strong, but strength is made perfect in weakness. What was ever so weak as Christ -- Christ crucified through weakness? but then the weakness of God is stronger than men, and the foolishness of God is wiser than men. Nothing could be more weak and foolish in man’s eyes than the cross, but we know, nevertheless, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Whenever we are content to own ourselves weak, there is the strength that enables us to overcome. Satan is very subtle. If Satan deals with man (apart from God), it

11. {All Christians are positionally in the light (1 John 1); the question is, are we there in our practice?}

is all over with him. How is it possible that wise and learned men of this world give way to such follies as ritualism and the like? Satan, more clever than they, is behind it all, and laughs to see them trusting their own wisdom. The simple soul that has his heart right *cannot* go wrong. Satan has no kind of power while the soul is walking in obedience, that is the secret of it all. If walking inconsistently, the shield of faith will be down, and I shall be open to all the fiery darts. There should be that blessed confidence in God which reckons on Christ having completely overcome the world and the devil, and that all the power of evil now in the world will soon be put down. *We* are to be exercised in the conflict.

The Lord has said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world."

We have as yet no activities brought out; so far it is defensive. The defensive armor comes first. We are slow to understand this, and we often get into activities when we ought to be quiet. The shield is defensive. Satan is active. The Lord may bless and help us, in His grace, but there are many who get into activities without knowing themselves. The **helmet of salvation** is still defensive; we have the conscious, blessed, and full certainty of being in heavenly places in Christ -- the soul walking in the full confidence that I have Christ there, who has delivered me out of the power of the devil. Christ has fought my battle, and overcome. I can hold my head up, because I have got salvation. The blessed certainty that I am in Christ and Christ is for me is my *helmet*. I can now be active. Having judged the flesh, godly in walk, peaceful in my path through the world, with confidence in God, and salvation assured, I can take up **the sword of the Spirit** -- I can fight, sheltered in the inner man, and shielded from all attacks from without. I take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. We do not always look to see that it is so -- that there is nothing between God and our souls, so that He is *practically* with us in the conflict. Are we walking in the practical sense of God being with us? If there is an Achan in the camp, as there was with Israel, God will not go up. It is of all-importance we should be clear as to this. Paul kept his body under, and brought it into subjection. If we are to be active in the service the Lord, we must go out from the presence the Lord according to what His presence gives. Paul said, "Herein do I exercise myself, to have *always* a conscience void of offence toward God and men." Always self-judgment, always keeping close to God, and *then* you can go out in service to others; not always, perhaps, in public ministry, but in the path of everyday life.

You will have the secret of the Lord with you, the consciousness of God with you, clearness of judgment, and not distracted or dismayed by half a dozen thoughts. You have the *secret of the Lord*; going on quietly, it may be, but going on with God. Then comes, no matter how active I may be, the inward preparation -- "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." We have had the inward affection and the sword of the Spirit, but now it is

entire dependence -- the word of God and prayer. These two things are found running together through Scripture: *the word of God and prayer*. Mary sat at the Lord's feet and heard His *word*. The Lord said, "Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." In the next verses, the Lord teaches His disciples to *pray*. When deacons were chosen, the reason assigned by the apostles was that they might give themselves continually to *prayer* and to the ministry of the *word* (Acts 6). When there is to be service carried on against the wiles of the devil, half the battle is to be fought out in God's presence beforehand in *prayer*. When the prince of this world came to the Lord in the garden of Gethsemane, he found Him agonizing in prayer. Peter slept while the Lord prayed: the result was, that Peter denied Him, but the blessed Lord witnessed a good confession.

Nothing can, or ever will, take the place of that earnestness in prayer: if we are to have God with us, we must pray. It is marked by perfect calmness. If we have God with us, we must be with God, who is sovereign in love and goodness, and has associated us with His own interests. Does not my heart yearn after the conversion of poor sinners? do I not pray that hearts may know more of Christ? that saints may walk more faithfully? God desires this, and He has given us a path in the world associated with His interests. There is to be perseverance and supplication for all saints. If I see a soul in danger of going astray, I go with all perseverance and supplication to God about him: my heart is in it.

The very same word used of the Lord in Gethsemane is used of Epaphras, who labored fervently in prayer (Col. 4). It is conflict of heart. He craves the blessing of God with all his heart -- craving for it earnestly, and entering into it because it is in the interests of God in the world. This has to be carried on in opposition to Satan, who will bring all his craft and power against us. We have consequently to be with God. What a blessed thing to know that I get power and wisdom from God, grace and wisdom in practice! If I use a sword, I must get wisdom for it. What a place of blessing it would be if we were all practically with God!

For our own souls it is so helpful, because prayer is the expression of entire *dependence*, but at the same time of *confidence* in God. A person like Paul in weakness and trembling, fightings without and fears within, going about getting victories! He says to the Corinthians, "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." It is always good to be conscious of weakness provided there is faith in God. Constant dependence is the constant expression of faith in God; the soul goes to God with God's affairs, we realize how much they are our own. The blessed Lord has gone down into the dust of death. Satan's power was exercised to the fullest, but it was all broken. He comes up again and sits at the right hand of God, takes His people, whom He has completely delivered from the hand of Satan, and uses them for conflict against him -- the instruments of His service in the world -- a wondrously blessed place if we only knew how to hold it -- blessed to be made the Lord's host against Satan. The more you are in the forefront of the battle, the more you will be exposed to the fiery darts. The

more you bear testimony to God's thoughts, God's mind, the place the saints have in God's mind, the more you will be the object of Satan's attacks. You will necessarily be exposed to more snares and dangers than those who lag behind, and there is no place where dependence is more needed and felt.

There is more strength provided for those in the forefront to bear witness to Christ's title against Satan, and Satan will never let it pass without opposition. When I have all the armor on, and come to wield the sword, I am not to be thinking of the armor, but of God and His purposes, "watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." Oh, how little we know of this! Supposing we pass through a day, was all that happened turned into prayer? If I am walking maintaining Christ's cause, it all turns to prayer. It is a wondrous test of the state of our souls. Do you think you can intercede much for others? Do you find earnestness in intercession for all saints? Is my heart so in the interests of Christ that I can have a lasting and continual interest for others? If my heart is in a bad state, and the presence of God is revealed to me, I think of myself -- I am not free to intercede for others. "And for me," says the apostle, "that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly . . . as I ought to speak." How is it with us, beloved friends? It is an amazing blessing to be doing this, but we cannot if our own souls are not right -- if I am not in the presence of God. As far only as I keep on this armor, I am useful; all is grounded on being in a settled place before God. The blood on the door-post, the Red Sea crossed, Jordan passed, circumcised, and the reproach of Egypt rolled away -- *then* comes conflict in the land; all is founded on redemption.

Be assured we shall meet the wiles of Satan. Our own state and conscience are easily detected if our hearts are simple in the truth. It is not that we are to be learning Satan's wiles, but if our hearts are simple, we shall be more than a match for him. Satan is a good deal cleverer than we are, and wherever redemption is not fully known, there Satan plays his tricks. The moment that redemption is really believed in, all the systems of superstition so prevalent in the world are going. You may have old things lingering, but you will never find a person under the power of superstition who has the consciousness in himself that Christ has died and suffered for *him*. We see wise and learned men going away to ritualism, and the devil behind it all; but the moment redemption is really known, the devil's power is gone. The system of ritualism proceeds on the footing that Christ can have to say to man in the flesh that he is not lost and dead in his sins, and consequently a complete and accomplished redemption is denied. The moment I have my soul established in Christ, this snare of the devil will not prevail. A man may know the truth of the incarnation, and may speak more beautifully of the person of the Lord than even Christians, but all the time be ignorant of redemption. I have the witness of Christ in me; I know Christ. They may try to persuade me that Christ is such and such, but I *know* Him: I have got Him; He dwells in my heart, so that I am not to be turned by such follies as ritualism and the like. The Lord keep us in a

constant sense of dependence, in a sense or what He is, dependent on Him every moment, that we may never get out of the presence of God, for when we are out of His presence there is danger.

*The Remembrancer* 7:181-198.

### Notes on Ephesians 6:10-20

. . . That evil spirits have sway over men, there can be no doubt: the words "The rulers of the darkness of this world" (Eph. 6:21, 22), and "Ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2), would suffice to prove it; but the truth is proved by passages innumerable besides these.

And the way, too, these enemies act upon man, is shown (Eph. 2:3): "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were, by nature, the children of wrath, even as others." That is, they *act through the lust* of the flesh, leading us to fulfil the desires of the flesh and the mind.

It is a great truth that Satan could get no hold of our blessed Lord, because He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and had a will and purpose to be obedient in all things. And when led up to be tempted in the wilderness, this was fully evidenced. We, on the contrary, have, besides the new nature, the old one too; and we need to be put on our guard, lest the enemy should act upon it in its deceitful lusts and passions, and so lead us off our high and holy ground of being able to show that we are in the Lord, and have the power of His might.

It may be said: "But in Christendom we have no false Gods, which are deifications of evil human passions." Be it so. Yet this same principle may be present, only a little more artfully covered over. It has been said, that the Papal system is so arranged, that you may be and do anything you please in it, if you will but belong to it. I know not how far this is true; but, certainly, in the variety of its orders and classes, as presented, there does seem a path prepared for all the various conceits and fancies of the fallen human mind. In principle, the thing is dearly done in the Papal system: for the poor, fallen, though blessed, Virgin Mary, is set, by that system, as the person to whose human affections we can appeal -- whose human affections and thoughts sway the Lord Jesus and God. In the patron saints, too, and the position in which a devout Romanist finds himself before them, the same may be seen. And have we not, nearer home, all around us, systems of religion so framed as to shut out the free influence of God's truth, and to hinder and to prevent the Spirit? The national

system<sup>12</sup> is the sanction of this world in every way. Membership with it, and separation from the world, cannot possibly coexist. The most that a member of it can do, is to judge his own heart and mind, and see that inwardly he does not love too much that world which, though it crucified Christ, is an integral part of His church. I know that dissent [from a national church] is upon a narrower, more separative, principle; but, practically, it is based upon the world, and shuts out the truth of God's church, and of the Spirit, and sanctions this present evil world. I do not speak of what these Protestant systems were at the first, when the fresh energy of the Spirit of God was at work; but what they have now practically become in man's hand.

Again: as to the ruling of the darkness of this world; it is said to be under these wicked spirits who are on high [in the heavenlies]. If I look at nations, as contrasted one with another, and at their chief cities, not in the point of Christlessness and Godlessness, in which, as being of this present evil world, they have a common agreement; but, as contrasted one with the other, I seem to learn something which is in accordance with our subject. There are such things as national peculiarities. A mass of Italians, and a mass of French, and a mass of English, would require very different modes of handling to rouse them up, and to work them. And this, not only because of the present differences of their present respective circumstances, but because also of constitutional difference, and difference of tastes.

If there be an evil spirit that watches over martial glory, one can well suppose it to be the one whom the French speak as (the deification of their own pride) "*La gloire*." If there be one evil spirit more than another that watches over and cherishes commerce, one can well suppose it to be the one of whom the English speak (embodiment of their love of money), as commercial prosperity. Petersburg, Rome, Paris, London, may each have its own distinctive peculiar trait. Each has one most surely; and how are these connected. On the one hand, with the lust of the flesh and mind of the citizens of these places; and, on the other, with distinctive powers of darkness high [in the heavenlies]. The darkness of *the order of the world* in France has been ruled by Glory; and the darkness of the world in England has been ruled by Commercial Prosperity. An idea, or some one that presented an idea, has ruled Russia since the days of Peter the Great, and, perhaps will rule it still onwards [as Communism]; for He that marked, in prophetic history, a sphere for the King of the North, Gog and for Magog, for Tubal and Meshech, is above all the powers of darkness; and the Prince of the kingdom of Persia, who withstood Daniel (Dan. 10:13) has his counterpart in the North; and yet, opposing as may be, he cannot prevent all things subserving God's counsels.

Now, the exhortation to us is to be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." To stand upon the defensive,

as being in Christ; and, when attacked, to stand fast, to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.

Now, in order to do this, the first of all things is to have the affections of my heart, and the thoughts of my mind, in the light; so that every thing that rises may be measured and judged ere it be accredited. Observe it: the *issues from the heart* and mind have to be judged. The entire badness of the flesh in itself has been taken for granted; the world has been stamped as the scene the adversary's power; the new man has been created, and all its springs are from above. But as standing down here upon earth [as] the soldiers of the Lord, the issues of our hearts and minds have to be judged.

If I stand fast in the Lord and use the power of his might -- I know where, and what, and who I am as placed, and what manner of life here below it is which becomes such a one. The issues from heart and mind are not to be of the flesh, and according to the world and the spirit of darkness, but of the Holy Spirit and according to the truth. Nothing can guard my heart and mind as a child of God, and a member of Christ, but the indwelling of that truth in my soul, by the Spirit of God, which has made me such.

We see then that we have a conflict -- have to wrestle; that there is methodical order in him against whom we have to wrestle; accusation is his mode of work -- as well as wrestling. Accusation had to be met against Israel in the days of Balaam (Num. 22-24), against Job in his days -- against saints of another class, too (Rev. 12). All that the adversary can find in that which issues from a heavenly member of a risen Christ which is not according to the believer's place in the Lord, and according to the power of His might -- becomes the ground of accusation. The effort on the enemy's part is, to stir up the old man in us, to get us occupied with it, to lead us to act upon it; and to do this, he tries to hide the truth from us, to keep us from it, from living upon it. Our wrestling is to abide in the Lord and in the power of His might. We see, too, that there is a connection between powers of darkness on high [in the heavenlies] and the order-holders of the darkness of this age. But the darkness of this age is but the sanctioned systematized wickedness of the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life -- systematized by certain principalities and powers, and sanctioned by men.

And who but God can cause Christ to dwell thus in our hearts by faith, the center of all our thoughts and desires, the one from whom we have the Spirit abiding, and hidden in whom we are the subjects of the action of the Spirit who worketh in us.

According to the measure which the saint has of the preciousness of this epistle to the Ephesians, will be measure of the importance attached to this walk. The glory and honor of God in the Lord Jesus Christ are deeply concerned in our walk down here. It was, if I may so say, the practical obedience of the Ephesians, which was the open window that let all the flood light about the God and Father of our Lord

12. {The reference is to the Anglican Church.}



Jesus Christ, shine in. God and the Father, in all the bright counsels and plans about His Son the Lord Jesus Christ and the heavenly bride, never so revealed Himself to a disobedient and gainsaying people. For, while the obedience in us Christians is *the occasion* of receiving fuller light, the goodness of God himself is the alone cause of the revelation of Himself. What a contrast, in this respect, between this epistle, in which the full unhindered play of God's truth and light and love is found, and the epistle to the Corinthians, where fleshly disorder had to be corrected, or the epistle to the Galatians, in writing which Paul's spirit seems to have been straitened in him through the darkness among them, which had led them to grope after another foundation than Christ, and another energy than the Holy Ghost. The testimonies for God of the two masses, that at Ephesus and that among the Galatians, how contrasted! And how contrasted, too, (while each was perfect and gracious in its place), the two letters of Paul to the Ephesians, and Paul to the churches which are in Galatia!

Warfare may, as man speaks, be of two kinds; -- it may be offensive, or it may be defensive merely. In the case of Israel it was offensive; for they had to be aggressive on the flesh and blood that were in the land, to drive them out of the Lord's inheritance. For us the warfare, as here presented at least (in other places, where the question is of carrying the testimony forward and planting the truth in parts where it was not before, it may be looked at in another aspect, but here the warfare), is defensive; we are *to stand fast, to withstand*, and having done all, *to stand*. For it is not for us to take possession by violence of the heavenly places, much less is it for us to think of ejecting thence the wicked spirits: they will be ejected hereafter, as we are told in the twelfth chapter of the Revelation. The Lord, when He has risen up from the right hand of God, where He now sits, when they have overtly shown out their nature and works more fully and more openly than they have as yet, -- the Lord will drive them out and their places [Rev. 12] shall be found no more in the heavens. But now we are the objects of assaults from them, and we must be prepared to resist and to wrestle. The call to us here is not to mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts. That would suit very well other epistles and places, in which man as a sinner is being treated of; but in this epistle it is the Christian as partaker of the new nature, enjoying it and acting in it, which is the subject; and, consistently herewith, [it is] not the danger of the flesh of itself breaking loose [that] is treated of, but the danger of assaults upon it, efforts to stir it up, so as to hinder the right and true display of Christ in us, -- efforts by spiritual wickedness on high {in the heavens}. That there is that which is common between fallen flesh and blood and these wicked powers has been shown, and may be seen in another way, too, viz., in the different ways in which the evil is met in various epistles. If the evil power of the flesh in itself has to be met, then the cross is thrust before us -- we are reckoned to be crucified, dead, and buried, together with Him. But if, on the other

hand, as here, the question is of that which ever is on the watch to take occasion of the old nature in us, then the evil principalities, the order-rulers of the darkness of this world; whom Christ has overcome (Col. 2:15), though they are now still found antagonistically agonizing against His glory in us, is referred to. The immense importance of seeing this, may be easily realized by the effects of the revelation to us (in Gen. 3) of a master-mind as the one that ruined man: and by such revelations as are found elsewhere (as in Zech. 3:1, 2; and in Job 1 and 2; Matt. 4 &c.) The discovery that it is not merely man, set loose from God through sin, that is *wandering*, he knows not where, but that there are master-spirits who can play with him, and mislead him by his own lusts and passions -- this discovery puts man's position in quite another light to him. And to us it is known, that these regulators for the present, of wickedness, are all conquered -- and are under the power of Him that conquered. Such a thought helps one to cease from oneself, and to look on high, where they, that deal contemptuously enough down here, are seen in their true light;<sup>13</sup> seen too, as not so much our enemies as His; and already, though still allowed to show their active opposition to Him and His glory, they are shown there to be already condemned. Oh, that the glory of and the honor of our Lord Jesus Christ lay a little nearer to our hearts, were a little more visible in our minds, how would it simplify ten thousand difficulties, how would it set our hearts free and happy, yet in carefulness and watchfulness too, -- lest His name, whom we love, should be blasphemed through us!

From *The Present Testimony* 1:408-414.

13. As in any failure, such as that of Lot's whole life, of Jacob's wandering, or of the fall of a David, a Solomon, a Job, a Peter, no sound judgment is had until the motive-causes and the occasions are discerned in light: so it is with us now, and the springs of a heavenly saint's danger are therefore set before us. More than this; for we are apprized and made aware of the danger beforehand, that the danger foreseen may be danger avoided.



## Chapter 7.5

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### *The Heavenly and His Heavenly Ones*

#### *1 Corinthians 15:46*

Two efforts of the enemy are characteristic of the present day, and go along together with the humanizing Christ, and the giving a worldly character to Christianity, leading in result to multifarious forms of human religiousness and of earthly organization, having little or nothing in common but this, that they exhibit practical departure from heavenly principles and grievous independence of the divine persons.

It is therefore of no little moment that we should recognize that Christianity in its very essence is as heavenly as He who inspired it. Many are they who accept its divine authorship, who have never adequately apprehended it to be an absolutely heavenly thing, though in an earthly locale. But practically we find that the less it is apprehended as heavenly, the less also will its divine aspect be before the soul. And this we may safely predicate, that it is impossible to understand its character and its scope, unless in its origin, in its essence, in its operation and in its end, it is seen to be altogether a heavenly product for a heavenly purpose. Outside a very small circle, how rarely do we meet a Christian who understands his parentage, and occupies according to God, his present portion! How contracted and how erroneous are the commonly-prevailing thoughts of what Christianity is. How little is it accepted as the reflection of a heavenly Christ in a heavenly people redeemed from the earth, who are here only for Himself and looking for translation at His coming!

"The first man of the earth, earthy," had been running his carnal and material course for forty centuries here below, before "the second man" paid a visit of three and thirty years to the same scene, having been sent into it in grace to "the first." As man, He was, He is, "the heavenly," and by this title is contrasted with "the earthy." In God's reckoning He was "second man," for all before God counts as one; and He was "last Adam," for there could be no more after. But more than this He was "from (or out of) heaven" as the first was, "out of the earth, made of dust." Refused and cut off from the earth, having nothing, He is now the risen Man in the Glory of God, and alike in incarnation and in resurrection is

He "the heavenly" -- there, now and eternally!

Further, as is He, "the heavenly, such also the heavenly (ones)." There is, it is admitted, another aspect of Christianity in which birth and profession give status, and wherein are certain privileges and answering responsibilities; but what is now before us is a matter of race, and as to this we are born of God, are partakers of the divine nature, and just as truly as the angels, are we one of the heavenly families. The One "who lived, who died, who lives again," has redeemed unto Himself a chosen race of which, as the risen Man He is the glorified federal head, and this word -- "As the Heavenly, such also the heavenly (ones)" -- so constitutes Christianity in its very essence, that every bit of it which is a genuine thing before God, expresses in word or in deed, the cardinal truth that man is in the glory of God, and God is glorified thereby. One who was once visible upon earth, "in likeness of flesh of sin" (Rom. 8:8), sits now in a glorified, but no less real, positive human body in the Father's throne. From the glory of God; from the throne of the Father; and *in* the risen, exalted Man who fills all heaven with His peerless presence. Christianity has its origin; and in the power of the Holy Ghost alone, witness from thence of His exalted majesty and glory, it has its activities in so far as they are according to God. "When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high" -- marks its starting-point, both as to sin and place. It is thus "the heavenly" gone back to heaven -- man in the glory of God -- in whom it takes its rise; and it is this fact -- the parent truth of Christianity -- which imparts to it its distinctive character. It is a divine thing as He is divine; it is heavenly as He is heavenly: He is its sure foundation, its tried cornerstone, its immovable keystone, its crowning top-stone. It is all and altogether for His glory, and therefore its operation is progressive assimilation day by day of His heavenly ones to Him, "the heavenly," by the action of the Spirit of God, and this alone constitutes practical Christianity of the highest, the true type. And as He and they look along

the vista of earthly trial and testimony to the consummation of blessedness beyond, they contemplate the issue and end in the many sons brought to glory, when that unsullied scene of untold joy, which has ever been the true home and habitat of Christianity, shall be reached for aye.

When He was here in the days of His flesh, “knowing he came from God and went to God,” He took a towel and girded Himself, and washed the feet of His heavenly ones elect, and in principle that word applies (in a lower sense, of course) to us, for we too may say we have come from God and are going to God, and when He who is coming returns in the air, we shall be eternally with God, and in the likeness of the bosom-Son of the Father. Meanwhile we blessedly experience His tender solicitude in removing with a practiced hand every defilement that we contract in passing along an earthly scene, nor will He cease this heavenly service of His faithful love and unwearied grace, until we assume “the image of the heavenly” at His return.

If we look at the origin of Christianity, we see that it sprang from the heart of the Father, as it takes its title from Him who adorns His throne, and it is most interesting to trace how in every step of its delineation in the word, the Spirit of God indicates its wonderful and varied relations to the Father. It was the Father sent His Son to be Savior of the world (1 John 4:14). In Him the glory of the only-begotten of the Father was beheld (John 1:14). His ever-enjoyed place in the bosom of the Father made Him competent to declare Him (John 1:18). Here was He about His Father’s business (Luke 2:49). What He saw the Father do He did (v. 19). The will of the Father alone was what He sought to fulfil (v. 30). The Father’s works were given Him to finish (v. 36). The Father’s name it was in which He was come (v. 43). The Father gave to us the true bread from heaven (John 6:82), and gave us to Him (vv. 37, 39, and also John 18:6, 11, 12, 24). It is learning of the Father brings us to the Son (John 6:46, 65). The life everlasting is the Father’s commandment (John 12:50). The words, also, the Son affirms to be the Father’s (John 14:10-24), and when He goes away it is to prepare a place for us in the Father’s house (John 14:2). The Father holds the sheep in His hand (John 10:29); is the husbandman who purges the fruit-bearing branches of the vine (John 15:1, 2), that He (the Father) may be glorified in our “much fruit” (John 15:8). The Father is to be asked in the Son’s name, and that which we ask, the Father will give, for He Himself loves us (John 16:23, 27). The glorified Son shows us plainly of the Father (John 16:25), and is now glorifying Him (John 17:1). The eternal life is the knowledge of the Father and the Son (John 17:3), and those who have it are kept in the Holy Father’s own name (John 17:11), are sanctified through the Father’s word which is truth (John 17:17-19); have the Father’s name declared unto them, and are loved of the Father’s heart, even as He is loved (John 17:16). By the glory of the Father has he been raised up (Rom. 6:4); to the Father’s throne has He been taken (Rev. 3:21); and from thence has He sent down “the promise of the Father” -- the

Holy Ghost (Acts 1:4; 2:33).

These are a few only of the scripture marks of the Father’s relations to that of which we speak, all of which are of incalculable value as forming an essentially divine bulwark to Satan’s present efforts to terrestrialise Christianity, and to humanize its Author, for clearly the Father is neither earthly nor human. Christianity then is the revelation of the Father, by the person and work of the Lord Jesus, His Eternal Son, in the presence and power of the Holy Ghost as “the promise of the Father.” Coming forth from His blessed heart according to eternal purpose and counsels, it is based upon the atoning work and acquired glories of the eternal Son, and has its unfolding by the living energy of the Spirit of God dwelling in us. By Him is its heavenly character wrought out, through and in “the heavenly ones” whom grace has reached for this precious character of blessing, as the associates in eternal glory, and in heaven of Him who is emphatically, “the Heavenly.”

Two questions naturally arise here.

1. Have we truly accepted the fact that *generically* we are as heavenly as He who adorns the Father’s throne? (Compare John 17:16 with Heb. 2:11).
2. How far does the character and order of our lives make patent that our former earthly standing has been eternally abrogated to make room for the new and indissoluble relations we hold to the Man whom God has gratified His own heart in exalting to highest glory?

Could believers answer these inquiries satisfactorily it would be utterly impossible that they should go on in practical fellowship with the course and current of this world; governed by its principles, giving utterance to its maxima, aiding its objects, adopting its practices, and accepting its patronage, the fruit of which is as the apples of Sodom, and whose reaping shall ever be leanness and poverty and wretchedness of soul.

May He, “THE HEAVENLY,” so blessedly connect with Himself the hearts of those who have accepted His heavenly call, and who know that what they have been brought into is as intrinsically of heaven as it is radically of God, that our Christianity may not comport with that of “this poor, faithless world,” but may, through grace upon grace, be ever acquiring in an increasing degree a character suited to its divine origin, expressive of its celestial destiny and redolent with the graces and the virtues of a glorified Christ!

R. *The Bible Treasury* 12:154-156.

## Chapter 7.6

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### *God's Promises to Abraham, and His Grace to the Church*

No one denies that the promises made to Abraham flowed from the grace of God. But it is a serious mistake, affecting our faith, our communion, and our conduct, to confound these promises to Abraham with God's promise in Christ by the gospel spoken of in Eph. 3:6. It is agreed that the Abrahamic covenant involved security, acceptance, favor, and friendship with God, for its objects. The question is whether the Epistle to the Ephesians, for instance, does not reveal a far deeper and higher purpose of grace, which was never promised to Abraham, but was intentionally kept hid until the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, consequent upon the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ to the right hand of God in heaven. Neither reason nor tradition will help, but will hinder, the solution of the question. But, what saith the scripture? Let us compare the two things, which I affirm to be totally distinct in range and character, though both find their source necessarily in the manifold grace of God.

The call and first revelation of the promise to Abram is found in Gen. 12:1-3, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Subsequently, Jehovah appeared unto Abram and said, "Unto thy seed I will give this land" (v. 7). What can be plainer? A particular land given to Abram and his seed, a great nation, and a great name; blessing from God to Abram, and he a blessing to others; God treating men as they treated Abram; and in him blessing secured to all the families of the earth. Blessings natural and spiritual to Abram and his seed, and so even to the Gentiles are, I believe, conveyed in this inalienable promise, part of which is repeated in still clearer terms in Gen. 13, and confirmed by sacrifice in Gen. 15. Then we have circumcision enjoined as the covenant sign in Gen. 17, where the name is changed to Abraham, "for a father of many nations have I made thee;" and, finally, after the son of the bondwoman is cast out, in Gen. 22, we have Isaac, the son of the freewoman, the child

and heir of promise, raised up from the dead in a figure, and the oath. See Heb. 6. "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies: and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (vv. 16-18).

All the nations, or Gentiles, are to be blessed in the seed, but they and the seed<sup>14</sup> are quite distinct parties. The nations blessed therein are no more to be confounded with the Seed, than are the enemies whose gate the seed is to possess. There is blessing for both; but are the nations blessed in exactly the same way and in exactly the same degree as the seed? If it be so, where is the honored place of Abraham's seed; where is their peculiar privilege in virtue of the promises to the fathers? Or, after all, do they stand on one level of common indiscriminate blessing? If it be not so, and the seed is to have its own special promised place by divine favor, above all the nations who are blessed in it, then is it evident that the covenant with Abraham is one thing and "the mystery" is another, wherein no such differences are found; but the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and joint-partakers of God's promise in Christ by the gospel. The believing Jew from the heights, and the believing Gentile from the depths, of their earthly estate, are ushered into an unheard-of sphere of heavenly oneness in Christ, which is made good by the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth. Such is "the mystery," as far as regards the church.

For the doctrine of Ephesians is not merely justification by faith, and the death of Christ, as the basis of this divine righteousness, the sole ground on which stand all the saved from the beginning to the end of time: in Romans, we have fully discussed, and applied to past, present, and future dispensations. Much less do we find here the death of Christ

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14. In the most blessed and important sense, the Seed is Christ (Gal. 3:16). But, literally and quite truly, the seed means the Jews, as the Holy Ghost shows in Acts 3:25. Either sense suits the argument in the text.

connected in a special way with the Jewish nation, or even with the spared Gentiles who may be saved during the future reign of the Messiah: of these things the Psalms and Prophets abundantly treat. But we are taught in Eph. 2:11-18, that, beside and apart from these applications of the death of Christ, there is a new and most glorious use to which the wisdom and the grace of God have turned it. He has founded on the cross, and effected by the Holy Ghost thereon given, a novel and heavenly structure, without parallel in the millennial period, and without precedent in the ages and generations which closed with the crucifixion. "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, ye, who sometime were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances: for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and he came and preached peace to you who were afar off, and peace to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

Now, it is plain from scripture that the distinction of Jew and Gentile, with all its accompaniments, was set up of God, had His sanction so long as the earth in any way was owned (Matt. 10:5), and will be resumed when the church is caught up, and God begins to interfere immediately, and acts not, as now, in mere secret providence with the course of human things here below. The moment He enters upon the visible proof that there is a God Who judges the earth, the Jew appears first in responsibility -- in guilt, no doubt -- but first, assuredly, in blessing, by virtue of the promises to the fathers.

Accordingly the new covenant already ratified in the blood of Christ, but suspended in its application, save to a remnant of the Jews and an election from the Gentiles, who are together brought into and form the church, and enjoy its blessings -- this new covenant, when it takes effect in all its value and in its literal results, will not neutralize but sanction the divinely ordained separation of the Jew from the Gentile, and the supremacy of the former above the latter. "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" (Jer. 31:31). Is there a word said in this covenant of obliterating the difference of Jew and Gentile, of forming both into one new man, and of introducing them on the same level of intimacy to the Father? On the contrary, there is not a syllable about the Gentiles, but an emphatic assurance of blessing to the Jew, Jehovah undertaking to put His law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts; to

be their God, and they to be His people; all of them to know Him from the least to the greatest, for He will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

There is no question that abundant blessing will flow to the Gentiles. "Yea, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek Jehovah of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah of host, in those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you" (Zech. 8:22, 23). "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, and to keep the feast of the tabernacles" (Zech. 14:16; Mic. 3, 5; 7:16; Jer. 3:17. See also Psa. 77, 96-106, &c). That is, the covenant order of blessing will be the Jews in the inner ring, and the Gentiles in the outer, when all lands make a joyful noise unto Jehovah.

Nothing can be more certain than the fact that Israel, sanctified by having Jehovah's sanctuary in their midst, will be kept aloof from and above the Gentiles, instead of both being made one body in Christ. That is to say, the abolition of Jewish exaltation above the Gentile is only for the church of the heavenly places. It was not so before Christ came the first time; it will not be so when He comes again. The space between these two boundaries is filled up by the formation of the church, where is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all: not a mere collection of all the individuals in every different dispensation, but a body now gathered into one by the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth, and united with the Lord Jesus Christ in His heavenly glory. Neither of these things could be till Jesus was glorified (John 7:39; 1 Cor. 12:13). It was then that Christ took His place above as Head, and then that the church began to be called here below, "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:20-22).

As the difference just insisted on is of all importance, let us look at Isa. 59:20, 21; 60:1, 2, 3. "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith Jehovah. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith Jehovah: My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith Jehovah from henceforth and for ever. Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples: but Jehovah shall rise upon thee, and his glory

shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." Here also it is clear that, in the coming dispensation to which the Holy Spirit in Romans 11 applies the passage, preeminence over the Gentiles is guaranteed to Israel.

"The wealth of the Gentiles shall come unto thee" (v. 5). "The Holy One of Israel . . . hath glorified thee. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee." "Therefore thy gates shall be opened continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted" (vv. 11, 12). Compare also the rest of this chapter, as well as chapters 61 and 62. One portion of the first is so decisive and striking that it may be well to cite it. "I will make an everlasting covenant with them; and their seed shall be known among the Gentiles" (is this the same common position?) "and their offspring among the peoples: all that see them shall acknowledge them that they are a seed which Jehovah hath blessed."

Here, plainly and indisputably, we have the literal fulfillment of the promises to Abraham and his seed; but it is evident that the terms of the prophecy, equally with those of the original covenant, are irreconcilable with the notion of identical blessings to Jews and Gentiles, all difference between them being utterly nullified.<sup>15</sup> On the contrary, great as may be the privileges to the nations of the earth, resulting from these promises, decided and blessed superiority will be the indefeasible prerogative of Israel. The Gentiles are to serve them and the nations that will not shall perish. All this is in perfect accordance with the Abrahamic covenant whose accomplishment in any strict sense is yet future without one feature of resemblance to the church, which is entirely above such distinctions. For the Christian it is grace.

The prophecy of Zecharias (Luke 1:68-79) is evidently Jewish in its sources, its associations, and its hopes, as indeed had been the previous announcement of Gabriel to him (vv. 13-17). "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets," &c. (is this the mystery which, from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God?) "that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all that hate us" (is this the character or manner of salvation to the church?); to perform the mercy promised to our fathers" (are they really our fathers, or fathers of the Jewish people?), and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us," &c. It is conceded that many of the blessings are

common, such as "in holiness and righteousness before him," faith resting on Messiah and the new birth; for there are, of course, general principles which characterize all the people of God in all ages. But I affirm that, as a whole, this prophecy, as yet unfulfilled, and clearly based upon the oath sworn to Abraham, is not in any way a charter of church privilege. To say that it is, would be, in effect, to efface the peculiar doctrine of such Epistles as to Ephesians and Colossians; or, in other words, to deny unwittingly the being and proper character of the church of God.

Moreover, it was no secret that the nations were to be blessed. It was as ancient a promise, we have seen, as that which secured the peculiar seat of honor to Abraham's seed. It was repeated to Isaac (Gen. 24:4) and reiterated to Jacob (Gen. 28:14). A Jew ought not to have thought of Jehovah's pledge of blessing to his race without remembering that he himself was to be the channel of blessing to the nations. Will it be affirmed that this most familiar assurance of blessing to the Gentiles in the promised seed, published frequently and undisguisedly (as the apostle Paul showed) in Moses, and the Psalms, and the prophets, is the same thing as "the mystery" which has been "hid from ages and from generations, but is now made manifest to the saints" (Col. 1:26)? Is that secret and silent which was published from age to age and rehearsed from generation to generation? Can a simple and familiar covenant, revealed so often by Jehovah, and so often appealed to by His people, from the book of Genesis till the last prophet wound up the Old Testament canon (Mal. 1:11) -- can this be deemed a "mystery," altogether concealed from the sons of men? Surely not. Gentile blessing therefore, as involved in the Abrahamic covenant, which was the constant expectation of Israel, wholly differs from "the mystery of Christ"; which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery was not revealed before. It is now disclosed. From the beginning of the world it was (not known to God's people, but) hid in God (Eph. 3:9).

Indeed, we have only to read Matt. 16:18 in order to see that, even in the Lord's lifetime here below, the church did not exist save in the purpose of God. It was His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus, but actually existed only after His death and resurrection. During His ministry He was not even beginning to build it: "Upon this rock I will build my church." Hence it is said in Col. 1:18: "He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead." Christ Himself, in resurrection, was the beginning. Souls had been born again; sinners had been brought by the faith of the Savior. But the church was a new body formed by the Holy Ghost, after its risen Head took His seat in heaven. Hence Heb. 12:23 distinguishes the church from the "spirits of just men made perfect" (i. e., the Old Testament saints), as plainly as from myriads of angels, a general assembly. Scripture applies the term "Church of God" only to the saints of the present period. The congregation of Jehovah, Israel, was wholly different.

15. At most identification is only involved in that wonderful hint of "thy seed" ("as of one") in Gen. 22:18, in contrast with the numerous seed in v. 17, of which the apostle avails himself in Gal. 3:16. This is now only for the Christian in the gospel.

Is it maintained then that election, redemption, faith, life, saintship, are peculiar to the church? By no means. The church of God shares these and other blessings with all the faithful of all times. But this does not make all the faithful to be the church; nor can it annul the peculiar standing which is traced as the church's portion, in Eph. 2, 3, 4. It is admitted fully that to us, members of Christ's body, it can be said, "All are yours." Of the new covenant, though, strictly speaking, made with the house of Israel, we yet enjoy the blessing; and if we are Christ's, then are we Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. But it by no means follows that millennial Israel, for instance, though enjoying the new covenant and the Abrahamic promise still more literally than ourselves, will have any portion in that mystery, or secret of God, which is distinct from either.

Scripture speaks of the faith of Abel, of Enoch, of Noah; but that the Abrahamic covenant was in operation as to them is assumption and false. Faith ever rests upon the word, I. e., the revelation of God; and the Abrahamic Covenant was not disclosed until the time of Abraham, though the Savior had been pointed to from the first (Gen. 3:15). Saints previously rested on a revealed Redeemer, not on an unrevealed covenant.

The real stumbling-block, as appears in scripture, has ever been, not so much the Jewish channel of outward testimony traced in Romans 11 as the temporary leveling of Jewish prerogative, and the grace which gathers out of Jews and Gentiles, alike children of wrath as traced in Eph. 2. The ordinary notion, which prevails to the present, is a specious form of the same self-conceit which vexed the church from its early days.

The "new covenant" and "new testament" are merely various versions of the same Greek phrase, *καινη διαθηκη* of which the former is always, I believe, the right rendering, as regards the use of the full phrase in scripture. If so, the reasoning about the testator has no place save in the parenthesis of Heb. 9:16, 17 which seems owing to "inheritance" immediately preceding, besides being an admirable turn given to that other and familiar sense of the word *διαθηκη* singly. I do not believe the new covenant to be identical with the Abrahamic covenants, which are more extended in their scope, though, so far as Israel is concerned, they may coincide; but it is needless to discuss the point at this time.

Nor is there such an idea in the Bible as the grace-giving testament. The grace of God brings salvation, even to such

as were strangers from the covenants of promise. There is no doubt that the shedding of blood is essential to the remission of sins, and that the new covenant is much more too. Ephesians 2, as we have seen, introduces other truth. Nor is it scriptural to say, that "the promise" and "the new covenant" are convertible terms, though they may be intimately blended.

But we can heartily agree that unconditionality stamps the Abrahamic covenant, as the apostle so strongly insists in Gal. 3. It is evident that, when the Judaizers insisted upon the law, the apostle could appeal most powerfully to the promises God, given so many centuries before the law 3:); when they insisted upon circumcision, he could triumphantly point to the faith which their father Abraham had, being yet uncircumcised (Romans 4). If therefore God now justified the uncircumcision through faith, it was no more than He had done in the case of faithful Abraham. Nor could any objections be more completely silenced. But to say that the Abrahamic covenant is the channel of God's grace to us argues an inadequate view of our wretchedness as outcast dogs of the Gentiles, as well as of the bright heavenly atmosphere into which we are brought, when baptized, Jews or Gentiles, by one Spirit into one body.

On the head of glory, Eph. 3:21 seems show that the church, as the reflection of Christ's heavenly glory, will not lose its singular blessedness "throughout all ages, world without end." And Rev. 21:1-8 appears to confirm the idea that, even in the everlasting state, the holy city, new Jerusalem, is distinct from though connected with the men who people the then purged universe. It is true that the Old Testament speaks of Jehovah marrying Israel, and Israel's land. Is it really meant that this equalizes them or their land with the Bride, the Lamb's wife? But here one may pause. The grand principle has been already asserted.

*The Bible Treasury*, New Series 2:343-345, 359-361.



## Chapter 7.7

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### *A Heavenly Christ, Therefore A Heavenly Church*

It is the uniform tendency of man's mind to practically dissociate Christ and the Church, particularly with regard to those relations of intimate unity which scripture reveals and emphasizes as the peculiar marks of the Christian calling. Which of the great sections of Christendom really holds that the church is so united to Christ in heaven that its constitution derives an essential character from this very fact? The Roman, Anglican, and Dissenting, not to speak of the Greek, communities, all fall short of discerning that the living connection between the church and its risen Head on high is not a mere abstract notion, purely theoretical and altogether inoperative, but a vital principle meant to be embodied in its every action.

Now it is impossible to understand the heavenly nature of the calling of the church apart from Christ; for the *raison d'être* of the church is Christ. And it is not meant by this to refer now to the atoning and redemptive work of the Savior. Undoubtedly that incomparable work supplied the immutable foundation on which God's dealings with man are based. Anticipatively or retrospectively, the death of Christ formed the sole ground for blessing to the children of faith for all time. It does not follow however that the blessing offered and given has been of an identical character from beginning. On the contrary that blessing has varied in character and measure according to the then purpose of God, as it has been successively revealed in connection with the varied glories of the Son.

The Old Testament, speaking broadly, is occupied with the promise and prophecy of the advent of the Messiah Who would come to the chosen people of Israel as their Prophet, Priest, and King, and exalt the seed of Abraham above all the nations of the earth. The blessings which the saints of old were taught to expect were of an earthly nature. The daughter of Zion was to look for the coming of her King Who would reign in righteousness. The oppressor should be broken in pieces, and their enemies made to lick the dust. Peace should flow like a river and the earth be full of the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea. Long life and prosperous days should be the happy portion of every

subject of the kingdom of David's Lord. In short, Christ in the Old Testament is brought forward as the earthly ruler and the executor of divine justice in the earth, specially in connection with the nation of Israel. Accordingly the blessings of the people assume an earthly and national character in perfect accord with these promises.

Now just as the hopes of Israel derived their points of distinction from Messiah the Prince coming to reign here below, so the hopes and calling of the church receive their distinctive marks from the position now assumed by Christ on high. This establishes the widest possible difference between Israel and the church. The difference is that betwixt earthly and heavenly, carnal and spiritual blessing. Wherever we look in the Old Testament, we find the same kind of anticipations. In Egypt and the wilderness, they look for the land of promise with a bountiful basket and store. In Canaan when groaning under the idolatrous rule of apostate kings, or when weeping by the rivers of Babylon, the faithful long for the Redeemer to come to Zion, Who shall bless every man under his own vine and his own pomegranate tree.

But the New Testament sanctions no such expectations for the Christian. The Jew was entitled to hope for blessing here of a worldly nature; but the believer's blessings are heavenly and spiritual, enjoyed alone by faith. They take their character, as has been said already, from Christ; and from Christ, not as the king of Israel and the ruler of the nations, but as the glorified Head of the church.

Now the epistle to the Ephesians unfolds the mystery of the heavenly blessing of the church in a very full manner, but always in connection with Christ. The close of the first chapter establishes the truth of the present exaltation of Christ on high and binds up with that momentous fact the position of the church in the heavenlies along with Him. Let us look at the way in which this doctrine is brought forward.

The first fourteen verses of chapter 1 contain a summary of truths relating to the saints, bringing out their place in the mind and purpose of God. This calls for a remark worthy of note. It is a principle of the word of God that personal

blessings and responsibilities are invariably set forth before corporate blessings and relationship. And it is nowhere more strikingly illustrated than in this epistle which exceeds all others in the fullness of divine unfoldings concerning the church in its most comprehensive aspect. For we have it presented in its totality, from eternity “hid in God,” “now made known,” and by-and-by to be presented to Christ perfect and entire. Nevertheless there is even in this epistle no exception to the general rule observed throughout the whole scheme of revelation to state first of all what relates to the individual. We are told not only of election and inheritance in Christ, but of what might seem very elementary, of forgiveness of sins and of hearing the gospel. This is significant enough. The individuality of the believer ought not to be swamped by the generalities of the church. It is also well, nay imperative, for the soul to be assured of its personal relationship before God in order that it may be able to enter more truly into its place in the church. Neither should an acquaintance with the privileges of Christ’s body cause any to forget or undervalue their individual standing through grace.

Having therefore unfolded to the saints at Ephesus their blessed place individually before God in Christ, he tells them of his prayers on their account that they may be made to know yet more. He seeks that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of the heart being enlightened. His petition on their behalf is threefold, viz., that they may know --

1. What is the hope of His calling, and
2. What the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and
3. What is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ, when He
  - (a) raised Him from the dead, and
  - (b) set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come, and
  - © hath put all things under His feet, and
  - (d) gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all (Eph. 1:16-23).

Here then we have the inspired desires of the apostle for these Ephesian saints. He sought that they might grow in divine knowledge (“full knowledge” is the word employed).

In the first place (1) as to their calling; it had already been brought before them in the early verses, but did they grasp the hope of that calling? The hope is the consummation, the crown, the climax of what we now enjoy by faith. We are in point of fact even now blessed in the heavenlies, even now

accepted in the Beloved. But the hope is yet to be realized when the Lord takes us to the Father’s house on high and the purpose of God with regard to us is fully accomplished. The calling is individual, the hope takes in all; for it contemplates that unity in which Christ will present the church to Himself in glory. Into this view the apostle prays that the saints may now enter fully.

He further prays (2) that they may know the riches of the glory of God’s inheritance in the saints. It is not so much, as has been pointed out by others, that the saints themselves form this inheritance, but that in the saints God in Christ will take the inheritance. Christ is “heir of all things” (Heb. 1:9), and when He enters into His right, the church will share the glory of that inheritance as joint-heirs (Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:12). Christ will not enter into His glory apart from His bride. He says Himself, “The glory which thou hast given me, I have given them” (John 17:22). And it is the desire of the apostle that the saints may now by faith apprehend their high destiny in the coming day of glory.

The next clause (3) of the petition is that they may know the exceeding greatness of God’s power already exercised upon believers in raising them up to share the exaltation of Christ.

The strongly and distinctly marked clauses of the apostle’s first prayer for the Ephesian saints (Eph. 1:16-28) have already been noticed. He sought on their behalf that they might be made to know (1) the hope of His calling, (2) the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and (3) the exceeding greatness of His power toward believers.

The last petition introduces a subject on which the apostle in a characteristic manner enlarges in a very full way. It was a theme especially near and dear to the heart of Paul. Christ in heaven and the consequent effects for us of His present exaltation are prominent in almost every epistle. Paul knew not Christ in the days of His flesh. He did not meet Him on the banks of the Jordan, like John or Peter. It was a heavenly Christ that confronted the mad persecutor; and it was the memory of that vision of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ which ever hung like a brilliant beacon star on the horizon of the apostle’s life, shaping his course and animating his zeal. He loved to think of Christ in the glory, and when led to speak of the power now working in us, he immediately unfolds its connection with the power that put Christ there. The selfsame power that wrought in Him works in us.

Thus the doctrinal truth is made as ever to rest on the solid substructure of fact. It is a fact however only to be appreciated by the spiritual mind; and this the apostle has in view. Such he calls to consider the most recent display of God’s omnipotent power in the resurrection of Christ, unveiling its profound import to the church of God.

In the beginning God displayed His power in the creation of the heavens and the earth. In the history of Israel, He showed His power by their redemption from Egypt. But the

greatest exemplification of God's power for the Christian is in the resurrection and exaltation of Christ. This transcends in character the power exercised in fashioning the material universe, as it also does that which crushed the military power of Pharaoh and overruled natural phenomena for the deliverance of His enslaved people. For here we have the annulment of man's last enemy--death, God raising Him Who lay under its power, not merely to life but up to the very chiefest place of authority and glory.

In that supremest position dominion is given Him, and that over all things; "He hath put all things under his feet." He is Lord of all. Though this universal sway is unseen as yet, the time of its public administration not having come, the glorification of the One Who lay in the rich man's tomb is no secret to faith because revealed. It is to the believer the most signal exercise of divine power. Wondrous are the potent and invisible forces of nature operating alike on the mightier orbs, forming the remoter stellar systems, as in the countless swarms of minute life which people the stagnant ditch. But the glory of God in creation is infinitely surpassed by the glory of the Father in raising the Son.

It is surpassed to the same degree as spiritual things surpass natural, and as eternal things surpass temporal. Mechanism of the universe! Cleavage of the Red Sea! Of what small account are these in comparison with what He has done for the Son of Man, for Him Who was "crucified in weakness," but "raised in power." He Who passed by the heavenly dignitaries, in His descent to the assumption of manhood and the subsequent shame and death of Calvary, has now passed them by in His ascent to occupy His seat on the right hand of the majesty in the heavens, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."

What a super-eminent example of the working of God's mighty power is this! Life from the dead is much, but exaltation to the very utmost how much more! Singularly few are the instances of resurrection in Old Testament times. And those who thus issued from the gates of the grave through direct divine interposition full soon returned. But here is One thither again truly raised but raised to die no more, being elevated out of the domain of death beyond its reach into the heavenlies whereto death can never come. There even now abides the Son of Man, the permanent demonstration to faith of Omnipotent interference.

Now having strained our thoughts to their utmost in setting forth the heights of exaltation to which Christ is raised, the apostle brings forward a fact of the profoundest interest to the church. In that place of conferred glory, the church is associated with Him. He is not only "head over all things" but "head over all things *to the church*." The selfsame power, that wrought in Christ to set Him on high, works in us to set us along with Him there. As Son of Man He has those who are destined to share the headship bestowed

upon Him in resurrection; and they are described as being already, in purpose and effect, associated along with Him there.

The intimate connection of the church with Christ is illustrated by the figure of the body -- "the church which is His body." This is not the relationship of subjects to a ruler, though of course it is at the same time true that the church is subject to Christ. But this expressive metaphor implies the marvelous truth that the eternal purpose of God would not be realized unless the church is united to the Risen Man in the place of glory to which He is exalted. Indeed, this is the particular import of the succeeding phrase, "the fullness of him that filleth all in all." The church is called out to become the complement, that which is necessary to complete the Mystic Man on high {1 Cor 12:12}.

Here then we have the revealed purpose of God with regard to Christ and the church. We are brought into indissoluble association of the most intimate character with Christ, not as a man here below, for this could not be, but as man in resurrection and exaltation to God's right hand.

The fact (for it certainly is not a theory) of itself stamps a unique distinction upon the church. The grand objects and purpose of God in reference to her will never be accomplished on earth. The scene of her consummation in glory is on high, a secret as completely hidden from the world now as the fact of the present glory of Christ. On this account the aspirations of the church where the true nature of God's calling is apprehended, will be exclusively heavenly, while the world will be regarded as a place of temporary sojourn in which all arrangements are purely provisional and in no way objects of chief concern.

How far this is borne out by the practice of the professing church of today needs no word of comment.

W. J. H., *The Bible Treasury* New Series 1:45-47, 77-79.



# *Part 8*

## *The Purpose of God*

### *and*

## *The Heavenly and the Earthly People of God*

Part 8 is composed of some expositions, by J. N. Darby, concerning what God is doing for the manifestation of His glory, in Christ, in the two spheres, the heavenly and the earthly. These papers are foundational expositions of dispensational truth.

Chapter 8.1, *The Purpose of God*, sets before us God's glory in Christ, shown in two spheres, the heavenly and the earthly, with which Israel and the Church are, respectively, intimately connected. We should keep in mind the saints in heaven form several companies, but the church is eternally distinct among the saints in heaven (Eph. 3:21; Rev. 21). The Christian is, of course, even heavenly now, as we have seen.

Chapter 8.2, *Divine Mercy in the Church and Towards Israel*, is another very important paper by J. N. Darby., speaking as it does concerning the place of **call** and of **government**. The reader may find further help on this

subject in *J. N. Darby's Teaching Regarding Dispensations, Ages, Administrations and the Two Parentheses*, available from the Publisher.

Chapter 8.3 is composed of an extract on Israel's condition and position as Lo-ammi. It is important that this be understood rightly, in connection with the distinction between the earthly people and the heavenly people.

In Chapter 8.4 we will touch on a few points contrary to **Covenant Pretribulationists** (alias "Progressive Dispensationalists") regarding their effort to deny that the Church is a heavenly people. This denial is, of course, consistent with covenantism and is not far from **Covenant Posttribulationism**. It is a distinctly Judaizing movement among Scofieldian dispensationalists. I am somewhat reminded of the efforts of the posttribulationist, B. W. Newton, to thwart the teachings recovered through J. N. Darby.



## Chapter 8.1

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### *The Purpose of God*

Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth (Eph. 1:10).

#### *Introduction*

The good pleasure of the Godhead was that all its fulness should dwell and manifest itself in Christ. Such was the purpose of God, a purpose full of blessing. The way in which God is about to manifest that purpose, and in which we are associated with its blessings, is infinitely interesting to us.

In the following pages only a small part of that purpose has been treated of, the outward part, so to speak, a part which nevertheless is none the less interesting.

It was designedly that God was pleased to accomplish it in a visible way, in order that that purpose might be revealed to us by means of positive truths, which, while bringing the Christian into fellowship with God, who is their source, preserve him -- weak creature that he is -- from substituting the wanderings of his own imagination for the holy manifestations which God has given unto us of Himself. The subject we are treating is contained in the prayer of the apostle Paul, which we find at the end of Eph. 1. This subject finds a still deeper source (to which we have alluded) in what is announced to us at the end of Eph. 3, and we cannot truly enjoy the subject treated in Eph. 1, without having felt in some measure the power of Eph. 3.

For the rest, in communicating what follows, I only respond in weakness to the desires of a few persons, and I am confident that God will deign to make up for what is lacking.

#### *The Church and the Jews the Respective Centers of the Heavenly glory and of the Earthly Glory in Christ*

Two great objects are presented to our contemplation by the prophecies and testimonies of the Scriptures, which refer to the millennium: on one hand, the church and its glory in Christ; on the other, the Jews and the glory which they are

to possess as a nation redeemed by Christ. It is the heavenly people <sup>1</sup> and the earthly people. <sup>2</sup> The Son Himself, who is the image and glory of God, will be their common center, and the sun which will enlighten them both; and although the place where His glory dwells in the church be the heavens, where He has "set a tabernacle for the sun" (Psa. 19:4), the nations will walk in the light thereof. It will be manifested on the earth, and the earth will enjoy its blessings. When all is accomplished God will be all in all. The tabernacle of God will be with men, not coming down, so to speak, but come down from heaven.

All these things, and the way in which they will have their accomplishment, are revealed in detail in the Scriptures. Although the church and the people of Israel are each respectively the centers of the heavenly glory and of the earthly glory, in their connection with Christ, and although they cast on each other a mutual brightness of blessedness and joy, yet each of them has a sphere which is proper to itself, and in which all things are subordinate to it. With respect to the church, angels, principalities, and powers, with all that belongs to heaven -- the domain of its glory; with respect to the people of Israel, the nations of the earth.

We will confine ourselves here to the history and condition of the church, on one hand, and to those of the people of Israel, on the other.

"In the beginning God created," the Old Testament tells us. "In the beginning was the Word," says the New, proclaiming the foundation of a higher glory and more durable than that of the first creation, and on which was to rest the restoration of the latter, when ruined by the weakness of man and by sin.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." When they came forth from the hand of the Creator, all His works were "very good." Sin appeared, and they were

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1. {See *Collected Writings* 27:122.}

2. {See *Collected Writings* 11:229, 230 for more about this.}

marred. Compare Col. 1:20, with Eph. 2:10. For a moment, God rested, so to speak, in them; but that rest came to an end. The Scriptures say but little as to the evil which sullied the heavens: all that we know is, that there were angels who fell. But it was on the earth and among men that the divine and wonderful work of redemption was to be displayed; and this subject is revealed to us in all its fulness.

### *The Rest of God in the New Creation by Means of the Second Adam*

The rest of God, after the first creation, was short. The rest of man with God passed away like a morning-dream. But the blessing of God was not to pass away in the same manner. That which was transient, on account of the weakness of the first Adam, was to be restored on an infinitely more excellent footing by the display of the might and power of the Second Adam; the will of God being to head up in Him all things which are in the heavens and upon the earth; Eph. 1:10.

### *Christ the Heir -- the Church Joint-heir with Him, Through Resurrection*

It is on this gathering together of all things unto Christ and in Christ, as their Head (Greek, *anakephalaiosis* -- heading up), that depends the character and the substance of the hope of the church, until God be all in all. In this point of view, Scripture speaks of Christ manifested, as being Heir of all these things, and of the church as being joint-heir with Him. This is, as it were, the formal character which is attributed to Him with regard to all things; that we may understand what is our place with Him. Thus it is written, that God has appointed Christ "heir of all things" (Heb. 1:2); that, in Him, "we have obtained an inheritance" (Eph. 1:11); that we are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ," (Rom. 8:17). This glorious title of Christ -- the Heir -- has a still more glorious origin. He is "the firstborn of every creature, for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth . . . and for him" (Col. 1:15, 16). The church, the children of God, are therefore joint-heirs with Christ. How are they such? It is this which we are about to develop. Christ receives the inheritance in His character of man, of risen Man, once our companion in sufferings because of sin, and then the Head, the root and spring of all blessing.

We must first remark that the first Adam, "the figure of that was to come," is a type and figure of the Second Adam of whom we are speaking. He is referred to in this respect in Eph. 5:30, 31. Before His manifestation, the last Adam is, as it were, hidden, as the first Adam was buried in sleep;<sup>3</sup> Eve, who prefigures the church, is taken from his side, and

God presents her to him as the help meet for him, to be his companion in the government and the inheritance of all things given to him of God in paradise.

Thus Christ, who is God as well as man, presents the church to Himself, when He awakes in His glory, that it may share that glory with Him and that dominion which He already possesses in title and by the gift of God. "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them," (John 17:22).

Adam and Eve, taken collectively, are called Adam, as if they were but one (Gen. 1:27; 5:2), although, in a certain sense, Eve was inferior to her husband, and had come after him. So it is with Christ and the church, who are but one mystical body. This type, familiar to those who read the Scriptures, presents, in a most simple way, all the forms of the reality prefigured, with this exception, that the Second Man, being "out of heaven" (2 Cor. 15:47), is also the Head and Lord of the heavenly things.

### *All Things Put Under the Feet of Man*

Let us now consider the passages which speak of the dominion of man, and of the union of the church with Christ in that dominion.<sup>4</sup> It clearly results, from the terms in which they are worded, that their accomplishment has not yet taken place. All these passages rest on Psalm 8. There the Holy Ghost says, "Thou hast . . . crowned him" (man, the Son of man) "with glory and honor, . . . thou hast put all things under his feet"; then He tells us (Heb. 2:7, 8, 9), that this is not seen as yet, but *that Jesus* has been "crowned with glory and honor," that He might be pointed out to the church as the one who, as man, is to have all things put under His feet. Meanwhile, and until the purposes of God are accomplished, until the enemies of Christ, who hold the power in unrighteousness, are made to be His footstool -- in a word, during the period of the present dispensation -- Christ is seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high; He sits, as having overcome, at the right hand of God the Father. It is thus that He will grant to him that overcometh, to sit on His own throne (Rev. 3:21), when He takes possession of it and reigns.

Eph. 1:17 to 2:7 shows us the church united to Christ in all these circumstances, according to the working of the might by which Christ was raised from the dead; Eph. 2:7 points out the cause, the glorious motive of it. In Eph. 1:22 we find again the quotation of Psalm 8: "And hath put all things under his feet." The apostle adds: "And gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body,

3. This analogy is very questionable. It is rather as dead that Adam is a figure here of Christ.

4. Note to translation. -- the association with Christ, we must remember, is more blessed than the dominion which flows from it



the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”

Thus, therefore, the church is united to Christ, as a body of which He is the Head, and under whose feet God has put all things. “Christ is head over all things to the church, which is his body.” See the Greek. As to this character, it is as having been raised from the dead that He possesses it, as the passage itself clearly establishes. But this last point is treated in a special way in 1 Cor. 15, in which we find again the quotation from Psalm 8.

‘Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom [that which He possesses as being risen, which is the subject of the chapter] to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet: But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject [always as last Adam, as risen man; for it is always in this character that He is spoken of in this chapter] unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all”<sup>5</sup> (1 Cor. 15:21-28).

Christ, in His character of risen man, reigns therefore over a kingdom which He will deliver up, that God may be all in all. All this administration, and this human dominion, which is brought out in Psalm 8, comes to an end, that the glory of God, simply, may be universal. As to the way in which these things are accomplished other passages present it to us.

### *Christ as Heir Receives the Inheritance in the Way of Promise*

We have seen that Christ is Heir, in title, as being Creator of all things—all things having been made by Him and for Him, as the Son; and also because He has been established such in the purpose of God. So that, God [acting] in the way of promise, all the promises find their centre in Christ. “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ” (Gal. 3:16). “For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (2 Cor. 1:20). Thus Christ is the Heir, the Seed, to

whom the promise was made.

### *The Rejection by the Natural Seed gives Occasion for the Introduction of the Spiritual Seed into the Heavenly Places as Joint-heirs*

As regards this earth, the people of Israel, the seed according to the flesh, were, of all mankind, in the best position to receive the Lord, in a world that knew Him not; in coming unto them, “He came unto his own” (John 1:11). That people possessed the law, the promises, the covenants, the oracles of God; it was in their midst that, according to the promise, the Lord was to come, and that He actually came (Rom. 9:4, 5). It was this people which, in the midst of a lost world, possessed, through their relationship with God, the Sabbath -- that sign which was to remind them of the hope of Jehovah’s rest. But when the Messiah appeared, although His coming was in perfect harmony with the predictions of their own prophets, the Jews did not receive Him. It is true, they said, and this rightly, “This is the heir”; but as they hated Him, they added, “Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours” (Mark 12:7). Thus vanished the last hope of God’s rest upon the earth. After all that had come to pass, God had yet been pleased to send His own Son; but this trial served to complete the evidence that man is absolutely without any resource, and that “every man at his best state is altogether vanity” (Psa. 39:5).

But that only opened the way for a dispensation far more admirable, far more glorious. The earth and the people of Israel as a nation were set aside for a time;<sup>6</sup> although “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”<sup>7</sup> The design which was hidden in God for ages past was about to be revealed (that is, the gathering together into one body, and in Christ, the remnant of the Jews and the fulness of the Gentiles, in order to bring them into the heavenly places). The companion and bride of the One who had been rejected, but who is risen- the church-is gathered from among all nations, while her Bridegroom is seated at the right hand of God; and she will shine forth in the same glory as Himself, when He shall appear (Col. 3:4; 1 John 3:2).

Christ, in His character of Seed of Abraham, is the Heir of the promises. If He had taken possession of this inheritance during His life here below, He would have possessed it for Himself alone. In fact, after He had manifested His glory as Son of God by the resurrection of Lazarus, and as King of the Jews by His entry into Jerusalem, when the Greeks came also to seek Him, He said that the hour was come when (in spite of the rejection of the

5. God, but not Christ, considered under the aspect of His mediatorial character. It is not said, “that the Father may be all in all”; because, although Christ delivers up the kingdom as Man-mediator, He is none the less God over all things, blessed eternally with the Father and the Holy Ghost.

6. {See *Collected Writings* 143 ff and 2:353 for a tracing of this, as well as the following chapters.}

7. {See *Collected Writings* 5:151.}

promised Seed by the Jews) the Son of man should be glorified; but, as the Lord immediately adds, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:1-24).

It was as risen that Christ was to enter into the possession of the inheritance with the church--the ear, sprung from that grain of wheat cast into the tomb--with the church henceforth perfectly justified (Rom. 4:25). Thus Christ inherits the promises, not as having come in the flesh on earth, but as risen. He inherits them, after having done all that was necessary for the redemption of the church, and in the power of that life which He has taken again, of which He makes His bride to partake. The result of this union is, that the souls which form the church, when they are born of the Holy Ghost, are considered as risen with Him. In a word, Christ is heir, in His character of risen Man -- of risen Head of the church.

Paul, in Gal. 3:17, speaks of the confirmation of the promise, made to Christ, and what he says perfectly agrees with what we have just been saying. Moreover, the apostle is quoting Gen. 22:18, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." In these words we find indeed that the promise, made to Abraham in chapter 12 and referring to the blessing of the nations, is confirmed to the seed of the patriarch, after that seed had been restored to him in a figure of resurrection (Heb. 11:19).

Thus we have seen how the scripture establishes, under divers aspects, this blessed truth, that the church is redeemed to be united to Jesus, in order that, when He takes possession of His inheritance, He may have a companion meet for Him, to be associated with Him in all things, and perfectly like unto her glorified Bridegroom. For the complete fulfilment of these things, it was necessary, not only that the church should be redeemed, but also that Christ should go to prepare a place for her.

***Christ Exalted in the Heavens  
Prepares a Place for the Church, and  
can Fulfil the Promises made to Israel --  
Meanwhile the Church is Called***

The resurrection of the Savior had the double result of accomplishing the redemption of the church, and of putting Christ in a place where He could secure the sure mercies of David (Acts 13:34), that is to say, confirm in His own name all the promises made to Israel. Moreover, it was needful also that He should take possession of the heavenly places, in order to establish the kingdom of heaven and to fill all things

(Eph. 4:10) ; <sup>8</sup> as well as to associate the church with that glory -- new, and yet eternal -- prepared before the foundation of the world, and yet hidden from the former ages, but the manifestation of which had been determined according to the wisdom of God by the rejection of the Messiah by the Jewish people.

We must here distinguish two things: Christ preparing a place, a heavenly habitation; and Christ gathering from among all nations those who are to be His joint-heirs, calling the bride who is to enter into possession with Himself. Thus, in John 14:2, 3 the Lord says, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." In John 17:24: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world."

In Rom. 8:29, it is written: "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

***At his Coming, He Receives the  
Inheritance with the Risen Church***

In Col. 1:18, Christ is called "the head of the body, the church . . . the firstborn from the dead."

But in what manner do these things take place? -- "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." These words are found in 1 Cor. 15, where we find the subject of the resurrection exclusively treated. Thus again it is also written in Rom. 8:30, and that in reference not to sanctification, but to glory -- "Whom he justified, them he also glorified"; without any mention of sanctification. Phil. 3:21: "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body."

The time when these things will be accomplished is clearly taught in Scripture. Christ is now hid in God, and our life is hid with Him there (Col. 3:3). The present time is that during which are gathered, by the Holy Ghost, the members of His body, His joint-heirs, while He is seated at the right hand of Jehovah, until His enemies are made His footstool. The apostle says, "But he, having offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down in perpetuity at the right hand of God, waiting from henceforth until his enemies be set for the footstool of his feet" (Heb. 10:1-14). He has accomplished all that was to be done for the redemption of us, His friends; and while He is still gathering His own by the power of the Holy Ghost whom He has sent, and who reveals Him, and the Father

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8. Compare with John 20:17.

through Him, He is seated, in the expectation of the possession -- and not in the effective possession-of the earth, of creation; until the number of the joint-heirs is completed. He is sitting on the Father's throne, and it is there that the church knows Him at the present time.

But while He is waiting, we wait also; and even as regards the whole creation, it waits also: it waits for the manifestation of the children of God. As for the time and manner of that

manifestation, the Scriptures are clear.

Since we are to be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus, it is evident that it must be by resurrection and by glorification; for He is risen and glorified. Therefore it is said that the whole creation waits for the manifestation of the children of God; and the apostle adds, "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:19, 23). Again, it is written, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:4). "We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

### *The Saints Judge the World*

We have already seen that the Lord says, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3); and this is what will take place, either by resurrection, or by being changed; for "we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51). This is the entrance of the church into glory, as we are taught in detail by 1 Thess. 4:16, 17: "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

One may read in Rev. 19 the description of this scene -- the marriage supper of the Lamb, and the subsequent judgment of the earth, or at least of the heads of the antichristian revolt. This judgment is again described in more general terms in Jude 14, 15: "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment," etc.; and in Zech. 14:5, it is said, "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee."

How blessed the time when Christ shall have presented the church to Himself, as a glorious spouse, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing!" (Eph. 5:27). Clothed with the beauty and glory which belong to her, seeing in her Lord the beauty and glory of the Father, she is moreover associated with the glory of her Bridegroom in the power of that love wherewith He loved her, and in which He gave Himself for her, that she might be perfectly cleansed and

made glorious with Him, even where He is; then manifested in glory, surrounded with honors such as He receives Himself; made partaker of all His glory, of that glory which the Father gave Him, that the world might know that the Father has loved her, as He has loved Him. Associated with the Lord of glory, the saints will judge angels and the world; they will be the servants and instruments who will dispense the light and the blessings of His kingdom over an earth delivered of all its sorrows, and where Satan is no longer. "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak" (Heb. 2:5). "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world [age]" to come, "and the resurrection from the dead," can die no more (Luke 20:35, 36). "On such the second death hath no power," but they live and reign with Christ a thousand years (Rev. 20:6). Happy those believers!

At the coming of Christ, these (already risen as to their souls) will rise as regards their bodies, by His Spirit that dwells in them (Rom. 8:11). This is that resurrection-not of judgment, but of life (John 5:29) -- which belongs to the church in virtue of her union with Christ by the Holy Ghost. It cannot therefore concern the wicked; although they also must be raised up in their own time by the word of Christ, but to be judged. Those who belong to Christ will be raised at His coming; as for the rest of the dead, their resurrection will take place when Christ, after having delivered up the kingdom, will be seated, as Son of man, on the great white throne, to judge the dead, when the earth and the heaven have fled away before His face (Rev. 20:11).

Such is the teaching of the word of God. The taking possession of the kingdom by Christ is described in Daniel; but to treat this subject would lead to our second part, the earthly glory: we shall therefore lay it aside for the present.

Our only desire here was to shew the place which the church occupies in this scene, and the connection which exists in Scripture between that doctrine -- well understood -- and the most fundamental and comforting truths which form the hope and the joy of the believer.

### *The Kingdom of the Father*

There is a point in this subject which we have scarcely touched upon, but the contemplation of which would lead us too far away from our main object, and might expose us to the danger of losing sight of it. It is the place which the Father's love has here -- a subject equally full of deep comfort. It is for the kingdom of the Father that Jesus taught His disciples to pray: it is in the Father's kingdom that the righteous shall shine forth as the sun (Matt. 13:43), that is, as Christ, the Sun of righteousness. It is in the glory of the Father that Christ is to appear, and that is for us a most happy circumstance in the blessedness of that great day. Here we enter into deeper waters, and yet more calm; into that eternity which is an unruffled and boundless ocean of infinite

joy—a joy of which, however, we shall know the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, which pass all knowledge; for it is there that we shall learn these things; it is there we shall study the glory. Here below we may feel perhaps more deeply what grace is; there we shall be the full manifestation of it, we sinners made like unto Christ Himself (Eph. 2:7).

But the passages which have placed under the eyes of the reader, with the reflections which are added, may suffice to guide those who desire to inquire further as to this simple but blessed truth, and to receive the revelation of it in their souls. They will not be long without feeling that it contains everything; that it is the fulness of Him, who, without having had a beginning, was pleased to be born, and who, having no end, is pleased to accomplish eternally in us that infinite joy, the realization of which will even render us capable of enjoying it in a measure always increasing. We shall have great lessons to learn in glory with Christ, the Lamb, in whom the Father is fully revealed. The life we have received gives us even now a right and title to all these blessings as ours.

This is only a simple outline of the position the church will occupy, when Christ shall be revealed in His power and glory. Then will it be manifested as His bride, His companion, in the same glory with Himself; and all things will be blessed through it. For it will be the sphere and means of the display of the glory and blessing of Christ.

*(Collected Writings of J. N. Darby, vol. 2)*

## Chapter 8.2

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### *Divine Mercy in the Church and Towards Israel*

#### *The Church*

Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him Eph. 1:9, 10.

All the fulness of God is well pleased to dwell and manifest itself in Christ the Son. Such was the counsel, the blessed counsel of the Holy One. The manner in which this is manifested to us, and in which we are associated with it, is to us infinitely interesting. After all, but a small, and, as it were, external part is treated of in the following pages; still a part deeply interesting. The manner of its accomplishment is, on God's part, designedly external, and so by truths; but by these truths the child of God enters into communion with Him who is the power of them; and, moreover, is guarded by them (poor feeble creatures that we are!) from substituting his own imaginations in place of the holy manifestation of God.

The subject spoken of here is that contained in the prayer of the apostle at the close of Eph. 1. There is a deeper matter whence it flows, at the close of Eph. 3, to which I have alluded above; nor can the subject of Eph. 1 be really enjoyed without, in some measure, the power of Eph. 3; but I respond feebly to the desire of some in communicating this, trusting that God will supply the rest.

There are two great subjects which occupy the sphere of millennial prophecy and testimony: the church and its glory in Christ; and the Jews and their glory as a redeemed nation in Christ: the heavenly people and the earthly people; the habitation and scene of the glory of the one being the heavens; of the other, the earth. Christ shall display His glory in the one according to that which is celestial; in the other, according to that which is terrestrial—Himself the Son, the

image and glory of God, the centre and sun of them both. And though the scene and habitation of the glory shall be the heavens, wherein He hath set a tabernacle for the sun, the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it. It shall be manifested suitably on earth, and earth shall enjoy its blessing. When all this is accomplished, God shall be all in all; and the tabernacle of God shall be with men, not descending, so to speak, but *descended* out of heaven {Rev. 21}. The principles and the manner of the accomplishment of this are fully detailed in the Scriptures. Though the church and Israel be, in connection with Christ, the centers respectively of the heavenly and the earthly glory, mutually enhancing the blessing and joy of each other, yet each has its respective sphere, all things in the heavens being subordinate and the scene of the glory -- angels, principalities, and powers in the one; the nations of the earth in the other.

But to confine myself now to the history and condition of the church on the one hand, and to that of Israel on the other. "In the beginning," I read in the Old Testament, "God created"; "In the beginning," I read in the New, "the Word was" -- the latter the foundation of a higher and an abiding glory, on which the former, ruined in man's weakness and man's sin, should rest and be restored. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." All were made and fashioned very good: sin entered, and they were defiled. (Compare Col. 1:20; Eph. 1:10.) God, for a moment, as it were, rested in them; and His rest passed away. Of the defilement of the heavens little is said; we know only that the angels fell. But on earth, and by man, the great scene of divine working and redemption was to be manifested; and of this a full account is given. The Sabbath of God in creation was short. The Sabbath of man with God was not so to pass. That which passed away in the first Adam in weakness, was to be restored in infinitely fuller blessing in the last Adam (sustained and displayed in His strength), God gathering

together in one (as we have seen in Eph. 1) all things in heaven and in earth, in Him. On this re-heading of all things, as the scripture expresses it, in Christ, hangs the constitution and substance of the church's hope, until "God be all in all." "Christ manifested" is spoken of in this respect as the Heir of all this, the church as co-heirs with Him. It is, so to speak, the formal character which He receives as to all things, that we may understand our place with Him.

Thus, in Heb. 1:2, "Whom he hath appointed heir of all things"; Eph. 1:11 "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance"; and Rom. 8:17, "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." The source of this great title is yet in greater glory. "He is the first-born of every creature; for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth"; "all things were created for him and by him" {Col. 1}. Then we have seen the church, the children, are co-heirs with Him. The manner of this we have to develop. Christ takes this title as Man. He takes it as the risen Man; being previously the fellow-sufferer in respect of the evil; afterwards the Head and chief, and source of the blessing.

First, we have in the "image of him that is to come," the type and picture of this; and it is used as such in Eph. 5. That is Adam, Adam hidden in sleep, as it were; and Eve, the church, taken out of his side, and presented to him by God as the help-meet for him, as the co-partner with him in the dominion over and inheritance of all things which God had given him in paradise. So the church, taken as it were out of Christ, He (being God as well as man) presents to Himself, awoke up in His glory, partner with Him in the glory and dominion which was already His in tide, and in the gift of God. "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them." And Adam and Eve together are called Adam, as one, though Eve was in a sense inferior to Adam, and subsequent; and so with the church and Christ -- one mystic Person. This type, familiar to the readers of Scripture, presents very simply all the force of the truth, save that the last Adam, being Lord from heaven, is Head and Lord of the heavenly things also.

The texts which speak very particularly of this dominion of man, the union of the church with Christ in it, and its not being yet accomplished, follow. They have their rise, as the apostle uses them, in Psalm 8, "Thou hast crowned him (man, the Son of man) with glory and honor; thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet." This we learn in Hebrews 1, is not yet to be seen; but Jesus is crowned with glory and honor, the designation to the church of Him under whose feet, as Man, all things are to be put. Meanwhile, till His enemies (who unrighteously hold the power till God's purposes be accomplished) be made His footstool, that He may hold all things in power of blessing, He sits (that is the present economy) on the right hand of the majesty on high, set down, as having overcome, on the Father's throne, as He will give them who overcome to sit down on *His* throne {Rev. 3:21} when He takes it -- takes His power and reigns. In Eph. 1, at the close, we have the union of the church in all this,

according to the exercise of the power in which Christ was raised from the dead. Read from the prayer of the apostle in Eph. 1 to the end of Eph. 2:6. The glorious cause, or reason, is in verse 7. In Eph. 1:22, we have Psalm 8 again quoted, "And hath put all things under his feet, and hath given him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Here the church is the body of Christ, the Head over all things which are put under His feet. He is Head over all things to the church as His body. This is as risen and ascended, as is there fully stated. This point is taken up specially in 1 Cor. 15, where the same passage is referred to: "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end when he shall have delivered up the kingdom [the kingdom held thus as the risen Man, which is the subject of this chapter] to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule and all authority. For he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject (i.e., as the risen Man, the last Adam, in which character He is ever spoken of here) unto him that put all things under him, that God [not Christ in His mediatorial kingdom] may be all in all." Here then we have this reign of Christ as Man in resurrection, in a kingdom which He delivers up, that "God may be all in all" -- all administration and human dominion being given up, that the divine glory simply may be universal.

As to the manner in which this is accomplished, other passages instruct us. Christ, we have seen, was the heir in title, as Creator: "All things were created by him and for him," the Son; and also by the counsels of God, in appointment; and so (God acting by way of promise) all promises center in Him. To Abraham and to his seed were the promises made; not to seeds as of many, but as of one; "and to thy seed" -- which is Christ. And 2 Cor. 1, "All the promises of God in him are Yea, and in him Amen, to the glory of God by us." Thus Christ was the heir, the Seed to whom the promise was made. As regards the earth, Israel, the seed after the flesh, were the best situated of all men to receive the Lord in a world that knew Him not; Israel, His own, whose were the law and the promises, and the covenants, and the oracles of God; and amongst whom, according to the flesh, He was to come; and who, amidst a ruined world, had, through their relationship with God the Sabbath, the sign given to them of the hope of God's rest. But though coming according to all which their own prophets had said, they received Him not. They said, and justly, "This is the heir"; but they hated Him, saying, "Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours." Here the last hope of

the rest of God on the earth was gone. After all that had passed, He had yet one Son. It was tried; but man was found in his best estate altogether vanity, wholly wanting when all was done. But it only made way for the revelation of a far deeper and more glorious economy. The earth and Israel were set aside for a time, though the gifts and calling of God were without repentance. The counsel, hidden from ages and generations, was now to be revealed, the counsel stated in Eph. 1, the embodying in one the remnant of Jew and Gentile in Christ; to set them in heavenly places, the companion and spouse of Him who was rejected and risen, gathered while He sat at the right hand of God, and to appear with Him in the same glory when He shall appear (Col. 3:4; 1 John 3:2).

Christ, as the seed of Abraham was the heir of the promises. Had He taken them alive here, He had taken them alone. Thus, after His vindication of His glory as Son of God, in the resurrection of Lazarus, and as King of the Jews, in His entry into Jerusalem, when the Greeks also came to seek Him, it was evident that the hour was come -- though the Jews might have rejected the promised seed. The hour was come that the Son of man should be glorified; but, adds the Lord immediately, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Christ was to take the inheritance in resurrection with the church, born upon this plant from the tomb of death. The church is therefore perfectly justified; that is, Christ takes the promises, not as on earth, incarnate, but as risen. That is, after He has done all needful to redeem the church, and in the power of that life in which He associates them (quickened them into fellowship and association) by the Holy Ghost with Himself, when born of the Holy Ghost they are viewed as raised together with Him. In a word, He is heir as the risen Man, the ascended Head of the church. The confirmation of the promise to Christ, referred to by the Spirit in the Galatians, accords exactly with this. It is in Gen. 22, where we find the promise of blessing to the nations, made to Abraham in Gen. 12, confirmed to the Seed consequent on his reception from the dead in a figure, as the apostle speaks in Heb. 11: "Because thou hast done these things," etc.; and, "*In thy seed* shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Thus we have seen under various lights this blessed truth, how the church was redeemed into union with Jesus, that in taking the inheritance He might have a help meet for Him, entirely associated and made like to Himself glorified. For this it was necessary, not only that the church should be redeemed, but that He should go and prepare a place for it.

The resurrection was both the accomplishment of the redemption of the church, and also set Jesus in the place in which He could establish the sure mercies of David (Acts 13:34); that is, establish in His Person all the promises to Israel; but He had yet to take the heavenlies, that the kingdom of heaven might be established, that He might fill all things, and associate the church in that new yet everlasting glory, prepared before the worlds yet hidden from preceding ages, for which the rejection of Messiah by His people, by the

Jews, in the wisdom of God made the way. There were two things in this -- the preparation of a place, a heavenly place of abode; and the gathering, out of all nations, those who were to be the joint heirs -- to call the bride who was to inherit it.

Thus, in John 14, the Lord says, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." See John 17. "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world"; and "Whom he foreknew, he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren"; and Col. 1, "The head of the body the church, the firstborn from the dead." But how is this? Not as "bearing the image of the earthy," but, as we have borne that, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." This is in 1 Cor. 15, where the subject is entirely the resurrection; and in Rom. 8 it is pursued, not to sanctification here below, but to glory. "Whom he justified, them he also glorified"; "Who shall change (as we read in Phil. 3) our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." The time of this is clearly taught in Scripture. Christ now is hid in God (Col. 3:3). Our life is hid with Him there. It is a time of gathering, by the Holy Ghost, the members of His body, the co-heirs, while He sits on Jehovah's right hand, till His foes be made His footstool. "Having," says the apostle (Heb. 10), "by one offering perfected for ever them which are sanctified," He sat down, "from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool." He has finished all He had to do in redemption for us His friends; and while we are actually gathering by the power of the Holy Ghost sent down by Him, and revealing Him and the Father by Him, He sits there expecting, not taking the earth till this, the gathering of His bride, His co-heirs, be accomplished Seated on the Father's throne, there the church knows Him now. But while He waits, we, yea, the whole creation, wait for the manifestation of the sons of God; as to when and how the Scriptures are plain. If we are to be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus, it is plain it must be by resurrection and glory, because He is risen and glorified. Accordingly it is said in Rom. 8, "The whole creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God: and not only so, but we ourselves also, who have received the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." In Col. 3, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory"; and in 1 John 3, "We know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is"; as we have seen before the Lord saying, "I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." And the circumstances of this, the resurrection or change ("for we shall not all die, but we shall all be changed," which is the church's entrance into glory),

are particularly told us (1 Thess. 4): "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

The description of this, of the "marriage of the Lamb," and of the consequent judgment of the earth, or at least of the leaders of antichristian wickedness, may be found in Rev. 19. The judgment is described in yet wider terms in Jude, where "the Lord cometh with myriads of his saints to execute judgment"; or, as in Zech., "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee"; when He shall have presented His spouse to Himself, a glorious church," without spot or wrinkle or any such thing," in her own beauty and glory that is proper to herself, seeing in her Lord the beauty and glory of the Father, and with Him in His own glory, and in the power of that love in which He has loved her, and given Himself for her, that she might be perfectly purified and glorious with Him where He is; and then brought forth in glory with honors such as His, the participator in all His glory, the glory given Him of the Father (that the world may know that we have been loved as He was loved), to judge angels and the world; companions in all His glory, and the ministers and instruments of the light and blessing of His reign over a refreshed and solaced earth, renewed out of its miseries, where Satan is not. "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak." "They that are counted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead, die no more"; "on such the second death hath no power, but they . . . shall reign with him [Christ] a thousand years." Blessed are they! Risen already as regards their souls, they now, when Christ appears, are raised as regards their bodies, on account of His Spirit dwelling in them, to a resurrection, not of judgment, but of life (John 5:29); a resurrection which belongs to the church by virtue of its union with Christ, through the Holy Ghost dwelling in them, and with which, therefore, the wicked can have nothing to do, though raised by the word of Christ in their own time for judgment," but they that are Christ's at his coming "; the rest, when (the kingdom being given up) as Son of God, He, on the great white throne, shall judge the dead, heaven and earth being fled from before His throne. So the word of God instructs us. The taking of this kingdom by Christ is described in Daniel; but as this would lead us into the second part, or the earthly glory, I do not yet enter on it, having only here sought to shew the place which the church holds in this scene, and the scriptural connection of it with all the most sweet and fundamental truths, which, in their true light, rejoice and fill the heart of the true believer.

There is one point of this scarcely touched on here (but I should be too long, and depart too far from, the subject, so as to distract the minds of others); that is, the place of the Father's love in it. But this is very blessed also. It is the Father's kingdom we pray for. In the Father's kingdom we

are to shine as the sun, that is, as Christ the Sun of righteousness (Matt. 13:43).

In the Father's glory Christ is to appear. And this is a sweet part of it; for it passes into deeper and yet calmer waters, where eternity unruffled is found -- that wide and soundless ocean of infinite joy, the length, and depth, and height, and breadth, of which are, we know, unknown: I say, "passes into," for it is learned there: we learn glory there; grace, perhaps, more deeply here. We witness it there. But the passages referred to may suffice to lead those who search much into this blessed and simple truth. They will soon learn that they have everything to find there -- the fulness of Him, who, without beginning, began, and without end shall endlessly fulfil, all the joy which itself enables us increasingly to apprehend. There are great lessons to learn in glory with Him, the Lamb, in whom we have all the Father revealed. The life we have received makes it ours now. But this is individual. Here I have simply traced the place of the church, when Christ takes the glory and the power, and it is manifested as His consort and companion in the same glory and love, all things blessed through it as the medium and sphere of the display of His glory and blessing.

## *Israel*

We have seen, in the first part of this tract, the infinite grace of God manifested in the exaltation of the church into heavenly places. In this second part, we pass on to the interest of the earthly people, "a people wonderful from the beginning hitherto." As in the church we have seen the full manifestation of grace, so here we shall behold, supremely displayed, all the providence, all the counsel, all the patience, all the long suffering mercy of God, manifested in sovereignty, strewn already, or before the end of the history of this earth, the wonderful theatre of all His dispensations: here is the importance of the thing. It was necessary that God should choose some nation: in this He was both sovereign and wise. He chose the Jews: He formed them for Himself, that they should be His witnesses, and that they should shew forth His praise (Isa. 43:10, 21). Let us follow the history of this people of God, towards whom "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11:29).

The two passages we have just quoted are sufficiently remarkable in themselves to attract all our attention to Israel. God has formed this people for Himself; and it is with respect to them that it is said, "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." It follows as a direct consequence, that the *faithfulness of God* on one hand, and His character on the other, should be found specially manifested in this nation.

In fact, it was in contemplating the dispensations of God toward this people that the great apostle of the Gentiles exclaimed, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33).



But it is *on earth* that they are the witnesses. As to the heavens, there is neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all (Col. 3:11). Consequently, this witness acts on the nations of the earth. God Himself, in the midst of this people, and by their instrumentality, acts on these nations, and shows Himself amongst them by His justice and power towards Israel, and by the connections which Israel had with the nations, or the nations with them, and according to their conduct towards this people.

Here, then, all His providence finds its center, as it is written: "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deut. 32:8). Thus, then, the faithfulness, the character, and the providential government of God are found displayed on earth. I shall endeavor to follow, according to the Scriptures, some of the facts, the principles, and the testimonies, which refer to this people, and instruct us in the judgments and ways of God.

There is a very clear distinction between the ways of God before and after the deluge. Since the fall, there has always been a people of God, and the world of the ungodly. God has never left Himself without a witness. The prophecies of Enoch were the instruction of the people of God in those days, and the hope of the faithful in our days. Nevertheless, in those times, there was no manifested judgment, no nation, no external call, which formed believers or an elect people into a body acknowledged before God; and there was consequently no development of the principles of the character of God. It was a fallen race; and the fallen nature of man shewed itself, and followed its course in spite of the witness of God; and God did nothing until (the evil being intolerable) He swept them from before His face, by a judgment which none could escape, save the little band in the ark; and the world, swallowed up in the waters, perished. God "repented that he had made man," for "the earth was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence," and God destroyed it.

The world which exists now is a new world, reserved for fire in the day of judgment. In this world there are two great principles: *rule*<sup>9</sup> in the hands of men -- and *separation from the world* by the call of God {with Abraham's call}.

The first is easily corrupted; and men may show themselves in this, and in everything else, unfaithful in maintaining the glory of God; but where there is the possibility of evil, where there are principles, which, left to themselves, might produce evil and misery, there the ordering of everything on divine principles, according to the will of God, is the first principle of happiness, which, in its character, embraces all the extent of the earth. This was the

principle which, in its root, was established for the first time with Noah, for the guidance of that new world, which rose out of the ruins caused by lust and violence: "He who sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." It was the authority of God over life, put into the hands of man, and for which he was to be responsible. The exercise of this power was the manifestation of the judgment of God, and recalled the holiness, the authority, and the constant watchfulness of the Most High. This at least was its true character. But in order that the value of this principle of rule should be recognized in its details, either by the governor, or the governed, it was necessary that the source whence it emanated should be acknowledged. The value of this principle was its recalling, to the heart and the eye, the authority of that God who had established it -- an authority which, thus recognized, would restrain the lusts of the flesh, ere they broke out in those acts to which the power of the sword itself was to be applied, and would even prevent the effects of those desires which were not sufficiently serious to come under the immediate application of the law. But not only do we see the head of this new world {Noah} failing (in the very beginning) in self-government, and consequently losing the respect of him who ought to be the first to obey, even his own son; but we also perceive an evil and malicious spirit, who knew how to destroy the efficacy of this power in its very source, by appropriating it to himself-presenting himself as the source both of the evils and blessings which resulted from man's conduct, or were the effect of the power and rule of God.

And in the fallen and sinful state of man, he was able in some degree to verify his pretensions, or at least to cause them to be respected.

Hereupon, then, came in the second principle; viz., the call of God: a principle which (by separating one person, one people, one family, one assembly, which acknowledged the true God) was capable of rendering them witnesses of His character, and the theatre where He could display His power in accordance with that character. "And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan," etc. (Josh. 24:1-3). We see, in the history given in this passage, the occasion and the necessity of this call, which was a thing unheard of in all the provocations before the deluge." Your fathers served other gods!" -- a fresh crime, a fresh snare of Satan, which called for new measures on the part of a God who is all goodness.

Strife and violence displayed themselves in the time of Nimrod; and perhaps pride and ambition, rising against God, were seen in those who wished to make themselves a

9. {It was the introduction of government that began the first administration. See the chart on J. N. Darby's view on p. 25.}

name, lest they should be dispersed. There Satan caused the principle of rule to flow from the will and the violence of man, and the concentration of power from the name he was making for himself. But the judgment of God, confounding their projects and dispersing them, sufficed to shew the supremacy of His power to humble their pride, and by the confusion of tongues to originate at the same time the national separation and ties of country, which were to furnish opportunity for the organizations of His providence.

But, whilst the pride of man was abased by the judgments of God, and served only to display His watchful power and to accomplish His providential designs, the substitution of the power of Satan in man's heart, under the form of false gods, as the originators of rule and the authors of judgment, gave occasion to Almighty God, who is ever able to extract good from evil, to display the other principle before mentioned, even the calling of God; and thus He glorified Himself, even by the perversities of His foolish creatures.

God called Abraham, who was a type (both according to the flesh and the spirit) of the family of God, and the depository of all His promises. These are the terms of this call: "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great: and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Here, in principle, was separation from the world, by breaking all its strongest ties and nearest relationships, in order that he might give himself to God alone, in heart, faith, and confidence.

The principle of national government and family authority remained in all its power, but Satan had seized upon it; and our gracious God, by drawing one family and nation nearer to Himself, introduced a new and powerful principle to make good His name, His character, and His grace, in the midst of that world, which had withdrawn from His providential judgments, by throwing itself into the hands of the great adversary of its happiness, as well as of the glory of God. The want of fidelity and power in man, under responsibility, was thus again strewn, in a manner fatal to the whole world; because his weakness had placed it in the hands and under the authority of Satan, not only in consequence of the sin of the whole human race, but as respected the principle of government introduced for its regulation. But the principle of the call of God maintained His supremacy in a manner which put it beyond the effects of man's responsibility; and therefore God could add to it unconditional promises. This is what took place as respected Abram; and, in what follows, we shall see its importance in the history of the people thus chosen. This is the difference between the external call in itself, and the principle of government (two things, nevertheless, which have clear and

positive rights on the hearts of men) on one side, and the certainty of the promises and the calling of God according to grace on the other, whether for the Jews or for the church. God's right is recognized by the believer in the first case, but also the perfect failure of man in every sense, as respected them. The efficacious power of God is felt, and produces its effects, in the second.

The existence of this principle of the call of God has been developed, since the time of Abraham, under various forms; but God has constantly maintained the principle. In the history of the government of the world from that time there have been many changes of the greatest importance, in which the government of God has been displayed; and the truth of it will yet be honored by the results which shall spring from them in the latter day. These are the subjects of the Old Testament prophecies; as the precious subjects of the New are the faithfulness of God to His call, as respects His ancient people, and the manifestation of this call in a new form, which leads the church into the knowledge and enjoyment of heavenly things—things plainly revealed by the Holy Spirit which has been given to it.

Before the deluge, then, we see the perfect opposition between fallen man and the character of God; and that, after a simple yet powerful and patient testimony, God swept this mass of iniquity from before His face, and washed the polluted world in the waters of the deluge. We have seen the principle of judgment and daily retribution introduced under Noah, as a constituent of the new world. This is the principle of government. We have also seen the principle of the calling of God marked out in the history of Abraham. This is the principle of grace, holiness, and the supremacy of God. But the union of these two principles is also presented to our view in the Scriptures; a union very remarkable for a time, as a new trial of the faithfulness of man under responsibility, and in circumstances altogether singular, and accompanied by a still more astonishing display of patience on the part of God, which will furnish the subject of that solemn praise in the latter times: "His mercy endureth for ever." As to the future, the union of these two principles is the source of a state of things which will be the manifestation of the incomparable wisdom and power of God, when He takes the government into His own hands.

The history of the union of these two principles, whether under the responsibility of man or in the efficacy of the supremacy of God, is the history of the Jewish people. The law is the directing principle of it, as being the expression of the actual terms of God's government. It is consequently in the history of this people that we must look for the center of the administration of the government of the world; containing (as it does) in its past history, on the one hand, the witness given by a people called to the knowledge of the only true God against the false gods of the Gentiles ("Hear O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord!"), and, on the other hand, the witness afforded to the principles of the

government of the true God by His conduct towards His chosen people, blessing or punishing them openly according to their proceedings: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos 3:2). In their history for the future (of which prophecy is the account), the sovereignty and efficacy of the calling of God will be clearly and openly manifested, and the government of all the earth be put into the hands of the king whom God has established, and conducted according to the principles of a law which God shall, in the meantime, have written on the hearts of His people; a covenant teeming with rich and sovereign blessings, and proving at once the riches of His goodness and the faithfulness of His promises, and of which the obedient Gentiles shall partake, according to their measure, in a world filled with the knowledge of the glory of God, as the waters cover the sea.

But if the responsibility of man gave mediately an opportunity for the display of the whole character of God on the one hand, the weakness of man on the other made it necessary for God to establish the hope of all His promises on some other basis than this responsibility. And, in fact, we see, in the history we are examining, that Israel receives the promises in Abraham, according to the calling of God absolutely and unconditionally. Under the law, Israel takes these promises on the responsibility of their own obedience. We will examine their circumstances in these two respects rather more in detail.

The promises of blessing were given to Abraham unconditionally. We read in Gen. 17, that "when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be called Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." Then he received the seal of circumcision, which, if neglected, occasioned, not the loss of the promise nationally, but the cutting off of him who omitted it. We also see the unconditional promise in Gen. 15, "He that shall come forth out of shine own bowels shall be shine heir"; and, again, "so shall thy seed be"; and in verse 18, "In the same day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt, unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

the Kenites," etc. This promise to Abraham is confirmed to Isaac in Gen. 22, and to Jacob in the vision at Bethel, equally unconditionally.

Let us compare the covenant made with the people at mount Sinai. God had brought them out of Egypt with a strong hand, and had led them with grace and blessing to the mount, providing for all their wants, and never reproaching them for their murmurings; and Israel encamped over against the mountain. This was God's message to them by Moses, "Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, *if ye will obey my voice indeed*, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord" (Ex. 19:4-8).

Then the law was given; and thus was the covenant concluded, on the express condition of obedience on the part of the people, as a preliminary to their enjoyment of the promises it contained. What was the consequence of it? Just what must be expected from man -- from our wretched hearts. Before Moses could bring down the details of the covenant from the presence of God, and the commandments written by His hand, the people had turned completely from Him, and had made to themselves a god of gold.

The covenant was, on their part, broken in its fundamental principle almost before they had received it. "And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up; make us gods which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, *the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt*, we wot not what is become of him" (Ex. 32:1). What forgetfulness of the hand of God! But the Lord takes them at their word, and does not acknowledge them as His people under the covenant that had been made with them. He said to Moses (v. 7), "Go, get thee down; for *thy* people, which *thou* broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves."

Let us pause for a moment at this important juncture, and consider the unfolding of the relationship of God with the world, and with men, in this people: after that we will return to their history. From this time we see the three great instruments of these relations, holding their place in the midst of them: Moses was the representative of royalty among the people of God. "Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. And he was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together." Aaron held the place of the great high priest; and Miriam as the prophetess: "For I

brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses Aaron, and Miriam" (Micah 6:4. See also Ex. 15; Num.3).

Thus we see in the wilderness the model of the three mediatorial instruments of the power of God -- one, the communication of His will; the second, the means of our approach to Him and the third, the instrument of His government, the recipient of His power.

Moses at different periods filled all these three functions. Thus also in the plagues inflicted on the proud Egyptians, Aaron acted as prophet, Moses as God to Pharaoh, but that changes nothing in the main. During the union of the two principles of government and calling, these things were fully developed. But under responsibility in these things, the Jewish people corrupted themselves in each one of them.

Under the priesthood (when God was their King, and there were only judges raised up from time to time to preserve them in their inheritance from the occasions of misery produced by their unbelief), they were connected with God through the medium of the priest. Shiloh was the place where God had put His name; but what was the end of it? A witness of judgment to all generations. "Go ye now [saith the Lord] to my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel . . . I will do unto this house . . . as I have done to Shiloh" (Jer. 7:12). Under the priesthood there was complete corruption, even in the priests; as we see in 1 Samuel 2, and in the touching scene described in chapter 3, which marked *Ichabod* on the people of God. I say not that the priesthood was abolished; far from it: it was, on the contrary, to be an example of the patience of God, until He came who could efficiently fill all its functions.

Samuel was the representative of the prophetic line, a *judge* also, governing the people by the witness of God -- a witness given, as we have seen, against the actual state of the priesthood. It is for this reason Peter says, in Acts 3, "*All the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after.*" This then was God's government by prophets; yet the people were not yet satisfied with it. but desired a king: and God gave them "a king in his anger, and took him away in his wrath" (Hos. 13:11). A king chosen according to the flesh, when God was their King, served only to show the weakness of all that man did, the folly of all he desired. Nevertheless, the kingship of Christ over His people was ever in God's designs. And He gave them a king after His own heart, and David and Solomon furnished the type of the kingship of Christ: one, in suffering and overcoming all his enemies, after complete obedience; the other, as reigning in peace and glory over a happy, obedient, and prosperous people. There the picture ended! Man may furnish types, but can never fill the functions of that which is true, and which shall be fulfilled in Christ. The repose and glory which Solomon enjoyed were the cause of his fall. He kept not his uprightness in the midst of the gifts of God, but, drawn aside by his wives, he

followed other gods. Kingship, the last resource of God for maintaining His relationship with His people, was corrupted, just in that particular in which Israel should have been His witness. The kingdom failed, and was divided: nevertheless, the house of David had one tribe, in the wisdom of God, for the love of David His servant, and of Jerusalem, the city which He had chosen among all the tribes of Israel; for the calling of David was a calling according to grace, and the choice of Jerusalem was the choice of God. See 1 Chron. 21:22; 22:7-14; 1 Kings 11:13.

After that, the longsuffering of God waited, teaching, reproving, and forewarning by His prophets. For "the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees" (2 Chron. 36:15). The rest of their sorrowful history is short: the kingdom was made over to the Gentiles. God, to fulfil His designs, preserved and restored a remnant, in order that His Christ should be set forth in the midst of the people, "a minister of the circumcision, to confirm the promises made to the fathers." The prophet was manifested, the king was born but rejected. The history of this all-important event is given us, though shortly, in the controversy which Jesus had with all classes of the Jews, at the close of His ministry (Matt. 21:23 etc.). At length He sent unto them, saying, "They will reverence my Son. But when the husbandmen saw the Son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on the inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him." And their judgment was given, and their desolation declared in these tender words: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, *till ye shall say*; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Having accomplished His ministry to the people as a prophet, and maintained their cause (notwithstanding their being under a righteous judgment *until that day*) like Aaron, not yet come from within the veil (they therefore consequently ignorant of their fate, He will return as a King, and fill the throne of David His father He shall be a Priest upon His throne, according to the promise: "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days" (Hos. 3:4, 5). In those days, the government and the principle of calling shall be united under the reign of Christ;

and “the Lord shall be King over the whole earth: in that day there shall be *one* Lord, and name *one*.” Nevertheless, Jerusalem shall be built and safely inhabited; and God shall say, “It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God” (Zech. 13:14).

Having thus briefly followed the history of this people until grace shall restore happiness to their nation (which shall bear fruit, and be the people whom the Lord has blessed (Matt. 21:32) -- a history which shows us how they have been the scene of the manifestation of the principles of God’s government -- I will now resume the consideration of the relationships with God, under more general, yet deeper and more detailed, circumstances.

We have seen the promises made to Abraham unconditionally; the exodus from Egypt through grace and the strong arm of God. We have seen the people, led by grace to mount Sinai, enter into a covenant based on their obedience, and break every tie with God by making to themselves a god of gold. But this circumstance gave opportunity for the revelation of another principle of the greatest importance -- mediation; which served at once to maintain the consistency of the character of God with the choice which He had made of a wicked people, and to give occasion for the development of that character, in patience, justice, and faithful chastisements and pity. Mediation always recalled to God *His grace*; *never* the covenant of obedience: for *then* there was no need of it, inflicting, perhaps, at the same time, severe chastenings, the duration and severity of which were proportioned to the fervor of the mediatorial supplications -- a mediation on which, consequently, all the relations of God with His people were based; in order that He might display all the riches of His grace and of His nature, manifested towards the people of His choice, beloved by Him (the just God), but constantly failing, in fact, in the obedience which was His due, and which would have been the source of direct blessing.

Mediation sustained the relations of God with His people in the midst of their transgressions, whilst all His wonders were made known, and until His judgment had severed the wicked from among them, and completed the blessing and glory of His people under the sustaining hand of him who had been the mediator during the time of all their trials. “And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word: but as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: but my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land, and his seed shall possess it” (Num. 14:20-24; read all the chapter).

But we must observe the historical evidences of this

introduction of mediation as a support to the old covenant, or the foundation of a new one. “And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and behold it is a stiffnecked people: now therefore let me alone that my wrath may wax hot against them, . . . and I will make of thee a great nation. And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against *thy* people, which *thou*<sup>10</sup> hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. *Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants*, to whom thou swearst by shine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land which I have spoken of will I give unto thy seed, and the, shall inherit it for ever. *And the Lord repented* of the evil that he thought to do unto his people” (Ex. 32:9-14). Here was the principle.

The consequences of this mediation -- the conduct of Moses towards the people -- his return to God with fresh supplications (placing himself as the one hoping to atone for their sins), together with the detail of God’s answers, are found in what follows in Ex. 33. At length Moses intreats to see the glory of God: this was impossible; but He promises to make all His goodness to pass before him. “And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children unto the third and to the fourth generation” (Ex. 34:5-7). Then, on the renewed intercession of Moses, the Lord announces to him some modifications of His dispensations; and in the end it is said (v. 27), “Write thou these words, for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.”

Here we see a covenant founded on the calling to remembrance the covenant made with Abraham, etc. (the intercession of Moses staying the uplifted hand of God), and the revelation of a special character of relationship with the people; a character on which is based the new covenant with Moses the mediator, and the people. When Moses interceded in the desert on the return of the spies, his intercession was founded on the character given by God as the terms of the relationship existing between Him and the people; and both the answer and the judgments of God are in accordance with this character, save only one special mark of mercy which arose from circumstances. Ezekiel 18 (often quoted with really unbelieving views) announced that God acted towards

10. God had before said to Moses, “ *thy* people, which *thou*.”

the people for their own iniquity, and according to the covenant of which we are speaking, and in truth put an end to an important application of an important principle it contains. The same thing is found in Jeremiah, who concluded the period of their history in their country, as Ezekiel concluded it out of it, accompanied in the former by a promise of a covenant and a new order of things, which should in the latter days be made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah (Jer. 31:27-37). It will be found also that Daniel, who prophesies of the four empires, confesses both their *past* and actual transgressions.

Having traced the allusions to this covenant, there is one remark which it is very important to make; and the intercession of Moses, at the time of their sin in making the golden calf, gives rise to it. It is this: the Spirit of God, in all references to the true hopes of Israel, refers to the unconditional covenant made with Abraham. Thus we have seen Moses saying, "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by shine own self, saying," etc. In the same manner the God of mercy, having pronounced blessing on their obedience, and followed their rebellions with threats, until their actual dispersion, adds in Lev. 26, "If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers . . . and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity; then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land." See also Micah 7:20. Such was the hope of Zacharias, filled with the Holy Ghost (Luke 1:72, 73); such also the prophetic song in Psa. 105:6-9, 42. According to the solemn declaration of God, when Moses asked, "If they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM," He said also, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." Therefore, the apostle in discussing this subject says (Rom. 11:28), "As concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election they are beloved for the *fathers'* sakes."

We see, in the book of Deuteronomy, the people, when nearly entering Canaan, put under the principle of obedience, and their enjoyment of the promises dependent on that obedience. Moses recalls to the people all that God had done for them, adding, "The Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear . . . Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do . . . that thou shouldest enter into a covenant with the Lord thy God . . . that he may establish thee today for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he

hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." As it is said, Moses "set before" them "life and death, blessing and cursing. It was a covenant which, in remembrance of the oath made with the fathers, is a covenant of blessing, if they obeyed, and of threatenings, if they disobeyed. God did not promise that they should possess the land, but that they should be blessed in it; otherwise, that they should be driven out of it; but that God would show mercy unto them in a far country, if their hearts turned to the Lord. For this reason the apostle quotes a passage here as a pledge of the righteousness of God according to faith, because the observance of the law was impossible in any land except that of Israel. Nevertheless, if they were obedient in heart, and turned to the Lord, they should be head and delivered. The return under Nehemiah was a partial accomplishment of this promise, and this covenant. But in that return, there was no question of the promises made to Abraham. It was an event that showed the mercy and faithfulness of God, but which was not the fulfilment of His promise and original covenant, although it involved important consequences. The original promises, given unconditionally, and guaranteed by the oath of God, must find a complete fulfilment in all their extent.<sup>11</sup> This is what still remains for the people of God. Joshua gives the history of their then present and earthly fulfilment; and the book of Judges, that of the fall of Israel in the midst of human enjoyment.

In order, then, to accomplish the full manifestation of the thought and will of God, there was needed, not only the promise made to Abraham, and the mediation (which testified to the complete violation of it), to sustain the weight and truth of God's promises, in conformity with His justice, until the fulfilment of the promises should take place (a mediation which was the type of Christ's); but there was also needed the representation of the type of Him who was to be the instrument of their accomplishment, and the centre of the blessings they comprised. This must be by *grace* in the midst of a fallen and rebellious people, who were consequently thrown upon the mercy of God. This representation took place in *David* among a people, who, transgressing under the immediate government of God, desired in their wretchedness another king than Him, that they might be like unto the nations. After this filling up of their iniquity, God, in His grace, gave them a king, who was a remarkable type of Christ-named as king, rejected, driven out, hunted as a partridge on the mountains, but just, patient, and obedient under his sufferings; the hope of Israel, when Israel would not hope in him, filled himself, in the midst of his trials, with all those glorious hopes with which the Spirit of God inspired him; afterwards vanquishing all his enemies, and reigning in glory in Solomon. These are the things which God gave us,

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11. What is said in Deut. 32 goes farther and deeper: God speaks not according to the covenant, but according to His sovereignty, and His thoughts. Consequently, the joy of the Gentiles with His people is there introduced.

to serve as a type of Christ rejected -- Christ the hope of Israel. And in fact the Psalms are the prophecies of the experience or the expression of the sympathy of Christ with all the sufferings of His people. We see the soul of Christ revealed, either in the circumstances which were to befall Him, in the midst of His people (and in that case taking the form of direct prophecy); or in the events which were to happen to His people (and in these He is found by His complete sympathy, as His Spirit expresses itself, "In all their afflictions he was afflicted," or, as He said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *me*?"). In every case they are songs which give, not an historical narration, but the soul, the feelings, the thoughts, the dependence of the spirit of Christ under the circumstances detailed: an admirable thing to give us the most perfect acquaintance with Christ, and throw a light and a personal interest over all the circumstances described in the gospel histories, and in those prophecies whose accomplishment is yet future.

We find the mind and the thoughts of Christ, on all the was passing around Him, in the gospels. We find it also in the whole prophetic history of future events. These strains introduce us to His heart, whether it be to the reality of His sufferings, or to the perfection of His sympathy with His people. The sufferings and the kingdom of Christ are the completion of all the promises which have been typically presented to us in David and Solomon: and the Spirit of Christ, as in the midst of His people, presents to us in the Psalms all that He was in them.

But there were also declarative prophecies; and we would speak a little of their character. These begin with the anticipated fall of the kingly power -- the last means of maintaining the union (in the responsibility of man) of the government and the character of God in His called ones according to the flesh. In order to enter into their full character, we will take the prophet Isaiah, where the commencement of this species of prophecy is given us. This prophet begins by stating the complete fall of the nation -- their future glory -- the coming of the Gentiles to that revealed glory; and he takes Israel themselves for a witness that God had done all that was possible for them, and that they had only brought forth wild grapes. He declares, nevertheless, that after judgments grace should triumph in blessings to this rebellious and backsliding people. After this, he is regularly appointed to his mission, and goes to meet Ahaz.

It is to these latter circumstances that I wish to draw the attention of those who have accompanied me in my researches. The first thing to be observed is this: that the promise, and the prophecy as a witness of the promise, are always applicable to a state of failure. Adam, in a state of innocence, had no need of the promise. Israel, walking in all uprightness under the law, and rejoicing in all the blessings which flowed from it, was not the subject of the reprimands of God, or of promises tending to encourage the faithful,

when depressed by the prosperity of the wicked or the misery of the chosen nation. Consequently, the promise and the prophecy belong alike to grace. They are addressed to sinners, and are the intervention of God, to give an object to faith, or to sustain it where already existing. This is their character, as we find it in Isa. 6 -- the manifestation of the glory of Christ, as the Lord God of Israel, convincing the nation and even the prophet of sin, but strengthening his mouth by purifying it to bear witness, in the midst of them, to the judgment of God, and also to His faithfulness in preserving for future blessing the *seed* which was to be the strength of the tree stripped of all its glory. I say, the glory of Christ, because it is thus stated in John 12. Judgment had been hanging over the heads of this people for centuries; but at length finds its accomplishment on their rejection of Christ, the true David. See John 12:40; Acts 28:26, 27. The other part of the spirit of prophecy is intercession, the spirit of faith, which acknowledges the people and the fidelity of God; the answer of the duration of the judgment of God, as not being for ever -- an answer which is the support of the faithful remnant, in the midst of a wicked people. The glory of Christ, and His rejection (sufferings), are the two subjects of prophecy -- a rejection which shows the fulness of that wickedness which the glory condemns, and becomes the foundation of the hope which finds its blessing and its end in that glory. Reproof always takes place according to actual circumstances; and the violation of that law which was the rule of the government of God, together with the idolatry which destroyed their witness as a chosen people to the one true God, furnished the occasion for those wonderful expositions of grace, of which the prophecies are full, and also for the detail of those circumstances, by which God vindicated His rights in the midst of an ungrateful people by righteous judgments, and by means of a new covenant.

This is the reason that the prophets (I speak not now of Daniel and the Apocalypse), omitting the present dispensation,<sup>12</sup> pass from the circumstances which gave rise to the prophecy to the circumstances in and by which the judgments of God on infidelity (which is the subject of the prophecy) shall be fully displayed. They pass to the events of the latter days, when God shall arise in judgment upon all nations -- upon Israel, according to their behavior as a people, and the Gentiles, according to their conduct towards that people; and when the glory of Christ, which has been the hope of the faithful in all ages, shall be manifested for their joy and complete happiness. It is impossible to understand the prophecies without looking to the circumstances of the latter days. Certainly there have been remarkable judgments on the Jews, and on the Gentiles who were in connection with them; but nothing which fulfils the prophecies, because nothing which fulfils the end of God. This, to my mind, is the

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12. {The reader should bear in mind that JND often used the word dispensation in a conventional sense when not strictly speaking.}

meaning of the Holy Spirit, when Peter says, “No prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation”; it must form a link in the counsels of God, which only finds its completion in the solemn and magnificent scene of the latter days. All the nations which persecuted Israel and insulted God by their idols and their pride, shall take part in them. Christ must reign over all the nations. The mountain of the Lord’s house is to be set up above all mountains, and the Gentiles shall flow to it. He must reign in peace; but first the judgments of God must be manifested: “When thy judgments are in the earth, then shall the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.” The consequences of these judgments on Israel, and even on the nations, may be seen in Isaiah, from chapter 13 to chapter 33, in which is contained also the glory of Israel, which shall be accomplished. The same may also be briefly seen in Jer. 5.

There are three classes of prophecy in the Old Testament after the establishment of the kingdom -- those which preceded the captivity, those during it, and those which followed the re-establishment of Jerusalem. But there is one event of the utmost importance, which gave rise to the division, viz., God ceasing to reign in the midst of His people, and the giving authority and dominion over the whole earth into the hands of the Gentiles. Jerusalem ceased to be “the throne of the Lord,” where His rule was directly displayed, where the ark of the covenant was found, and where God was seated between the cherubim. Consequently, there were prophets who bore witness to the circumstances of the Jews, and the other nation, whilst the throne of God was in the midst of Jerusalem, or who spoke of the judgments of God on His people and on their enemies. There were others who spoke of the state of the Gentiles, during the time that the authority of God in judgment was committed to their hands. The prophets after the captivity embraced both, and had a special character on account of the partial re-establishment of the Jews, whilst the Gentile empire still existed. The event of which we speak *changed the whole state of the earth*, by separating the *government* from the *calling* of God -- two things which had long been united in the Jewish people under responsibility: a union which (having failed through the unfaithfulness of man, when God Himself ruled over them) had been propped up, and established afresh, under the reign of a man who was a chosen type of Christ. From the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the throne of David, the government of the world was in the hands of the Gentiles; and the times of the Gentiles commenced (see Dan. 2:37, 38) under a responsibility, the effects of which are described in the book of Daniel, the Apocalypse, and Zechariah, and which are characterized in Dan. 4. The four great empires which, by their pride and in God’s providence, successively seized on the supreme power, and consequently brought themselves under this responsibility and failed, are well known. All the time of their dominion, Israel has been Lo-ammi, “not my people.” This is all that we need say of them at this present time.

Before this event, prophecy was the voice of God, judging the nations as from His throne in the promised land. The world is viewed in its pride, rising against God and His people, and Babylon presenting itself only as taking the place where Israel had reigned. Its destruction is consequently foretold; but its history, and that of the nations which succeeded it, are not given. The question is always between the God of Israel, Israel, and the world. There is no mention of Babylon in the first prophecies of Isaiah, which end at chapter 12. In Isa. 13 we have the destruction of Babylon, which represents the habitable world. In Isa. 14 it is said, “For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land; and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place; and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids; and they shall take *them* captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.” Here is Babylon set aside, and replaced by the restoration of Israel to dominion in the land of the Lord. “For the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion, from henceforth even for ever. And then, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, *even the first dominion*: the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.” This is the accomplishment of the prophecy in Micah 4, “But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.” I have quoted all this as necessary to complete the scene. The details belong to the times of the Gentiles, which is the reason I refer to what belongs to those times.

But there were many prophecies which belong to Israel recognized in a measure, though unfaithful. The great question was between Israel and the world, before and after the existence of the beasts: not as under their power, for the beasts come into existence only by Israel’s ceasing to exist as a people. Egypt, which was at first the world, was already passed away in that respect -- God having called His son out of Egypt. Assyria was its representative: that is the reason we see so many vital questions, between Israel and Assyria, as the last thing in the history of the present age.<sup>13</sup>

Babylon represented the world in the time of the empire

13. {The reader should keep in mind that JND understood the present age to be the Mosaic age which runs on to the appearing of Christ in glory when the Messianic age is introduced.}



of the Gentiles, when God had given the empire to the Gentiles and she was responsible in herself for the exercise of His power. Daniel, as we have said, has given us the results, but the *call* of God (a principle of all importance) was separated from *government*. We see the character of the union of religion and government under the beasts, in Dan. 3. Faithfulness was displayed in keeping out of such a union, while acknowledging the authority of the government; but for religion it appeals to God alone. But while Israel was the called nation, Babylon was not in question.

But the question between the authority of God's government in Israel and the world ever existed. Nineveh and Assyria were the occasion of it. This was how God acted. He permits the world, as executor of His judgments, to lay waste His people for their good. Judgment begins at the house of God; but if the worldliness and the sin of His people have been corrected by the stronger worldliness and sin of the world, what will the end of that world itself be? We have, consequently, two prophets, whose witness concerns Nineveh only: one of these, the last witness given to the world in the mercy of God, that is to say, Jonah, a witness that there was the greatest and most speedy mercy for the world itself before God; the other, Nahum, a witness of the final judgment. "The Lord hath given a commandment concerning thee, that no more of thy name be sown." "The Lord hath turned away the pride of Jacob, as the pride of Israel"; but there was, through grace, a faithful remnant, though a small one. Here there was nothing but pride against the Lord: and who shall abide the day of His wrath? In the prophecies which bring into contact the state of Israel and the world, we find the activity of the Assyrian, as the last instrument of the wrath of God, and the judgment of Israel by its means; but at length their destruction by God Himself. Israel is found a prisoner in Babylon, or, what is still worse, united in desire and principle with the king of the apostate system, having "made a covenant with death," and being "at agreement with hell," saying, "When the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us, for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves": wretched refuge against the justice and the wrath of the Lord! The return from Babylon, when Cyrus was king, changed nothing in fact: "Behold we are servants this day," said Nehemiah (who felt the truth of the thing), "and for the land that thou gayest unto our fathers, to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it: and it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins; also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress" (Neh. 9:6, 37). And the Lord Himself, the legitimate King of the Jews, united Himself, in His infinite wisdom, to this confession of the state of His beloved Israel, in repelling their unholy temptations: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." The wretched Jews received a repulse, which left the weight of their wickedness on their own heads. Their malice and

wretchedness reached their height when they said, "We have no other king but Caesar." Although their state varied according to the character, the strength, or weakness of their rulers, yet were they always under the dominion of the Gentiles.

But it was quite otherwise as to the Assyrian, the rod of the Lord: he humbles them. But the Lord, choosing Jerusalem, puts her by His power beyond all the efforts of the pride of the world. Thus, until the end of Isa. 13 where the history of the world begins, the prophet pursues the history of Israel in relation with the king of Assyria. The other events are only passing troubles; and both in Isa. 7 and 8 the king of Assyria is the subject of the prophetic threatenings; and from Isa. 9 and 10, from the actual circumstances of the moment, he shows the outstretched arm of the Lord, until He takes the Assyrian by His strong hand to be the staff of His indignation, which is completed, and ceases, in Isa. 10:25, with the destruction of the proud king.

In chapters 10 and 11 we see the glory, the joy, and the peace of Israel, and of the world in *their* deliverance, a deliverance which, as the apostle says, shall be life from the dead. Isa. 10 marks, in a very striking manner, all the principles and effects of the judgments of God, which only leave a faithful remnant of His people, who destroy their enemies completely. It is God judging the earth, whether His people or the world. For this reason, after the destruction of Babylon and its king (who had been substituted in the place of God's union with Israel), we find in Isa. 14:24, 25 the destruction of the Assyrians upon the mountains, and the land purified from all those enemies, when the answer to the messengers of the nation shall be, that the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of His people shall trust in it (v. 32). In the remainder of the chapters which are applicable to this subject, we see the judgments of God on all the nations who have interfered with the affairs of Israel, whether near or afar off beyond the rivers of Cush. We see the subject also treated of in reference to the latter days (the occasions of the prophecies being sometimes the Assyrians, sometimes Nebuchadnezzar), and a complete mixture of dates and circumstances, if we refer them to past time -- exact, however, even in detail as to the latter days, a detail which is verified and arranged by a comparison with other prophecies.

To enter into the details would be to explain almost all the prophecies. The slightest attention will show us the application of these things to the latter days (for example, Isa. 18 and the end of chapter 19). But we have said enough to show the separation of rule and the calling of God, in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the giving of government or power into the hands of the Gentiles. With them it still exists, and shall exist, until the destruction of the last of the four empires: with this destruction the times of the Gentiles end. During those times the calling of God remained with some of the Jews. After the fall of their nation, after all hope was lost for the Jews in their actual state by their rejection of Messiah,

this calling took place in the church, not for earthly, but for heavenly places; and God, in His providence, suffers the last empire to exist until it rises against Him and His church. See Rev. 16:14; 17:12, 14; 19:19, 20. But this belongs to the history of the Gentiles, or to the hope and character of the church, of which we have before spoken.

We must observe here, that at the time of the invasion of the Assyrian (a type of what shall take place in the latter days), they acted upon Israel and Judah, seizing Israel and falling before Jerusalem. The king of Babylon (representative of the empires) takes Jerusalem; consequently, when he is destroyed, Christ will retake Jerusalem; and the contest between Him, as King there, and the Assyrian will begin; and the restoration of Israel shall have its full accomplishment.

Thus, among the prophets of the captivity, we have in Jeremiah (who prophesied in the land) the total rejection of Judah, as *Lo-ammi*, not a people; and a new covenant made with the two divisions of the people, Judah and Israel; and under this covenant complete blessing is brought in both to that nation and to the earth. We see in Daniel the history of the four empires, and the circumstances of the call of God, until their end. In Ezekiel, we find an entire omission of the four empires. The prophet, having given an account of the destruction of Pharaoh by the king of Babylon (whose attempts were a last effort to obtain the empire before Babylon), passes at once to events which characterize the return of Israel and their re-establishment in their own land, and to the attacks which their last enemies will make upon them; attacks which only serve for the complete manifestation to the Gentiles of the glory of God in the midst of Israel. These last events bring us to the consideration of the reunion, once more, of rule and the call of God in the Jewish nation, but under His dominion, who, in the display of His glory, shall make all the earth happy; in the reign of Him who shall be a Priest upon His throne, and who will maintain the fulness of blessing by His presence in His reign, and by the complete union, established and settled in Him, between the heavens and the earth.

We will quote some passages as proof of the accomplishment of these things: first, of the government of Christ in Israel, as powerful to subdue and drive out the enemies of His ancient people; and then of His being the peaceful Benefactor of them, and through them of the whole earth: in both cases joining together power and justice, which had long been separated. The cross of Christ was the complete overthrow of justice on earth. For the only just One was persecuted by the people whom He loved-of whom He was the benefactor and the glory; condemned by him who represented the government of the world, and who, nevertheless, declared His innocence; and at length apparently, and in one sense really, forsaken of God and given up to the justice of Him He had appealed to. This is what the cross was to the world. The church, which views

these things in their heavenly light, sees in them, not the judgment of the patient Jesus, but of that world which rejected Him. It sees heavenly justice in the abandonment on the cross (divine love having provided a lamb for a sacrifice) -- a justice which made good the rights of that victim, not by helping Him in this sinful and wretched world, where He finished the work of salvation, but by receiving Him to that place which was the only real witness of His righteousness and the glory of His Person; namely, to the right hand of the Majesty on high. The church, consequently, partaking of the righteousness and glory of Christ, should seek rather the fellowship of the sufferings of her Head, than the participation of that false glory which drove Him from the earth (see Phil. 3); expecting that which He expects -- that His enemies be made His footstool.

In those days His cause and His right shall be maintained even upon earth, and His right hand shall find out all His enemies. The Jews suffer the earthly consequences until this moment. The kingdom which has rejected Him in His humiliation, rising out of the abyss, will oppose Him when coming forth out of His place in His glory, and shall find its end. Then Christ, uniting Himself to His earthly people, or at least to the faithful remnant, will subdue the whole world unto Himself by His power. The little stone which broke the image shall become a great mountain, which shall fill all the earth.

This is the witness of a post-captivity prophet, given in the passage where he speaks of Christ manifesting Himself in humiliation: "When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man. . . And the Lord shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord God shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south. The Lord of Hosts shall defend them." See Zech. 9 and 10. "I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off; for I am the Lord their God and will hear them" (Zech. 10:6). And in Zech. 12, "In that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it," Zech. 12:3. The details of these things will be found in this chapter and the following ones. Jerusalem will have been taken before, as was foretold by Ezekiel, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him" (Ezek. 21:7; see also Zech. 14). We see the same truth in Jer. 51:19, "The portion of Jacob is not like them; for he is the former of all things: and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: the Lord of Hosts is his name. Thou art my battle-axe, and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms," etc.

Let us come to more general descriptions of the reunion

of Christ with this people, at the time of their restoration. "The children of Israel," saith the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of Hosea, "shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without seraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days." Read from Hos. 2:15 to the end of chapter 3.

This is the promise in Jer. 32:37, "Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in my anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: and I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and of their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul," etc. And in Jer. 33:14, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness. For thus saith the Lord, David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel. . . . Thus saith the Lord, If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant," etc. Also verses 7, 8 and 9 of the same chapter, "And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them as at the first. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned and whereby they have transgressed against me. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honor before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and all the prosperity that I procure unto it."

Also in Isa. 59, having described the state of sin and ruin in which Israel was found, their transgressions being multiplied before the Lord and truth lost, the prophet announces the intervention of the Lord in these words: "And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breast-plate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries,

recompense to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompense. So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come from Zion; and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob [or, shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob], saith the Lord." I take here the reading of the apostle (Rom. 11:26), supported by many ancient versions, which alters nothing as to the present question; but the application of the passage by the apostle is of immense importance, for he says that it applies to the restoration of Israel, after the fulness of the Gentiles is come in; that is to say, to the glory of the nation after the end of the economy of the church.

There is yet another long passage which must be quoted. After the resurrection of the dry bones, the Holy Spirit by the mouth of Ezekiel says, "Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord. The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: and join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in mine hand. And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these? Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in mine hand before their eyes. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them; so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. And David my servant shall be king over them: and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall

also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children, for ever; and my servant David shall be their prince for ever. Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore."

We may also read in detail Isaiah 65 and 66, the elect remnant of Judah, and the judgments on the wicked nation, the blessing of the earthly Jerusalem after a marked distinction between the faithful and unfaithful Jews (Isa. 65:13, 14; then Isa. 66:15), the remnant addressed in terms of the greatest tenderness and consolation, and at last judgment on their enemies. "For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many. . . . For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord.... For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain" (Isa. 66). The same thing may be seen in Joel 3 and the manner in which it shall be done in Isaiah 63 compared with Rev. 1:9. The promise is found in the second Psalm. I have already quoted the latter chapters of Zechariah, and will only select three passages, amongst numbers that present themselves: the first, respecting the re-establishment of the Jews; the second, respecting the judgment on the nations; and the third, concerning the presence of Christ as the strength of the restored nation against the Assyrian. "Behold," saith the Holy Spirit, by the prophet Amos, "the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I

have given them, saith the Lord thy God" (Amos 9:13-15). "Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent" (Zeph. 3:8, 9). What follows is the joy of Israel, saying, in verse 17, "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty." "Thou shalt not see evil any more," v. 15. This is the quotation from the prophet Micah: "Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth; then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide; for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land, and when he shall tread in our palaces" Micah 5:1-5.

That which follows is the description of what Jacob shall be in the midst of the nations, and of what God will be in the midst of Jacob and the nations: for, as we read in Zech. 14:9, the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Lord, and His name one. We see the kingdom given to Christ after the destruction of the fourth beast (Dan. 7:13, 14). In Psalms 75, 76, 82, we have God arising to judge the earth, because all have failed in obedience, walking in darkness, Christ celebrating the government of God as put into His hands, in Psalm 75, His re-establishment in Judah, in Psalm 76.

There is one consequence to be observed, which several of the quotations have in fact already marked; namely, the actual blessedness of the earth under the government of the Lord. The call to universal joy is found in Psalm 95; then in Psalm 96, the earth is called to sing the new song: being instructed, she sings the song in Psalm 97. Psalm 98 is the calling of Israel to sing. Their song is found in Psalm 99. Psalms 96 and 98 finish with one common chorus. The same state of things is described in Psalm 72, but directly as Christ reigning as Solomon. We have seen, in the passages quoted, the judgment of God on His unfaithful people, and the calling of God separated from His government, and the government made over to the Gentiles, furnishing afterwards the opportunity (through the rejection of the Messiah by the Jews) for the manifestation of the heavenly calling of God to the church.

We have seen the promise of the restoration of Israel, but

under very adverse circumstances, even their chiefs at Jerusalem making a covenant with hell and the grave to escape the scourge of God; all the nations led by their pride and their passions against Jerusalem; the righteous judgment of God on His people: a time thus described by Jeremiah with the promises already quoted (Jer. 30:7): “Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble, but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him. But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.” We have, in fact, seen all the nations of the earth assembled against her, saying in their pride, Where is thy God? But at this word, this unknown God shall show Himself to their confusion, and shall gather them as sheaves into the floor (Micah 4:12). Jerusalem becomes a burdensome stone to all nations. Her faithful remnant escape from the judgments. See Isa. 65:19. To the faithful remnant the Savior manifests Himself. They weep justly, but they will have David their king -- His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives. Then the calling and the government of God shall be united once more, “This man shall be the peace when the Assyrian shall come into the land.” The wrath against Israel shall then have ceased; their land shall be delivered from their oppressors, who had long filled it: and the dispersed among the nations shall return. “And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people . . . and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab: and the children of Ammon shall obey them” (Isa. 11:10-14).

All the promises to Israel shall be fulfilled to the letter: for when has God failed in His promises? But the earth also shall rejoice before the Lord, Himself coming to judge it. And we have seen in Daniel 7 dominion over all nations put into the hands of the Son of man; and His kingdom, which broke the image, becomes a mountain which fills all the earth. We have seen also, in speaking of the church, that Satan shall be bound at this time, and there will be a world blessed under the dominion of Christ, from which outward temptation and the tempter shall be alike banished. The Lord shall hear the heavens, and the heavens shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel (that is, the seed of God) (Hos. 2:21). There shall be a chain of blessing without interruption or hindrance from

the throne of the Lord to His people blessed on the earth; and the Gentiles shall rejoice with them.

We have seen this state described in Psalms 96, 99, 72; Isa. 24-28; and even the following chapters describe the same things. For it is in those days that the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Here is the truth of the promises. They shall bless themselves in the earth, in the God of truth. Here is the long expected accomplishment of the prophecies. Here the proof that the calling of God is without repentance, even on earth; and that His mercy endureth for ever. Here is the oath to David, to which the faithful God has not been wanting. Here is the government of God established, not on the instability of man under responsibility, but on the efficacy of the power of Christ, the Son of God, Son of man, Son of David, Heir of all things. Here, even on earth, is the grace of God triumphing in the splendor of His justice: “Mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” “Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness look down from heaven; yea, the Lord shall give that which is good, and the land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before him, and shall set us in the way of His steps.” We may read from Psalm 73 to the end of Psalm 77, which are all the description of what will take place in Emmanuel’s land in the latter days. The blessings of Noah, the promises made to Abraham, the hopes of David, shall be accomplished together; and men shall rejoice in the beneficence of the Lord, not in the miseries of their own weakness and the temptations of the enemy, but in the strength of a present God, and of Christ, the rightful Heir, the support, the Mediator, of all the blessings.

I have but one word to say, one character of Christ to add. It is in those days that He shall be manifested as the real Melchisedec, King of Righteousness, King of Peace; the Priest of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth; the High Priest, not of intercession within the veil, hidden in God, but come forth to bless, with the riches and abundance of His house, the people of God, already conquerors over all their enemies, and to pronounce on them the blessing of the Most High God, possessor then in blessing of the heavens and the earth, and to bring up praises worthy of Him in the mouth of the High Priest. Happy reciprocation of blessings! for if the blessings of God are the happiness of His people, the happiness of His people in Christ is the joy of God. It was meet to make merry and be glad for those which were dead, and are alive again, which were lost and are found. The happiness and blessing of this earth are the joy of our gracious God; and the last Adam will not fail of this part of His inheritance. Happy those who are co-heirs with Him, and who, partakers of the divine nature, may rejoice with God in the blessings with which He clothes others, with hearts filled with His love. Blessed is the church of the Lord {of God}.

*(Collected Writings of J. N. Darby 2:122-164.)*



## Chapter 8.3

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### *Lo-ammi and the Government of God*

The rejection of Judah, at the time of the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and, consequently, the cessation of the application of the title “Ammi” to the whole people, has been the universal conviction of those Christians who have studied these subjects; and this for very simple reasons. One may be astonished that any one should call it in question, but I will briefly here present some of the proofs. To give them in full and in order, it would be needful to transcribe the greater part of the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Before producing some of these, it is well to recall the fact, that Israel is always the people of God; and if the affections of the heart and of the faith of a Daniel and a Nehemiah have called them so, nothing is proved thereby. Israel cannot cease to be the people of God.

“The gifts and calling of God are without repentance,” and it is of Israel that this is said. God never ceases to consider Israel as His people; but He has ceased to govern them as His people, and to have His throne in the midst of them upon the earth. Paul insists in Rom. 11:1 upon this point after their rejection of Christ -- “I say, then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid.”

So that Israel may now be called the people of God, and ought to be so, as beloved for the fathers' sakes, respect being had to the election. Hence this is not the question. If Zacharias (Luke 1) says He has visited and redeemed His people, this is still less difficult to understand, because he speaks of the coming of Jesus, who was, in truth, to establish the people in the enjoyment of all its privileges as the people of God. This, then, proves nothing; for, if this proves that “Lo-ammi” was not applicable, because Israel remain the people of God, it is evident that they never will be “Lo-ammi,” because they are always the people of God.

It might be said, perhaps, “But this is because Judah always remained the people of God.” One could hardly venture to say so after the death of Jesus. But the fact is, that the apostle takes no notice of the distinction between Judah and the ten tribes. He speaks of all Israel, and shows that they are beloved for the fathers' sakes -- that God has not cast off the people whom He had foreknown. Now this, evidently, does not apply only to Judah, but to all Israel, as the apostle expresses himself; and the distinction which he draws is

between all Israel and the election according to grace. This will suffice for the moment; we shall see positive proofs of it farther on. Here I seek only to shew that the recognition of the people, as a people, applies to all Israel, and that it is entirely to misapprehend the force of the passages, and to mistake as to the whole question, to suppose that the faithfulness of God to His predeterminate counsel, and the precious faith of them that are His in that unchangeable faithfulness, according to which the title of His people is given to Israel, touches the question of the judgment of “Lo-ammi.” It is to confound the counsels of God with His government. In all times, Israel is His people, according to His counsels, and the thoughts of His love. This does not prevent their being called “Lo-ammi” (not my people) as to the government of God. Consequently, the fact that Israel has been called “His people” at any given epoch leaves the question entirely unanswered of “*When* was the sentence of ‘Lo-ammi’ pronounced?” Only we have made a step in our research after truth, to wit, in that we have found that this concerns the government of God. For “Lo-ammi” certainly applies, as to the government of God, to all Israel, and to the ten tribes, at one epoch or another. And as to the sovereign love and the counsels of God, Israel as a whole are always His people. The question then is of His government, and we can now ask,” when is it that God, in His government of the people of Israel, executes upon that people the sentence of ‘Lo-ammi’?” I am about to shew my reader that it was at the time of the captivity of Babylon.

It is certain that the ten tribes bore the name of Israel after their separation from the other two, and that they are presented in general as having the right to the title, the other two being rather an appendage to the family of David whom God would not utterly forsake. Yet the fate of the whole people hung upon that family, on account of the Messiah, who was to be of it, and of the temple, which was at Jerusalem. The perusal of the Book of Kings will show that the ten tribes held the place I refer to; the Book of Chronicles shows the importance of the family of David. The last chapter of 2 Chronicles shows us that the God of Israel was thoughtful of His house and of His people, until there was no remedy. Lastly, 2 Kings 23 shows us that the sin of Manasseh was the cause of the Lord's saying, “I will remove Judah also out of

my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem, which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there.”

As Jeremiah had said -- “Then said the Lord unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight and let them go forth. And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the Lord; Such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity. And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the Lord: the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy. And I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem. For who shall have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem? or who shall bemoan thee? or who shall go aside to ask how thou doest? Thou hast forsaken me, saith the Lord, thou art gone backward: therefore will I stretch out my hand against thee, and destroy thee; I am weary with repenting.”

Compare 2 Kings 21:13; Jer. 14:7. Thus we learn that in the captivity of Babylon (for that event is the subject of these passages) the Lord rejected Judah as He had rejected Israel. He drove that people from before His face and destroyed Jerusalem, being weary of repenting.

Now, Hosea handles the case of Israel and of Judah, and his prophecy bears date of the reign of the various kings of both countries who reigned in his time. The ten tribes are principally the objects, inasmuch as they formed the main body of the people, and as their dispersion was nearer at hand; but the judgment of Judah is also proclaimed, and the prophet, at times, speaks of the whole together under the titles of “the children of Israel,” and “my people”: especially in Hos. 4, as being the priesthood of God, while at the same time he speaks of the priests separately. The general application here of the expression “children of Israel” is explained clearly by its use in Hos. 3:5. The judgment on Judah is announced in chapter 5:5, and 10-15; chap. 6:4-11; that of the house of the Lord, chapter 8:1; that of Judah, again, verse 14; of Ephraim, Judah, and all Jacob, chap. 10:11; of Judah and Jacob, chap. 12:2. The sum of these passages shows plainly enough the object of the prophecy of Hosea; it applies to the whole of the land and of the people, to Judah as well as to Israel; but the ten tribes are chiefly in view. The expression, *the mother*, includes both, and the restoration of the whole people is announced, chapter 2, when God will again become their husband. The point which is not treated by Hosea is the family of David, if not in chapter 3:4, 5, in which the subject is the people as a whole, under the title of “children of Israel,” and their history in a few striking words up to the time of their millennial restoration.

The expression “Lo-ammi” necessarily applies to all the

people, and, consequently, could not be announced ere the captivity of Babylon, although great progress may have been made towards its fulfillment by the captivity of the ten tribes. The conduct of the king had, from the days of David and Solomon, been the question with God, in His dealings with His people, who were finally rejected on account of the sin of Manasseh. The impiety of Solomon had already been the cause of the separation of ten tribes from the throne of his family, and then the peculiar iniquity of these ten tribes had finally caused them to be delivered over into the hands of the Gentiles. still, the house of God, the family of David, the priesthood of Aaron, the ark of the covenant, continued surrounded by two tribes and some other Israelites, in such sort that one could not say absolutely that there is no longer a people. Yet the arm of the Lord was already lifted up to smite Judah. One has only to consult Isaiah (who prophesied at the same time as Hosea), the declarations of the first four chapters, and the magnificent and touching appeal of chapter 5 of his prophecy, to see what was the judgment which God had formed upon the state of Judah.

In the midst of these circumstances, Hosea announces, first of all, the judgment of the house of Jehu. Then, under the (symbolical) name of “Lo-ruhamah,” he announces that the Lord will entirely remove the house of Israel, that is to say, the ten tribes. But He will yet have mercy upon Judah, and will deliver it, even as He did in the case of Sennacherib, successor of him who led captive Israel. Then He declares by another (symbolical) name given to another child, that at length He will pronounce the sentence of “Lo-ammi”; for, said He, you are not My people. Having announced this judgment in an absolute manner, by a prophetic act, after the judgment executed upon Israel, by means of which it was already entirely cut off, and having declared at the time of this cutting off that Judah should be spared, the evidence is of the clearest kind, that it would be by the judgment executed upon Judah that this sentence would take effect. This is by so much the more evident in that “Lo-ammi,” by the import of the term, applies to the whole people, which was the object of the prophecy of Hosea. Immediately afterwards, the prophet, publishing the mercies of God, declares, first, that the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea-shore, and that then the children of Israel -- here expressly distinguished the one from the other in order to establish their reunion in one -- shall be gathered together, and shall appoint to themselves a leader, etc. We thus see clearly that the answer and the deliverance embrace Judah as well as Israel, both of whom were included in “Lo-ammi,” although the judgment pronounced for the latter could not take effect until Judah also should be rejected, and thus there should no longer be a people before God. That God in the meanwhile preserved a little remnant, which He brought back in order to present Christ to it, is evident. The question which we have to solve is this -- Did God, as to His government, put in force this sentence of “Lo-ammi” at the time of the captivity of Babylon? for that sentence must needs at some time be put in



force.

Now let us bear in mind, that the question, as to this expression, is one of the relationship of God with His people, already broken as to the ten tribes (whatsoever may have been the patience of God, and the messages which He sent to them) by the separation of Jeroboam. For the golden calves did not maintain the relationship of Israel with God. Now, Jerusalem was the place which He had chosen, the temple the place where He had placed His name. The ark of the covenant of the God of the whole earth was there. The family of David, a family chosen for the maintenance of His relationship with His people, the Urim and the Thummim, means of receiving (by the intervention of the priesthood) light and direction from God, were there. Now, not only had Judah sinned, but the family of David, upon the conduct of which all depended, had failed in fidelity. There was no remedy (2 Chron. 36:16), and God must reject Judah as He had rejected Israel.

But in this case the act is more solemn, because the house of God, the throne of God (dwelling) between the cherubim, the royal authority, which was of God, which "sat on the throne of the Lord" (1 Chron. 29:23), His Urim and His Thummim, were in question. But how preserve them there in order to sanction the iniquity which existed? That would have been still worse, and God executes the judgment which He had pronounced upon His people. The house of God is destroyed, the family of David is led into captivity, and the times of the Gentiles commence. The scepter of the world is placed in the hands of the Gentiles by the authority of the God of the heavens, an event of immense import, which exists even at this time, and which necessarily prevents the establishment of the earthly people of God, considered in the light of the government of God, because the reign of the Messiah cannot consist with such empire in the hands of the Gentiles. Now it is as clear as possible that the epoch of the restoration and blessing of Israel, when they will no longer be "Lo-ammi," will be that of the reign of the Messiah. For the time being the people of God is a heavenly people, subject to the powers which be, a people which has nothing to seek in the world but the glory of Him who has saved it in order to introduce it into the heavens.

We see then, at the taking of Jerusalem, the judgment of God executed upon His people; the ark of the covenant taken; the house of God burnt; its royal authority taken from the family of David (and this until the coining of the true son of David); the Urim and the Thummim of the priesthood lost; the throne of God removed from off the earth; and sovereign authority placed in the hands of the Gentiles. In a word, all that which, as institutions, formed the link between God and the people is set aside (observe it, reader), and by a means which renders the reestablishment of the people impossible, because the scepter and authority have been transferred by God to the hands of the Gentiles.

Under the old covenant, all was lost; under the new, under the Messiah, all is yet future for Israel. Christ

manifested in flesh has not re-established the old covenant, and Israel have not been placed under the new. Christ was personally perfect under the old, and when He shed His blood -- basis of the new covenant, the time was past for Israel as a nation. If the grace of God proposed to this people the return of Jesus (Acts 3) if they repented, the people in their blindness stopped the mouths of those who made the declaration. This truth, that it is under the new covenant and under the Messiah that Israel will be recognized as a people, is of all importance in order to judge in these matters. We shall see that the prophets who announce the judgment by Nebuchadnezzar pass directly from it to the coming of Christ. We shall see that, although God acted to bring matters to this point by divers acts of providence, Christ, when the blessing is established, is always in relationship with the people as a whole, and that the existence of two tribes without the ten cannot accord with the accomplishment of the promises in Christ. He may come from heaven to destroy the wicked one; but once united to Israel, it is to all Israel: so that there should have been the re-establishment in the promised blessing at the time of the return from Babylon is impossible, if in that view that event is considered as a continuation of Judah alone as the people of God.

We will now examine the passages which prove that which has just been stated. That the royal authority over all the earth was conferred on Nebuchadnezzar is most clearly stated in Dan. 2:37, 38; and even that this should continue until the setting up of the kingdom of God (v. 38-44); which renders it impossible that Judah during that interval should be the people of God, recognized by Him, His government being that which we have to consider. Israel is always "Lo-ammi" during this period.

I need not say that the royal authority was not renewed in the family of David. We nowhere find that the ark of the covenant was made *de novo*; certainly it was not so by the command of God; and, surely they could not make the tables of the law having the writing of God, which rendered the ark the ark of the testimony. We have, further, the assurance that no manifestation of the glory of God, sign of His presence, took place at the time of the dedication of the second temple, as happened when the tabernacle was set up, and when the ark was introduced into the temple of Solomon, and they sounded with the trumpets. So that the testimony and the glory of the presence of God were wanting to the ark, if so be they made one. The absence of these two things made the existence of an ark the plain proof that all that which could have given importance to it was wanting. That there was neither Urim nor Thummim is a fact also admitted by the Jews, and proved by Neh. 7:65. The absence of this mysterious token was a fact of the most serious kind, for it was thus that the high priest bore the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually. That is to say, all that which symbolized the presence of God, and all the links established of old and which maintained the relation of the people with God, were wanting, while the people themselves were subjected to the Gentiles by reason of their sin. God

might come in in grace; He might send messengers to the little off-shoot of His people which found itself at Jerusalem; He might bear with the mutilated state of institutions, the exterior appearance of which was re-established; He might, further, send His Son: all this He did; but He never canceled the decree of "Lo-ammi." He could not do so, save by Jesus and the new covenant, when the links of the first covenant were broken, and Israel subjected to the Gentiles. He presented Jesus -- the people would not have Him. He presented Him in the faithfulness of His promise; and it is evident that it was not according to the old covenant, under which Israel had been in relationship with God as a people: all was lost according to that covenant. The new covenant could not be established with a people who rejected its Mediator in Jesus.

There remain three things for us to consider. That which the prophets said after the captivity, and that which they said before, as to the means which God would employ in order that Israel might be His people, and, then, the manner in which the New Testament presents this point. I put in the forefront the prophets after the captivity, because we find there all that the Spirit of God could say of the strongest kind to encourage the people on their return. If in examining these passages we find that the remnant which returned from the captivity is not in them called the people of God, we shall also understand that the other prophets and the New Testament confirm this testimony.

Let us examine Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Never once is the people returned from the captivity called by any one of these prophets the people of God: contrariwise, in the occasions in which one would have supposed this inevitable, the expression is not found, but they say, that they will be His people in the last days. But in these occasions it is Israel and Judah: proof manifest that they were not recognized by God then as His people. Never do these prophets say on behalf of God "My people." Their prophecies are full of remarkable revelations on the subject of times yet to come, as also with regard to the first coming of Jesus; and they connect the blessings which are to come with the encouragements which they give for the time present; but never at the time, nor in reference to the first coming of Jesus, are the people called the people of God. While Zechariah is very plain in declaring that it will be so in the latter days, never is it said that God should dwell in the temple then, but He promises to abide there in the days yet to come. But it is after the glory that the prophet is sent to the nations who have robbed Israel; then it is said, "I will dwell in the midst of thee" (compare Zech. 2:8-10).

It is said, "I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies; my house shall be built in it" (Zech. 1:16); but the promise of abiding there is reserved for another time, when the four carpenters shall have "frayed away," and "cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it" (v. 21).

Again, in Zech. 8:3 it is said, "I will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem"; but, forthwith, we find the times yet to come in which God will cause His people to come from the east and from the west, and when He will be their God. For the time present, he says, "so again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah: fear ye not" (v. 21).

Precious encouragement! yet leaving the abiding of God and the title of His people, "as a hope for days to come, when (Zech. 6:12), "behold the man whose name is the Branch shall grow up out of his place"; and (Zech. 9:13) Ephraim and Judah shall be united as the bow and the arrow of the Lord.

The promises in Haggai are temporal, and the presence of the messenger of the covenant is promised for the house, but for a time yet to come, for it is when GOD shall have shaken all nations, the heavens and the earth -- a declaration which Heb. 12:26 makes us understand is not yet accomplished. The attentive reader of the Bible will not have failed to observe that God constantly addresses Himself to Judah, or to the whole nation as to His people, by the prophets who spake to them before the captivity. Stronger proof one can scarcely have, that God no longer recognized Judah as His people after the captivity of Babylon, while, at the same time, He was vouchsafing to them the promise that, together with Israel, they should be His people, when He should re-establish them by means of Christ under the new covenant. I will now examine what is the light which the prophets who announced the judgment executed upon Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar furnish, and what is the epoch at which they declare that Israel will anew be called the people of God. They are the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel. We have already seen that the Lord, weary of repenting, would reject Judah as He had rejected Israel, and that He would execute, without longer deferring (Ezek. 19:21-28), the judgment announced. We shall, then, now see at what epoch the prophets place the reestablishment of Judah in the enjoyment of the privilege of being the people of God.

Before clearing up this point, and examining at what moment the name of "my people" is given to Israel (I say to Israel because the two families are always united in this blessing), I will draw the attention of my reader to the solemn judgment which took place at the time of the taking of Jerusalem, which stamps its true character upon this, and gives the true force of the term "Lo-ammi," placed on the forehead of Judah, as well as of the whole nation, when it was led captive to Babylon, and on the import of the transfer of the throne to the midst of the Gentiles. The throne of God shows itself, and the cherubim of glory, with the wheels, the rings of which were so high that they were dreadful to the spirit of the prophet -- these wheels which were as a wheel within a wheel; the cherubim running to and fro, according to the appearance of lightning, and the wheels in the rings were full of eyes round about. There was the likeness of a

man sitting upon a throne. This was the vision of the glory of the Lord. Then he declares to the prophet the end: "An end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land. Now is the end come upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations. And mine eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity: but I 'viii recompense thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee: and ye shall know that I am the Lord" (Ezek. 7:2-4).

Then, having set a mark upon those that sighed and cried by reason of all these abominations, He visits and smites the wicked according to the glory of His throne, beginning at His house. But a judgment yet more solemn, announced by the most significant action, awaited the rebellious city. The throne of glory, the cherubim which the prophet had seen at Chebar appeared anew at the side of the house of the Lord, whither the prophet had been carried. "Then the glory of the Lord went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the Lord's glory" (Ezek. 10:4).

Wherefore this solemn visit of the Lord to His house full of imagery and corruption? Wherefore this unwonted glory? Alas! the reason was but too soon evident. Then the glory of the Lord departed from the threshold of the house and mounted up above the cherubim. The temple is void; the glory has departed from it! In vain the cherubim of gold stretched forth their wings over a forsaken mercy-seat, and over a broken law -- He who, till within a while filled that throne of glory, had quitted it. Nebuchadnezzar might take possession of the temple as of a corpse. The God of heaven had entrusted him with a kingdom. The glory of the Lord had forsaken His throne upon the earth. "Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city" (Ezek. 11:22, 23).

The Lord had quitted Jerusalem; the throne on earth was given to the Gentiles. Has the Lord returned to Jerusalem to hold His throne in subjection to that of a Persian or a Greek? We have seen that, whatever may have been His compassion for His people, His presence has not returned to fill with His glory the new building. If God is not there, what meaning in the title -- "The people of God"? And when is it that this poor but ever loved people will find again their blessedness? When will "Lo-ammi" be for ever effaced from their forehead, to make way for that precious title "Ammi"? God had already accomplished His word: "And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab; and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down. And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand

of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies" (2 Kings 21:13, 14). As it is said in Jer. 12:7, "I have forsaken mine house, I have left mine heritage; I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hand of her enemies. Already, at the moment of quitting Jerusalem, as He did before driving our first parents from Eden, He announced the deliverance and the blessing: "I will even gather you from the people and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel" (Ezek. 11:17).

But one sees at once that it is not of the return from Babylon that the prophet speaks, for it is added, "And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh" (v. 19).

Now, we know with the most perfect certainty, that this did not take place at the return from Babylon, nor, certainly, since the first coming of Jesus. The prophet passes to the latest days, in order that the people may be blessed. Let us again turn to Jeremiah, who announced and saw the taking of Jerusalem, of which we speak. He declares in chapter 30 that God will bring back the captives of Israel and of Judah, and that they shall possess the land given to their fathers. David their king shall be raised up, "and their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them" (v. 21); and, adds the Lord, "Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God" (v. 22). In Jer. 31:31 we have the new covenant. There is also the question of Israel and Judah in verse 27.

In Jer. 32 Judah is again restored by an everlasting covenant; they shall no more draw back from God, they shall be His people, and the Lord will be their God. (See verses 38-40.) Again, in Jer. 33:7, God will bring back again Israel and Judah. "In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David" (v. 15).

In Ezek. 34:24 David shall be prince. "They shall be my people, saith the Lord God" (v. 30). In Ezek. 36 we have the remarkable promise to which above all others the Lord Jesus made allusion in His conversation with Nicodemus, and which declares the necessity of that work in order that Israel may enjoy their privileges even in the land, and that they may be at the same time "Ammi," the people of God, and that God may be their God. We have also here the proof that this work (which shows that the people were not recognized as the people of God), is applicable to the people, such as they were at the return from Babylon, since the Lord so applies it, and that the promise of being the people of God cannot be fulfilled without this work of grace being made good; a work which was not made good in the days of the Lord, and which is not yet either, as to the restoration of the nation. In Ezek. 37 we see Judah and Israel reunited in a striking manner -- the people of God "Ammi," and God their God -- twice repeated and David king over them. They shall walk in the judgments and statutes of the Lord, David being their prince, in their

own land for ever. Upon these points Ezek. 38 and 39 may also be consulted. These passages show, in a way not to be disputed, that the epoch at which Israel should become "Ammi" (that is to say, should no longer be "Lo-ammi," for "Lo" is but a negation), was not to be realized until the last days, when Christ will be their king; that this was to have its accomplishment by that grace which will write the law in their hearts, when God gives them a new heart according to the new covenant, and all Israel will be there. Judah and the ten tribes will form but one nation which will never be divided nor driven from the land, over which Christ will reign for ever. And all this is said on the occasion of the captivity of Babylon, in which God rejected Judah as He had rejected Israel; as also that the promise of the return from the captivity which would cause "Ammi" to be named upon Israel should be when all these things therein recited should be accomplished; so that the period during which "Lo-ammi" is the name of Israel was to last from the captivity of Babylon until the return of the Lord.

Lastly, to remove all possibility of question, I add that the judgment of "Lo-ammi" was not executed before the captivity of Judah, for in Jeremiah 2 God still calls them His people. And to show that this was not because the term "Lo-ammi" could not apply but to Israel, I quote verse 4, "Hear ye the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel." On the other hand, the New Testament shows us, that then also all Israel was thought of, and that God considered it as not His people, making an allusion to Hosea. We have seen the Lord showing that the kingdom of God, under which the people would be the people of God, could not come but by the fulfilment of the promises of the new covenant. And the Apostle Paul says (Acts 26), "Unto which [promise] our twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night"; so also James, "To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad."

We have already seen that (Rom. 11) Paul only distinguishes between the election and Israel; the latter, in the last days, when a deliverer should come out of Zion. And the distinction was so lost at that time, that (in Acts 26) the expression of the twelve tribes is a neuter in the singular (*to dodekaphulon*). So, in citing the passage which speaks of "Lo-ammi," Paul applies it to the state of the Jews, before being called by the revelation of Jesus as Savior, without distinguishing "Lo-ruhamah" and "Lo-ammi." Peter is still more positive in his manner of expressing himself, and tells us in just so many words, that the term "Lo-ammi" applies to the state of the people before the revelation of Christ, while those who received Him quitted that position. I say "people," for it is without controversy that the expression "strangers scattered abroad" (*parepidemois diasporas*) belongs to Israel, while at the same time it restricts itself to such among them as believe. So that we have a direct revelation that the state of the people, after Babylon, was the state of "Lo-ammi." See 1 Peter 2:10. I believed it might be useful to present this point clearly for brethren who are interested in it. It treats not

of the question of the Church, save so far as all truths are linked together; but it treats of an epoch, singularly important, as to the government of God, because God ceased to dwell upon the throne of the earth between the cherubim, and entrusted sovereign power to a chief raised up among the Gentiles -- a state of things which is to continue under one form or other until the judgment of the world.

*Collected Writings of J. N. Darby 4:254-267.*

## Chapter 8.4

### *Additional Thoughts on The People of God Now*

#### *1 Peter 2:10*

1 Pet. 2:10, 11, addressed to the sojourners of the dispersion (1 Pet. 1:1) is addressed to Jewish believers. These verses tell us that they had not been a people. Well, of course! They Jews were Lo-ammi, not God's people. Though, for example, Joseph and Mary, and John the Baptist, were born of God, they were amongst those upon whom the sentence of Lo-ammi was pronounced. And Ammi will not be pronounced on the nation until He comes whose right it is to reign over them -- when the smiting stone (Dan. 2) comes to crush the Gentile power (to end the times of the Gentiles (Luke 21), during which the ancient people is Lo-ammi).

But consequent upon Christ's exaltation and the coming of the Spirit to form the body of Christ, there then was formed a recognized and accepted people. How otherwise came it about that Christ has a people (1 Pet. 2:10) when the sentence of Lo-ammi (not my people) is in force? **It is a different people!** Those addressed by Peter were told the evident truth that they were not a people (in accordance with the sentence of Lo-ammi) "but now God's people," and *that* without the lifting of the Lo-ammi sentence -- which left the earthly people remaining in the same status.

Thus, those to whom Peter wrote did not have an earthly status. Is that not obvious? How could they have an earthly status as the people of God when, concerning the earthly status, the sentence of Lo-ammi was in force on the earthly people of God? The answer is simple: they had a heavenly status. They were the heavenly people of God. Hence, in the very next verse Peter exhorts them as "strangers and sojourners" (1 Pet. 2:11). Clearly, they do not belong to the earth, though they are here. From Paul we learn that we are seated in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6). We have a heavenly position.

W. Kelly has interesting and instructive remarks upon 1 Pet. 2:9, 10, to which we now turn.

But ye [emphatically, are] a chosen race, a royal

priesthood, a holy nation, a people for a possession, that ye might set out the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness unto his marvelous light; who once [were] no people but now God's people, the unpitied, but now pitied (vers.9, 10).

It is true that as "a holy priesthood," the exercise of the heart by faith is toward the God who brought us to Himself by His grace in Christ, and could righteously bring us thus near by His blood. We hence approach within, and offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. What the sons of Aaron did in the sanctuary after a material sort, which derived all its value from being a shadow of Christ and His acceptance to God as a perfect and constant odor of rest, the saints are now exhorted to do. As the Epistle to the Hebrews expresses it, "By Him therefore let us offer sacrifice of praise continually to God, that is, fruit of lips confessing to His name. "Can any privilege be higher or more intimate than to be in His presence, walking in the light as He is, delivered from the egotism which breaks out into the variance of separate will, and cleansed by the blood which effaces every sin? to adore the Father, the only true God? to pour forth our thanksgivings for all the grace that has reached even to us? to praise Him, in spirit with all saints, for all that He is and has done, and given us to receive and know?"

Christ is the ground and substance of it all, and hence without cloud or change, and the Holy Spirit given, that a divine power and character might be in vessels though still earthly. This is a wondrous assimilation to the everlasting worship which shall be in heaven and throughout eternity; but we own it now and are invited to it now, not as a title merely but as a joyful occupation, especially as gathered to His name. It will be perfectly without alloy in the day of glory to which we look on; but it does become us to abound in it here, seeing that the light and the love and the known accomplishment of that work which secures the blessedness of all to God's glory are already ours, and Christ is revealed to us in that glory as the fullest witness and pledge that it is ours.

Never should we confound worship with the ministry of the word. Precious as this is, it is but the means of conveying to us the truth, which received by the Spirit fits us for the praise and adoration of our God. It is rather the service of the Levite than the approach and the offering of the priest. But no communication of blessing from God to our faith, however essential as the basis, has the same nature, character, and effect as worship; for this is the return of the heart, when made free of His presence and strengthened by His Spirit, to present our thanksgivings and praises in the communion of all saints, acceptable to God through the Savior.

Yet it is not all. The believers are also viewed on another side. They, and they only, are "a chosen race," at the very time when the elect nation had proved itself more than ever guilty to its own ruin. Now to a remnant of the Jews is this word primarily addressed; not as if it were not true of all who believe, but that those might be comforted who were saved from that perverse generation, over which a fresh judgment was suspended, about to scatter them once more, and more than ever. If Israel's place was for the time forfeited, the believing remnant get the blessing and are pronounced "a chosen race." The distinction in Christianity acquired a higher character and more personal.

Next, they were "a royal priesthood" (which the Aaronic was not), but rather after the pattern of Melchizedek in its display of the blessing. In the day that is coming He will exercise that priesthood, sitting as Priest upon His throne, instead of bearing us up as He now does within the veil. Meanwhile those who are His are even now said to be a royal priesthood to manifest His praises before the day of His power. It is not of course preaching the gospel to the lost that they might be saved, but telling out His virtues or excellencies, as our testimony to Him who alone is worthy and exalted of God in the highest.

Then again they are "a holy nation," when the nation, who ought to have been so, stood with the stamp on it of evil to the uttermost, not of idolatry alone but of disdaining the Holy One of God, the Messiah. Had they not cried in their blind and mad hatred, His blood be on us and on our children? The remnant, on the contrary, who owned Him and were washed from their sins in His blood, were now "a holy nation" accepted in His name.

Finally they were "a people for a possession." If God was morally bound to discard at length the people who were always resisting the Holy Spirit, as their fathers had done, those of them who believed on Christ became "a people for a possession." They were the more dear, because their faith broke through the manifold hindrances by which unbelief, pride, and judicial darkness encompassed the Jewish nation. Few as they were, compared with the mass hurrying on to destruction, they were "a people for a possession" to God, that they might tell out the excellencies or him that called them out of darkness unto his marvelous light.."

Such is the Christian position here below. By-and-by Israel shall have the place in power and glory before all the nations, where the blind people see and the deaf people hear in the rejected Messiah the Lord Jehovah, the only

Savior. Then will it be plain that "this people have I found for myself; they shall show forth my praise." And men shall know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides Him, who is Jehovah, and none else; and the heavens from above and the skies shall pour down righteousness, and the earth shall open and bring forth salvation, and righteousness shall spring up together. But even now, while the rejected Christ sits on the Father's throne, and the Spirit is sent forth to glorify Him after a spiritual sort in a world of darkness and rebellion against God, those who confess Christ are to tell out His excellencies. And well they may: seeing that He called them out of darkness unto His marvelous light. If these should hold their peace, as He said, the stones would immediately cry out. They were once as dark as any. So were all who now believe, darkness itself as the apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians, but now light in the Lord. And truly the light is wonderful unto which He called us, Himself the genuine light which never deceives nor grows dim. Though it has not yet arisen to shine on Zion, as it will surely come, it has shone in our hearts who believe, the light of the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Now it is only from heaven and for heaven, as we wait for Him. But He will return and appear in manifest and indisputable light for Zion and repentant Israel; and the earth, which darkness still covers, shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah and of His glory as the waters cover the sea.

Meanwhile those He called out of the Jews are consoled by the assurance that in Christ all that can be theirs, consistently with walking now by faith and not by sight, is their assured portion. The failure of the ground (their own obedience), taken in Ex. 19:5, 6; 24:3-7, does not compromise those who believe. Christ suffering for their disobedience established what could not fall. Their faith rests on Him, not on themselves; whosoever believeth on Him shall not be confounded; and they did believe on Him who secures all for the weakest that is His. Hence *they* anticipate Hos. 2:23 before it can be verified to Israel, as ver. 10 clearly proves. They are warranted to appropriate now the prophet's words. It is due to Christ whom God delights to honor. But it is full of interest and instruction to apprehend that Paul, writing to both Jews and Gentiles that believed, quotes Hos. 1:10 no less than 2:23; whereas Peter, writing to the believing Jews of the dispersion, does not go beyond the latter. Each inspired writer was perfectly guided of God for the divine aim in view. This Wiesinger totally failed to discern, and Alford, who endorses his error, confuses the two truths, and thus destroys a distinction of all moment for spiritual intelligence. The once "no people" "were now God's people; the unpitied as to their settled state, which the perfect implies, were now pitied. How truly great His mercy now. And it is good and wholesome for the soul to feel habitually that it needs nothing less in the day of temptation in the wilderness. So the apostle Paul reminds the believing Hebrews in the close of chap. 4. Indeed it is what the priesthood of Jesus constantly implies. All saints should cherish His sympathy

and God's mercy throughout our earthly path.<sup>14</sup>

It is clear that even though all saints are saved by the grace of God and are born again, that does not prove that there is only one people of God. Also, that fact that Peter used many descriptions drawn from Jewish things, that does not prove that those he addressed were not a heavenly people.

### *Romans 9:25, 26*

Commenting on Rom. 9:25, 26, W. Kelly wrote:

The quotations taken from Hosea are worthy of all consideration, both in themselves and in the comparison of the references here and in 1 Pet. 2:10. Some feel the difficulty; others, who do not seem to see any- thing particularly to be noted, prove how little they enter into the deep wisdom of God here displayed.

The call from among Gentiles is not the question with Peter, who accordingly does not cite Hos. 1:10. He contents himself with using Hos. 2:23, which he does not hesitate to apply even then to such of the Jews as came to the one foundation stone and became thus themselves living stones. Writing to the strangers of the dispersion throughout a part of Asia Minor, he had only the believing Jews directly before him. Hence there is remarkable force in telling them that they were a chosen generation and a royal priesthood. This their fathers attempted to make their own at Sinai on condition of their own obedience, and, as we know, broke down immediately as well as unceasingly ever afterwards till the final sentence was pronounced and God by Hosea pronounced the Jew Lo-ammi (not my people). The apostle now, addressing those who had received the rejected Messiah, not only predicates unconditionally of them under the gospel what was only offered to their fathers under a condition which utterly failed, but shows that they do not need to wait for the glorious kingdom of the Messiah to be revealed before they can be assured of the gracious reversal of the old sentence: "which in time past (says he) were not a people, but are now the people of God, which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." The shining of grace from Christ risen on those that are His assures even now, not yet indeed of the setting aside of the power of evil in the world, but of the bringing the believing Israelites addressed into distinct, present, and known relationship with God. If the many still persevered in their unbelief and its bitter consequences, this did not hinder God from cheering the godly remnant by the apostle's employment of the prophet.

Our apostle cites the same scripture as Peter uses and more fully too; but he also cites Hos. 1:10 almost precisely as it stands in the Alexandrian copy of the LXX: . Is it then certain that he quotes these two passages from Hosea as applicable to the Gentiles being called to be the people of God? This is generally assumed<sup>15\*</sup> as manifest

from the words themselves, and from the transition to Israel in verse 27, though many who say so confess that in the prophecy they are spoken of Israel, which, after being rejected and put away, was to be again received into favor by God.

But it is always well for the believer to search narrowly an assumption of the kind, more especially when an apparent discrepancy is thereby insinuated between the Old Testament and the New. It is wise to try our own hypothesis over and over again, for we may rest assured that the One divine author cannot slight a word He has written. "Scripture cannot be broken." Is the assumption itself well grounded? We need not then dwell on the answers which are attempted to the difficulty which appears to me made by those who seek to answer it -- answers with which those who give them seem themselves by no means satisfied, and no wonder. The question is as to the precise aim of the Spirit. For myself I cannot doubt that He contemplated the Jews and the Gentiles in the two citations from Hosea; for if He meant only the Gentiles in both, why quote them in so peculiar an order? Why place the fragment of Hos. 1:10 after that of 2:23? If on the other hand He means to illustrate the call of grace under the gospel first to the Jews, spite of their having lost their distinctive name of relationship, nothing can be more natural and appropriate than his use of Hos. 2:23 before 1:10 is quoted; and thus the apostles Paul and Peter are seen to be not only in perfect harmony with each other, but in their application exact to the evident bearing of the

15. (...continued)

afterwards subjoined a consolation, and said, that of those who were not beloved He would make some (?) beloved, and from (?) those who were not a people He would make a people. But Paul applies to the Gentiles what was expressly spoken to the Israelites!

Again, a very different mind writes thus in our day on Hosea 1:10,

Both St. Peter (?) and St. Paul tell us that this prophecy is already, in Christ, fulfilled in those of Israel, who were the true Israel, or of the Gentiles to whom the promise was made, *In thy seed shall all nations be blessed*, and who, whether Jews or Gentiles, believed in Him. The Gentiles were adopted into the Church, which, at the day of Pentecost was formed of the Jews, and in which Jews and Gentiles became one in Christ . . . And so St. Peter (?) says that this scripture [expressly commenting on the latter part, which Paul only applies to the Gentiles now called] was fulfilled in them, while still scattered abroad through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. (Dr. Pusey's Minor Prophets.)

On chapter 2:23 the latter is still bolder:

This which was true of Israel in its dispersion was much more true of the Gentiles. These too, the descendants of righteous Noah, God had cast off for the time, that they should be no more His people [not so, the Gentiles never had been as such in relationship with God as called nations, nor was Israel itself or any other people yet chosen], when He chose Israel . . . out of them in reversing His sentence, He embraces in the arms of His mercy all who were not His people, and says of them . . . all that they should be *My people and beloved* . . . Israel was not multiplied by itself, but through the bringing in of the Gentiles.

It will have been noticed from the queries, or without them by the careful reader, that both are obliged to depart, by their system of thought, from the language of the text.

14. *The Epistles of Peter, in loco*. See also the *Synopsis, in loco*, and 5:125.

15. The meaning (says Calvin in loc.) is evident: but there is some difficulty in the application of this testimony; for no one can deny but that the prophet in that passage speaks of the Israelites. For the Lord, having been offended with their wickedness, declared that they should be no longer His people: He (continued...)

prophet. The common error sets all three in opposition. The very order too agrees precisely with the verse before (24) in Romans 9 which is followed up by the citations.

But if this be so with the employment of Hosea 2:23 by the two apostles, if they both expressly apply to converted Jews that which the prophet expressly wrote of them and of them only, what of Hos. 1:10? This, it is freely granted, may not be so obvious, but in my Judgment it is on mature consideration no less sure. Yet why should the latter part of the verse refer to the sons of Israel because the former does? Let it be observed that there is a striking break or at least offshoot in the middle of the verse, which might most naturally prepare the way for another disclosure of God's purposes of grace. I allow that it is somewhat veiled; but this was proper and intended. The turning aside to call in Gentiles was intentionally concealed till the time came, but when it did come, enough was found, expressed hundreds of years before by the prophets, to prove that all was ordered and left room for and justified in passages here and there, which could scarcely have prepared any beforehand for so momentous a change but fell in with it expressly when it was a fact.<sup>16</sup> So there is to my mind a similarly rapid transition in Isa. 65:1, 2, of which the apostle makes use somewhat later in this very argument, and gives us divine certainty that, as verse 1 applies to the call of Gentiles, so verse 2 goes even farther than the early half of Hos. 1:10, for it intimates the rejection of Israel. The apostle guided by the Spirit was tender to his brethren after the flesh and would not yet set before them so unpalatable a truth. All he is proving here from Hosea is that, as the ruin of Israel does not preclude but rather gives occasion for the call of grace in the gospel to the Jews spite of their dreadful estate, so the same prophet very remarkably leaves room for Gentiles to come in on a ground which shall yet bless Israel beyond measure and number. "And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said unto them, not my people, there it shall he said unto them, The sons of the living God." I see no more reason to doubt that Gentiles were not by accommodation but directly and primarily meant in this striking portion than in Isa. 65:1. The same apostle who warrants the application of two verses of Isaiah in Rom. 10. warrants the application of two verses of Hosea in Rom. 9. The call of Jews and Gentiles he attests in the latter; the coming in of Gentiles and the rebellion of Israel he proves from the former.

Thus there is no ground whatever for the idea that the inspired Paul does violence to the prophet by applying to Gentiles what was written about Jews; or that the principle on which he quotes is merely that of analogy, instead of direct divine authority. Still less is it true that God makes so light of the ground on which He set Israel as to allow the theory that the nations had ever been in any similar position before the call of Israel, or that Israel has lost it irrevocably to let the Gentiles in, and thus merge all for the future on one common level. Not so: the

Gentiles have not stood by faith, but become high-minded and will surely, because of unbelief, be broken off the olive-tree, whereon they are now grafted; and as surely the Jews, not continuing in unbelief but truly repentant and blessing Him who is coming in the name of Jehovah, will be once more in sovereign mercy grafted into their own olive-tree. This will not be under the gospel. For as concerning the gospel they are enemies for our sakes, jealous that we should meanwhile receive the truth and hating the grace which saves the vilest through Him whom they cast out. "But as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes," as will be demonstrated in that day, when it will be no longer the call of indiscriminate goodness as now, which ignores all earthly distinctions and unites to Christ in heaven, but the fulfilment of the magnificent purposes of God for the world, according to which the Israel of that day, converted and restored to their land, will be the most intimate and honored and important instrument here below for the universal blessedness of the race and the earth. As the election of Israel was before the gospel was sent out, so it will be after the gospel shall have finished its heavenly work. Then the purposes of God for Israel, which came to naught under the first covenant, will be made effectual and stand for ever under messiah and the new covenant.

Meanwhile, if any from Israel are blessed, it is on the principle of God's having called them, spite of the people being Lo-ammi, and giving them to obtain mercy anticipatively now, as the remnant will another day at the end of this age. But mercy now, as we of all men should know best, is not confined to them, but has called from among Gentiles also. Thus the two citations of Hosea were each equally required; and only the latter of the two used by Paul as the apostle of Gentiles, and in fact writing to saints at Rome, who were even more numerous Gentile than Jewish. Hence the reason and beautiful propriety of our finding the latter part of Hos. 1:10 not in Peter's Epistle but in Paul's.

But there is another feature, not palpable to the careless eye, but most real and in the highest degree confirmatory of a Gentile reference as originally intended of God in the close of Hos. 1:10. Thus the Holy Spirit does not say merely (as Dean Alford for instance like others ancient or modern) "as a general assertion, that in every place where they were called 'not His people,' there they shall be called 'His people'." If Gentiles were not His people, like the Jews now for a time, those who receive the gospel are called, not "His people" merely as the Jews shall be, but "sons of the living God." It is the special well-known title which grace now confers on all who hear the rejected One who speaks from heaven; and the emphasis is brought out the more powerfully, because it is said so expressly of Gentiles who never enjoyed the title of the people of God, if scripture is to rule our thoughts. There is thus a propriety in the new title which suits the actual state of things, rather than the millennial day and the relationship of restored Israel; and this too pre-eminently fitting in with the call of Gentiles, who, if by the Holy Spirit made willing to take the place of dogs, find "the crumbs" richer fare than those ever tasted who

16. {Remember that the O. T. prophecies concerning blessing to Gentiles have the millennium in view. That is when they will be fulfilled. Meanwhile, an application of principles involved in such texts is made.}



once were free of the Master's table.<sup>17</sup>

### *The Olive Tree and the Heavenly/Earthly Distinction*

The following sketch concerning this may be helpful to the reader.

That Israel's earthly hopes and glory will be accomplished when the Church's heavenly hopes are, and that thus there will be harmony, is true. All things in heaven and earth will be gathered together in one in Christ. But they will never be blended. Flesh and blood will never inherit the kingdom of God, nor corruption inherit incorruption. If an eternal state be spoken of, then these are not Israel's ancient promises. What is peculiar to and prophetic of Israel's will then be done with.

The ancient promises made to Israel were of earthly blessings (as God's people no doubt): but the promises to Israel were of an earthly inheritance, made to them as a people separated from Gentiles. I am not now speaking of individual saints, looking beyond those promises to better things. These were not promises to Israel, but heavenly hopes. And that the hopes ministered by the apostles were different from those promises is clear; for the author {B. W. Newton, a posttribulationist} calls them new hopes. The question is, how far they are blended. That there may be common things is very possible. No doubt there are. They must be born again. They must be forgiven. And they will have life. But what is the blending of the heavenly and earthly hopes? The olive tree would be referred to; and here it is said that the Gentiles owe all their fatness to it. Now this is merely the sad principle which runs all through this book {*Thoughts on the Apocalypse*} -- namely, reducing the Church to the lowest privileges of which it is partaker.<sup>18</sup> Let us consider a little this teaching of the olive tree. The apostle had concluded all under sin without difference, the Jew having only added transgressions under the law: and he had closed the account of the privileges of the saints in Rom. 8. Not, it is true, on the ground of the elevation of Christ to be Head of the body (this is the subject of the Ephesians), but on a principle of a headship of Christ going beyond Abraham and David, and extending to a position which answered to that of Adam, the figure of Him that was to come -- the new resurrection man. This blotted out the idea of Israel as to distinctive position before God. Lifted up from the earth, He was to draw all men in a new way. God was the God of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews. The free gift had all men for its object. The consequent blessings are then enquired into; the presence of the Holy Ghost; they were called, justified, and glorified, and never to be separated from God's love in Christ Jesus. This closes Rom. 8.

But then naturally arises the question -- If Jews and

Gentiles are indiscriminately admitted by faith, what comes of the promises made to Israel as God's people? This question the apostle answers in Rom. 9-11, showing that God had foretold that they would be a disobedient and gainsaying people, as they had in fact stumbled at the stumbling stone. The question, then, here discussed is not Church privileges, but how to reconcile their being indiscriminate with the distinctive promises to Israel. And therefore (Rom. 11.) the apostle asks, Hath God cast away His people? And here he comes entirely on earthly ground: for Israel never were, and never will be, and were never promised to be, a heavenly people: whereas the Church, in its higher and distinctive and proper privileges, was a heavenly people, and had Christ's suffering portion for them upon earth. They were sitting in heavenly places in Him {Eph. 2:6}. But they were to have a place actually on earth; and here they replaced for a time Israel. But this did not at all set aside the promises to Israel as such: there was no blending of them. A Jew, or circumcision, was nothing now. One displaced the other on earth. In heaven the distinction was unknown. Christ was the Head of the body in heaven, but He was no Messiah of the Gentiles upon earth, though the Gentiles were to trust in Him, so that the apostle could justify himself by the Old Testament.

But then how reconcile these things? God had not cast away His people. First, He had reserved an elect remnant. Secondly, it was to provoke, as He had declared He would, to jealousy, His ancient people; therefore not to cast them off. Thirdly, Israel would be saved as a whole by Christ's coming again and going forth from Zion.

But this last, instead of blending, was preceded by the threat of utterly cutting off the Gentile branches. Now it is quite clear that this cannot refer to the heavenly body of Christ (for it cannot be so cut off), but to God's dealings with them on earth. And this is yet more evident, because the Israelites are said to be grafted into "their own" olive tree, which clearly has nothing to do with the Church as a heavenly body, because that is not *their* olive tree any more than a Gentile's. All were alike here, children of wrath. There was no difference. It was one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. But there was an administration of promises, and immutable promises, which did naturally belong to them. The Gentiles came in here, inasmuch as, being united to Christ the true Seed of Abraham, they come into the promises and blessing of Abraham. But on repentance, Israel down here on earth will be grafted into their own olive tree, where we are now contrary to nature.

But all this naturally, and contrary to nature, has no place in our proper Church position: all is beyond nature and contrary to nature there. Yea, though we had known Christ after the flesh (and He was seed of David according to the flesh, and Abraham was the Jew's father after the flesh) -- but, though we had known Christ after the flesh, we were now to know Him no more {2 Cor. 5:16} though we recognize His title. "The glory of the Messiah of Israel" will be established, but not on the principles, though both be received by grace, on which the Church is set in heaven; because there can be no Israel known there. They have their own olive tree down here, and the gifts and

17. *Notes on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, in loco.*

18. {This is the thrust of Covenant Pretribulationism, which will end in Covenant Posttribulationism.}

calling of God are without repentance. But in Christ as known to the Church there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all. The Church of heavenly places has put on Christ and knows nothing else.

And it is because the Church at Jerusalem did yet as to earth refer to this special place of Jews, according to the mind of God Himself (and not as if it did not enter into the full heavenly privileges itself), according to the sermon of Acts 3 (where the unbelieving Jews are still treated as the children of the covenant which God made with Abraham) that the Pentecostal Church has been spoken of as having a Jewish character. It is not that those who composed it did not form part of the heavenly Church and body of Christ; but that God (till Jerusalem had rejected the testimony of the Holy Ghost about a glorified Christ, as she had rejected a humble Christ) did not finally cast her off as having no more hope. She had deserved it, indeed; but God answered the intercession of Christ for that nation upon the cross, by the Spirit in the mouth of Peter in Acts 3 (as indeed as a nation He will here-after, only in a remnant saved by grace) telling them that now, if they repented, He would send Jesus, and the times of refreshing would come. But when He called, there was still "none to answer"; and judgment, though with long patience, took its course. And Paul appears (Col. 1) as minister of the church, to fulfil the word of God, and of the gospel to every creature under heaven; and the full heavenly indiscriminate character of the one body is brought out. Nobody ever dreamed that the Jewish saints were not of it; but they justly discerned the blessed patient dealings of God with His ancient and beloved people -- the nation for which Christ died, and for which He interceded -- and the full bringing out of the doctrine of that heavenly body which knew no difference of Jew within itself at all, nor Christ Himself after the flesh, while it recognized the truth of all the rest.<sup>19</sup>

And further: the doom of the Gentile nations and beasts, though long foretold, will not have its accomplishment till the Gentile Church has lost its own place. "Gentile Christianity" as such -- as Gentile -- became mighty when Peter's testimony was useless at Jerusalem; that is, when the blending down here of Jewish promises and Christian hopes closed Jerusalem's rejection of the gospel, as to practical testimony on the earth. It was as effacing the distinction of Jew and Gentile, and showing that Israel was cast away for a time from all its hopes, that

the testimony of Gentile Christianity was mighty upon earth -- not by blending them. That the denial of Israel's earthly hopes has helped on the ruin of Gentile Christianity is most true: because the Church thereon looks for earthly place and position, which is only and contrastedly Israel's. It was the attempt to blend them<sup>20</sup> that did the mischief, and I firmly believe is the grand mischief of this book. Deny Israel's place and glory with Messiah, and the Church will become earthly, rise in its own conceits, and finally, as a system down here, cut off. But it was the distinct and unequivocal maintenance of the Church's proper and separate place, as sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, which maintained its position for Israel; and not blending them in harmony, when God had temporally replaced on earth one by the other, as He will the latter by the restoration of Israel on a new ground, but as a distinct people on its own promises. And if this be not kept clear, the Church actually and practically loses its own place and character, and will not long give its testimony in the earth. It cannot blend itself with Israel's promises, and continue so to do. It is true that the Church has taken up the dropped inheritance of the promises down here; but it has taken them up as possessor of a higher and new glorious title, which was no subject of promise -- living union with the Lord Jesus as His body, which was no subject of promise -- and in accomplishment of a mystery hidden from ages and generations. Israel was judicially blinded to let in the Church; as the apostasy and excision will come, and the faithful be in heaven, that Israel may be grafted in again. Is this blending them? The Gentile Christians do not owe all their fatness to the tree. They partake of its fatness, i.e., of the Abrahamic promises. But they owe their highest blessings to their union with Christ -- being His own body -- a thing never promised to Abraham at all, whatever portion he may be judged to have in it, in his own person.

That Paul recognizes the old things and the new we all believe; but, as we here find, the writer does not go beyond old things and new of the kingdom. The Church, as the body of Christ, does not enter into the new or old in his statement. I do not the least wish to deny the importance of this question; I implore brethren to weigh anxiously this point: they may be assured it is of the greatest practical importance -- I mean the distinctness of the Church's hopes or their blending with the ancient promises to Israel. The life and spiritual energy of a saint depends on his faith in what is proper to his own dispensation. This is so true, that, if he only believed what belonged to the last, it would not be life to him: it has ceased to be the test of faith to

19. And I am fully persuaded that the more spiritual discernment there is, the more it will be perceived that (while there was the same life, and grace, and salvation for all believers, and all were in the church) St. Paul held a place in ministry proper to himself -- a dispensation or administration of the grace of God committed unto him, in which he was quite alone, and none at all like him {Col. 1:23, 25. He recognized all the rest; but he stood, called independently into an independent place, for a special and distinct service, and peculiar and distinctive sufferings. None other speaks the least like him in his relationship to the saints and churches; while, there is no doubt, he preached the same gospel of salvation. None were the head of a system entrusted to them in the same manner. The special doctrine was Christ among the Gentiles the hope of glory, and the unity of the body the Church, with the gathering of all things into one in Christ and the glory and principles connected with this. It was his gospel.

20. The setting aside the metropolitan order of Jerusalem which had been, as far as it went, the blending of the two systems, and which the author compares with Jerusalem's place in the millennium when this blending will be accomplished, certainly was not what destroyed the power of Gentile Christianity, but, as he himself has stated, set it a going in the person of Paul. The denying the future hopes of Israel, and so blending the earth and heaven in a new popish metropolitan, is quite a different thing from distinguishing the nature of these hopes, and so not blending them. The author has assumed, that not to blend the Church's hopes and Israel's, is to deny Israel's; but it is quite the contrary. It maintains them Whereas, blending them denies what is proper to the Church, which is lost when you blend it with Israel: and so does it Israel's too; for each is what it is.

him. To Abraham, faith in Almighty God was living faith: is this (though living faith surely owns it) what living faith consists in now? A Jew, not owning Jehovah, would have failed from the covenant. And it is true of power too. If the Holy Ghost be not fully owned, if the proper heavenly place of the Church be not fully owned, no general idea of salvation, however true, will give the power, nor form and guide for Christ's glory those who neglect the former. What is special to the dispensation is the power and testimony of the dispensation, and not what is said to be common to all.<sup>21</sup>

### *Millennial Saints not in Heavenly Places*

Our place {Ephesians} is this:

God has "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." That is God's mind. We are not yet there in fact, but it is the thought of God about us, and we ought to have it always before us. Blessings of the Jews in earthly places under Christ will be fulfilled in time, but for us it is "spiritual Blessings," and "in heavenly places," and "in Christ" Himself; and our present connection with it all comes through the Holy Ghost.<sup>22</sup>

Concerning millennial saints:

It can be said of us (as united to Him {by the indwelling Spirit}, because we are united to Him for a heavenly condition in glory), "He hath made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ." This cannot be said of millennial saints. For, though they undoubtedly have life from Christ, though they have it from the risen Man, so that I doubt not they will be changed into likeness to Him, and, though their forgiveness and their blessings are enjoyed through the blood of the Lamb, yet they do not sit together in heavenly places. They are in earthly places and earthly glory.<sup>23</sup>

### *Lo-ammi Was not Pronounced Upon Gentiles*

The fact that there will be great blessing among the Gentiles in the millennium does not mean that they will be incorporated into Israel. That people who distinctly came under the sentence of Lo-ammi will just as distinctly come under the lifting of that sentence (Ammi). Zech. 2:11 says:

And many nations shall join themselves to Jehovah in that day, and shall be unto me for a people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee . . . .

And Isa. 19:25 reads:

Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance.

The removal of the sentence of Lo-ammi does not apply to such nations. The distinction is kept up in the millenium. Israel's place remains unique -- though great blessing goes out to the Gentiles. The others' being unto God for a people is in a subsidiary sense to Israel's unique position, but it does show that God owns them, for His salvation will have gone out to them. National distinction is then in effect; not so now, in Christ. Christ has formed the Jew and Gentile "in himself into one new man" (Eph. 2:15). It is a *new* man because it never existed before. And after we are gone to the Father's house, that new man will no longer be here. In the millenium, the saved will not form one new man. Israel will be the distinctive people of God once again as the Ammi sentence undoes what the Lo-ammi sentence did. Only, the saved Gentiles will have great blessing -- but not the blessing we have now as a heavenly people.

Opposers of a millenium say it would be a downward step. Not so. Leave the heavenly out of the picture of God's ways in government in the earth and you will see what an immense step up it is for millennial saints on earth, compared to the portion of the O. T. saints, whether Jew or Gentile. The temple will be again erected. God has one earthly house. The millennial temple will stand in moral identification with the temple of Solomon. Concerning the house built by the returned remnant in Haggai's day, Haggai said:

The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former . . . (Hag. 2:9).

In God's sight it was one house, regardless of the vicissitudes. God's house now, the church, is not connected with this. In that day the church will reign with Christ in the Kingdom of the Father, while here below it will be the Kingdom of the Son of Man, with Israel at the head on earth.

None of the Scriptures that deal with the subject of the people of God leads to the *Covenant Pretribulationist* conclusion of R. L. Saucy:

In the final sense it is perhaps best to say that "the people of God" are one people because all will be related to him through the same covenant salvation. But this fundamental unity in a relation to God through Christ does not remove Israel's distinction as a special nation called of God for a

21. *Collected Writings* 8:108-113.

22. *Collected Writings* 27:122.

23. *Collected Writings* 8:363, 364.

unique ministry in the world as a nation among nations. Nor does it define the totality of the people of God as “Israel,” requiring that the church is somehow a “new Israel.”<sup>24</sup>

C. A. Blaising and D. L. Bock wrote:

If dispensationalists {?} no longer accept the notion of two distinct peoples of God, which the biblical studies in this book do not . . . .<sup>25</sup>

The “fundamental unity” leaves out the blessed truths involved of being “in Christ,” of being heavenly, which neither O. T. Saints were, nor millennial saints will be. By erasing such basic distinctions -- if ever even having been understood by *Covenant Pretribulationists* -- one can arrive at “*perhaps* best to say.” And thus Christianity is lowered, indeed Judaized, by those who do not know that the church is heavenly and will eternally have a distinct place (Eph. 3:21; Rev. 21) compared to all the children of God.

## *The Eternal State*

### THE ASSEMBLY ETERNALLY DISTINCT

There is a special glory that accrues to God through Christ in connection with the assembly:

. . . to him be glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus unto all generation of the age of ages. Amen (Eph. 3:21).

That he might display in the coming ages the surpassing riches of his grace in his kindness towards us in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:7).

And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, and spoke with me, saying, Come here, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife . . . and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem (Rev. 21:9, 10).

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea exists no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of the heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice out of the heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God [is] with men, and he shall tabernacle with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, their God (Rev. 21:1-3).

The city spoken of is the bride, the church, seen symbolically. What basis is there for thinking that the bride, the Lamb’s wife is other than the wife of the Lamb spoken of in Rev. 19:7-9)? What basis is there to think that when the angel said that he would show John the bride, the Lamb’s wife, he showed him something other than that?<sup>26</sup> The city

is not a literal city; it is the church. And it is seen as distinct from men on earth in the new heaven and new earth condition. In view of Eph. 3:21 and 2:7, that is not at all surprising. The church, the body of Christ subsists eternally as such.

But, though the name of Jerusalem be symbolically used, it is the saints themselves in glory, viewed in their unity as the bride, the Lamb’s wife, who are new Jerusalem. And therefore the distinction is between new Jerusalem, the bride, the Lamb’s wife, and men on the new earth, is such subsist. The tabernacle of God is with men. And this was connected with the descent of new Jerusalem from heaven as a bride adorned for her husband. So that if this be so, she is seen in this distinctive beauty in the new earth also . . . to be the tabernacle or dwelling place of God in the eternal state, and in the nearest possible union with Christ, will surely be infinitely precious to the saint who really estimates things spiritually as he ought . . . this particular city has its own proper place of distinctive glory, and the rest come under the title of men.<sup>27</sup>

J. N. Darby rightly referred to “the assembly, the true heavenly and eternal metropolis of glory. . . .”<sup>28</sup> God will display His glory in the assembly for eternity. Christ will never cease to be head of that body, whatever else changes. Nor will all saints be merged into one -- as if all become part of that body. A clear distinction is made in Rev. 21.

. . . He remains eternally the Firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, I do not think that the church loses its place as the bride of Christ and the habitation of God. (See Eph. 3; Rev. 21.)<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, we read:

. . . and to [the] assembly of the firstborn [who are] registered in heaven; and to God, judge of all; and to spirits of just [men] made perfect . . . (Heb. 12:23).

Here the distinction is made between the assembly of the firstborn and the spirits of just men made perfect. No Scripture warrant has been produced to justify the notion of

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26. (...continued)

bowls,” showed him that woman in a *desert*. Each place is morally suitable to what John saw. The harlot was in the desert. She is the great antichurch. Observe that the harlot of Rev. 17 is also depicted as a city (Rev. 18).

These are two opposed things: the true bride and the false harlot; the true city and the false city. The marriage of the Lamb is seen as transpiring after the destruction of the false. Consequent upon the destruction of the corruptress, she who pretended to be the spouse, but was a harlot, heaven will reverberate with four mighty and thunderous Hallelujahs! You and I will be there to participate in those four Hallelujahs (Rev. 18:1, 3, 4, 6); for there was to be wreaked upon her fourfold judgement. “Double [to her] double, according to her works” (Rev. 18:6). “Strong [is the] Lord God who has judge her” (Rev. 18:8).

And her smoke goes up to the ages of ages (Rev. 19:3).

To Him be glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus unto all generations of the age of ages. Amen. (Eph. 3:21).

27. *Collected Writings* 8:315.

28. *Synopsis* 4:62 (Stow Hill ed.).

29. *Collected Writings* 22:364.

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24. Robert L. Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism*, p. 190.

25. *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, p. 392.

26. It is instructive to notice that the angel who showed John the Bride, the Lamb’s wife, was one of those seven angels who had had the seven last bowls -- and that he showed John from the *great and high mountain*. In Rev. 17 there is another woman and “one of the seven angels, which had the seven  
(continued...)

merging them. Rather, as the Firstborn among many brethren shall eternally retain that place, so shall those brethren among whom He is the Firstborn, namely, the assembly of the firstborn.

Those who say all will merge into one in the eternal state not only fly in the face of Scripture, they deny the peculiar glory of God in those heavenly saints who are *in Christ*. When they say all will share equally in glory, I suggest that they do not understand that glory. They remind me of the mother who stood before Solomon and said to divide the baby. As she had not the real heart of a mother, and was ready to share the baby, so the theological systems cloud that glory of God in *Christ and the church* by sharing it, thus destroying its true character.

In replying to a posttribulationist, T. M. {Mansell?}, J. N. Darby wrote:

But T. M. assures us "that when they (Jews and Gentiles) pass out of them into an eternal state, these distinctions vanish." The distinctions of Jews and Gentiles has vanished now in the assembly, because it is an eternal thing -- is what remains. But where does T. M. find that the church's distinctive position, which he cannot deny here, vanishes in another world? <sup>30</sup>

Concerning the word "nations" in Rev. 21:24 and 22:2, it is in a millennial context, not the eternal state. Rev. 22:1-5 refers to the "holy city, Jerusalem," the bride, the Lamb's wife (Rev. 21:9, 10) in the glorified state during the millennium. That state will not change for her. Rev. 21:2 shows her in what we are calling the eternal state (of the new heavens and earth); she is still prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

I suppose there are persons who think that men will propagate on the earth in the eternal state. That would produce an infinite number of people in eternity. It is well to leave with God how He will move millennial saints to the new earth. Is there nothing else to do than idly speculate about all kinds of questions that might arise in the mind?

#### ISRAEL NOT ETERNALLY DISTINCT

At the rapture, the church enters upon its eternal state. The bringing in of the new heaven and new earth does not affect that distinction, and the implication of this is that the other saints in heaven have their place too.

Concerning the earth, that is another matter. God's ways in government in the earth, with Israel as the center, will have come to an end with the closing of the millennial kingdom. As JND remarked:

If an eternal state be spoken of, then these are not Israel's ancient promises. What is peculiar to and prophetic of Israel, will then be done with. <sup>31</sup>

. . . No earthly people distinct from the inhabitants of the

earth. These are God's people, and God is with them Himself, but withal His tabernacle is with them. This is the holy city, the New Jerusalem. The assembly has her own character, is the habitation of God in a special way, when the unchanging state comes, and all is made new. <sup>32</sup>

His dwelling place is with men. It is no more an individual or national thing . . . God's dwelling-place is no longer with the Jews, but with men. <sup>33</sup>

NOTE: If the Lord will, we shall consider the church in millennial glory and its eternal distinctiveness in detail in vol. 2; as well as considering in detail why Israel will not have an eternally distinct place.

30. *Collected Writings* 10:250.

31. *Collected Writings* 8:108.

32. *Synopsis* 5:420.

33. *Collected Writings* 16:136. See also 2:257; 5:95; 30 *in loco*.



## *Appendices*





# *Appendix 1:*

## *In 1827 J. N. Darby*

### *Understood the Pretribulation Rapture*

### *and the Distinction between the Heavenly and the Earthly*

#### INTRODUCTION

*Notes and Comments* comprises seven printed volumes of notes from J. N. Darby's note books. Vol. 7 (369 pages) is composed of notes on John's gospel. F. Marotta drew my attention to a date on p. 261 that indicates when that was being written. The date reads, "Lord's Day, April 8/27." Thus, more than half these study notes were written before April 8, 1827. The connected thread of exposition that runs through these notes bears witness to their having been written together as a single work which thus can be dated 1827.<sup>1</sup> In these notes we find how advanced he was in apprehension of truth, though he did not always word himself as became more standard later. For example, it is clear that he held the doctrine of the ruin of the church by the time John wrote the book of Revelation, though he did not use the words, "the ruin of the church."

Concerning the future tribulation, he understood the apostate Israelites and the Jewish remnant would be in it. He does not speak of the church in it, but rather that the church is heavenly. He saw the bride in heaven before Rev. 4:1. Moreover, he was waiting, and longing, for the Lord to come.

As we briefly examine some of this material, keep in mind the typical way he views many things in John's gospel. These are typical of future events. But this may not do justice to the range of his understanding because what he says is, generally, limited by his purpose of examining John. He was not generally ranging over Scripture.

These notes from 1827 have a bearing on the allegation that JND was a historicist through 1830, which we will touch on at the end.

#### IN 1827 JND DISTINGUISHED MORE THAN ONE SPHERE OF CHRIST'S GLORY

John 11:51, 52 shows that the death of Christ provided for the several spheres of the display of His glory:

In this little sentence, then, we have the conversion of the wickedness of man into the purpose of God . . . The purpose is fully opened in verse 52. But there is much to

be learned in every letter of this; for it is not, Not for the nation, but, etc.; but, "not for the nation only, but that also." Its present purpose was the Church, Jew or Gentile. The full purpose was "not for that nation only," etc. and the prophetic character attached to Caiaphas . . . as exhibiting that point, is fully confirmed and established. And, indeed, on the whole, it is a remarkable synoptical view of the whole counsel of God . . . The blessed Lamb (to Him be all honor, to whom it is due) was led to the slaughter in the accomplishment of it, that we might see Him there, and the just stamp of honor on Him, as in our affections. For He "walked no more . . . among" them.

We have, moreover, in detail the peculiar character and stamp of this dispensation in purpose: gathering into one the children of God. He died negatively, so to speak, for the world; that is, the purpose effected in dispensation is this gathering together in one the children of God. The world ought to have obeyed. But compare Eph. 1:9, 10. This was the result of rejection; for the children of God, through grace, would rather have Him rejected than the world received; that the result of full purpose in glory as passing by rejection; for God is glorified in all His ways (pp. 189, 191).

The distinction between the Church and Israel and blessed Gentiles in the millennium runs through these in various forms such as the distinction of the earthly and heavenly spheres (p. 25), "Its present purpose was the Church, Jew or Gentile" (p. 190), etc. He understood Eph. 1[:10] to speak of the millennium (p. 25). On page 28 he says:

. . . and if I have told you the earthly part of the kingdom, and ye believe not, how will ye believe if I tell you of the heavenly things that are the crown and glory of it? It is not merely "earthly things" but "the earthly things," definitely, I think, pointing out the two associated portions of the millennial glory, the earthly and heavenly. "Earthly things" and "heavenly things" are doubtless contrasted in their knowableness, but also in fact, as in Ephesians.

#### IN 1827 JND UNDERSTOOD CHRIST'S EARTHLY GLORY IS POSTPONED UNTIL A FUTURE MILLENNIUM

At this time he wrote of the millennium as the future fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles (pp. 95-96, 102-103):

Christ was to be hid, hid in God (see Col. 3) till the time of the restoration, the true Feast of Tabernacles; He was to be with the Father, sitting there till, etc. (p. 102).

But when the future Feast of Tabernacles is fulfilled, the Jews will experience

1. This adds to the evidence brought out in *Precious Truths Revived and Defended Through J. N. Darby*, Vol. One, 1867-1845, that he held the "any-moment" coming in 1827.

the Jewish millennial rest (p. 96). . . . They will be delivered. The power of that will be to the Jews in that day, as well as the power of the Kingship (p.191).

Thus there is a *postponement* of Christ's glory as Son of Man.

Chapter 7. His glory, still as Son of Man; or, rather, postponement of glory, as connected with the Feast of Tabernacles and giving of the Spirit as ascended, the witness of the glory meanwhile; this specially including Gentiles . . . (p. 363).

The glory of the Kingdom, not yet fulfilled (p. 20), shall occur at "His ascension to the mediatorial throne" (p. 350). Thus, He is not on His throne of glory now. His glory is *postponed*. Observe that implicit in the above quotation is the postponement of the Kingdom. This involves the setting aside of Israel temporarily. He speaks of the future Jewish remnant here and there in these notes on John and understands Nathaniel (John 1) to typify that remnant (p. 16) that will receive Christ in a future day. Following that will be the millennial glory:

Accordingly hereon follows (as we have seen, chapter 2) the two parts of actual millennial glory in their objects and service . . . (p. 46).

The marriage in John 2, then, is typical of the marriage with Israel:

Note, the first miracle in Cana of Galilee was (as noted heretofore) the expression of the change from Jewish purification to the joy of the millennial [rest], when Jehovah shall espouse Israel in truth; as the subsequent acting at Jerusalem was the judicial cleansing part of the same period (p. 60).

This involves Israel being laid aside now (Lo-ammi, p. 20) but then being restored as life from the dead. This is brought out typically by the second miracle in John's gospel:

Thereon the second miracle in Galilee is the life-giving power of faith . . . an analogous and larger expression of the full, real state of things *dispensationally*, which is not His going down to heal, but the child really dead. Then He heals by virtue going out of Him by the way, where He is touched by active faith, and afterwards restores to life; Israel being really dead, but in God's eyes only asleep; that is, laid aside for a season, though morally dead. This second miracle, then, is in special connection, but contrast, with the first (p. 61; see also p. 68).

#### **IN 1827 JND UNDERSTOOD THAT THE FUTURE JEWISH REMNANT WOULD BE THERE IN THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE**

The glory of the kingdom is preceded by the formation of a Jewish remnant. A Jewish remnant existed in Christ's day when here, but found its place in the Church as the "Israel of God" (p. 187). Note the implicit distinction between Israel and the Church in his use of this designation. Nathaniel is a type of this future remnant (p. 16). This remnant shall be in the time of Jacob's trouble. JND notes that the Lord departed from His own to a mountain (John 6) while His own are in

difficulty on the sea. JND saw in this something typical of Christ and the future remnant:

. . . and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went, but not till Jesus was in the ship rejoining it in the midst of, and walking over, the difficulties and trials they were in: the time of Jacob's trouble; but when they shall be delivered out of it, when a King shall indeed be among them, and the troubled and isolated Remnant, the yechidim, find themselves in the rest they could not attain, and that immediately, troubled as they may have been, even as his brethren before Joseph at his approach (pp. 75, 76).

So as to the Jewish remnant in that day, they will be in the "tribulation," but forget the trouble for the abundance of joy when the Son is given to them. They recognize that the Child was born to them, coming in by faith, even as the Gentile did, who, seeing the glory and the Lord, had to be taught faith, "I am Jesus," that One that was slain (p. 287).

That future owning of Messiah by the Jews is typified by Thomas. He was absent when the Lord manifested Himself to what typified the Church in John 20:19 (p. 352). But concerning John 20:28, 29:

And there are those who shall believe when they are looking on Him whom they have pierced, to whom Jesus will yet show Himself in due and appointed time in mercy, but with this reproach. And, as verse 28 will give the full confession of the Jewish Church and brought in Gentiles in that day, so verse 29 gives the judgment of the Lord on the difference. The saints are those who, having not seen, yet have believed, and they shall be in the glory . . . The conduct of Thomas, as we have seen, represented the Jewish people (p. 354).

Note that he here used "the Jewish Church" as an expression for the blessed nation of Israel in a coming day. Observe also that the saints who have "not seen" refers to ourselves. Here again he distinguished the Church from Israel and from the blessed Gentiles of the millennium.

#### **IN 1827 JND UNDERSTOOD THE ANTICHRIST TO BE OVER THE APOSTATE JEWS**

In notes on John 17, he connected Antichrist with the desolation of the Jews:

[the Lord] kept those who owned Him Son of God in the Father's name. When another comes (to wit, Antichrist) in his own name, him they will receive. It will suit their selfishness. Hence the desolation of the Jews in the latter day (p. 311).

The idol shepherd of Zech. 11 is the Antichrist:

The idol shepherd of Zechariah 11 is, I should think, however, the Antichrist as in his connection with the Jewish people. Compare that prophecy; it is most important. His object was to steal, etc., even as to the fold, which shows (though specifically resulting in the sheep) the generic character of the one there. He could not touch the sheep. He had no life to give. It was the contrast of the object and the existing state; not of the objects of application; though, if followed out, this was in result, as to the life, the sheep only. This could be most fully shown in Antichrist

himself (p. 157).

On pages 223, 224, he speaks of the apostate Jews as connected with the Antichrist.

He also understood that Elijah has a future, literal mission. Elijah (contrasted with Moses), *has* his body, as suits that mission:

It is not known what became of Moses' body, save that God buried it; a great honor put upon it; though not such as Elias, for it would not have suited his mission (p. 210).

### IN 1827 JND UNDERSTOOD THAT THE KINGDOM HAD AN EARTHLY PART AND A HEAVENLY PART

John 3:12 makes a distinction between the earthly and the heavenly:

It is not merely "earthly things" but "the earthly things," definitely, I think, pointing out the two associated portions of the millennial glory, the earthly and the heavenly (p. 28; see pp. 37 and 46, 47 also).

On p. 179 he uses the expression "the earthlies" and on p. 362 he speaks of "the Kingdom in two parts." On p. 349 we find:

He must go in the accomplishment of His glory to receive the kingdom above, establish righteousness in the heavens, receiving the kingdom of the Father, make the kingdom properly heavenly, and also in its heavenly glory the Father's kingdom.

### IN 1827 JND WROTE ABOUT ISRAEL AND CHRIST'S EARTHLY GLORY DURING THE MILLENNIUM

In the millennium "Jehovah shall espouse Israel in truth" (p. 60) though they are now "Lo-Ammi" (p. 20), for He has a "relationship with Jerusalem as bride; chap. 3:29-36" (p. 61). JND referred to "earthly things, for which the Jews . . . must be born again, as the prophets testified, for the real enjoyment under God of the earthly things" (p. 362; see also p. 25, and especially p.28). That Day will be for Israel "life from the dead" (p. 68). Israel will be blessed under the King as priest upon His throne. Christ's earthly glory will then be a royal glory:

Accordingly our Lord showed His royal power of feeding and sustaining His people unlimitedly (for this shall be His portion in gift in that day over the creature, as it is also in Colossians, but not thus). See also Psalms 132:15, 68:10. So see the time of Solomon's manifestation in the temple when the Feast of Tabernacles was kept . . . also exercised in unity of royalty, as not simply over the house of David (though so) but also as Melchisedec, the Priest upon His throne; for as over the house of Judah and Israel it is exercised actually in royalty: "They shall hear Jezreel" (p. 74).

### IN 1827 JND DESCRIBED THE CHURCH'S PART IN CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL GLORY

The future fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles will introduce the millennial glory:

I remark in John's gospel, chapter 1, all the glory of Christ's Person set forth in a remarkable manner, from His divinity WHO IS to His millennial glory among the Jews as Son of Man; and this very methodically. . . .

Then we have specially what the Lord is as regards the Church, or as effecting His *work*: the Lamb of God . . . Hereon He becomes a witness and a gatherer. Then He is presented to us as Messiah, Son of God and King of Israel; and the angels ascending and descending upon Him as Son of Man; thus closing with His millennial glory.

It seems to me that the following chapter [John 2] shows the Church's part rather in that glory, or the principles of it, at least. The third day evidently gives some meaning. It was not the third day of the preceding, for He had passed into Galilee. Three days were elapsed withal in the former chapter: John's testimony, the Church, and the millennium (pp. 15, 16).

Note the sharp distinction between Israel and the Church, with Christ's respective relationship to these. Here, at the beginning of these notes, early in 1827, he had an understanding of the *typical* import of these chapters. What he meant by the church's part in the millennial glory was explained later:

. . . the third day [chap.2] the day of resurrection. This is the association of the Church, a new character; His (Jewish) mother cast aside; the water turned into the wine of the kingdom. It is not introduced consecutively (for Nathaniel properly includes the earthly part, and consequences of it), but a separate statement to show the Church, and withal in a certain sense the Jewish marriage of Christ. We belong, as it were, to the third day. Verse 12 seems to show, after the purpose in the Church was manifested or set about, that mother, brethren, Jesus and disciples were all together; which was just His earthly ministry in that place . . . and so the Kingdom in two parts: earthly things, for which Jews (for it also hung on resurrection in "the sure mercies," and was really with God) must be born again, as the prophets testified, for the real enjoyment under God of the earthly things. Besides, the Son of Man must be lifted up, not received of the Jew now (His miracles only affected what was in man), and so be the door of heavenly things; fit men for them too, even eternal life; enable them to enjoy them according to the love in which, as Son of God, he was given (pp. 361, 362).

The distinction between the heavenly portion of the Church and the earthly portion of Israel is quite clear in this passage.

### IN 1827 JND UNDERSTOOD THE CHRISTIAN POSITION & THE HEAVENLY CHURCH

The Church is united to Him, as in heaven, by the Holy Ghost, and the universe itself is to be put under the risen and now heavenly ascended Man, with the Church associated with Him as His body and bride. Hence all that takes Christians back to the world, to the law, to all that flesh has its part in, takes them back to the system they were redeemed out of. That they do not, and as in Christ, never belonged to at all; the law being the measure of responsibility in it, the intermediate system antecedent to which the Church had its place with God, before the very sphere in which mortal man has had being existed; the Church which God has now set up actually in the heavenly place into which Christ has entered, when the man or Adam sphere, the world, has rejected Him, not knowing the

Father.

Under this Man and the Church the world will be. But we are not of it, as Christ was not of it, but of the Father, and now gone to Him, Man with Him, and we in Him. Of this the Holy Ghost is the revealer and the power, uniting us with the Head. But the law as a true measure, fleshly religion and its ordinances, the attempt to regulate the world, all belong to the Adam system, though the first be God's rule for it, not the Christian; it is going back to it, the beggarly elements. This it is that Paul insists on, the Church's place connected with redemption, the divine place of the Son before the world, with which (as now made good and returned into) the Church *is* connected with the Holy Ghost. It is true of life, life and incorruptibility being brought to light by the gospel; only this *life existed*, before the world was, in Christ; hence has in itself been true all through; whereas the heavenly Man, Man in heaven, and the Church raised up, and in Him there, did not and could not exist in fact; for He was not there as Man.

But in what a place this puts the sticklers for law, and those who insist on influence in the world for the Christian! No doubt the law is perfect; but they are putting man back, out of Christ on high, into the system of the world and Adam responsibility. John *is* just as clear as Paul as to eternal life and Christ's place, but he does not treat the question of the Church. Paul was made the minister of that. Hence Paul would not know Christ after the flesh; that is, Christ as connected with the world, come to it in connection with men's Adam existence, in which Judaism was the testing form, and hence in His Jewish connection, to which He had offered Himself, and had been rejected. Hence, while fully owning Him as the fulfillment of promise (even as to this only in resurrection) he would only know Him as He had been revealed to him, the glorious Christ who had taken His place, really His own, but as Man, according to the eternal thoughts of God before the world in which man, as responsible creation, was tested. Hence our conversation is to be in heaven, and our life the display of that of Christ. This is the mystery (Ephesians 1 as a whole) of Christ; as to its form down here, Ephesians 3. So Christ hope of glory in Gentiles (Col. 1).

I fear I have given this confusedly and feebly; but the subject is of first-rate practical importance; it alters the *whole* nature and character of Christianity, and enters into every detail of life. Am I a living man, a child of Adam? or have I died and risen, so as to belong to a heavenly Christ, drawing life from Him, and having to display that, not take the law for my guide, as still alive in the flesh? This put down flesh; dropped Judaism, which was in it; revealed the Father; shows we are in Christ (who is in heaven), and He in us. This shows the Church now wholly heavenly, as suited to the heavenly Man, the fulfiller in fact and object of pre-worldly desires, thoughts, with which the world can have nothing to do. It did not exist when they were in God's mind, and so the Church cannot belong to it; yea, exists as composed of those redeemed out of it, and connected wholly with the rejected and ascended heavenly Christ. The world is "*this* present evil world." The two great points are eternal Life and the Church; connected with Christ as Son and as Man set far above all

principalities, etc., in heavenly places. The Church exists only in connection with Him . . . Where has the Church got? What is the putting it under law? . . .

Note, in practice as to this, what is said: "We are *clear from the law*." We have not ceased to exist, but we have been nullified (*vernichtet, annulled*) as regards, cease to have any existence, *as to law*; my existence is annulled (Rom. 7:6, flowing from verse 4). Then on the other hand Galatians 5:4: "*Ye are deprived of all profit from the Christ* whosoever of you are justified by law." So death: "*Who has annulled death*," 2 Tim. 1:10.

The first two are very remarkable in their contrast. The law is not annulled, but we from it as dead in Christ; we are no longer thus alive as in the nature <sup>2</sup> which we were of this world, children of Adam. On the other hand, if we turn back to this, we turn back to life in the world and flesh. Thus the two things being contradictory we nullify ourselves as regards Christ, do not exist as and in connection with the risen and ascended Christ, who is out of the world. Hence, too, what is heavenly, what is Christ, is necessarily the cross down here (pp. 329-331).

We belong to a higher system (p. 309).

But we are in an earthly system, but we walk through no divine earthly system to which we are bound, formed for earth, but spiritual fellowship with the heavenlies . . . (p. 311).

We sit in heavenly places in Christ, though not actually. . . (p. 320).

It is the Father's truth they were to be sanctified by {John 17}, that revelation of the heavenly state and what Christ is as Head of the new creation before the Father, what is conformed to the counsels of God as before the world, and the new glory in which Christ was with Him, His Father; theirs according to His own nature, and which is brought out in what is heavenly, as a system displayed before Him, according to those counsels (p. 324).

Christ . . . takes as man His heavenly place and glory He had before the world was, what was before the world in His Person, and in the counsel and mind of God as to the church in Him; now, however, heavenly, in the sense of man being there, and actual setting up. . . . and the Church, which was known and in purpose before the world existed, was brought actually out in connection with the heavenly Man, the true Man and Eternal Life, Christ the center of all God's purposes (p. 328).

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2. {This implies that the believer has two natures.}

**IN 1827 JND UNDERSTOOD THE RUIN OF THE CHURCH**

B. W. Newton spoke of a very early book by JND (lost) on the fall of the Church. In 1827 JND wrote:

We know that John continued till the whole system of the Church was broken up (see beginning of Revelation) . . . (p. 360).

**IN 1827 JND UNDERSTOOD THAT THE BRIDE OF CHRIST IS ABOVE DURING THE JUDGMENTS ON THE APOSTATE CHURCH**

Speaking of Peter and John as typical, in JND's notes on John 21 we find this:

. . . the Apocalypse looks only into a gloomy future of judgment in the Church (the bride of Christ above); for such is that book. It has no earthly blessing or form, which note. It is entirely heavenly as to the Church . . . In prophecy it is judgment. Below, the Church is in mystery, and the marriage above. Peter ministers the kingdom of heaven; Paul, the house of Christ, as on earth holding a certain place. John goes up, and looks down into judgment here, and has the Church for the marriage of the Lamb above (p. 367).

"The bride of Christ above"! In the Revelation when John takes the viewpoint from above, looking down (Rev. 4:1), John sees the church above, no longer on earth. Implicit here is a pre-Rev. 4 rapture of the saints. Note well, also, that the Church has "no earthly blessing or form."

The post-tribulation view sees Christ coming into the air, catching up the saints and immediately proceeding to earth. Not so JND. He wrote:

He could not rest here with them, but He goes to prepare a place for them in His Father's house; and He would come again, not to be with them as to the Jews and the world, but to take them to be with Him. But then they had seen and known where He was going, and the way; for He was going to the Father, and they had seen Him in Him, and He Himself was the way (p. 300).

So John 14:3 means Christ would come and take them into heaven and not rather, be with them as to the Jews and the world. The Jews and the world would pass through the events here on earth while His own, now, would be "with Him" (the bride of Christ above). Well, that is just how they are able to come forth from heaven when He appears in glory.

**IN 1827 JND HAD THE HEAVENLY HOPE**

We close with these words of ardent longing to see the Beloved One by this 27 year old student of the mind of God revealed in His holy Word:

. . . the Apocalypse gives the end of all these things, and teaches (as to those of them which pass now) the Church to cry, "Come, Lord Jesus," come quickly. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come." "Even so, come, Lord Jesus, Amen." Do not I hear, O Lord? In this my heart says, Come. My soul says, Come. We are here so as in a manner to be "sick of love"; yet in spirit so with Thee, and above this world's, living with Thee; set down with Thee; that we can say, "Thy will be done." Be thy name, blessed Jesus, fully glorified by their

power and ways. Yet Thou knowest me to be "sick of love," desiring Thy presence, holy and blessed Savior, Lamb of God, our Lord, Prince of peace, King of kings, the Word of God (pp. 235, 236).

***JND and Historicism***

For many years JND thought that a general *application* of the Revelation could be made to Christians and the world. The *interpretation* of the Revelation was a different matter. JND's 1839 work, *Notes on the Revelation*, contains a chart titled, "New Testament -- Viewing the Revelation on the Protracted or Historic Scale" (*Collected Writings* 2:262, 263). This is followed by another chart, "Synopsis of the Revelation -- The Prophetic Part Viewed as the Lord's Assumption of the Inheritance, Consequent On the Church Being in Heaven" (*ibid.*, pp. 264, 265).

Interestingly, W. Kelly remarked upon this book by JND:

Years before the first edition of the *Horae Apocalypticae* {by E. B. Elliot} appeared in 1844, there were Christians who waited for Christ and looked for {believed that there would be} the personal Antichrist, with the many momentous consequences of both views, yet held the general application of the Apocalypse to the saints and the world since the time of St. John, as stated in my lectures. Nor ought Mr. Elliott to have forgotten this (as I doubt not he did); for I have so told him orally and given him a work by a friend of mine to that effect, which was published in 1839. He should not therefore have spoken of {my} "renouncing" futurist dogmas once entertained, any more than of "a person originally altogether opposed to the Protestant view" (*Lectures on the Book of the Revelation*, p. 8).

Without the slightest doubt, in 1839 JND held the pretribulation rapture (the church in heaven by the opening of Rev. 4), yet made a historicist application. The same is true concerning his comments referring to Historicism in his 1829 and 1830 papers. These comments do not prove he did not hold the immediate coming before 1830. And this simple and obvious accounting for such comments harmonizes with the evidence that he held the immediate coming in 1827 already. How could anyone who does not have an anti-Darby agenda fail to see that? Even in 1860 JND wrote:

I believe a certain prolonged application can be given in the sense in which John said there were many antichrists, but they were not the Antichrist. In this moral sense, then, passages may have an application to the present order of things; but I do not doubt that the things which come after "the things which are" do not belong to the present order of things . . . (*Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:306).



## Appendix 2: Pseudo-Ephraem

Thomas Ice, Executive Director for the Pre-Trib Research Center, kindly sent to me an interlinear Latin and English draft of a sermon by “Pseudo-Ephraem.” I am thankful to thus have had the complete text for examination. Numbers of friends of the truth of the pretribulation rapture believe that a pretribulation rapture is indicated in this paper (dated as 4th-7th century).

Thomas Ice wrote a paper on this sermon in *Pre-Trib Perspectives*, “Examining an Ancient Pre-Trib Rapture Statement,” April 1995; and with T. J. Demy, a paper in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, “The Rapture and Psuedo-Ephraem,” (July-September, 1995:1-13).

The book, *When the Trumpet Sounds*, Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 1995, contains a chapter by Grant Jeffries entitled, “A Pretrib Rapture Statement in the Early Medieval Church,” an alleged pretrib statement that he construes to be such. It is found in a sermon by one called Pseudo-Ephraem, *On the Last Times, the Antichrist, and the End of the World*. The interested reader will find a translation of Pseudo-Ephraem’s paper therein. Grant Jeffries claimed that:

Ephraem’s text revealed a clear statement about the pretribulation return of Christ to take His elect saints home to heaven to escape the coming Tribulation (p. 109).

The statement is:

For all the saints and Elect of God are gathered, prior to the tribulation that is to come, and are taken to the Lord lest they see the confusion that is to overwhelm the world because of our sins (p. 108).

And here is what is done with the fact that Pseudo-Ephraim spoke of *just* persons in the Tribulation:

Significantly, Ephraem states that there will be some (Tribulation saints) who reject Antichrist during the Tribulation and who will “bend their knees to God,” and “while not yet testing death, are the servants for the heralding of the second coming of Christ (p. 117).

He did not explain the significance. I suggest that the significance is that he has imposed a pretribulation rapture into Pseudo-Ephraem. Pseudo-Ephraem was a posttribulationist who believed that the Lord would deliver His own from the tribulation with which He would trouble the unbelievers when He appears in glory at the end of the great tribulation. The fact that Pseudo-Ephraim speaks of these just persons during the time of Antichrist is teaching simmilar to others of the early era who were futurist posttribulationists.

Moreover, taking Pseudo-Ephraem to be Ephraem the

Syrian (p. 117; on what basis, or authority, he does not state), G. Jeffries refers to some of his works but does not quote anything from these works (p. 188) that indicates a belief in a pretribulation rapture.

He then proceeded to claim that:

Dr. John Gill Taught the Pretribulation Rapture in 1748 (p. 119).

We must beware of reading into things what we would like to see. I suggest that we have this phenomenon at work in both these cases; and others are doing it regarding other writers. In this regard, see Appendix 3 regarding Morgan Edwards, who *did* hold to a rapture of the saints to the Father’s house before the revelation of the Antichrist. Some of the allegations about Dr. Gill and other writers are shown in Appendix 3 to be false -- persons reading into writers what they would like to be there.

Wonderful things in those writers I see,  
things that are put there by you and by me.

Paul J. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, p. 210 (Berkely: University of California, 1985) is also used in support of the understanding that the sermon contains a pretribulation rapture. He wrote:

It is probably no accident that Psuedo-Ephraem does not mention the shortening of the time intervals {as other writers had done} for the Antichrist’s persecution, for if prior to it the Elect are “taken to the Lord,” i.e., participate at least in some measure in beatitude, there is no need for further mitigating action on their behalf.

It is just the same *assumption*, namely that it is a removal before Antichrist’s persecutions.

Regarding the interlinear Latin and English draft of Pseudo-Ephraem’s sermon that Thomas Ice had kindly sent to me, I wrote to him on Jan. 20, 1995:

Dear bro. Tom,

Thanks very much for the translation of Pseudo-Ephraem. I do have some comments to make.

The case hinges on how one takes the word “tribulation” on p. 4. Does it refer to a rapture 3 1/2 years, say, before the coming of the Lord in glory, or does it refer to tribulation to be visited upon the earth by His coming in glory?

If it meant before the 3 1/2 years, then one would have to put the Christians mentioned on p. 7, line 9, before the 3 1/2 years. But be that as it may, on p. 13, line 6, there is mentioned those who bend their knees to God; and on p. 13, line 7, they are sustained by the salvation of

the Lord; <sup>1</sup> then on lines 8 and 9 we see that there are 'just' persons, found good by their Lord -- and these persons are there during Antichrist's reign.

It seems to me that the paper is saying that there will be persons on earth, belonging to the Lord, while Antichrist reigns. Who are they if Christians are removed before the onset of the 3 1/2 years? Perhaps you will see that all one has to do is say that the reference on p. 4 to "the tribulation" <sup>2</sup> refers to tribulation introduced at the coming of the Lord in glory, and then the references to the "just," to those "sustained by the salvation of the Lord" and who "bend their knees to God" are Christians on earth during Antichrist's reign. They will be "taken to the Lord" "before the tribulation which is about to come." And that would be what we call a posttribulation scenario.

In fact, that is what the case appears to me to be. . . .

Yours in Christ,

Roy

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1. "But those who wander through the deserts, fleeing from the face of the serpent, bend their knees to God, just as lambs to the udders of their mothers, being sustained by the salvation of the Lord, and while wandering in sates of desertion, they eat herbs. Then, when this has inevitably overwhelmed all people, just and unjust, the just, so that they may be found good by their Lord . . . ."

2. "Because all saints and the elect of God are gathered together before the tribulation which is about to come and are taken to the Lord in order that they may not see at any time the confusion which overwhelms the world because of our sins."



# Appendix 3:

## *Morgan Edwards: An Eighteenth Century Pretribulationist*

*Including  
A Survey of Early Baptist  
Prophetical Views  
and  
A Brief Answer to  
Dave Macpherson's  
The Rapture Plot*

*by Frank Marotta*

### *Who Was the First Modern Pretribulationist?*

There is likely no doctrine in Scripture which has provoked such a feverish search for its origin as the doctrine of the pretribulation rapture. True, the heterodox have long attributed Trinitarianism and immortality of the soul to pagan sources, but the search for rapture origins largely emanates out of the professed evangelical community. Dave MacPherson has written that an occult influenced woman named Margaret Macdonald was the first pretribulationist.<sup>1</sup> John Bray once taught that pretribulationism originated with the Jesuit Lacunza.<sup>2</sup> They both have attempted to discredit the rapture by attributing it to a heterodox source. Both

MacPherson and Bray have discredited each other's view; and both are correct in doing so!<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, a later Irvingite apologist ignores Margaret Macdonald and credits John Asgill in 1703 as “. . . the only individual who, since the Reformation [until 1830] had given a clarion testimony” to the hope of translation.<sup>4</sup> J. N. Darby certainly was pretribulationist in the 1820s; and it is beyond contention that the spread of pretribulationism and dispensationalism

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1. In a tract entitled *The Rapture Hoax*, p. 7, MacPherson writes, “. . . the originator [Margaret Macdonald] and the first group to adopt it [Prior Rapturism] (that is, the Irvingites –followers of Edward Irving) were all heavily influenced by the OCCULT!” MacPherson's larger works are *The Incredible Cover-Up* and *The Great Rapture Hoax*. His newest work *The Rapture Plot* has just been published as this is being written. MacPherson's erroneous statements regarding Morgan Edwards are considered on p. 343ff, along with a brief consideration of other falsehoods found in his works.

2. I say once taught as Bray has recently admitted to an earlier pretribulationist, Morgan Edwards. Bray's writing on Lacunza is found in his *The Origin of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture Teaching* (PO Box 90129, Lakeland FL 33804). Previously, the Lacunza source theory was published in Duncan McDougall's *The Rapture of the Saints*.

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3. There are several refutations of the work of MacPherson and Bray; for a rigorous refutation of both see R. A. Huebner's *Precious Truths Revived and Defended Through J. N. Darby*, vol. 1, pp. 133-166, available from the publisher.

4. *The Church's Forgotten Hope* by William Bramley-Moore, p. 251, 3rd edition, 1905. The year 1703 appears to be when Asgill's work provoked controversy; it was published three years earlier. Asgill is discussed in depth on pp. 321-327. Asgill taught that *individual* translation was possible for Christians, much like Enoch and Elijah were translated. Asgill's presented his view in his 1700 paper entitled *An Argument proving that, according to the Covenant of Eternal Life revealed in the Scriptures, man may be translated from hence into that Eternal Life without passing through death, although the human nature of Christ Himself could not be translated, till He passed through death*. Asgill was expelled from the House of Commons in Ireland in 1703 and the House of Commons in England in 1707 for the views expressed in this work. He was imprisoned for his work and the common hangman burnt the pamphlet. He died in prison thirty years later for this offence! MacPherson has not considered Bramley-Moore or Asgill in any of his books.

has been largely through his influence.<sup>5</sup> Pretribulationist Ken Johnson has written that Particular Baptists Benjamin Keach, Hanserd Knollys, and John Gill taught pretribulationism in the 17th and 18th centuries.<sup>6</sup> Some have considered Pseudo-Ephraem as a patristic pretribulationist.<sup>7</sup>

Before considering the recent discovery concerning Morgan Edwards (1722–1795), let us consider some illogical notions that have commonly been used in argument against pretribulationism.

To say “---- was the first modern pretribulationist,” is a foolish statement; it implies that one has an exhaustive knowledge of all views held prior to that point in time. If it is claimed that “---- was (or was not) a pretribulationist,” then we can assess the claim with written evidence; in some cases evidence may be inconclusive. Some have reasoned:

1. Margaret Macdonald was the first pretribulationist.
2. J. N. Darby became a pretribulationist after Margaret Macdonald.
3. Therefore, J. N. Darby derived pretribulationism from Margaret Macdonald.

The first premise is false; but for sake of argument assuming it to be true does not prove that Miss Macdonald influenced J. N. Darby. It is possible for J. N. Darby to have independently come to the same conclusion. Opponents of pretribulationism often fail to realize or to admit the possibility of two individuals coming to similar conclusions independently. Evidence of influence must be demonstrated.

We will now show that Morgan Edwards was an 18th century pretribulationist; that he derived his view by applying a Scriptural, literal method of interpretation; that many of his viewpoints fit within a dispensational framework; and that it is highly unlikely he influenced later dispensational thinkers.

### *Morgan Edwards and Pretribulationism in 1788*

John Bray, the leading promoter of the theory that Manuel de Lacunza originated the pretribulation rapture doctrine in his book *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty*, had for some time offered a reward of \$500 to anyone who could identify an earlier exponent of pretribulationism. In

a Spring 1995 mailing, Bray stated that he had paid the reward and promised to issue a booklet on the subject. The exponent was identified as Morgan Edwards, a prominent 18th century Baptist. In the mailing Bray did not identify the title, but the publication date of 1788 was given. In that year, Edwards published *Two Academical Exercises on Subjects Bearing the Following Titles; Millennium, Last-Novelties* (Dobson and Lang: Philadelphia, 1788). Edwards wrote his paper between 1742 and 1744 as a student of the Bristol Academy in England. He was between 20 and 22 years old at the time that he wrote it, although his paper was published for the first and only time in 1788 at Philadelphia, USA. Edwards notes that his paper had “undergone several alterations and corrections”<sup>8</sup> since its original presentation. As admitted by Bray in his 1995 booklet, *Morgan Edwards and His Pre-Tribulation Rapture Teaching* (1788), Edwards is clearly pretribulationist. Consider the following extracts:

The distance between the first and second resurrection will be somewhat more than a thousand years.

I say, *somewhat more* --; because the dead saints will be raised, and the living changed at Christ’s “appearing in the air” (I Thes. iv, 17); and this will be about three years and a half before the *millennium*, as we shall see hereafter: but will he and they abide in the air all that time? No: they will ascend to paradise, or to some one of those many “mansions in the father’s house” (John xiv. 2), and so disappear during the foresaid period of time. The design of this retreat and disappearing will be to judge the risen and changed saints; for “now the time is come that judgment must begin,” and that will be “at the house of God” (I Pet. iv. 17) . . . .<sup>9</sup>

Another event previous to the *Millennium* will be the appearing of the son of man in the clouds, coming to raise the dead saints and change the living, and to catch them up to himself, and then withdraw with them, as observed before. This event will come to pass when Antichrist be arrived at Jerusalem in his conquest of the world; and about three years and a half before his killing the witnesses [the two witnesses of Revelation 11], and assumption of godhead. . . . And that godhead he will now assume, after killing the two witnesses and gaining the temple. Behold, then “the man of sin sitting in the temple of God, shewing that he himself is God,” ([II] Thes. ii. 4.). Now the great persecution of the Jews will begin; who (though bad men) cannot submit to him as God. . . . Nevertheless it appears that many of the nominal Christians, and Jews *outwardly*, will apostatize to him, and become his idolators (Matt. xxiv. 10. Dan xi. 35.)<sup>10</sup>

There are two essential elements of pretribulationism: first, a two-stage second coming; secondly, the first stage of the second coming must be prior to judgment and persecution.

5. See, for example, Ernest Sandeen’s, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, for proof of this statement.

6. His article *The Imminent Pre-Trib Coming of Christ* appeared in the March 1995 issue of the *Plains Baptist Challenger*. It is also available as a tract. We will consider the writings of Keach, Knollys and Gill later in this paper.

7. See *Examining an Ancient Pre-Trib Rapture Statement* by Thomas Ice in vol. 2, no. 2, of *Pre-Trib Perspectives*.

8. Morgan Edwards, *Two Academical Exercises on Subjects Bearing the Following Titles; Millennium, Last-Novelties*, p. 35.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 7, spelling modernized throughout, italics Morgan Edwards’.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 21-23.

Morgan Edwards' teaching has both of these elements. He connects the Rapture with I Thessalonians 4 as do modern pretribulationists. He sees a three and a half year period with the saints being judged in heaven (Edwards connects this judgment with 1 Peter 4:17) and great persecution on earth by Antichrist. Fully developed dispensationalism would add an any-moment coming with a seven-year gap (Daniel's 70th week) between the rapture of the church and the Millennium. Even though Edwards' gap is only three and a half years, he cannot be labeled midtribulationist as he does not base his interpretation on the 70 weeks of Daniel; nor does he teach that there is tribulation on earth prior to the saints being caught up.

### *Morgan Edwards: The Man*

Morgan Edwards was born in Wales, May 9, 1722. He was educated at Bristol Baptist College. He was ordained and labored in Ireland, then in England. He was recommended by John Gill and others to pastor the Baptist church in Philadelphia. Edwards was Calvinistic. During the Revolutionary War, he sided with Britain, which was unusual among Baptist ministers in colonial America. He was the founder of Brown University, at first called Rhode Island College. He was the premier Baptist historian of his era; his *Materials Toward A History of the Baptists* remains an important historical source regarding early American Baptists. Cathcart describes Morgan Edwards as:

. . . a master of scholarly attainments. . . His attachment to Baptist principles was intense, and no man since the days of the Apostles ever showed greater love, or made more costly sacrifices for them than he did. He was full of generosity, he would give anything to a friend or a cause dear to him. Edwards was a man of uncommon genius. In his day no Baptist minister equaled him, and none since his time has surpassed him.<sup>11</sup>

The Baptist historian Armitage describes Edwards “. . . as noble, refined and scholarly a servant of Christ as could be found in the colonies.”<sup>12</sup> So we see Morgan Edwards as very different than Margaret Macdonald or Lacunza; a brilliant educator and historian, but far more important, *a godly man!*<sup>13</sup>

### *Additional Elements of Morgan Edwards' Prophetic Scheme*

Morgan Edwards did not write obscurely, as many of the older writers on prophecy have been known to do. Important aspects of his prophetic views include:

**a. Premillennialism.** Edwards writes, “Christ's personal reign on earth will be a thousand years at least. . . Christ's kingdom and reign will be universal. . . No people or state will be left out. . . The risen and changed saints shall reign with Christ on earth a thousand years.”<sup>14</sup>

**b. Futurism.** Edwards sees Antichrist as a future individual. He speculates that he will be the last pope. He teaches that the 1260 days and 1290 days are future, literal days (the former as part of the latter), after the church is caught up. He sees the two witnesses as future individuals prophesying. He teaches that Satan is bound during the future Millennium. Edwards' teaching stands in stark contrast with the predominant historicism of his day which interpreted the Antichrist as the papal system and the above prophetic days as years. We learn from the case of Morgan Edwards the fallacy of necessarily linking futurism with Jesuitism. Edwards was staunchly anti-Romanist while futurist.

**c. Literal interpretation.** The rule of interpretation that Edwards applies was that recommended by his tutor at the Bristol Academy, “to take the Scriptures in a literal sense, except when that leads to contradiction or absurdity.”<sup>15</sup> Edwards applied this method, common to modern dispensationalists, and came to some similar conclusions independently.

**d. Prophetic chronology.** Edwards provides a fairly well-defined prophetic scheme. Prior to the Millennium he sees the Turks removed from Israel and the Jews restored to the land. The two witnesses (Elijah and the Apostle John) will be active in their ministry even before the 1260 days. When Antichrist (possibly the last pope) arrives at Jerusalem, the saints are raised. The witnesses prophesy 1260 days, Antichrist assumes godhead and then is destroyed. Satan is bound 1000 years and Christ returns to earth with his saints prior to the Millennium.<sup>16</sup> During the Millennium, the nations will be brought into subjection to Christ. After the 1000 years, Satan is loosed, deceives the nations, which are destroyed and then the second resurrection occurs.<sup>17</sup>

**e. Non-dispensational elements.** The careful reader will note that there are some important elements where Edwards differs from dispensational teaching. One of the most important is his denial of an any-moment coming. He

11. William Cathcart, *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, vol 1, p. 362.

12. Thomas Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, p. 723.

13. The definitive biography of Morgan Edwards is *The Life and Works of Morgan Edwards* by Thomas R. McKibbens, Jr. and Kenneth L. Smith. This work was published by Arno Press in 1980. These authors describe his prophetic views in detail on pp. 123–126. The presentation of Edwards' prophetic views therein is consistent with our description, although the authors do not make any connection with modern dispensational thought. We must also state that Edwards was subject to church discipline from 1781 to 1788. We note that he was restored in 1788. See pp. 41–54 of the above work.

14. Edwards, *op. cit.*, pp. 8, 10.

15. *Ibid*, pp. 5, 6.

16. *Ibid*, pp. 13–25.

17. *Ibid*, pp. 26–31.

allows for events prior to the rapture, including activity of the two witnesses. Also, he accepted the idea that the Millennium would commence in 1996, based on the theory that human history will be 7,000 years long and the Millennium would commence after the first 6,000 years are complete.<sup>18</sup> Also, Edwards does not appear to hold to the dispensational dichotomy between Israel and the Church. He does not write much along these lines, but does seem to lump all saints together in one group when speaking of Christ's return.<sup>19</sup>

### *Baptist Prophetic Interpretation During the 17th and 18th Centuries*

The view of a future "double coming" of Christ, quite different from a pretribulational coming of Christ, was taught by several 17th and 18th century scholars. Consider the respected Puritan Thomas Shepard (1605-1649) in his work *The Parable of the Ten Virgins*:

*Quest.* But what is this coming of Christ?

*Ans.* There is a double coming of Christ.

1. His coming to call the Jews and to gather in the fullness of the Gentiles with them, which is called the "brightness of his coming," (2 Thes. ii. 8;) when there shall be such a brightness of the truth shining forth in the world, armed with such instruments as shall utterly destroy Antichrist, long before his second coming. Rev. xix. 19, 20.

2. His coming to judgment, (Heb. ix. 28; 1 Cor. xv. 13, 24;) when there shall be a universal resurrection of good and bad.<sup>20</sup>

Shepard cannot be considered pretribulational in any sense. His teaching is postmillennial. The first phase of his "double coming" is the so-called "latter-day glory" when the gospel is widespread and the Jews are converted. This is the Millennium of postmillennialists. It precedes a general resurrection, the second part of Shepard's "double coming."

It would be interesting to see modern postmillennialists confront Shepard's view: would they attack, defend, or excuse it?

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 34.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 25.

20. Thomas Shepard, *The Parable of the Ten Virgins*, pp. 24, 25 of the 1990 reprint edition of *Soli Deo Gloria*. Do modern postmillennial exponents take Shepard to task for his "double coming" doctrine, as they attack pretribulationists for believing that the second coming has two aspects? Or do they justify it? Or, are any even aware of his views?

On June 2, 1995 I wrote a letter to the editor of *Credenda/Agenda* (a Reformed, postmillennial periodical) in reply to an attack on J. N. Darby stating that Darby taught two second comings. In my reply I included the Shepard quotation found herein, with the statement that Shepard's remarks were not dispensational in any sense. The published reply in vol. 7, no. 5 of *Credenda/Agenda* states that my reference to Shepard's teaching "appears exaggerated." There was no exaggeration -- simply a quotation. The reply failed to address the issue.

Moving on to Baptists, Benjamin Keach (1640-1704), a historicist premillennialist, wrote in his *Exposition of the Parables*:

Now this coming of Christ is either personal or precursory.

(1) His second personal coming I judge will be at the beginning of the thousand years reign, when "God will tabernacle with men" Rev. xxi.3.

(2) There is a precursory coming of our Lord, (as one notes) or a most glorious spiritual coming, to set up a more visible and universal kingdom in this world, which will precede his personal appearance; which I take to be the beginning of the latter-day glory, and which will be at the sounding of the "Seventh trumpet," for then Jesus Christ will begin his spiritual and more visible and glorious kingdom; or "when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ," Rev. xi.15,18. One design of this coming of our Lord, is to destroy the son of perdition, and utterly to overthrow Mystery Babylon. "And then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming," 2 Thess. ii.8. Now it is partly this coming of Christ (I conclude) our Lord in the first place intends, though I will not exclude his personal appearance; for I see no reason to doubt, but that the precursory coming of the Lord Jesus is to prepare things for his personal appearance; when, (as a bridegroom) he will appear to celebrate the marriage with his beloved spouse. Yet his coming upon mystery Babylon, or by his bright appearance to destroy the son of perdition may be comprehended, or included by the Bridegroom's coming.<sup>21</sup>

Keach's precursory coming is no different than Shepard's; it is not the catching up of the saints, but rather a latter-day glory in which Mystery Babylon is destroyed. When Keach writes above "as one notes," he is likely referring to Thomas Shepard. This can be concluded for two reasons; first, both were considering the parable of the wise and foolish virgins in Matthew 25 when they wrote their comments; secondly, Keach refers to Shepard by name in the margin of his work on page 646, just three pages later. In another work Keach refers to this period as:

... a time of great glory and refreshment unto God's people by the abundant pouring out of the Spirit upon them, whereby Conversion work will swiftly go on and prosper, and the Gospel run and be glorified.<sup>22</sup>

Keach does something that no modern expositor does (to my knowledge); he maintains a premillennial system and then overlays a postmillennial "latter-day glory" on top of it. James Grant, a prolific antimillenarian author of last century wrote:

21. Benjamin Keach, *Exposition of the Parables*, p. 693 of the 1978 Kregel reprint edition.

22. Benjamin Keach, *Antichrist Stormed*, p. 144, printed in 1689. On p. 231 of the same work, Keach stated that this period began in 1688.

Benjamin Keach believed in two Millenniums - the one spiritual and the other personal. With regard to the spiritual reign of Christ, his opinions were in accordance with those generally entertained at the present day.<sup>23</sup>

It is easy to read current prophetic views into older authors; when Keach speaks of a “precursory coming,” we may imagine a pretribulation rapture if we are not careful. In contrast to Keach, Morgan Edwards wrote concerning the Millennium:

Now begins the *spiritual reign*, or the *latter day-glory* [sic], which divines talk so much of, tho’ none of them (to my knowledge) has assigned it to its proper time and place.<sup>24</sup>

So Edwards makes the spiritual reign coincident with the literal millennial reign and sees how others have misplaced it.

Hanserd Knollys (1598-1691) was a prominent 17th century Particular Baptist. In his *Parable of the Kingdom of Heaven Expounded* he expounds on Matthew 25:1-13. This work was printed in 1674. Knollys speaks of a “virtual coming” as Keach does a “precursory coming.” He wrote:

I do believe and am persuaded that the coming of Christ (spoken of in this Parable, *ver.* 6,10) is not the coming of Christ in his own person upon the Earth (though I believe Christ will come the second time in his own person upon the Earth, Heb. 9.28, Zech 3.4,5) but this is his virtual, spiritual, powerful and glorious coming in his Saints . . . as the *Bridegroom of his Church*.<sup>25</sup>

. . . the coming of Christ spoken of in the 6[th] & 10[th] verses of this Parable is not the coming of Christ in his own person upon the Earth. First, because at the personal coming of Christ on Earth. . . all his saints shall come with him. . . The living Bodies of the Saints shall be changed and glorified. And the Bodies of the Saints deceased shall be raised and also glorified . . .<sup>26</sup>

. . . at the personal coming of Christ on Earth, will be the Universal *Physical* Resurrection of all that are dead (and the Physical change of all their bodies that are then alive) . . .<sup>27</sup>

*Objection.* Doth not this Opinion exempt and exclude Christ from Rule and Sovereignty in his *Monarchical Kingdom* on Earth, contrary to Rev. 20.4. *They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years?*

*Answer.* No. Consider *first*, Christ may be said to be

with a person or people, and they with him *virtually* by his Spirit and power or his powerful *spiritual* presence.<sup>28</sup>

The only substantial difference we see in Knollys from Keach is that Knollys, while admitting to Christ personally returning to Earth, teaches this will be *after* the 1000 year reign of Christ, not before. Observe:

As Christ is said to be in his *Mystical Kingdom the Church of God on Earth*; where his Laws, his Statutes, and his Ordinances are dispensed in his Name and by the power of his holy Spirit: so will he be in his *Monarchical Kingdom*. . . *he shall reign over the house of Jacob*. . . not personally at the *beginning of it*, but virtually by his Laws . . .<sup>29</sup>

. . . from the beginning of the thousand years Reign, Rev. 20:4 until the end thereof, which is Christ’s *Davidical* and *Monarchical Kingdom*. And after that Christ hath put down all Rule, all Authority and all power that are his enemies by the hands of his saints, who shall bind Kings in Chains and Nobles in Fetters of Iron. . . Then will the Lord Jesus Christ himself come in his own person, and all his holy Angels and Saints shall attend Him . . .<sup>30</sup>

John Gill (1697-1771) was the leading Baptist theologian of his day. His prophetic views were similar to those of Keach. James Grant writes concerning Gill:

Dr. Gill . . . held that there would be two Millenniums, the first a spiritual and the second a personal reign of Christ . . .<sup>31</sup>

This is exactly what we find in Gill’s, *The Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*. In this work, Book VII, Chapter VIII is entitled, “Of the Millennium, or Personal Reign of Christ with the Saints on the New Earth a Thousand Years.”<sup>32</sup> Gill’s exposition extends for over twenty double-column pages of small print. Concerning the 1000 year reign of Christ he states:

This kingdom of Christ will be bounded by two resurrections; by the first resurrection, or the resurrection of the just, at which it will begin; and by the second resurrection, or the resurrection of the wicked at which it will end, or nearly. . . now in the interval between the resurrection of the one, and the resurrection of the other, will be the millennium, or thousand years’ reign of Christ and his people together.<sup>33</sup>

23. James Grant, *The End of All Things*, p. 65, printed in 1866. Grant wrote, “I doubt if there be a single Millenarian of the present day of any note, if, indeed any at all, who subscribe to the Millenarian views of [Keach],” *ibid.* So the view of Keach was likely extinct by 1866, although premillennial and dispensational views were thriving at that time.

24. Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

25. Hanserd Knollys, *Parable of the Kingdom of Heaven Expounded*, p. 68. Spelling modernized throughout; some punctuation modernized; italics are Knollys’.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 72, 73.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 75. For the complete exposition, see pp. 72-75. He presents the rule of Christ by his saints, and links this with Rev. 20:4. This is all in line with the “virtual, spiritual coming” theory. As kings rule through their governors without being present, Christ will rule through his saints: so argues Knollys. See also his *Exposition of Whole Book of Revelation*, p. 146, 147; edition of 1689.

31. Grant, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

32. It should be noted that Keach and Gill both taught the conflagration of the world and the new heavens and new earth occur *prior* to the 1000 year reign of Christ, not after it. See Book VII, chapter VI, of Gill’s *Body of Divinity*, entitled, “Of the Conflagration of the Universe.”

33. John Gill, *The Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, p. 644 of the 1989 Baptist Standard Bearer reprint edition.

. . . Christ will have a special, peculiar, glorious and visible kingdom, in which he will reign personally on earth.<sup>34</sup>

From the above quotes we learn that Gill was premillennial, but posttribulational. He teaches that the saints are resurrected just prior to the Millennium.

Gill believed in a latter-day glory prior to the Millennium, like Keach. He refers to this as the “spiritual reign of Christ,” as opposed to a “precursory coming.” An in-depth description is found in Book V, chapter XIV of his *Body of Divinity*. Here are a few brief statements of Gill:

. . . there are two remarkable periods of time yet to come, in which Christ will exercise his kingly office in a more visible and glorious manner; the one may be called the *spiritual reign of Christ*; and the other, *his personal reign* . . . .<sup>35</sup>

In his spiritual reign antichrist will be destroyed, *with the Spirit*, or breath of Christ, his gospel; and with *the brightness of his coming*, that clear light which will attend his coming, by the effusion of his Spirit;<sup>36</sup> which will be with such spiritual efficacy, as to dispel all darkness, Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan; and cause an universal reception of the gospel; which will open the way for the christian princes, to carry their victorious arms every where, and seize upon, and possess all the antichristian states . . . .<sup>37</sup>

Thomas Collier started out as a Particular Baptist. He subsequently rejected many of the distinctive Calvinist viewpoints, and fell out of favor with his Baptist brethren over his newer views. In 1674 he published his work entitled *The Body of Divinity*, a very early Baptist Systematic Theology. Chapter 31 of his work is entitled “Of the Coming, Kingdom, and Reign of Christ on Earth” and extends for 59 pages. Collier writes:

. . . most of the things Prophetied of in the Revelation from chap. 4 may and must be done at and after Christ’s coming from Heaven, my reasons for such a supposition are:

1. Because the time of John’s receiving of it, is called *the Lord’s day*, Rev. 1.10 and very probably do relate to that saying of Christ, John 21.22, 23. *If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee*; Which might be this coming, called the *Lord’s day*, so called because Christ

did in Vision discover all things to *John*, as it shall be done over when he cometh, both in bringing down of his enemies, and saving of his people,

2. Because very probably the opening of the Seals, Sounding of the Trumpets, and pouring out of the Vials, may be all at and after Christ’s coming from Heaven, and if so, it must admit of time for the doing thereof, and must be the time of perfecting the Restoration work spoken of by the Prophets, in bringing down of the World, and saving of the Church.

My reasons so to suppose are,

1. Because the opening of the first Seal, chapter 6.1, 2 seems to be the first appearing of Christ from Heaven, *I saw and behold a white Horse, and he that sat upon him had a Bow, and a Crown was given unto him, and he went forth Conquering and to Conquer*. I cannot apprehend what should be here intended, if not the coming of Christ from Heaven, and entering upon his conquering work . . . .<sup>38</sup>

Collier, like modern dispensationalists, takes a futurist viewpoint. Again, it should be stressed that this is no friend of Rome or the Jesuits. Like James Kelly,<sup>39</sup> E. W. Bullinger,<sup>40</sup> and J. A. Seiss,<sup>41</sup> he takes the expression “the Lord’s Day” to be equivalent to “the Day of the Lord”. Also, he considers the whole of the Revelation from chapter 4 onward to be “the coming of Christ.” From this extract alone one would wonder if it were possible for Collier to be a pretribulationist. Unlike dispensationalists (and in general agreement with amillennial and postmillennial interpreters), Collier interprets the rider of the white horse of Revelation 6 to be Christ. Unlike amillennial interpreters, he rejects Revelation 6 to be the success of the gospel proclamation, but rather teaches a literal, future appearing of Christ and a literal conquering of nations.<sup>42</sup>

The bulk of the quotation above from Collier I initially found quoted in James Kelly’s commentary on Revelation. I thought it would be possible for Collier to have considered (if not believed) a pretribulation rapture. His futurism and view that events from Revelation 4 onward are at and after Christ’s coming make this plausible. Upon inspection of the

34. *Ibid.*, p. 643.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 448.

36. Here Gill provides a footnote, “So the author of Onus Ecclesiae, published A.D. 1524 vid. Heidegger Dissert. 23. de Chillasmo, s. 8.” It is interesting that this view can be dated back to 1524. Robin Bruce Barnes in his work *Prophecy and Gnosis: Apocalypticism in the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation*, p. 116, tells of Osiander, the early Lutheran theologian, holding similar doctrines in his 1544 work *Conjectures on the Last Days and the End of the World*. Osiander projected the downfall of Antichrist in 1672 followed by a sixteen year period in which the Gospel would be preached throughout the world. This fits well with the latter-day glory theme discussed in this paper.

37. . *Ibid.*, p. 643.

38. Thomas Collier, *The Body of Divinity*, pp.588, 589. Spelling modernized throughout; some punctuation modernized; italics are Collier’s.

39. James Kelly, *The Apocalypse Interpreted in the Light of “The Day of the Lord,”* vol. 1, pp. 31–36. Second edition of 1853.

40. E. W. Bullinger, *Commentary on Revelation*, pp. 9–15 of the Kregel reprint edition of 1984.

41. J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse*, p. 37 of the Zondervan reprint edition of 1981.

42. Collier, pp. 590, 591, wrote:

I know this Riding forth on the White Horse, is understood to intend the Preaching of the Gospel, and Christ Conquering Souls thereby to himself; but I see no ground for this Conception . . . To understand this of Christ’s coming, to Conquer and bring down his enemies, do fully agree with other Scripture in the very terms thereof, and why then we should turn it in such an Allegory, I know not; See the same expressions in substance, Rev. 19:11.

whole of Collier's *Body of Divinity*, I noted this passage:

*Quest.* At what time may we suppose the Saints shall be raised? at his first appearing in the Clouds of Heaven? Or at the entrance of the thousand years? or after the thousand years are finished?

*Ans.* Very probably at the entrance of the 1000 years, and that for these reasons.

1. Because it is not likely that they should be raised before the Nations are subdued and the new Heavens and new Earth prepared.

2. The Scripture saith, that it shall be at the sound of the last Trump, which imports that other Trumps had sounded before, (else it could not properly be called the last Trump) and probably it may have relation to the seven Trumpets mentioned in the *Revelation*, which are all to be sounded at and after Christ's appearing, in carrying on the work of judgment upon the Nations, and when the seventh Angel sounded (which is the last Trump) *There were the great voices in Heaven saying, the Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall Reign for ever and ever, Rev. 11.15 and chap. 20.4* the Resurrection is stated to be at the entrance of the thousand years, they lived and Reigned with Christ a thousand years. We may groundedly suppose that after Christ's appearing in the work, he may ascend and descend often, we may not imagine that he should be limited on Earth, and so his coming at the sound of the last Trump, to establish his peaceable Kingdoms to be the first resurrection, and all his appearance and works is [sic] included in his second coming, and probably there may be Death in the time of this Reign, *Isaiah 65.20*. And if so, then there must be a Resurrection of some of the just as well as the unjust, at the end thereof.<sup>43</sup>

Because he raised the question of the saints being raised at Christ's "first appearing in the clouds of heaven," instead of later on "at the entrance of the thousand years," it is apparent that Collier certainly *considered* the idea of a pretribulation rapture. If the saints were raised when Christ appears and this is prior to the fulfillment of the bulk of Revelation, this is the essence of a pretribulation rapture.

Whether anyone contemporary to Collier actually held the pretribulationist view, or this was just an exercise of his mind, we cannot say. Collier was clearly posttribulationist. Unlike modern posttribulationists, Collier taught that Christ's appearing spans most of Revelation, with him possibly ascending and descending often. Collier does not say in his *Body of Divinity* how long he expects the time from Christ's appearing to the Millennium to be. In an earlier work he interprets the 1260 days of Revelation as literal.<sup>44</sup>

Morgan Edwards was, no doubt, acquainted with the writings of Benjamin Keach, Hanserd Knollys, and John Gill. It is possible that he was exposed to Thomas Collier's writings, though they were generally not in favor among Particular Baptists. We have seen in these Baptist writers statements that might appear to be pretribulationist. Further investigation shows they are not; the precursory coming is not a rapture, but a superimposing of a postmillennial "latter-day glory" in which there is destruction of Mystery Babylon and widespread success of the Gospel. This view is essentially postmillennial. Keach and Gill superimposed this "latter-day glory" onto a premillennial 1000 year reign of Christ. We have demonstrated that the basic question of pretribulationism was considered by Collier in 1674, but he rejected it. How much did these men influence Morgan Edwards' prophetic views? We cannot say for certain, but we take Edwards at his word when he writes:

I wonder that none (to my knowledge) have written of the millennium in a simple and literal manner; especially as that involves in it no absurdity or improbability . . .<sup>45</sup>

So Edwards was certainly aware of other works on prophecy, but none in agreement with his views.

There is a need for further research into Baptist eschatology of the 17th and 18th centuries. It is important not to read modern prophetic views into their works; often they had unique views that are extinct or nearly so.

### *Implications of Morgan Edwards' Pretribulationism*

The discovery of an eighteenth century pretribulationist destroys certain arguments of some opponents to pretribulationism. Consider the following:

1. Gone are the evil sources for pretribulationism. Pretribulationism has been alleged to have an evil origin in Lacunza (a Jesuit) or in Margaret Macdonald (an occult influenced woman). Morgan Edwards was a godly pretribulationist who predated both Lacunza and Macdonald.

2. Gone is the "chain link theory" of the history of prophetic interpretation. Opponents of pretribulationism have forced J. N. Darby to have derived his views from a previous source -- a previous link in the history of interpretation. Two individuals can have identical or similar interpretations of Scripture *independently* without mutual influence or a common root. Did the Jesuit Lacunza read the Baptist Edwards? Did Miss Macdonald? Did J. N. Darby? Thus far there is no evidence that Edwards influenced the eschatological views of his Baptist brethren

43. Collier, *op. cit.*, pp. 585, 586.

44. Thomas Collier, *The Glory of Christ, and the Ruine of Antichrist*, p. 72 of the 1647 edition. In the same work he makes "The Lord's Day" equivalent to "The Day of the Lord" (p. 9). In *The Body of Divinity* he (continued...)

44. (...continued)

refers to the days of Daniel 12:11,12 as being probably years (p. 601).

45. Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

(with the *possible* exception of his tutor),<sup>46</sup> let alone these other individuals.<sup>47</sup>

3. Gone as well are the claims that there were no pretribulationists prior to about 1830. Morgan Edwards was pretribulationist in the 1740s. Thomas Collier *considered* pretribulationism in 1674. The truth of a doctrine is proved by Scripture, not its historical continuity in the teaching of the professing church. Antidispensationalists make the false claim that dispensational teaching is in error because of a lack of historical continuity. Can they prove the historic continuity of their own teaching?<sup>48</sup> Both the Church of Rome and the Eastern Orthodox base their claims of authority on alleged historic continuity; and many so-called evangelicals have of late entered their folds on this account. Yet their claims of authority do not stand the test of Scripture.

4. It does not surprise us that Morgan Edwards was pretribulationist. He was apparently a godly man who applied certain Scriptural principles of interpretation. Quite frankly, we would expect godly men who applied the same Scriptural principles of interpretation to come to the same kind of conclusions that he did.

## Conclusion

Certain antipretribulationist arguments ought to be forever silenced. We have seen Morgan Edwards to be pretribulationist in the 18th century; we have shown that Thomas Collier considered pretribulationism in the 17th century; we have documented and clarified the views of leading Baptists before and contemporary to Morgan Edwards; and we have shown Morgan Edwards to be an *independent* witness to the truth of pretribulationism, highly unlikely to have influenced later dispensational thinkers, like J. N. Darby.

J. N. Darby's public testimony to the truth of the pretribulation rapture occurred in connection with understanding the distinction between the church and Israel -- which involved a heavenly position for the church and an earthly position for Israel. That is, it accompanied the recovery of the mystery concerning which the Old Testament is silent (Rom. 16:25; Col. 1:25, 26; Eph. 3:9).

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46. Edwards, p. 35, quotes his tutor as saying, ". . . I assure you that the novelty and ingenuity of your attempt have entertained me not a little."

47. Bray writes on p. 12 of his booklet on Edwards ". . . it is difficult to believe that the teaching of the pre-tribulation rapture as found in this book was not preached also from the various pulpits where Edwards ministered." While this statement cannot be disproved, thus far there is no evidence of his influence on the prophetic views of others; nor is there evidence that his work generated replies or rebuttals; nor did it achieve popularity such that it generated a second edition.

48. Here is a challenge to any and all who use the relative modernity of pretribulationism as an argument against it: identify expositions of prophecy, say the book of Revelation, for example, that you can recommend, written prior to 1830. Of the massive amounts of Reformed literature from the 16th through 19th centuries reprinted in recent times, very little has been on prophetic themes. There is good reason for this. Older prophetic works are most often historicist in their outlook. Historicism has been generally discarded, except by cults such as Christadelphians and Seventh Day Adventists, and a minority of orthodox Protestants. To conclude: if one demands historic continuity of prophetic interpretation for dispensationalists, then let the continuity of one's own prophetic *system* (not single, isolated views) be demonstrated.



## *Dave MacPherson, Morgan Edwards and The Rapture Plot*

### *Dave MacPherson Versus Morgan Edwards*

Imagine this: a man writes a manuscript for a book which he feels uncovers the most important historical revisionist plot of the past century. Just before publication, new information comes to light which makes the thesis of the manuscript irrelevant. The author is faced with a choice: discard the thesis along with the manuscript; ignore the information; or create a smoke screen, distorting the new information so the publication can go forward. What should the author do? The answer is obvious. But if the author were Dave MacPherson, what would he do? Let's find out.

Dave MacPherson's *The Rapture Plot* has just been published (1995). It claims to reveal ". . . the most astounding historical revisionism of the past century."<sup>49</sup> The plot is that the scholarly author of many valued works, William Kelly, used his periodical, *The Bible Treasury*, to conceal that J. N. Darby took the pretribulation rapture from the Irvingites. This was accomplished by alleged misrepresentations of Irvingite prophetic views in Kelly's 1889–1890 articles on the Catholic Apostolic Church. In these same articles Kelly is alleged to have created a smoke screen by emphasizing Irvingite heterodoxy.<sup>50</sup> Then in 1903 (13 years later), having discredited the Irvingites, Kelly was able to credit Mr. Darby with pretribulationism in his article, *The Rapture of the Saints, Who Suggested It, or Rather on What Scripture?* This "plot" is considerably more dull than his Margaret Macdonald material.

MacPherson devotes less than five pages of *The Rapture Plot* to Morgan Edwards, all of which is found in Appendix E, "The Claim Game." This was written in 1995, the year *after* the book was copyrighted. If MacPherson were to regard Morgan Edwards as pretribulationist, then both his Macdonald "cover-up" and his Kelly "plot" would be for naught. Instead of forsaking his ideas, he recklessly labels Edwards a posttribulationist historicist.<sup>51</sup> Consider the following:

1. MacPherson writes: ". . . it's obvious that Edwards

interpreted these 1260 days [of Revelation 11] as *years*."<sup>52</sup> This is a blatant falsehood. Edwards wrote:

When these witnesses will appear is hard to say; for though their time of *prophesying in sackcloth* [sic] is 1260 days or three years and a half (allowing thirty days to a month) yet they may preach out of sackcloth long before; for the 1260 days refer only to the time that the holy city and the outer court of the temple shall be trodden under the foot of the Gentiles (or Antichrist and his army) viz. 42 months, which make exactly 1260 days, allowing 30 to a month (Rev. xi. 2) . . .<sup>53</sup>

It is clear from the above that Edwards does not believe the two witnesses had appeared yet. The preaching in sackcloth is for 1260 literal days; if they were years (clearly they are *not* from the context) then they had not as yet begun, which is unlike Historicism in any form. The "prophesying out of sackcloth" that Edwards speculates the two witnesses will perform is *before* Revelation 11:2. Edwards is futurist and literal in his consideration of prophetic time in Rev. 12:7–11 (p. 8), Daniel 8:14 (p. 20), Daniel 12:12,13 (p. 21), Revelation 12:14 (p. 23), and Daniel 12:11 (p. 23).

MacPherson's method of dealing with Morgan Edwards indicates that all must be forced to fit his false ideas about Margaret Macdonald and the Irvingites. He handles J. N. Darby in the same distorting way and now also seeks to implicate William Kelly in a cover-up plot. What we see is his fascination with the notion that he has been a discoverer of a plot.

2. MacPherson writes:

Edwards' basis for holding to a rapture three and a half years before the second advent (and a future millennium) may well have been the Revelation 11 witnesses on whom he focused. This chapter has a period of three and a half days (verses 9, 11) that historicism can view as three and a half *years*. Since the spirits of these dead witnesses conceivably go to be with Christ during the same days — days preceding the final advent — historicist Edwards could see in this symbol a rapture three and a half *years* before the same advent.<sup>54</sup>

Compare this with Morgan Edwards:

Another event previous to the *Millennium* will be the appearing of the son of man in the clouds, coming to raise the dead saints and change the living, and to catch them up

49. *The Rapture Plot*, p. 138.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 158.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 268.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 266.

53. Edwards, p. 19.

54. MacPherson, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

to himself, and then withdrawing with them, as observed before. This event will come to pass when Antichrist be arrived at Jerusalem in his conquest of the world; and about three years and a half before his killing the witnesses and assumption of godhead.<sup>55</sup>

MacPherson's speculation is without foundation; Edwards distinguishes the saints caught up from the two witnesses, both as to time (the saints caught up three years and a half *before* the witnesses killed) and identity. Edwards identifies the witnesses as Elijah and the Apostle John;<sup>56</sup> MacPherson fails to inform his readers of this fact which contradicts his notion. The catching up of the witnesses is *after* the three and a half days (verse 12), not before. MacPherson also fails to inform his readers of Morgan Edwards linking the rapture to I Peter 4:17, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God."<sup>57</sup>

3. MacPherson provides two reasons why Edwards should be considered historicist. He considers Edwards' reference to the Turks having a role in unfulfilled prophecy an indication of Historicism. Really, it is not. Edwards writes "The present usurpers of the country of Abraham and his seed will be dispossessed. . ." speaking of the Turks.<sup>58</sup> Futurists who hold that the land of Israel will be restored to the Jewish people have always taught that other occupants would be removed. MacPherson's second reason is Edwards' teaching that the last Pope will be the Antichrist. However, this really indicates a futurist application. Most historicists regard Antichrist to be the Papal *System*, not a man. Nor do they teach that the "assumption of godhead" is future, but rather current.

4. MacPherson concludes his section on Morgan Edwards by writing:

Edwards' scheme of a rapture three and a half years before the end of a 1260-year tribulation has the same tiny gap a futurist would have if he were to teach a rapture three and a half *days* before the end of a 1260-day tribulation! Since such a futurist view would be seen as a *posttrib* view, Edwards (who had the same small percentage) should be classified as a historicist *posttrib*!<sup>59</sup>

There is a footnote attached which states:

Edwards saw a rapture at the extreme end of the tribulation. The mathematics works out as follows: 3.5 years/1260 years = 0.0027 or 0.27% remaining. That means 99.73% of the tribulation was already past before the rapture. Hardly a pretrib rapture!<sup>60</sup>

As already shown, Edwards did *not* teach anything like a 1260 year tribulation. Nor was he a historicist. Nor was he

"posttrib." But let us apply the same mathematics to some of his alleged pretribulationists. First, consider John Hooper, a contributor to *The Morning Watch*. MacPherson speaks of "Hooper's pretrib rapture."<sup>61</sup> He also writes of Hooper as "a historicist who saw the final advent in about 1868, Hooper had 37 remaining years where he could fit in between Revelation 16 and Revelation 19. . ."<sup>62</sup> Let us perform a calculation: 37 years/1260 years = 0.0294 or 2.94% remaining. That means *at least* 97.06% of the tribulation was already past before the rapture (assuming Christ could come immediately). Hardly a pretribulationist! Perhaps Dave MacPherson will tell us at what number between 97.06% and 99.73% completion we transition from pretribulationist to posttribulationist. Or perhaps MacPherson could admit Hooper as posttribulationist. Next, let us consider the woman whom MacPherson labels as the first pretribulationist: Margaret Macdonald. He wrote in *The Great Rapture Hoax*:

Margaret, however, had been influenced by historicism and the year-day theory involving 1260 years. . . If only one-tenth of 1260 years remained unfulfilled in her view, she could still believe in a future Antichrist; he would have a total of 126 years in which to do his dirty work.<sup>63</sup>

MacPherson is gracious in allowing 126 years remaining in Margaret's mind. Especially since she identified Robert Owen, a contemporary, as the Antichrist!<sup>64</sup> But applying the same mathematical formula that would mean 90% of the tribulation was complete for her! Applying the same method MacPherson does to Morgan Edwards would make her "hardly pretrib!"

To conclude this section: Dave MacPherson has substantially distorted and suppressed the evidence concerning Morgan Edwards. While his premise that Morgan Edwards held the year day theory is false, consistent application of the same mathematical principle and logic forces one to conclude all historicists, including Margaret Macdonald are posttribulationist.<sup>65</sup>

55. Edwards, *op. cit.* p. 21.

56. *Ibid.*, pp. 17–19.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

58. *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 14.

59. MacPherson, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

60. *Ibid.*

61. *Ibid.*, p. 200.

62. *Ibid.*

63. MacPherson, *The Great Rapture Hoax*, p. 49.

64. MacPherson, *The Rapture Plot*, p. 53.

65. Our objective here is to show MacPherson's inconsistency in his application of "logic." This does not imply our endorsement of his premises.

## *Further Problems with The Rapture Plot*

This paper is about Morgan Edwards, not Dave MacPherson. Without any pretension of being exhaustive (else this Appendix would be a book unto itself!), we will list a few problems in *The Rapture Plot*:

1. MacPherson states that the key symbol of the pretribulation rapture for Margaret Macdonald is the catching up of the two witnesses of Revelation 11.<sup>66</sup> If that is true, one wonders if MacPherson has ever *read* Revelation 11. Before the witnesses are caught up (verse 12), the beast makes war with them and kills them (verse 7). Thus the two witnesses go through tribulation *before* they are killed, raised and caught up. So if Macdonald's teaching is based on this passage, she is certainly posttribulationist! We are quite certain that the woman who said, "The trial of the Church is from Antichrist," was a posttribulationist. Could a pretribulationist utter such words?

2. MacPherson claims that Robert Baxter became pretribulationist based on the translation of the two witnesses to heaven in Revelation 11.<sup>67</sup> As stated above, the passage is clearly posttribulationist, and so must Baxter be.

3. MacPherson glosses over the evil character of Irvingism. Concerning Robert Baxter's characterization of Irvingism as a work of Satan, MacPherson writes on p. 175, "But why such harsh language? Couldn't he have just used words like 'error' or 'wrong interpretation' instead of 'Satan'?" When one considers the delusive character of Baxter's experience, and the heterodoxy of Irvingism concerning both the Person of Christ and salvation,<sup>68</sup> it is difficult to conceive why MacPherson treats Irvingism so gently.

4. MacPherson misrepresents the accuracy of Darby's *Notes on the Revelation* (1839), in his *Collected Writings*, vol. 2. MacPherson writes:

. . . Huebner emphasizes that at the end of this work there's a chart showing the church in heaven starting with Revelation 4 . . . Huebner's remark is grossly misleading, for these reasons . . . There's no mention as to who

sketched the chart or when (Darby later on? or someone else later on?).<sup>69</sup>

We've previously noted that a chart (listing no artist or date) accompanying this work shows the church in heaven no later than Revelation 4 - additional manipulation and further contradiction of Darby's Revelation 12 basis!<sup>70</sup>

I have inspected a xeroxed copy of the original 1839 edition of this work published by the Central Tract Depot in London. The chart in question is there and shows the church in heaven in Revelation chapter 4!

MacPherson's speculation is without foundation. A true historian would inspect the original source materials before making the claims that MacPherson does. MacPherson has speculated much about William Kelly's manipulation of Darby's *Collected Writings* without once consulting Darby's original editions.<sup>71</sup> We believe he is governed by an agenda, not a desire for unbiased historical research.

5. The importance MacPherson places on his book, *The Rapture Plot*, reveals his spiritual state. He writes:

The real test is ahead. If pretrib promoters ignore or twist this book's documentation, and if their only bottom line is a continuing flow of funds, then I won't be surprised if God views them collectively as an "Achan" (Josh. 7) and allows a national or even international money collapse!<sup>72</sup>

This statement is incredible. Ignoring *The Rapture Plot* may lead to an international money collapse! This idea indicates the mentality under which MacPherson operates.

## *Some Hoaxes in The Great Rapture Hoax*

Briefly, let us consider a few errors found in MacPherson's *The Great Rapture Hoax*. We will limit ourselves to three items.

1. Midtribulationism origins. Can the man who falsely identified the origins of pretribulationism, tell us accurately when midtribulationism originated? No, he cannot. On p. 14 he writes of "the Mid-Trib Rapture view, a view traced back to Norman Harrison's books of the 1940's." We do not pretend to know when midtribulationism originated. But we know it was much before the 1940's. Consider the following quote from David D. Rutledge in his 1903 book, *Christ, Antichrist, and Millennium*. Speaking of himself he writes:

. . . while taking the Futurist view. . . he stands alone in many important particulars . . . Such, for instance, is the indication of the middle of the seventieth week as the period for the Second Advent of Christ, i.e. the Coming

66. MacPherson, *The Rapture Plot*, pp. 47-49.

67. *Ibid.*, pp. 159-161.

68. Catholic Apostolic William Bramley-Moore, in *The Church's Forgotten Hope*, p. 52, writes, ". . . the Holy Spirit, having quickened this eternal life in our spirits in baptism . . . ." On pp. 258, 259 he writes, "Mr. Irving . . . vindicated the reality of Baptism as a means of grace, and expounded the true catholic doctrine of the Incarnation of the Son of God." We reject baptismal salvation as heterodox, along with Irving's view that Christ took the carnal nature.

Consult the *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, and the *Bible Treasury*, edited by William Kelly, on the subject of Irvingism and also the Catholic Apostolic Church. See the respective indices to these works. Also see R. A. Huebner, *The Word of God Versus the "Charismatic Renewal,"* Appendix 2: "Irvingism and Demon Manifestations," pp. 168-176.

69. MacPherson, *The Rapture Plot*, p. 114.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

71. *Ibid.*, pp. 149-153.

72. *Ibid.*, p. 234.

of Christ for His saints, as indicated in I Thessalonians iv. 13-18.<sup>73</sup>

Now we do not claim Rutledge was the first midtribulationist. We simply do not know. But we would expect the so-called “world's leading authority on the origin of the Pre-Trib rapture theory” to know better than he does.

## 2. The Day of the Lord. MacPherson wrote in *The Great Rapture Hoax*:

All Christians until the early part of the 20th century, including Darby and Scofield, held that the “day of the Lord” wouldn't begin *until* the Post-Trib Second Coming of Matthew 24.<sup>74</sup>

We do not profess to know what all Christians have believed about the Day of the Lord. We consider MacPherson's claim to be reckless; it assumes exhaustive knowledge which he does not possess. As with midtribulation origins, we can disprove MacPherson's thesis by counter example. James Kelly<sup>75</sup> held, in the early 1850's, that the entire 70th week of Daniel is the Day of the Lord. He wrote:

. . . those Divine judgments which will begin with the imminent period of the Lord's Day, or, day of the Lord . . . and run their course, upon Jews and Gentiles, up to the personal appearing of the Lord Jesus *with* His saints, in the clouds of heaven; that is, this series of visions comprehends, in a general way, the visitations on the world at large, during the two moities of three and a half years especially treated of in this book [Revelation], and which, together, compose the last remaining week, or hebdomad of years in Daniel's prophecy, which has been in suspense ever since Messiah was cut off.<sup>76</sup>

So it is clear MacPherson is wrong again; there was at least one Christian author before the 20th century who taught the Day of the Lord was Daniel's 70th week.

## 3. MacPherson's reading comprehension (or lack thereof). On p. 178, MacPherson quotes a letter of Darby's which he takes as an admission that he learned basic truth from a young lady. The letter reads in part:

I trust many have been aroused since I have been here, and the Lord's coming looked for by many, and some brought to peace. We have also some very nice scripture reading meetings, to which any of the clergy who hold the truth, have fallen in, though quite mixed, and everyone at liberty to speak. It is chiefly, of course, on what may be called first principles, but I trust thorough ones practically. It is a remarkable circumstance, that a dear young lady,

who was instrumental in setting them afloat for me, and at several members of whose family they were held - who had been only called about a year by the Lord, but was very decided ever since - was suddenly called away the other day in the midst of it all.<sup>77</sup>

MacPherson comments on the above letter as follows:

Question: why did Darby admit such things about a young Irish lady (written three years after Margaret's revelation) and not give Margaret any credit for her prior Rapture?<sup>78</sup>

The answer is obvious. The young lady in the letter set reading meetings up for Darby. She was not the source of his “basic principles.”<sup>79</sup> MacPherson's failure to comprehend such a simple paragraph causes one to question his ability to interpret any historical data.

## Conclusion

We have demonstrated Dave MacPherson's lack of credibility. He has misrepresented Morgan Edwards. He has misrepresented J.N. Darby. He has misrepresented Margaret Macdonald. He has calumniated William Kelly. Contrary to the claim that he is the “world's leading authority on pre-trib rapture origins,” he is deficient in his presentation, logic, consistency, conclusions and Scripture understanding. His latest book has the same character as his previous books. Christians who desire to feed their souls on truth would be well advised to avoid his works.

73. David R. Rutledge, *Christ Antichrist and Millennium*, p. ix.

74. MacPherson, *The Great Rapture Hoax*, p. 133.

75. James Kelly was an Anglican clergyman who accepted dispensational teachings. Some aspects of his teaching anticipate what later became known as “Bullingerism” (e.g., the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3 are future). James Kelly entered into ecclesiastical controversy with J. N. Darby in a correspondence entitled *Claims of the Church of England Considered*. This is contained in Darby's *Collected Writings*, volume 14.

76. James Kelly, *The Apocalypse Interpreted in the Light of “The Day of the Lord”*, vol. 1, p. 307.

77. *Letters of J. N. Darby*, vol. 1, p. 15.

78. MacPherson, *Ibid.*, pp. 178, 179.

79. In a letter to me dated April 25, 1984 MacPherson wrote: “I'm sure that you don't mind quoting Darby even though he admitted that he got some of his basic principles from a young Irish lady!” (*Hoax*, p. 178). Nothing is further from the truth.

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