



Dispensationally

A complete dispensational study which will help the reader understand the Bible better.

by Ike T. Sidebottom

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PREFACE

There has never been a time in history when a real knowledge of the Bible was so necessary. Yet, we live in a time of waning spirituality. The real “key” that unlocks the great truths of Scripture is to “rightly divide the Word of Truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

This dispensational study book was written by a man who literally “spent” his life studying and standing for the “rightly divided Word.” His influence as a pastor, teacher, and evangelist will never fully be known this side of glory. In an era when men worship “big names” in the religious field, if the truth were known the late Brother Ike T. Sidebottom would surpass most of them in real, genuine, humble service to God and man.

This third edition is dedicated to the precious memory of our “brother beloved,” Ike T. Sidebottom, and to his wife and companion, Effie Mae.

CONTENTS

Earth's Angelic Inhabitants.....	5
God's Judgment Upon First Sin.....	6
Mr. and Mrs. Adam, the First Man and His Wife.....	7
The Test, Failure, and Fall of Man in the Age of Innocence	9
The First Promise of Christ, the Redeemer.....	14
Cain and His Wife.....	21
Capital Punishment	27
The Mosaic Law and Why?	37
The Meaning of Pentecost	42
The Three Periods of Grace	44
The Great Tribulation Period.....	48
Water Baptism and Why?	58
The Lord's Supper and Why?	64
The 1000 Year Reign of Christ.....	68

CREATION VERSUS EVOLUTION

Only **three creative acts** of God are mentioned in the opening chapter of the Book of Genesis. First He created **“The heaven and the earth”** (verse 1), second He created **all animal life** (verse 21), and third He created **human life** (verses 26-27).

The word “Beginning” in the opening verse of the Bible carries us back to the dateless past when the **un-created, self-existing, triune** God of glory **created** “The heaven and the earth.” This first creative act of God brought into being a **perfect heaven** and a **perfect earth**. The Holy Spirit tells us that God created the earth **“Not in vain (void)”** but He **“Formed it to be inhabited”** (Isaiah 45:18).

THE FIRST INHABITANTS

of the earth were angels and not mankind. Carefully read the lamentation of Ezekiel to the “King of Tyrus” as recorded in the Book of Ezekiel, chapter 28 and verses 12 to 19. The “King of Tyrus” is only a type of the super-natural, super-terrestrial and super-human being who is addressed and described in this particular Scripture. This **angelic being** was using the king of Tyrus as one of his agents to secure world-power, but he, himself was more than a mere man. Study the following inspired description of this one with whom we **still have to do**.

“Thou sealest up the sum” (that is, “Thou art the finished pattern”), **“Full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty”** (verse 12). **“Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God”** and “The workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that **thou wast created**” (verse 13). “Thou art the **anointed cherub** that covereth; and **I have set thee so**: thou wast upon the **holy mountain of God**; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire” (verse 14). “Thou wast **perfect in thy ways** from the day thou wast created, **till iniquity was found in thee**” (verse 15). **“Thou hast sinned”** (verse 16).

The Holy Spirit could never have used such language in the description of a mere man. The “King of Tyrus” was not “Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty,” he had never been “in Eden, the garden of God” and he was not “Created,” but was born. He was

never set up as the “Anointed cherub” in the “Holy mountain of God;” neither was he ever “Perfect” in his ways.

These words of the Holy Spirit, spoken through Ezekiel in chapter 28, verses 12-16, may logically be applied in Biblical description of Satan from the day he was **created** until iniquity was found in him, but they could never, by any stretch of imagination, fit in with God’s description of a mere earthly king.

This “Anointed cherub” whom God created and set up in His “Holy mountain” was, undoubtedly, the ruler or governor of the angels which inhabited the **perfect earth**, with its garden of “**Every precious stone**” (Ezekiel 28:13) and just as it came forth from the creative hand of God. Very probably, the perfect earth was also inhabited by animal life, fowls and creatures of the sea; but it certainly was not inhabited by man. We are told in 1 Corinthians 15:45 that the “**First man**” was Adam, and we know from the Genesis account of creation that he did not come on the scene until **after** the perfect earth of Genesis 1:1 became “Without form and void” and was wrapped in “Darkness” (Genesis 1:2); and was then **brought back** to a state of habitation in six working days by the hand of the original Creator.

DIVINE JUDGMENT

fell heavily upon the “Covering cherub” of Ezekiel 28:14-19. He is called “Lucifer, son of the morning” by the prophet Isaiah who gives us the divine record of his **five-fold sin** and God’s pending judgment in chapter 14, verses 12 to 15. Here we have the entrance of sin into the **universe** of God. Pride and egotism found a place in the heart of God’s highest angelic creature. This caused the creature to say to the Creator:

“**I will** ascend into heaven”

“**I will** exalt my throne above the stars of GOD”

“**I will** sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north”

“**I will** ascend above the heights of the clouds”

“**I will** be like the MOST HIGH”

The pronounced judgment upon this proud one, “**Yet thou**

shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit,” is recorded in the closing verse of this reference. It reminds us of the inspired proverb: **“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall”** (Proverbs 16:18). A comparison of 2 Peter 2:4 with Luke 10:18 and Revelation 12:3-4 will bring to our attention the fact that other angels followed Satan in his rebellion and were cast down with him.

We are led to believe that this same judgment which fell upon the angelic inhabitants of the perfect earth also brought about a cataclysmic change upon the earth which plunged it into the chaotic condition described in Genesis 1:2. As we follow God through the six working days of the remainder of this chapter, we find Him operating through the person of the Holy Spirit and His spoken Word (the second person of the Godhead). He restored **light**, He let the **firmament** appear, He gathered the waters together unto one place and let the **dry land** appear, He let the **lights** in the firmament of the heaven divide the day from the night, He created every living creature, and then He formed man in His own image. The judged earth was **restored** to a habitable place and thoroughly **set in order** for the livelihood of the human family before the first man and woman were created.

MR. AND MRS. ADAM

“This is the book of the generation of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; male and female created he **them**; and blessed **them**, and **called their name Adam**, in the day when they were created” (Genesis 5:1-2). The name Eve was not given to the woman by the Creator. He called them both Adam. It was Adam who later called his wife’s name “Eve; because she was the mother of all living” (Genesis 3:20).

Let us remember that **God Himself** “Created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.” The method which God used in creating the man is found in Genesis 2:7: **“And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a LIVING SOUL.”** The

method which God used in creating the woman is given in Genesis 2:21-22, where we are told that **“The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept, and He (God) took one of his (Adam’s) ribs and closed up the flesh instead thereof: and the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man.”**

Both Adam and his wife came forth from the creative hand of God, full grown, thoroughly matured people. The fact that Adam was able to give names to all cattle and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field as God had them brought before him (Genesis 2:19-20) is conclusive proof that he possessed mental faculties even above the average man of today.

This first pair were placed in the garden of Eden which the Lord God Himself had planted. “Out of the ground made the Lord God to grow **every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life** also in the midst of the garden, and the **tree of the knowledge of good and evil**” (Genesis 2:9). We are told that the Lord God put the man into the garden of Eden **“To dress it and to keep it”** (Genesis 2:15). We call special attention to the expression “Keep it.” It means “To keep safe” or “To preserve.” It has the same meaning here as in chapter 3, verse 24, where we are told that a flaming sword was placed at the entrance of the garden of Eden to **“Keep the way of the tree of life.”** We know that God knew all about Satan’s subtle scheme to spoil the **restored** earth and its **new inhabitants** as he had spoiled the **perfect** earth with its **angelic inhabitants**. Therefore, God instructed Adam to **keep** the garden. That is, he was to keep it from Satan by living in strict obedience to God.

This brings us to the first of seven general dispensations which are clearly distinguished in the Word of God. A “dispensation” is a period of testing in respect of obedience on the part of mankind to some specific revelation of the will of God. It has the same meaning as the word “stewardship” and is so translated three times in Luke 16:2-4. This first period of testing is often designated as the **“Dispensation of Innocence.”**

THE DISPENSATION OF INNOCENCE OR THE EDENIC AGE

extended from the creation of man to the expulsion from the garden. The record of this first period of testing is found in Genesis 1:28 through Genesis 3:21. During this dispensation, the human race consisted of only two people. **Their name was Adam**; they lived in the garden of Eden and they were **perfectly innocent**, until sin entered.

The test was whether they would **obey God** and live or **disobey God** and die. This proposition was made clear to both the man and his wife (because they were both one) by the Lord God, Himself. The details are recorded in Genesis 2:15-18: “And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.”

We are not told just how long Adam and his wife continued their fellowship with the Lord God in the Garden of Eden. However, the time must have been short, because they were only **an hundred and thirty years** old when Seth was born (Genesis 5:3). Cain and Abel were old enough to produce **fruits** and **flocks** (Genesis 4:1-4) before Seth came, and we know that they were not born until after their father and mother had fallen into sin and had been driven from the Garden (Genesis 3:24-4:2). Therefore the age of innocence was considerably less than one hundred and thirty years.

THE FAILURE AND FALL

of mankind in this first test are recorded in the first seven verses of Genesis chapter 3. The subtil serpent “**Beguiled Eve**” (Genesis 3:1-6 with 2 Corinthians 11:3); but “Adam was not deceived” (1 Timothy 2:14).

As an “Angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14), Satan cunningly approached the woman with this subtle question: “Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the gar-

den?” (Genesis 3:1). The question was pointed at the one and only command which God had given, the command by which the human race was then being tested and the command which, if broken, meant sin and death to the entire family of mankind (Romans 5:12).

The woman first **listened to Satan’s question**, then she **tolerated his company**, and then she foolishly answered him with a **part of the truth plus her own idea**: “And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.”

God had said: “Thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17).

The woman said: “Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die” and added a sentence of her own: “Neither shall ye touch it.” Her attempt to meet Satan without the pure Word of God, with nothing added to it and nothing taken from it, was doomed to failure, and the same thing that was true then is still true today.

Realizing the weakened condition of his victim, Satan now boldly said to the woman, “**Ye shall not surely die**” (Genesis 3:4). The woman continued to listen while Satan deliberately denied the very word of her Lord and creator. Furthermore, he accused God of withholding the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in order to keep the man and the woman from becoming “**As Gods**, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:5); but he did not tell them that when they came to know good and evil they would find themselves caught in the meshwork of **evil** and powerless to attain the **good**. Satan is an artist when it comes to mixing a little bit of **God’s truth** with his own **false teaching**. He is doing this very effectively today through “false apostles” and “deceitful workers,” who are successfully “transforming, themselves into the apostles of Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

THE FINAL TEST

came when Satan presented his three-fold appeal as recorded in Genesis 3:6:

1. **The lust of the flesh**—“The woman saw that the tree was good for food.”
2. **The lust of the eyes**—“It was pleasant to the eyes.”
3. **The pride of life**—“A tree desired to make one wise.”

She did not fall when she saw that the fruit was **good for food**. Neither was she persuaded to give in to Satan because the fruit was **pleasant to her eyes**. But, when she believed the subtle lie that this fruit was desired **to make one wise**, she took of it and “Did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”

To this very day, Satan has not changed his appeal to the human race. Since the fall of man, he has become the “God of this world” and is constantly blinding the minds of “Them which believe not” through the lust of their flesh, the lust of their eyes, and the pride of life. These three appeals include “All that is in the world” and all that is “not of the Father.” (Compare 2 Corinthians 4:4 and 1 John 2:16). There is not a sin in the category which does not come under one of these three appeals, and all fallen human flesh is in bondage to Satan because of weakness along these three lines.

RESULTS OF THE FALL

We are told in Genesis 3:8 that the fallen man and his wife “Heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day:” and they “Hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.” This verse indicates two things. First, that God was accustomed to meeting with Adam and his wife in the Garden of Eden; second, that on this particular occasion man was for the first time found hiding from his Lord and maker. This brings God’s first question recorded in the Bible: “And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, **Where art thou?**” (verse 9). Note the pitiful answer coming back to God from His fallen creature: “**I heard thy voice in the**

garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.”

He was afraid because his knowledge of good and evil had made him conscious of his nakedness, and his man-made “apron” of verse 7 could not cover the shame of his nakedness as he stood before a just and holy God. His sin had not only brought fear, but it had brought cowardly fear. This is indicated by his attitude to blame the woman for his deliberate sin (verse 12).

THE JUDGMENT OF GOD

upon the serpent is recorded in Genesis 3:14, while verses 16 and 17 of the same chapter reveal His judgments upon the woman and upon the man, and verses 18 and 19 bring to our attention the curse upon the earth. This just judgment came as a result of the entrance of sin into the human race and the re-created earth.

From this point on we shall be occupied with an examination of the unfolding of God’s eternal plan to regain that which was lost through the entrance of sin and to bring fallen man unto righteousness, even the righteousness of God—a higher position than that which he had in the state of innocence. This divine plan is woven around the finished work of Christ, the Redeemer, on the cross of Calvary.

Someone has suggested an interesting study in connection with three Biblical trees:

The Tree of Death—Genesis 3:17, which appears at the opening of the Bible,

The Tree of Calvary—1 Peter 2:24, in the middle of the Bible, and

The Tree of Life—Revelation 2:7 and 22:2, at the end of the Bible.

The work which Christ accomplished on the cross of Calvary extended backward to the **entrance of sin in the garden of Eden** and forward to the **freedom from sin in the garden of Paradise**. The believing sinner of the Old Testament times looked **forward** to the coming Lamb of God and His sacrificial work on the cross; the believing sinner of the New Testament times and the Body dispensation looks **backward** to the finished work of the Lamb of God on the cross.

The law of sin and death condemns mankind in all dispensations, but **the law of the Spirit of life** in Christ Jesus makes men free from the law of sin and death. There is no remission of sin apart from the shedding of blood, and the shed blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin, but the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses from all sin.

The wreckage and ruin as a result of sin blots the pages of the history of the human race from the fall of Adam to the new heaven and the new earth. The sin question can be dealt with in one way only, and that one way is **“Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins”** (Romans 3:24-25).

The setting forth of Christ as the sin bearer for the whole world is indicated by the crimson thread that runs through the entire revelation of God. When the saved of all ages are gathered together into the presence of the triune God, they will know that they were “Not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, ... but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world” (1 Peter 1:18-20). He died on **the tree of Calvary** to take away the sin that came as a result of the eating of **the tree of death** and to make it possible for fallen man to partake of **the tree of life**.

*“In the cross of Christ I glory,
Tow’ring o’er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers ‘round its head sublime.*

*Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
By the cross are sanctified;
Peace is there that knows no measure,
Joys that thro’ all time abide.”*

The judgment of God that fell heavily upon the human race and upon the earth in the garden of Eden will not be lifted until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has already paid the re-

demption price and will come soon to claim His purchased possessions.

THE FIRST PROMISE OF THE REDEEMER

is recorded in Genesis 3:15: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and **her seed**; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” This verse clearly sets forth the enmity between Satan and Christ. It also makes plain the fact that Christ, the seed of the woman, shall inflict the **head wound** that will bring about the destruction of Satan. “**For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil**” (1 John 3:8).

This promise in Genesis 3:15 establishes the fact that the promised redeemer should be of the **human race**; Genesis 9:26 suggests that He should be of a **certain section** of the race, Shem; Genesis 12:1-3 indicates that He should be of a **certain nation** belonging to that section, the Hebrew Nation; Genesis 49:10 makes plain the fact that He should be of a **certain tribe** in that Nation, Judah; 2 Samuel 7:16 declares that He should be of a **certain family** in that tribe, David; Isaiah 7:14 emphasizes the fact that He should be of a **certain member** of that family, the virgin, Mary; and lastly the prophet Micah, in chapter 5 and verse 2, tells us that this promised one should come forth from a **certain village**, Bethlehem.

MANIFESTED GRACE

on the part of God toward sinful man is seen in Genesis 3:21-24. The naked sinner was clothed with God-provided garments and expelled from the garden “**Lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.**” The tree of life was guarded by a “Flaming sword” until God could reveal His plan whereby the sinner might have right to its fruits.

The careful student of the Word of God will come to see the sixty-six books of the Bible as one book which reveals God’s one plan of redemption. The following comparison of the book of Genesis with the book of Revelation helps us see the unity of the Word of God in the revelation of His plan and purpose.

GENESIS FINDS ITS COMPLEMENT IN THE REVELATION

(from the Companion Bible)

Genesis

Revelation

1. Genesis, the book of the beginning.
2. The Earth created (1:1).
3. Satan's first rebellion.
4. Sun, moon and stars for Earth's government (1:14-16).
5. Sun to govern the day (1:16).
6. Darkness called night (1:15).
7. Waters called seas (1:10).
8. A river for Earth's blessing (2:10-14).
9. Man in God's image (1:26).
10. Entrance of sin (3).
11. Curse pronounced (3:14, 17).
12. Death entered (3:19).
13. Cherubim, first mentioned in connection with man (3:24).
14. Man driven out from Eden (3:24).
15. Tree of life guarded (3:24).
16. Sorrow and suffering enter (3:17).
17. Man's religion, art, and science, resorted to for enjoyment, apart from God (4).
18. Nimrod, a great rebel and king, and hidden anti-God, the founder of Babylon (10:8-9).
19. A flood from God to destroy an evil generation (6-9).
20. The bow, the token of God's covenant with the Earth (9:13).
21. Sodom and Egypt, the place of corruption and temptation (13:19).
22. A confederacy against Abraham's people overthrown (14).
23. Marriage of first Adam (2:18-23).
24. A bride sought for Abraham's son (Isaac) and found (24).
25. Two angels acting for God on behalf of His people (19).
26. A promised seed to possess the gate of his enemies (22:17).
27. Man's dominion ceased and Satan's begun (3:24).
28. The old serpent causing sin, suffering, and death (3:1).
29. The doom of the old serpent pronounced (3:15).
30. Sun, moon, and stars, associated with Israel (37:9).
1. Revelation, the book of the end.
2. The Earth passed away (21:1).
3. Satan's final rebellion (20:3,7-10).
4. Sun, moon, and stars, connected with Earth's judgment (6:13; 8:12; 16:8).
5. No need of the sun (21:23).
6. "No night there" (22:5).
7. "No more sea" (21:1).
8. A river for the New Earth (22:1-2).
9. Man headed by one in Satan's image (13).
10. Development and end of sin (21:22).
11. "No more curse" (22:3).
12. "No more death" (21:4).
13. Cherubim, finally mentioned in connection with man (4:6).
14. Man restored (22).
15. "Right to the Tree of Life" (22:14).
16. No more sorrow (21:4).
17. Man's religion, luxury, art, science, in its full glory, judged & destroyed by God (18).
18. The Beast, the great rebel, a king, and manifested anti-God, reviver of Babylon (13-18).
19. A flood from Satan to destroy an elect generation (12).
20. The Bow, betokening God's remembrance of His covenant with the Earth (4:3; 10:1).
21. Sodom and Egypt again (spiritually representing Jerusalem) (11:8).
22. A confederacy against Abraham's seed overthrown (12).
23. Marriage of last Adam (19).
24. A Bride made ready and brought to Abraham's Son (19:9) See Matt. 1:1.
25. Two witnesses acting for God on behalf of His people (11).
26. The promised Seed coming into possession (11:18).
27. Satan's dominion ended, and man's restored (22).
28. The old serpent bound for 1000 years (20:1-3).
29. The doom on the old serpent executed (20:10).
30. Sun, moon, and stars, associated again with Israel (12).

Between Genesis, **the book of the beginning**, and Revelation, **the book of the end**, we find the unbroken story of God's plan of redemption for fallen man and the cursed earth. The conflict of the ages is between God, the creator, and Satan, the fallen angel. God's triumph over Satan is assured through Jesus Christ, who took upon Himself flesh and blood **"That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil"** (Hebrews 2:14).

"JESUS CHRIST THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND TODAY, AND FOREVER"

This verse is found in Hebrews, chapter 13 and verse 8. It has been much misunderstood, because people have tried to read into it the idea that Jesus Christ is **doing the same things** yesterday, and today, and forever. The fact that He is the same personality yesterday, and today, and forever, does not suggest that He should perform the same miracles, signs and wonders in this dispensation as He did when He taught "In their synagogues," and preached "the gospel of the kingdom, healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (Matthew 4:23). His divine personality is the same throughout the ages, but His ministry during the different dispensations changes as the plan and purpose of God unfolds.

Before His incarnation, He was "In the form of God" (Philippians 2:6) and shared equally in "Glory" with the Father (John 17:5). He was the "Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:14).

After His incarnation, He found Himself "In the likeness of sinful flesh" (Romans 8:3) and "Was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Having no sin of His own to place Him under the death penalty, He could "**Lay down**" His life for sinners and "**Take it again**" in resurrection (John 10:14-18 with Romans 5:6-8). This He did on the cross of Calvary where He was made "To be sin for us, who knew no sin; that

we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

In His present exaltation, He occupies a position “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” (Ephesians 1:20-21). God gives us two reasons as to why He raised His Son from the dead and gave Him such glory at His own right hand in heavenly places. **Peter and the other apostles** said to the nation of Israel: “The God of our fathers **raised up Jesus**, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree; **Him hath God exalted** with His right hand **to be a Prince and a Saviour**, for to give repentance to **Israel**, and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:30-31). **Paul** declares that Christ was raised from the dead “**To be the head over all things to the church, which is His Body**” (Ephesians 1:22-23). The glorified Christ is doing two things that are of dispensational interest. He is officiating as the head of the church, which is His Body (Ephesians 1:22-23), and He is waiting with expectancy “Till His enemies be made His footstool” (Hebrews 10:13).

In His future glorious advent, He will be hailed as “King of Kings, and Lord of Lords” (Revelation 19:11-16). At that time the church, which is Christ’s Body, will have already been glorified and will return with the King in glory (Colossians 3:4). He shall “Sit upon the throne of His glory” and “Shall be King over all the earth” (Matthew 25:31 and Zechariah 14:9).

Thus we see Jesus Christ before His incarnation, after His incarnation, during His present exaltation, and in His yet future glorious advent. Through it all, He is the same “Yesterday, and today, and forever.”

He was one with the Father in glory when the plan of redemption was drawn up, and He was present in the counsel that determined His crucifixion before the foundation of the world (Acts 2:23 with 1 Peter 1:18-20). He is the promised seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15) who was to come in “The fullness of the time ... made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Galatians 4:4-5).

The human race passed through approximately 4,000 years

and three dispensations between the promise of the Redeemer and His first advent. His complete work of redemption will not be realized until His second advent which is promised “Immediately after the tribulation” (Matthew 24:27-31).

THE DISPENSATION OF CONSCIENCE OR THE ADAMIC AGE

(From the Expulsion to the Flood)
Genesis 3:22-8:19

The expulsion of man from the garden of Eden closes the dispensation of innocence and opens the dispensation of conscience. Man is no longer without a knowledge of good and evil. He knows good and he knows evil, but lo, he finds himself under the dominion of the evil one and without strength or help to attain the good. He must make his home in a sin-cursed world, earning his living by the sweat of the brow as he tills the sin-cursed soil, which as a result of the curse, brings forth thorns and thistles. We find the record of this expulsion in the last three verses of the third chapter of Genesis.

CAIN AND ABEL

So far as the Bible record is concerned, Cain is Eve's first child and Abel is the second. Let us bear in mind, however, that the inspired record does not so state that they are the first born of Adam and Eve. There may have been children born to Adam and Eve whose names are not mentioned in the Bible. As we read the first five verses of the fourth chapter of Genesis, we find Cain and Abel appear on the scene. They are born of a fallen father and a fallen mother and into a sin-cursed world. One is a tiller of the ground and the other is a keeper of sheep. **"In the process of time it came to pass that Cain, the tiller of the ground, brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord, and Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof."**

The part of this passage which attracts our attention and is certainly a puzzle to the **natural mind**, is the fact that God had **respect unto Abel and his offering**, but unto **Cain** and his **offering He had not respect**. Both of the boys were sinners, because they were born of sinful parents. Adam and Eve had fallen, consequently their children were fallen. **"Who can bring a clean thing**

out of an unclean? not one” (Job 14:4). Each one of the boys brought an offering unto the Lord, and we certainly have no reason to doubt but that Cain brought the choicest of the fruits of the ground. The fact remains, however, that God had **respect** unto Abel and his offering, but unto Cain and his offering **He had not respect**. As we compare Scripture with Scripture, let us see just why our God thus dealt with Cain and Abel.

In Hebrews, the 11th chapter and the 4th verse, we find these words: **“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.”** Let us note the **“By faith”** of the above mentioned verse. Does it not appear that God had a definite understanding with man that he must come to God on a basis of shed blood? The coats of skins were provided by Him at a cost of innocent blood, and here we find Abel offering a blood sacrifice by faith. We know that **“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”** (Hebrews 11:1). By comparing these Scriptures we must see that Abel and his offering typified the offering of the Lamb of God on the cross of Calvary. From Abel’s lamb to the cross of Calvary, we have blood offerings as the only approach to God. From the cross of Calvary to the end of God’s dealings with man, we have the blood of the cross as the only approach to God. The blood of bulls and of goats **covered** the sins of the Old Testament believer, while the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ **took away** the sins of both the Old and the New Testament believer (Romans 3:24-26).

We notice also that the 6th and 7th verses of the fourth chapter of Genesis reveal the fact that God gave Cain a second chance and even pointed out to him a sin offering which was lying at his door. Cain’s rebellious heart would not yield to God’s plan which required the blood, for **“Without the shedding of blood is no remission”** (Hebrews 9:22). Cain not only had a fallen countenance, but a fallen nature as well. He could have been received had he brought the blood offering, but in place of bringing blood as a sacrifice for his sins he yielded to his sinful nature and shed the blood of his brother Abel.

Why did Cain kill Abel? The answer is given in 1 John 3:12:

“Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous.” Here we find the first blood shed among the human race. It is also the beginning of the age-old conflict between evil and righteousness, which climaxed at the cross of Calvary where the evil heart of man satisfied itself by crucifying the righteous Son of God. **“Men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil”** (John 3:19).

CAIN AND HIS WIFE

“Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived and bare Enoch.” These are the very first words of the text in the 16th and 17th verses of the fourth chapter of Genesis. That time-worn question, **“Who was the woman of the land of Nod whom Cain married?”** has puzzled the minds of the multitude throughout the ages. The interesting fact is that the Word does not say that he married his wife in the land of Nod, but that in the land of Nod she bare him a son. Without a doubt, he took his wife with him when he went into this land east of Eden, and she was very probably his sister.

The descendants of Cain are described in Genesis 4, verses 16 to 22, as developing the first civilization. In this civilization, we find the pastoral life, and the development of arts and manufactures. Who knows but that this civilization was as splendid as that of Greece or Rome, or who can tell but that the manufacturing facilities of this early age were equal to the modern methods of today. We only know that the moral conditions became such as to provoke the divine judgment of the flood.

As the judgment of the flood was pending in Noah’s day, so is judgment pending today. The great tribulation, **a terrible judgment** including all nations of the earth, will follow the rapture of the church. The church will not go through this tribulation on the earth. Israel will go through the tribulation but will not be destroyed. Like Noah was kept through the flood, Israel, as a nation, will be kept through the tribulation.

Man went out from the presence of God, builded a city, and

established a highly developed civilization, but God was not honored. The righteous one, Abel, had been killed. God sent Seth, who was the appointed one, to take the place of Abel, Genesis 4, verses 25-26. After sons were born unto Seth, men began to call themselves by the name of the Lord.

Even though Seth was appointed to take the place of righteous Abel, we find that the human race was not made righteous through his, or his descendants' testimonies. On the other hand we find in Genesis 6:5 that **“God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”** In the 7th verse God said, **“I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.”**

NOAH AND THE ARK

Noah, who was descended from Seth, found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He is spoken of as a **“just man and perfect in his generations and as one who walked with God”** (Genesis 6:8-9). This, undoubtedly, has reference to the fact that he was free from the sin of inter-marriage mentioned in the second verse of this same chapter. We must not overlook the fact that Noah was an **object of God's grace**. He was not worthy of his place in God's plan and program of making sure the promise of Genesis 3:15.

According to God's instructions, the ark was built and the invitation was given to a proud, self-satisfied, and ungodly humanity to enter the ark and escape the judgment. The ark is a beautiful type of the Lord Jesus Christ, the ark of safety for whosoever will believe in Him during this age of grace. Notice how the ark had only **one door** and **one window** (Genesis 6:16). Compare John 10:9: **“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture.”** How true it is that those who were saved from the judgment waters of the flood were saved because they entered in through the **one door** of the ark, and how true it is that those who are saved from the judgment, which is now pending, are saved because they enter

in through the **one door**, which was opened by the Lord Jesus Christ when He shed His blood on the cross of Calvary. He is the one door. He is the one way, the truth, the life and no man can come to the Father except by Him. Thanks be to God for Christ, His unspeakable gift, for He is indeed the Saviour of the **“whosoever will.”**

Noah, a preacher, of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5), stood by the door of the ark and preached the coming judgment and salvation through the ark until **God shut the door**. Note carefully Genesis 7:16: **“And the Lord shut him in.”** Noah did not close the door himself, he did not just preach until he grew tired and weary, but he preached until God closed the door of salvation. Let us ever remember that in this age of grace our God is holding the door of salvation wide open and no man can shut it. It is not our place to count the converts and measure the success of our ministry by visible results. It is our place to **preach the Word, in season and out of season**, and stand by and see the salvation of the Lord as He uses the Word to convict the unsaved and as He draws them by the power of the Holy Spirit to the foot of the cross where the blood was shed for the remission of sins. Noah’s long ministry resulted in only seven conversions and they were of his own household, yet he filled the place that God gave him to fill. He ministered until God closed the door. Let us be faithful as we declare the glorious gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. We need not fear, the gospel will continue to be the power of God unto salvation to every believer until God raptures the church. What a privilege it is to preach the gospel of grace, yet what a responsibility, when we realize that unto some it is the savour of **death unto death** and to others the savour of **life unto life**. The next soul that is won for Christ may complete the body and rapture the church.

A wonderful statement is made in Genesis 8:1: **“And God remembered Noah.”** What an interesting study we find in the Bible by going through and checking the things that God **remembers** and the things that he **remembers not**. He remembered Adam, and gave him a coat of skin, He remembered Abel and respected his offering, He remembered Abram and brought him back to Bethel, He remembered the children of Israel and brought

them out of Egypt, He remembered man in his failure under the law and sent His only begotten Son, but the **sins** which are put away by the blood of the everlasting covenant, **He remembers no more forever**. So He remembered Noah and all that were with him in the Ark and He caused the waters to be abated and the ark to rest on Mount Ararat.

Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives came forth from the ark and walked again on the earth that had been purged of all the rest of the race. The flood was God's judgment visited upon the human race because of its wickedness. Grace was mingled with the judgment in that the ark was provided by God for those who would believe His testimony. When Noah and his family and all the living creatures came forth from the ark, a new dispensation was opened. The age of **conscience** was closed by the flood and the age of **human government** had its beginning with Noah and his family around the altar of burnt-offerings, where God met man to establish with him a **new covenant**.

THE DISPENSATION OF HUMAN GOVERNMENT OR THE NOAHIC AGE

(From the Flood to the Tower of Babel)
Genesis 8:20-11:32

This the third dispensation is called “The dispensation of human government” because it is the age in which man was first privileged to govern himself. From the days of Noah on down through the ages, and extending on to the yet future second advent of our Lord, man must live under “Human Government.”

With the closing of each dispensation and the beginning of the new one, we should closely observe three things. First, we should note the one man which God singles out to represent Him during the transition, between the passing dispensation and the incoming one. Second, we should observe certain orders or commandments of the passing dispensation that are brought over into the new. And third, we should carefully list the new things introduced with the new dispensation.

“GOD SPAKE UNTO NOAH,

saying, go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons’ wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth” (Genesis 8:15-17).

Noah went forth from the ark into a purged earth. His wife, his three sons, and their wives, and every other living creature that was in the ark went forth with him. Just as Adam was the “Key man” between the dispensations of Innocence and Conscience, so Noah was the “Key man” between the dispensations of Conscience and Human Government. He lived in the age of Conscience, when the human race became so corrupt as to provoke the just judgment of the flood. He also passed through the judgment and lived in the opening days of the dispensation of Human Government. The dark shadows, brought about by the sins of humanity before the flood, were brushed away by the grace of

God. Therefore, Noah and his family enjoyed a completely new beginning, in a new earth, with new and unlimited opportunities, but with great responsibilities. All human life from Adam to the flood, except their own lives, was swept away by the judgment of the flood and the unborn race was before them. It was up to Noah and his sons to re-establish the proper relationship between man and God. Obedience and fidelity were essential to happiness and usefulness in the new world.

THE NEW PROGRAM FOR THE NEW WORLD

At least three things were brought over from the dispensation of Conscience into the new age of Human Government.

The foundation of worship continued to be a blood sacrifice as a “Burnt-offering on the altar.” This was instituted in Genesis 3:21 and 4:4 and was carried on not only through the dispensation of Innocence, but to the cross of Calvary, where the supreme and “Once for all” sacrifice was made. Thus we see the altar and the burnt-offering established in the new dispensation immediately after the flood. Genesis 8:21 proves that God was pleased to have communion with Noah and his family around the sacrificial altar in the new world. Just as He had respected the offering of Abel in Genesis 4:4, so He smelled the “sweet savour” of Noah’s offering in Genesis 8:21.

The order of nature continued the same in the new Human Government dispensation as it had in the age of Conscience. Genesis 8:22 gives us God’s declaration that this same order shall be carried on as long as “The earth remaineth.” “Seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” as long as the earth remaineth; and we know of no scriptural support for the old adage: “The time will come when we shall not know the summer from the winter except by the budding of the trees.”

The sinful nature of man was not changed with the new dispensation. Genesis 9:20-21 reveals the manifestation of the continuance of Adam’s sin. The same will continue to the end of the human race. “Wherefore, as **by one man** sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon **all men**, for

that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12). At least five new things were introduced with this third generation.

Flesh was added to man’s diet. In addition to “Every green herb” and the fruit of the trees of the garden of Eden (Genesis 1:30 and 2:8-9), man was permitted to eat the flesh of “Every moving thing that liveth” (Genesis 9:3). At the same time, God put the **fear** of man and the **dread** of man “Upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea” (Genesis 9:2). It is no wonder that the beast of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea are afraid of man. He has been living on their flesh for thousands of years.

Capital punishment was introduced in connection with Human Government. It was God who said, “**Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed:** for in the image of God made He man” (Genesis 9:6). This does not mean that the individual citizen should take the law into his own hands and kill a man because that man has killed someone else. We read in the book of Romans, chapter 13, verse 4 that the officer of the law is “**The minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.**” The Mosaic law says, “Thou shalt not kill.” This command was given to the rank and file of the citizenship, and not to those who were in authority as officers of the government and ministers of God. The Lord Jesus made this fact plain in His testimony recorded by Matthew in chapter 5, verse 21. He said, “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment.” He was quoting from Exodus 20:13, a law which pertained to the individual citizen, and was in no wise changing God’s order for the governing forces of the land concerning capital punishment. Carefully read Romans 13:1-7 for God’s instruction to our present dispensation on this subject.

A triple prophecy found in Genesis 9:25-27 brings out a new fact which vitally concerns the children and descendants of each one of the three sons of Noah. Domination over the peoples of the earth was promised to Japheth. From his seven sons (Genesis 10:2) was to come the Gentiles (Genesis 10:5). To Shem was given the glory of being the progenitor of the Redeemer or

the “Lord God” (Genesis 9:26). From him has come the Israelites (Genesis 11:10 to 12:3). Canaan, the son of Ham, was doomed to servitude (Genesis 9:25). From him has come the Ethiopian.

The Noahic covenant is recorded in Genesis 9:9-27. It was a covenant between God and “All flesh” that was upon the earth (Genesis 9:17); and secured the earth against another universal judgment by water (Genesis 9:11). The “Bow in the clouds” was given as a token of this covenant and God’s promise in connection with it.

Nimrod and his kingdom, Babel, came into prominence in the Noahic age (Genesis 10:8-11 with Genesis 11:1-4). This man foreshadowed the anti-Christ of Revelation 13, and the city of Babel, which he built, is a type of the wicked city of the last days described in Revelation, chapters 17 and 18.

MAN’S FAILURE AND GOD’S GRACE

Noah and his family had a good beginning; the covenant was all right and the opportunity of man was great. Yet he still possessed a fallen nature. Even though he had the rich experience of riding upon the judgment waters of the flood, securely kept in God’s ark; even though he had seen the terrible results of sin and the wrath of God poured out in judgment, we find the reappearance of sin in this new dispensation even in the life of Noah himself. Just as soon as he could plant a vineyard, raise some grapes, and make some wine, **he got drunk**. After the reappearance of sin the heart of man was drawn further and further from the will of God until we find them in the eleventh chapter of Genesis saying “**Go to, let us make brick and burn them thoroughly**, and they had **brick** for **stone**, and **slime** had they for **mortar**. And said they, go to, **let us build us a city** and a **tower**, whose top may reach unto heaven; and **let us make us a name**, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.”

In this tower of Babel experience, man was doing the same thing that he does today. He was taking matters in his own hands. It is human nature for man to want to exalt himself. He received this nature from Lucifer, who fell from the highest created being to the lowest form of sin because of his pride. At the tower of Ba-

bel man said **“Let us build us a city, let us build us a tower, let us make us a name.”** They left God out of their plan and program. Even Christians are saying today let us get together, let us mass our man power and put over our program. The majority of the work done in the professing church today is done according to man-made plans and man-made programs. It seems hard for man to be able to stand by and let God work in him **“Both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”**

Man could not substitute his **brick** for **God’s stone** and his slime for God’s **mortar** and engineer the work of building a **city**, a **tower** and a **name** without God’s knowledge. God even knew the innermost secrets of his heart and the motives back of his unscriptural efforts. **So God said “Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.”** Up to this time man had spoken one language, and the confusion of the language was God’s judgment, used to scatter the people abroad upon all the face of the earth and prohibit them from completing the tower and the work which they had started.

This confusion of the one language is the origin of the different languages which are spoken today by the people of the different nations and tribes. This judgment reminds us again that **“God is not mocked,”** and that He is going to work out all things for His own glory, regardless of the stubborn will of man. Our God is a God of love and peace and He wants to rule. We must remember, however, that if God cannot rule, **He overrules.** His plan cannot be overthrown by man.

Here on the plains of Shinar, God changed the one language of man to a babbling of many tongues and the same God, on the day of Pentecost, caused men to speak with one tongue which could be understood by men of all the different tongues. He has the power to do all things to all men in order to establish His **eternal glory.**

Man’s sin brought on this judgment from God. God could have been just in condemning the whole human race and thereby closing out His dealings with man at the tower of Babel. His grace, alone, mingled mercy with His judgment.

The dispensation closed with the confusion of tongues, the

people leave off the building of the tower and scatter throughout the earth in groups or tribes. A new dispensation opened with the calling of Abram, and from that time on God has been dealing with a **called out** people.

THE DISPENSATION OF PROMISE OR THE ABRAHAMIC AGE

*(From the Call of Abram to the Giving of the Law)
Genesis 12:1 to Exodus 19:7*

Two covenants between God and Abram are distinguished in the book of Genesis. One is a **conditional** covenant and the other is **everlasting**. Each of these covenants carry a seven-point agreement. They are outlined in chapters 12 and 17 as follows:

“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 show thee:

1. And I will make of thee a **great nation**,
2. And I will bless thee,
3. And make thy name great;
4. And thou shalt be a blessing:
5. And I will bless them that bless thee,
6. And curse him that curseth thee:
7. And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him” (Genesis 12:1-4).

Our attention is immediately called to the past tense used in the opening of the above passage “**The Lord had said.**” The Holy Spirit explains His reason for this is Acts 7:2: “The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, **before he dwelt in Haran.**” Genesis 11:31 reveals the fact that “Abram went forth from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan,” but he “Came unto Haran, and dwelt there.” Thus we see that God’s call as recorded in Genesis 12:1 was before Abram went into Haran. Therefore, his **stopover** in Haran was not according to the directive will of God. He was called to Canaan, not Haran, and the blessings of God were withheld until he came to the appointed place.

Abram in Haran was in the same relationship to God as the present-day Christian, who accepts free salvation at the cross of

Calvary, is washed in the precious blood, robed in God's infinite righteousness, given the blessed hope of glory, and then **stops short of complete surrender** to God's revealed will. Full fellowship with God and unlimited blessings from God awaited Abram in the land Canaan, but we have no record of God meeting with him in Haran. In like manner, we believers of this present dispensation are unable to "Prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" until we present our "Bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God," which is our "reasonable service" (Romans 12:1-2).

It is easy to see that this covenant between God and Abram was conditional. That is, the blessing was offered on condition that Abram would obey and meet the requirements of God. This he refused to do until after the death of his aged father in Haran (Genesis 11:31-32). Death broke the cord that seemed to be holding Abram out of the land of promise. He took Lot with him, which was not according to the letter of God's instructions; however, God met him when he reached Canaan and then dealt with him later concerning Lot.

The account of God's first fellowship with Abram after he had called him is recorded in Genesis 12, verses 4 to 9. Two things stand out in this passage: "**The Canaanite was then in the land**" and "**The Lord appeared unto Abram**" (verses 6-7). The Canaanite was the arch-enemy of God's people. Imagine how Abram must have felt when he arrived in the land and found it infested with enemies. But such is the Christian's warfare. However, he had nothing to worry about after "The Lord appeared" unto him—"if God be for us who can be against us?"

BETHEL—THE HOUSE OF GOD

I love this part of the story because it pictures Abram, God's called-out man, in communion with the Lord around the altar in Bethel. Bethel means "**House of God.**" It seems that Abram was in the very center of the Lord's will while his tent was pitched at Bethel. There he called upon the name of the Lord.

Just as God had tested Adam in the garden, just as He tested Adam's descendants immediately before the flood, just as He

tested Noah after the flood was over, so He must test Abram in the dispensation of Promise. This is God's method of developing His saint, or His company of saints. As we are tried and triumph, we grow in the Lord and in His work. If we are tried and fail under the strain, it is our fault, because God has promised that, according to His own faithfulness, He will "not suffer" one of His own "to be tempted" above that he is able; "but will with the temptation also make a way to escape," that the yielded child of God "may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Abram's first test in the land of Canaan is recorded in Genesis 12:10: "**And there was a famine in the land.**" His failure is recorded in the same verse, "**And Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there.**" Even though the pastures began to dry up and food and water began to be scarce for both man and beast, there was no good reason for Abram to get excited and leave the place whereunto God had called him. The Lord had already manifested His presence with Abram in the "Enemy-infested" and "Famine-stricken" land of promise, and Abram had no right to believe that God would forsake him. Anyone can stand when there is no test, but God said, "Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand **in the evil day**, and having done all, to stand" (Ephesians 6:13). It was the weak flesh that caused Abram to accept the green fields of Egypt in place of the promise of God; he walked by sight and not by faith.

The Holy Spirit often uses Egypt as a type of the world. The green fields of Egypt were to Abram what the broad and alluring ways of the world are to the Christian. The church of this age doesn't always walk where God wants us to walk. We are a great deal like Abram—it is hard for us to **stay put**. We all need more of the spirit of Job who faced his trial by God's grace saying, "Even though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

As soon as Abram slipped away into Egypt for help, he found himself going deeper and deeper into sin and leading his good wife into sin with him. He was away from the **altar** and away from the **house of God**. This meant that he no longer enjoyed the leadership of the Lord, so he had to trust in his own wisdom; hence, his lies and schemes. We should read with profit the record of Abram's failure and God's grace (Genesis 12:10 to 13:4). The

next two chapters deal with Lot. After Abram was brought back to Bethel, the house of God, he was separated from Lot, whom he had brought along from Ur of the Chaldees against God's instructions.

THE PROMISED SON, ISAAC,

who was born unto Abram and Sarah did not come until Abram, **through testing**, was brought to the place of **believing God** (Genesis 15:1 to 21:8). With the coming of Isaac, the type of Christ, came the **everlasting covenant**, referred to in the opening paragraph of this lesson. Like the conditional covenant of Genesis 12:1-4, it has seven distinct points. It does not do away with the covenant of the twelfth chapter, but includes it, according to unconditional promise. The outline of the everlasting covenant between God and Abram is as follows:

1. "I will make my covenant between me and thee, and
2. I will multiply thee exceedingly, and
3. I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and
4. I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee, and
5. I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee for an **everlasting** covenant, and
6. I will give unto thee, and thy seed after thee, the land, for an everlasting possession, and
7. I will be their God." (Genesis 17:2-8)

With the coming in of this covenant, Abram's name was changed to Abraham. "Abram" means **exalted father**. "Abraham" means **father of a multitude**. The everlasting covenant confirms Abraham as the **father of many nations**, hence the change of his name.

The promised son, Isaac, came at God's "Set time" (Genesis 21:2). It was definitely understood between God and Abraham that the Abrahamic covenant was to be confirmed, or established, with Isaac and not Ishmael (Genesis 17:20-22). The covenant was confirmed to Isaac according to Genesis 26:1-5, and later the same covenant was confirmed unto Isaac's son, Jacob, according

to Genesis 28:12-15. These **promises unto the fathers** were confirmed again by Jesus Christ while He was here in the flesh as a “Minister of the circumcision” (Romans 15:8). They will be realized when the Lord Jesus, the “**Good Shepherd**” of the sheep, through the blood of the **everlasting covenant**, returns as the “**Chief Shepherd**” to reign on the throne of David (John 10:14-15; Hebrews 13:20 and 1 Peter 5:4). This will bring to full realization God’s perfect purpose through the everlasting covenant concerning the **seed** (Genesis 17:7), the **nation** (Genesis 12:2), the **land** (Genesis 17:8), the **king** (Genesis 49:10), and the **city** (2 Samuel 5:7-9).

THE TWELVE TRIBES

descended from Abram through Isaac and Jacob. They were first known as Hebrews, later as Israelites, and still later as Jews. The name “Hebrew” may have come from one of Abram’s forefathers, whose name was “Eber” (Genesis 11:14 with 10:21). The first time the word is used by the Holy Spirit is recorded in Genesis 14:13 where Abram is called the “Hebrew.” Joseph is also spoken of as a Hebrew in Genesis 39:14 and 41:12. The children of Israel were referred to as Hebrews again and again; see Exodus 1:15-19, Deuteronomy 15:12, Jeremiah 34:9, Jonah 1:9. Paul, also declared himself to be an “Hebrew of the Hebrews” (Philippians 3:5). The name “Israelite” came from Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel (Genesis 35:10). And the name “Jew” refers, in the strict sense, to the children of the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin. When the kingdom divided, these two tribes were joined together and the everlasting covenant was confirmed unto Judah (Genesis 49:9-10). This is why the Holy Spirit refers to Christ as “**The Lion of the tribe of Judah**” in connection with the opening of the seven seals in Revelation 5:5.

Thus, we see that all Jews are Hebrews and Israelites, but all Hebrews and Israelites are not Jews. All Israelites were Hebrews, but all Hebrews were not Israelites. Only the Hebrews who are Israelites and Jews are in line for the covenant blessings through the everlasting covenant. The Gentiles who come into the kingdom blessings will rejoice “**With His people**” (Romans 15:8-10).

ISRAEL IN EGYPT

Joseph, the beloved son of Jacob (Genesis 37:3) was sold by his brethren and carried into Egypt. After his faithfulness under severe testing in the courts of Pharaoh, he was made the prime minister of all Egypt, and was next in power and authority to the king himself. Under his inspired leadership Egypt stored up much food supply and was well prepared for the great famine which God sent following the seven years of plenty. The terrible famine throughout Egypt and surrounding countries brought many peoples to Egypt to buy corn and other supplies. It was at this time that Joseph's brethren were forced to humble themselves before the one they had sold as a slave and recognize him as their king. Joseph took a very humble attitude toward his wicked brethren, because he realized that God had a hand in the treatment he had received from them. Notice the language of Genesis 45:1-5.

As long as Joseph lived, the sojourn of the children of Israel in Egypt prospered. They **“Increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them”** (Exodus 1:7). But when a king arose who “knew not Joseph,” it was a different story. The Egyptians afflicted them with burdens, killed their baby boys, and made it impossible for the nation to survive in Egypt. God delivered them from this terrible bondage by his servant Moses through whom He later gave them the law covenant. Exodus 19:1-8 carries the record of the closing of the dispensation of Promise and the acceptance of the law covenant on the part of Israel. Read God's proposition to them in verses 1 to 7, and note their expression of willingness and confidence in verse 8: **“And all the people answered together, and said, all that the Lord hath spoken we will do.”**

As I understand it, the dispensation of promise closed and the dispensation of law opened with verse 8.

THE DISPENSATION OF THE LAW OR THE MOSAIC AGE

*(From Mount Sinai to Mount Calvary)
Exodus 19:8-Matthew 27:35*

The law, which was “given by Moses” (John 1:17), falls into three divisions, each essential to the others, and together forming the Mosaic Covenant. The divisions are distinguished as follows: the **Ten Commandments**, which express the righteous will of God (Exodus 20:1-26); the **Judgments**, governing the social life of Israel (Exodus 21:1-24:11); and the **Ordinances**, governing the religious life of Israel (Exodus 24:12-31:18). All that is written in these eleven chapters is included in what is commonly called “The Law.” A careful study of these exacting demands in the light of James 2:10, which declares that “whosoever shall keep the whole law, yet shall offend in one point, he is guilty of all,” will show us the utter helplessness of any mere human being if he is to be judged under the law.

“WHEREFORE THEN SERVETH THE LAW?

It was **added** because of transgressions, **till the seed should come** to whom the promise was made” (Galatians 3:19). Verses 17 and 18 of this same chapter explain that the law was **added** to the Abrahamic Covenant, being given “four hundred and thirty years” after the confirmation of God’s promise to Abraham and extending to the coming of the “**seed**,” which was promised to him. It is also clear that the law, which was added, “cannot disannul” the promises of God to Abraham.

The added law covenant was to be in force “**till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.**” “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**” (Verse 16). This explains why “Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to **confirm the promises made unto the fathers**” (Romans 15:8). “All the promises of God in Him are Yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (2 Corinthians 1:20).

The “Transgressions” which made the law necessary, were taken away by the One who “was numbered with the transgressors” on the cross of Calvary. Thus He became “the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believeth” (Romans 10:4).

THE LIMITS OF THE LAW

The Law is limited to a specified period of time, which began exactly four hundred and thirty years after the covenant of promise with Abraham and which ended when Christ shed his “blood of the New Testament.” Even though man has marked the Word of God indicating that the Old Testament closes with the last verse of Malachi and that the New Testament opens with the first verse of Matthew, God declares that such is not the case. “For where a testament is, **there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead**: otherwise it is of no strength at all **while the testator liveth**” (Hebrews 9:16-17). Therefore the New Testament could not come into force until the death of Christ, its Testator; and the Old Testament could not “vanish away” until the New came into force. We must conclude that the entire life and ministry of Christ, in His first advent, was under the law dispensation, and that His death ended the old covenant and opened the new.

The Law is limited to a certain nation. That certain nation is “Israel” whom God bore “on eagles’ wings” out of Egyptian bondage. He also delivered to her, through Moses, his proposition concerning the Law and the conditions under which Israel could be made a “peculiar treasure,” a “kingdom of priests” and “an holy nation.” After the children of Israel had heard all the words of God concerning the giving of the Law, they all “answered together, and said, **All that the Lord hath spoken we will do**” (Exodus 19:1-8).

The Law is limited to a certain ministration, or service. Its ministration is one of condemnation and death. Paul says, “I was alive without the Law once; **but when the Commandment came**, sin revived, and **I died**. And the Commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. **For sin, taking oc-**

casion by the Commandment, deceived me and **by it slew me**. Wherefore the Law is holy, and the Commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. **But sin, that it might appear sin, worketh death in me by that which is good**; that sin by the Commandment might become exceeding sinful” (Romans 7:9-13). The Law slew Paul because it demanded more than he could deliver. For this same reason “as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse” (Galatians 3:10).

THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE LAW

With the giving of the Law “every mouth” was stopped and all the world became “guilty before God.” The mouths of the Gentiles were not stopped by the Law but by the three-fold testimony of Romans 1:24-28:

“God also gave them up to uncleanness.” Verse 24.

“God gave them up unto vile affections.” Verse 26.

“God gave them over to a reprobate mind.” Verse 28.

The mouths of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah were stopped by the Law (Romans 3:19) because they were the only ones who were under the Law. Therefore, after the Law was given both Jews and Gentiles were proved to be “under sin” and neither could open their mouths in their defense before God.

The Law also serves as “**our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith**” (Galatians 3:24). This means that the Law demands so much that we are forced to turn to a substitute. We look into God’s perfect standard, the Law, and we see ourselves far short of the glory of God. We test our flesh under the demands of the Law and we find that, even though the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak.

“WHAT THE LAW COULD NOT DO,

in that it was weak **through the flesh**, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us,

who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit” (Romans 8:3-4).

Let it be clearly understood that the Law which God added is absolutely necessary in the carrying out of His purpose and plan for the ages, yet it has no power, whatsoever, **to save** or **to keep** or **to perfect** the believer. Its usefulness ends when we meet the crucified and risen Christ.

THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE OR THE CHURCH AGE

(From the Crucifixion of Christ to His Return in Glory)
John 1:17

While the Age of Grace stands out in direct contrast to the Dispensation of Law, which immediately precedes it, it is linked up with the Dispensation of Promise **through the promised seed which is Jesus Christ**. This means that John 1:17 should be studied in comparison with Galatians 3:16-19. The “Grace and Truth” which “came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17) is the fulfillment of the “promises made” to Abraham (Galatians 3:16).

The parenthetical period covered by the Age of Law offered nothing that could change the promises “confirmed before of God in Christ.” The law was simply **added because of transgressions** “till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made” (Galatians 3:19).

CHRIST CAME

in the “fulness of the time” and He was “made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Galatians 4:4-6).

While the four gospel accounts present Jesus Christ as the “**Savior**” and “**King**” of prophecy, they do not reveal His present work under the title of “**Head** over all things to the Church which is His body.”

The Messiah-ship of Jesus is clearly set forth by the prophets under two general lines. He is pictured as the **suffering Savior** (Isaiah 53). He is also seen in prophecy as the **powerful King** (Isaiah 11). The same two pictures are drawn by the Psalmist David. In Psalms 22 the Holy Spirit portrays the **crucifixion scene** and in Psalms 24 the “**King of Glory**” appears. Many times over we see these same two lines of prophecy standing out in various types. For instance, **the offering of Isaac** in Genesis, chapter 22, typifies Christ’s death on the cross, and **the return of King David**, after the death of Absalom, as recorded in 2 Samuel, chapter 19, is a type of the second coming of Christ, the true

David, to take His place on the throne that is now occupied by the usurper, Satan.

The first advent of Jesus Christ ushered in the Dispensation of Grace and Truth. The promises of God to Abraham and to the fathers were “Yea” and “Amen” in the promised seed which is Christ. Blessings for “all families of the earth” were offered through Christ on a basis of Grace at His first advent. This explains the testimony of the apostle Paul during the Acts period as recorded in Galatians 3:6-9: “Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are **the children of Abraham**. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would **justify the heathen** through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed **with faithful Abraham**.” This is the message which God gave through Paul to “**the Jew first, and also to the Greek (Gentile)**” (Romans 1:16). This is also in keeping with Romans 15:8-10: “Now I say that Jesus Christ was a **minister of the circumcision** for the truth of God, **to confirm the promises made unto the fathers**: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the **Gentiles**, and sing unto thy name. And again He saith, Rejoice ye Gentiles, **with His people**.”

The above paragraph reveals the fact that the Scriptures quoted carry a definite **Grace message**. However, it is clear that this Grace message was **made known to men of other ages**. Therefore, we must conclude that there is a distinction between this Grace message, given to the Jew first and also to the Gentile, and the Grace message revealed to Paul according to Ephesians 3:1-9 and Colossians 1:24-28. The **Kingdom message** of both the old and the new covenant was offered on a basis of **Grace** before the **Body message** concerning the Mystery began to be **magnified** by the Holy Spirit through Paul.

THE DAY OF PENTECOST

was a very significant day in the religious life of national Israel. The word “Pentecost” means fiftieth (day). The spiritual significance of this day can be more easily understood after a review of

Leviticus, chapter 23. Notice particularly verses 15 to 17 of this old testament chapter. “And ye shall count unto you from the **morrow after the Sabbath**, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the waive-offering: **seven** Sabbaths shall be complete: even unto the **morrow after the seventh Sabbath** shall ye number **fifty days**: and ye shall offer a new **meat-offering** unto the Lord. Ye shall bring out of your habitations **two** waive-loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of **fine flour**: they shall be baked **with leaven**: they are the first-fruits unto the Lord.”

The day of Pentecost necessarily had to come on the **fiftieth day** after the sacrificial offering of Christ on the cross, because it is the anti-type of the “new meat-offering,” the two waive-loaves,” which are spoken of as the “first fruits unto the Lord” (Leviticus 23:16-17). Since there were two waive-loaves in the Levitical type there was of necessity two different groups (Jews and circumcised Gentiles) in the Pentecostal company which made up the anti-type revealed in Acts 2. These facts seem to teach us that the Holy Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, was not beginning the formation of the “new man,” in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile, but on the other hand was fulfilling an old testament type by bringing the Jew and the Gentile together in a church which recognized both the Jew and the Gentile and gave the Jew the preeminence over the Gentile. These facts are clearly brought out in such Scriptures as Acts 2:10 with 11:19, 10:28 and Romans 3:1-2, as compared with Ephesians 2:14-18 and Colossians 3:10-11.

The fact that Pentecost marks the descent of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of His present dispensation does not suggest that the day of Pentecost is the birthday of the **Church which is Christ’s Body**. The ministry of the Holy Spirit during the Age of Grace includes more than just the calling out of the Body of Christ.

The close student of the Word of God can not apply 2 Timothy 2:15 to the ministry of the Holy Spirit without recognizing His three-fold ministry during this present age. These three periods are distinguished as follows: The period covered by the Book of Acts, another period beginning with Acts 28:28 and extending to the rapture of the Church which is His Body, and finally the

70th week, of Daniel 9, which will begin with the rapture and extend to the coming of the Lord in Glory. Most every Bible student will agree that the ministry of the Holy Spirit continues with Israel on the earth during the tribulation period, after the Body of Christ is glorified and joined to the Head, then why should it be considered such a strange thing to suppose that He had a definitely ordained ministry to perform toward National Israel **immediately preceding** the formation of the Body?

THREE PERIODS

are distinguished in the present dispensation of Grace. They are as follows:

1. From the crucifixion to the setting aside of National Israel (Acts 28:28).
2. From the setting aside of National Israel to the catching up of the Body of Christ (Philippians 3:20-21).
3. From the catching up of the Church which is Christ's Body to the return of Christ in glory (Revelation 19:11-16).

A careful study of these three periods, **within the dispensation of Grace**, will bring to our attention:

1. God's dealings with National Israel during the book of Acts period, or the first period mentioned above.
2. God's dealings with the Church, which is the Body of Christ, or the period in which we are now living, the second period mentioned above.
3. God's dealings with Israel and the nations during the Great Tribulation period, which will follow immediately after the catching up of the Body, or the third period mentioned above.

Even though **three** distinct periods of ministry are recognized during this present age of grace, we must understand that only **two** different companies of saints are dealt with. The **first** and the **last** of these three different periods of the Holy Spirit's ministry is directed toward **national Israel**, while the **middle** period of His ministry is given to the **church, which is the Body of Christ**. In other words, the present **mystery dispensation** is a parenthetical period which fits in between God's dealings with national Israel during the Acts period and His dealings with national Israel during the tribulation period.

There is no set day when this "Mystery" Dispensation began and there is no set day when it shall end. However, it is clear that Paul was the very first man to receive the truth concerning the mystery; therefore it seems incredible that it could have had its beginning, except in the mind of God, prior to the revelation made known to Paul. God may have given the **Body truth** to Paul before He moved upon Paul to write it down for our learning, but the Word plainly says that the dispensation of the mystery was "hid from ages and from generations" prior to Paul's day (Colossians 1:25-26).

A DETAILED STUDY OF THE THREE PERIODS

mentioned above will help us to rightly divide the Word of truth on the subjects of miracles, signs and wonders; water baptism, the Lord's supper, anointing with oil, divine healing, etc. The Holy Spirit does not give the same message to National Israel during the Acts period and the tribulation period as that which He gives to the Body of Christ between these two periods. The **hope and calling** of Israel are not the same as that of the Body of Christ. That which God offered to Israel through the Holy Spirit during the Acts period was rejected by the nation and is therefore withdrawn until after the completion of the Body of Christ. This is why it is impossible to make the **external things**, which are associated with the Kingdom message of the Acts period and the tribulation period fit into the "Mystery of the gospel" (Ephesians 6:19) revealed through Paul.

Before we go into a scriptural comparison of the three periods of the church age let us look into the scriptural meaning of the

word “**church.**” It comes from the Greek word “ekklesia” which means “to call out of,” or an assembly of “called out ones.” This word is used 112 times between the opening verse of Matthew and the closing of Revelation. Each of these times it is translated “church,” and has reference to a company of called out saints.

The word “church” is used in connection with the nation of Israel when she was called out of Egypt and assembled in the wilderness (Acts 7:38). Jesus Christ uses the word again in His sermon on the mount (Matthew 18:17). In both of these instances the Holy Spirit is referring to a company of called out saints who were assembled before the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. They were referred to as the church, but certainly these two churches could not be one and the same as the **church which is the Body of Christ.**

The members of the “Church in the wilderness” and the members of the church referred to in Matthew 18:17 could not have been baptized by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit had not then been given “Because that Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:38-39). **After Christ ascended** to the Father in glory and **after the Holy Spirit descended** to the earth on the day of Pentecost, members began to be added to the church of Acts 2:47. This was in fulfillment of the promise of Christ, Himself, “**Upon this rock I will build my church**” (Matthew 16:18).

THE CHURCH, DURING THE ACTS PERIOD,

was blessed of God with an addition of 3000 souls in one day (Acts 2:41). Just a little while later “about 5000” men heard the word and believed (Acts 4:4). This number was “multiplied greatly” according to Acts 5:7.

These thousands of converts were “**added to the church**” by the Lord Himself (Acts 2:47). There is no record of a membership roll, a church vow, or any voting on the part of the congregation. It seems that the Lord did the adding when they “gladly received His word” and were “baptized” (Acts 2:38 with Acts 2:41 and 2:47).

The message borne by the Holy Spirit through Spirit-filled men to those that were added to this church was accompanied by “signs” following (Acts 3:1-11; 5:12-16; 19:11-12; and 28:7-9).

This was necessary because the message was given to the Jews and “the Jews require a sign” (1 Corinthians 1:22). The kingdom message always carried with it signs, miracles and wonders. Notice the message given by Jesus (Matthew 4:23-24) and by His disciples (Matthew 10:1-8). This kingdom message borne first by our Lord, and then by His disciples is in perfect harmony with the commission given to the eleven by the Risen Christ (Mark 16:14-20). This same truth is brought out in Hebrews 2:3-4.

A bona-fide offer of the kingdom was made to Israel during the thirty year period covered by the book of Acts. In chapter 3, verses 19 to 26, the kingdom message was preached and the things “spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets” were promised on the condition that the nation of Israel would repent. In chapter 5, verses 29 to 32, the testimony was borne by the Holy Spirit that the Risen Christ was a “Prince and Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel.” Again, in Acts 28:17-24, the apostle Paul declared himself to be bound with a chain “for the hope of Israel” and he preached to them from “morning until evening,” “persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses and the prophets.”

Throughout this entire period of transition God made a difference between the Jew and the Gentile (Acts 11:19; 21:20-25, and 28:25-28).

The two outstanding ministers of the Acts period were Peter and Paul. The Holy Spirit distinguishes between their messages. In Galatians 2:7-9 we read that the “**gospel of the circumcision**” was committed unto Peter, and that the “**gospel of the uncircumcision**” was committed unto Paul. The brethren agreed upon this divine plan, shook hands with each other and Paul with his co-workers went “unto the heathen” (Gentile). This helps us to harmonize Peter’s statement, “Repent, and **be baptized** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38) and that of Paul, “Christ sent me **not to baptize**, but to preach the gospel” (1 Corinthians 1:17).

Throughout the entire thirty years covered by the book of Acts, God had dealings with Israel as a nation. His last appeal to national Israel is recorded in Acts 28:17-28. A careful comparison of Isaiah 6:9-10 and Matthew 13:13-15 with Acts 28:25-28 will

show that Acts 28:28 is a definite turning point in the ministry of the Holy Spirit and marks the **setting aside of National Israel and her Kingdom hope**. This move left the way open for the emphasis to be placed on the calling out of the church which is the Body of Christ, the “new man.”

THE CHURCH, AFTER ACTS 28:28,

made no more appeals to Israel, as a nation, concerning the kingdom of heaven on earth. Since the turning point at the close of the Acts period, the Holy Spirit has centered His ministry on the calling out from among the **Jews and the Gentiles** those who are chosen from “Before the foundation of the world” to be members of Christ’s Body (Ephesians 1:3-6).

Paul, who was bound with a chain for “**The hope of Israel**” during the Acts period (Acts 28:20), was an “ambassador in bonds” for the “**Mystery of the gospel**” after the Acts period (Ephesians 6:19-20).

The present day church, which is the body of Christ, is not made up of **Jews and proselytes**, as in Acts 2:10, but it is the “New man” in which there is “**Neither Greek nor Jew**” (Colossians 3:10-11). Neither is the church of this dispensation made up of **Jews and Gentiles**, as in Acts 21:20,25, but in it **they are “Both one”** and the “Middle wall of partition” has been broken down (Ephesians 2:14-18). The saved Jew and the saved Gentile of this dispensation are no longer recognized as Jews and Gentiles, but as sinners saved by grace.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION PERIOD

is that period of time referred to by Jeremiah as “**the time of Jacob’s trouble**” (Jeremiah 30:4-7). The Holy Spirit was careful to designate this period as a time of “**Jacob’s**” trouble and not “Israel’s” trouble. This proves that it is the natural and not the spiritual seed of Abraham that is to pass through the fires of the great tribulation (compare Genesis 32:28 with Genesis 45:26, 28). Note carefully how the Holy Spirit declares that it was **Jacob’s** heart that fainted (verse 26) but he was spoken of as **Israel** in his revived state of faith (verse 28).

This period of trouble is referred to by our Lord in Matthew

24:15-21. He declares that it will be a **“great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.”**

The “seventy weeks” determined upon the people of Israel and the holy city (Daniel 9:24-27) can not possibly include the dispensation of the “Mystery,” which was **kept secret from men and ages** prior to the apostle Paul and the revelation which he received (Colossians 1:24-26). The church of our present age, or dispensation, falls between the closing of the 69th week and the opening of the 70th week. Interpreting the 70 weeks to be weeks of years and seeing that 69 of the weeks of years ended with the cutting off of the Messiah, we conclude that the “one week” of Daniel 9:27 is yet future. This one **week** is the **70th week** and will not be fulfilled until after the rapture of the Body of Christ and even then it will not continue through the full seven years because of the cutting short spoken of by our Lord in Matthew 24:22. This 70th week is determined upon Israel and the holy city and therefore can not begin until God begins to deal again with National Israel, and that time will not come until He finishes with the Body of Christ.

The Jewish year has only 360 days. This seven-year period spoken of in Daniel 9:27 is to be divided in half. **“In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease.”** This means that the anti-Christ, of the tribulation period, will permit the people of Israel to worship according to their customs for the first three and one-half years of the 70th week. After the three and one-half years of peaceful worship on the part of National Israel the anti-Christ will break his covenant and usher in the **“overspreading of abominations.”** The last half of this 70th week will be the “great tribulation.” It is covered by such Scriptures as Revelation 11:1-11, 12:6,14 and Daniel 7:24-26.

During this time of terrible trouble the anti-Christ, the Beast of Revelation 13:1-10, and the false prophet of Revelation 13:11-18 will work together in the energy of the dragon against God’s chosen people Israel and the Kingdom Message which God will offer through the churches of the tribulation period. “A great mul-

titude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues” will be saved out of this great tribulation and will stand before the Lamb, “clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands” (Revelation 7:9-14). Of this company of saints a certain number must **“endure unto the end”** (Revelation 24:13). Those who die for their testimony will be raised at the close of the great tribulation and made to reign with Christ in glorified bodies throughout the millennium (Revelation 20:4-6). Those who endure to the end will “look upon” Him “whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born” (Zechariah 12:10).

These two companies of tribulation saints are suggested by two different passages of Scripture found in the book of Genesis. Genesis 13:14-18 refers to Abraham’s seed as the **“dust of the earth”** while Genesis 15:1-6 refers to Abraham’s seed as the **“stars” of heaven**. The Holy Spirit carries out this same thought in Hebrews 11:12: “Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many **as the stars of the sky** in multitude, and **as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable.**” It seems that the **star seed** of Abraham are to be glorified and inherit the city of Hebrews 11:13-19 with Hebrews 12:22-24 and Revelation 21:9-27, and that the **sand seed** of Abraham are to inherit the “Land” which was promised to Abraham according to Genesis 13:14-18. His natural posterity will receive the chosen land and enjoy it throughout the millennium.

“THE CHURCHES”

of Revelation 22:16 will receive testimony concerning the **“I am”** who alone could be called the **“root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.”** The churches referred to in this verse could hardly be other than the seven churches of Revelation, chapters 2 and 3. A careful study of the seven messages to the seven churches of these two chapters will prove that the messengers could not be bearing a testimony to the **“Gospel of the Grace of God”** and the **Headship of Christ over His Body which is the church of our present dispensation.** At the conclu-

sion of each of these letters the Holy Spirit makes a special offer to the “overcomer.” He says:

“**To him that overcometh** will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (Revelation 2:7). Compare Genesis 2:9 and Revelation 22:2.

“**He that overcometh** shall not be hurt of the second death” (Revelation 2:11). Compare Revelation 20:6.

“**To him that overcometh** will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it” (Revelation 2:17). Compare Exodus 16:32-34 and Revelation 12:13-17.

“**And he that overcometh**, and keepeth my works **unto the end**, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall **rule them with a rod of iron**; as the vessel of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the **morning star**” (Revelation 2:26-28). Compare Psalms 2:7-9, Numbers 24:17 and Revelation 22:16.

“**He that overcometh**, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels” (Revelations 3:5). Compare Daniel 12:1, Revelation 13:8 and 2 Samuel 23:1-8.

“**Him that overcometh** will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the **city of my God, which is New Jerusalem**, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name” (Revelation 3:12). Compare Revelation 21:2-3,9-27, and Hebrews 11:10-16.

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in **His** throne” (Revelation 3:21). Compare Revelation 20:4 and 2 Samuel 7:12-13.

A careful comparison of these seven messages with the truth of Ephesians 2:8-10, Titus 3:4-7 and Colossians 2:9-10 will prove that the Holy Spirit is not addressing the saints of our dispensation in the seven letters of Revelation, chapters 2 and 3. These letters are definitely linked up with the **Kingdom Message** of the old testament prophets, the gospel accounts, the book of Acts, the epistles of Peter, James and John and the writings of Paul during the Acts period; but it seems extremely difficult to link these letters with Paul’s **post-Acts epistles** which deal with the **revelation of the mystery**.

The number seven, as used in Scripture, represents any complete number. Therefore, the seven churches of Revelation could mean **any number of churches** through whom the Holy Spirit will minister between the rapture of the Body of Christ and the setting up of the kingdom.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

when He comes in glory to set up His kingdom will bring to an end the period of great tribulation. This will be the end of the present Dispensation of Grace and the work of the Holy Spirit which began at Pentecost will be completed. The important thing about rightly dividing the word of truth, as it pertains to the Grace Dispensation, is the recognition of a Kingdom Message at both the **beginning of the age** and at the **end of the age** with the message of the glorious gospel of grace **fitted in between**. The kingdom truth which was rejected by **National Israel** during the Acts period will be accepted **by the remnant** of the tribulation period and a nation shall be born in a day (Isaiah 66:7-13). During the period between the rejection of the Kingdom on the part of National Israel and the acceptance of the Kingdom by the remnant, the Holy Spirit is calling out the church which is the Body of Christ, of which every saved person of this present dispensation is a member.

While the Holy Spirit is calling out the church of the mystery dispensation, the nations of the world are getting the stage ready for the anti-Christ and his reign of terror. The wars and rumors of wars of the present day, accompanied by famines, pestilences and earthquakes go to make up what the Scripture calls **“the beginning of sorrows”** (Matthew 24:4-8). As members of the Body of Christ, we are not to be disturbed by the roar of Babylon all about us. We have Christ in us **“the hope of glory;”** soon we shall be caught up to meet Him in the air. Let us look up and wait with patience for His coming.

APOSTLES, ELDERS AND PROPHETS

are distinguished in the Word as follows:

In addition to the **“twelve” apostles**, who were called and commissioned by our Lord during his earthly ministry (Matthew 10:1-8), there were **others appointed by the Lord after his ascension** (Ephesians 4:11). The names of the twelve are given in Matthew 10:2-4, including Judas, whose place was filled after his fall by Matthias (Acts 1:26). Those who were appointed by the ascended Lord were **Paul and Barnabas**, first called so in Acts 14:4 and 14. **Andronicus and Junia** are referred to in Romans 15:7 as Paul’s “kinsmen” and “fellow prisoners” who were “of note among the apostles” and who were “in Christ” before Paul. In 1 Thessalonians 1:1 Paul associates **Silvanus and Timothy** with himself and tells us in the 2nd chapter, verses 1 and 2, that they were bold to speak “the Gospel of God with much contention.” **Epaphroditus** is mentioned by Paul in Philippians 2:25 as his “brother, and companion in labor, and fellow-soldier” and also a “messenger” to the church at Philippi. **Sosthenes and Apollos** are certainly included with Paul in 1 Corinthians 4:9 where he said “I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.” Compare 1 Corinthians 1:1 and 4:6.

The word **“elders”** is frequently used in the old testament in reference to the leaders of Israel and it always means an elderly man or an old man. For instance, God told Moses to “gather the elders of Israel together” and give them His plan concerning their escape from Egypt (Exodus 3:16-18). Christ was accused of

transgressing “the tradition of the elders” during his earthly ministry (Matthew 15:1) and the fact that He suffered at the hands of these elders is made plain by Matthew 16:21. They were always associated with the “chief priests, scribes and Pharisees.” However, it pleased God to recognize “elders” in the Acts period church (Acts 11:30 and 15:2-23). Elders were called together by the apostle Paul according to Acts 20:17 and the work which he assigned unto them was feeding and overseeing the flock (Acts 20:28). He also instructed Titus to “ordain elders” (Titus 1:5). It is clear that elders are made or “set” in the church by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28), yet we are told that they were ordained “in every church (assembly)” and “in every city” (Acts 14:23 and Titus 1:5). It is also clear that the ministry of the “**bishop**” (1 Timothy 3:1) is the same as that of the elder. In fact, the word “bishop” means overseer. We note also that there were “**business**” elders appointed to “set in order the things that are wanting” (Titus 1:5) and “**preaching**” elders “who labor in the Word and doctrine” (1 Timothy 5:17). Even though these elders were closely associated with the apostles, their office was not the same as that of the chosen apostles. It is to be noted that the bishop or elder must be “a man” and “the husband of one wife.” **Surely a woman, regardless of her gifts and qualifications, could never be the husband of one wife.** This is in keeping with admonition of 1 Timothy 2:11-12: “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.”

The “**prophet**” of the Scriptures is so called, not because he foretold, but because he spoke **for** God. This fact is made clear by careful comparison of Exodus 4:16 and Exodus 7:1. The Spirit of God testified through the prophets (Nehemiah 9:30). The Lord made Himself known to the prophets in visions and dreams (Numbers 12:6). But the man of God in this dispensation is made perfect, or complete, and “thoroughly furnished unto all good works” by the inspired Word of God which is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction,” and “for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The prophet, Agabus, foretold the “great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar” (Acts 11:28) and by the power of

the Spirit related beforehand how that the Jews of Jerusalem would bind Paul and “deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles” (Acts 21:10-11). However, this does not mean that a prophet is necessarily one who **foretells the truth of God**. One who merely **tells forth the Word** is none the less God’s prophet, or spokesman. Prophets are included in the gifts of 1 Corinthians 12:28 and Ephesians 4:11. Divine directions concerning the orderly exercise of these gifts are recorded in 1 Corinthians 14. The present day church has prophets who are divinely gifted in telling forth the truth, but none of today’s prophets are inspired to foretell future events. God has told us all we need to know about the future in His revealed Word of truth, and He has given us the Holy Spirit to guide us into “all truth.” We need more preachers who will honestly and fearlessly tell forth the truth and all the truth, but we do not need those who claim some special revelation from God which is not revealed in His Word.

WHAT ABOUT ORDINANCES?

Most of our present day churchmen contend for what they call the two church ordinances, **water baptism** and **the Lord’s supper**.

The scriptural meaning of the word “ordinance” is not hard to find. The word itself means a civil, ceremonial or ecclesiastical statute, or law. It is used in Exodus 12:14 in connection with the commemoration of the “**Lord’s Passover**” and in Malachi 3:7 in connection with “**tithes and offerings**.” Again we have an ordinance set up by King David concerning the rewards for his soldiers and for those who tarried by the stuff (1 Samuel 30:24-25). There were many other old testament ordinances which God imposed on his people. Zacharias and Elisabeth “were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless” (Luke 1:5-6). The “apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem” ordained certain “decrees” which were delivered to the churches of the Acts period to establish them in the faith (Acts 16:4-5). This word “decrees” comes from exactly the same Greek word as the word “ordinances” in Colossians 2:14 and Ephesians 2:15.

Since we know of a surety that the “decrees” or “ordinances” of Acts 16:4 were blotted out, taken out of the way and nailed to His cross (Colossians 2:14), we can understand Paul’s question in Colossians 2:20-21: **“Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?”**

There was a place for ordinances in the old testament times and during the period covered by the book of Acts because God was then dealing with National Israel. And, as I understand the Word, God will use the ordinances again during the tribulation period when He offers the kingdom again to his chosen people. But in this present Dispensation of the Mystery there is no room for ordinances. “For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sin of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead” (Colossians 2:9-12). Thus we, as members of the Body of Christ, have experienced a spiritual circumcision, a spiritual baptism, a spiritual burial into death, and a spiritual resurrection into life. These are things that cannot be obtained through carnal ordinances and there is no scriptural suggestion that these spiritual realities are typified by the ordinances imposed upon the saints of this age by the commandments and doctrines of men.

The Holy Spirit has issued a timely warning in Colossians 2:8: **“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”** It is utterly impossible for a child of God to join a **denominational** or an **interdenominational** church organization without following after the tradition of men. God is building His church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. We should be satisfied with the membership which He gives us, through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, in the church which is the Body of his dear Son (1 Corinthians 12:13

with Ephesians 4:4-6).

The Holy Spirit has also given us some timely truth in 2 Timothy 2:15 and 1 Corinthians 2:12-13. Many of God's dear children are content to **listen** and they forget that God says **study**. It is one thing to take what the preacher says. It is entirely another thing to search the Scriptures and find out what God has said. Too many Christians are like the little birds which are too young to leave the nest in search of food and therefore open their mouths to receive whatever the mother bird drops in. They sit without an open Bible and without searching the Scriptures to receive whatever spiritual counsel the preacher has to offer and whatever doctrine is contained in their denominational handbooks, or their interdenominational statements of faith.

As we approach the closing days of the age, the saints are going to need to be "rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith" (Colossians 2:7). We are going to need our "loins girt about with truth" and not with the doctrines of men. We are going to need to wield the "sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" and not the flimsy weapons offered to the saints by the religious corporations of this age. We must have "the whole armour of God" if we stand against the principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, and let us remember God says "Be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Ephesians 6:10-18).

We will not forget Paul's last message to Timothy: "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the **things that thou hast heard of me** among many witnesses, the same commit thou to **faithful men**, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:1-2). The denominational and the interdenominational hirelings will never give **all** of Paul's message. Such a commission demands "faithful men." We may well remember that "the things" which Timothy heard of Paul were not things pertaining to the Kingdom Message with accompanying miracles, signs and wonders, and with ordinances which were ordained by the apostles of the Jerusalem church. They were things pertaining to the **Mystery** which was revealed to Paul and was not made known to men of other ages.

Paul's message concerning Grace and Grace alone as it is

related to the calling out of the Body of Christ doesn't leave room for the man-made creeds and programs of the organized churches, therefore, it will never be popular among the masses. This is why "faithful men" and not "hirelings" are needed today.

WATER BAPTISM AND WHY?

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bare: **He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire**" (Matthew 3:11). John preached the "Baptism of repentance to **all the people of Israel**" (Acts 13:24), but we do not find any scriptural suggestion that John ever preached to the Gentiles. His message was "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" and his ministry was in direct fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (Matthew 3:1-3).

It is clear from the above Scriptures that John understood that Christ was to come after him to baptize **with the Holy Ghost and with fire**. The baptism of the Holy Ghost began on the day of Pentecost, but the baptism with fire will not come until the close of the thousand-year reign of Christ when the heavens and the earth shall be purged according to 2 Peter 3:10-13.

Why Was Jesus Baptized?

The Holy Spirit was very careful to tell us just why John came baptizing with water and just why Jesus, Himself, was baptized by the hands of John in the river Jordan. He gave us this information through the testimony of John the Baptist, himself, who said, "I knew Him (Christ) not: **but that He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water**" (John 1:31). Thus it is clear that water baptism was necessary in connection with the manifestation of Christ to **Israel**. However, it does not necessarily follow that water baptism is linked with the manifestation of the Lord Jesus to "**Gentiles in the flesh,**" which were "**At that time aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise,** having no hope, and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:11-

12). Back in the days of John the Baptist, Gentiles were **alienated strangers**, “But now in Christ Jesus” they are “**Made nigh by the blood of Christ**” (Ephesians 2:13).

“The blood,” by which the “Far off” Gentiles are now made nigh, necessitated a **second baptism** for Jesus Christ. Long after He had been baptized in water, He said, “I have a baptism **to be** baptized with; and how am I straitened (pressed) **till it be accomplished!**” (Luke 12:50). The fact that this second baptism had such a terrific straitening, or pressing, effect upon the Saviour suggests that it is the same baptism which He refers to in Matthew 20:22-23, where He said, “**Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?**” Surely, this can be nothing other than His baptism into “**death,**” which He experienced on the cross of Calvary, and which the present day believer experiences when he is “Buried with Him by baptism into death” (Romans 6:3-4). There is a vast difference between the **water baptism**, which Christ entered into with John the Baptist, that He might be made manifest to Israel as their **King**; and the **death baptism**, which He entered into on the cross, that He might be the **Saviour** of the whole world.

Water baptism was included in the program of Christ’s earthly ministry. This is evidenced by the testimony borne in John 4:1-2: “When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, **(though Jesus, Himself, baptized not, but His disciples)**, He left Judaea, and departed into Galilee.” Since both John the Baptist and Jesus preached a Kingdom message (Matthew 3:1-3 with Matthew 4:12-23) and since they were both sent to the people of Israel (Acts 13:24-25 with Matthew 15:24) and since they both labored to make national Israel behold and receive her King, it is no strange thing that water baptism is practiced in connection with both of their ministries. Wherever we find a bona fide Kingdom message being given, we always find the use of water.

The So-Called Great Commission

of Matthew 28:19 was given by the risen Christ to the “Apostles whom He had chosen” (Acts 1:2), and to whom He had said, “**I**

appoint unto you a Kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me" (Luke 22:29). I do not know why churchmen have designated this particular passage of Scripture as the "Great commission." It seems to me that 2 Timothy 2:1-2 would be a much more appropriate passage to single out as God's great commission for this present dispensation of the mystery. However, the Holy Spirit has not designated any particular portion of His Word as the great commission; therefore, we consider it dangerous to follow "After the tradition of men" along this or any other doctrinal line (Colossians 2:8).

Under this commission to the "Eleven" and to Matthias, who later took the place of Judas and was numbered with the eleven, the risen Lord said: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: **Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:** and, lo, I am with you always, **even unto the end of the world (age).**" We call special attention to three very important things which the Lord has included in this divine commission:

1. These teachers were to go to "**All nations.**"
2. They were to teach the observance of "**All things whatsoever Christ had commanded them, the teachers, to observe.**"
3. He promised to be with them to the "**End of the world (age).**"

This commission was never fully carried out by the "Twelve" to whom it was given: it has not been fully carried out by any other company of saints since the days of the twelve apostles, and it will not be fully carried out until the "Hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel" preach it again during the period of "Great tribulation" immediately preceding the "End" (Matthew 24:13-14).

"**Great salvation**" through this kingdom message "**first began to be spoken by the Lord**" and it was "**confirmed**" unto the

Hebrew believers **“by them that heard Him,”** namely the **“Twelve,”** and God was with them **“bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will”** (Hebrews 2:34). Just **“after the Lord had spoken unto them”** (the eleven) the words of the so-called **“great commission,”** **He was “received up into heaven,** and sat on the right hand of God. **And they went forth, and preached everywhere,** the Lord working with them, and **confirming the Word with signs following”** (Mark 16:19-20).

Water Baptism During the Acts Period and Why?

That period of time covered by the Book of the Acts of the Apostles (approximately 30 years immediately following Pentecost) is the period during which the kingdom message of the Lord was **“confirmed”** with **“signs following”** (Mark 16:19-20 and Hebrews 2:3-4), according to the commission of Matthew 28:19-20 and Mark 16:14-18.

During that period, the Holy Spirit was offering the kingdom message to Israel. The nation had rejected and crucified her King, but His prayer for them, on the day of His crucifixion, **“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do,”** was answered when the nation was given **another chance to accept the Messiah under the dispensation of the Holy Spirit.** When they rejected His offer of the Kingdom they committed the **“Unpardonable sin”** of Matthew 12:31-32, and the nation was set aside until after the calling out of the **“Church, which is His body,”** and then the above mentioned kingdom message will again be given to all nations, after which, the Age of Grace will end and the Kingdom of Heaven will be set up.

Water baptism was preached and practiced by Spirit-filled men throughout the Acts period. The Holy Spirit said, through Peter, **“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost”** (Acts 2:38). As I understand the Word, the baptism of this verse is **“Water baptism,”** and it was essential to salvation. Let us remember, however, that the Spirit was here addressing the **“House of Israel”** and **“when they**

(members of the house of Israel) heard” Peter’s message concerning the risen Christ “they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, **what shall we do?**” (Acts 2:36-37). God was still endeavoring to make Christ “**manifest to Israel**” as their King, therefore **water baptism was still in His program**. While the Holy Spirit was giving the message of Acts 2:38, He was also telling Israel about “**The Times of Refreshing**” and “The Restitution of All Things, **Which God Had Spoken by the Mouth of All His Holy Prophets Since the World Began**” (Acts 3:19-21). The “times of refreshing” Acts 3:19) **could not be the same** as “The Hope of Glory” (Colossians 1:27), and the “restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His Holy Prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21) **could not be the same** as “The Mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations” (Colossians 1:25-26). These simple comparisons of “spiritual things with spiritual” will prove that the Kingdom Message of John the Baptist, and of Christ, and of the “Twelve” was continued on into the opening chapters of the Book of the Acts. This is why Peter and the “eleven” preached and practiced water baptism.

Cornelius and his household were “uncircumcised” Gentiles (Acts 11:1-3), yet God saved them, gave them the Holy Ghost, and “**put no difference**” between them and the Jews upon whom He poured out the Holy Ghost at Pentecost (Acts 15:7-11). These are the first of a chosen number of Gentiles who are elected to be “A people for His name,” and their call is in **full agreement with “The words of the prophets,”** and they are to be linked with the building again of “**the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down**” (Acts 15:13-18). This links Cornelius with the kingdom hope and, therefore, accounts for his water baptism of Acts 10:47-48.

Paul, the preacher, the apostle and the teacher of the Gentiles (2 Timothy 1:11), did not preach water baptism at any time, yet during the Acts period he **practiced baptism with water** (1 Corinthians 1:14-16). During this period, Paul was an “able minister of the New Covenant” (2 Corinthians 3:6), and, as such, he was guided by the Holy Spirit to make a difference between

the “Jew” and the “Gentile” (Romans 1:16, Romans 3:1-2, 1 Corinthians 9:19-22, etc.). His Acts period ministry to the people of Israel included “None other things than those which the Prophets and Moses did say should come” (Acts 26:22). This accounts for Paul’s recognition of both **water baptism** (1 Corinthians 1:14-17) and **Holy Spirit baptism** (1 Corinthians 12:13) during the Acts period, and for his clear cut statement, after the Acts period, that there is just “**One Baptism**” (Ephesians 4:5). As I understand the Word, this one baptism is Holy Spirit baptism and not water baptism.

John the Baptist knew only **one baptism** and that was water baptism. During the Acts period **two baptisms** are recognized—water baptism and Holy Spirit baptism. In our present church age, we have only **one scriptural baptism** and that is Holy Spirit baptism (1 Corinthians 12:13 with Ephesians 4:5). During the period of tribulation at the end of the Grace Dispensation, Holy Spirit baptism will continue toward Israel, as during the Acts period, and water baptism may be recognized again.

A summary of the scriptural use of water baptism in God’s plan and program for Israel will clearly distinguish three different groups of “**labourers together with God.**” These three groups are set forth in the Scriptures as follows:

1. John, the Baptist, and the earthly ministry of Christ with His twelve disciples (Matthew 3:11 and John 4:1-2). These labored under the old (law) covenant.
2. The Acts period ministry of the Holy Spirit through Peter and the eleven (Acts 2:38 and 10:46-48). These labored under the new covenant.
3. The Acts period ministry of the Holy Spirit through Paul and his co-workers (1 Corinthians 1:14-17 with 9:19-22). These were “able ministers of the new testament” (2 Corinthians 3:6).

The same Kingdom Message which was borne to National Israel from the beginning of John’s ministry to the end of the

book of Acts will be preached again during the 70th week of Daniel immediately before the coming of the Lord in Glory to usher in His Kingdom (Matthew 24:8-14). Since the commission of Matthew 28:19-20 and Mark 16:14-18 will be the marching orders for the true ministers of God during this period between the rapture of the body and the setting up of the kingdom, it is reasonable to expect that water baptism will have its place in this future period as it did in the three periods mentioned above.

We call your special attention to the fact that the ministry of the above mentioned groups, and the ministry of the tribulation saints does not include the preaching of “the mystery of the gospel” (Ephesians 6:19) or the teaching of the truth concerning the dispensation of “the mystery” (Colossians 1:24-27). Therefore, there is no scriptural reason for introducing the use of water baptism in our present Mystery Dispensation on the grounds that it was preached by John, the Baptist, the twelve apostles and even Paul during his Acts period ministry. Either water baptism or Holy Spirit baptism must fade out of use with the application of Ephesians 4:5 which says, **“One Lord, one faith, one baptism.”** Since it is the Holy Spirit baptism that puts us into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13), and since Paul was not sent to baptize with water (1 Corinthians 1:14-17), it seems clear that the “one baptism” of Ephesians 4:5 is Holy Spirit and not water.

THE LORD’S SUPPER AND WHY?

Modern churchmen refer to their various communion services, which include the eating of bread and the drinking of wine, as “The Lord’s Supper.” However, the expression “Lord’s Supper” is used only once in all of the Word of God: and this one time the Holy Spirit is telling a company of Acts period saints that when they came together in **“one place”** they **could not** eat the Lord’s Supper. We quote this one verse which is recorded in 1 Corinthians 11:20: “When ye come together therefore into **one place**, this is **not to eat the Lord’s supper.**” In the original language the verse reads “Ye cannot eat the Lord’s supper.” There is a scriptural reason why the New Testament Church could not partake of the Lord’s supper in one place, or in a general assem-

bly. As I understand the Scriptures, this reason was the fact that the Lord's supper was the antitype of "The Lord's Passover" of Exodus 12:11, and was to be eaten in their houses and not in the general assembly (Exodus 12:3-4).

The day of "The Lord's Passover" was set forth as a **memorial day** to be kept throughout the generations of Israel "**by an ordinance forever**" (Exodus 12:14-17). This Passover was eaten by the children of Israel on the night before their redemption by blood from the iron hand of Pharaoh, the King of Egypt. Almost 1500 years later it was eaten by Jesus Christ and the twelve apostles on the night before His sacrificial death on the cross of Calvary. I call your attention to His own language concerning that last Passover supper. Turn with me to the Gospel according to Luke, chapter 22 and beginning with verse 14. "And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. And He said unto them, with desire I have desired to eat **this Passover** with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, **I will not any more eat thereof**, until **it be fulfilled** in the Kingdom of God. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, **until the Kingdom of God shall come.**" The kingdom reference in this passage is explained more fully in verses 28 to 30 of this same chapter. "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And **I appoint unto you a kingdom**, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may **eat and drink** at my table in my kingdom, and **sit on thrones** judging the **twelve tribes of Israel.**"

Two important dispensational truths are brought out in the Scriptures quoted in the above paragraph. The first one is the fact that Christ and His disciples were eating the Passover which had its beginning in Exodus, chapter 12. The second truth referred to is the fact that Christ declared He would not eat the bread and drink the wine with them again until the yet future day when they shall eat and drink at His table in His kingdom, and "sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." This helps us to understand the expression of the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:26, "**For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death til he come.**"

According to Paul's own instruction, the Corinthian Church was to eat the bread and drink the wine (1 Corinthians 11 :23-27). However, we must bear in mind that this eating and drinking was a household affair and not a service that could be performed by the whole congregation in one assembly (1 Corinthians 11:20). The reason for this is found in Exodus 12, verses 3 to 4, where the children of Israel were specifically instructed to eat the Passover supper in their respective households and not in the congregational assembly. We are also to remember that when Paul received this ordinance from the Lord and delivered it unto the people he was an able minister of the new covenant (2 Corinthians 3:6), and not a minister of the Dispensation of the Mystery (Colossians 1:24-26).

As a labourer together with God under the "new testament," Paul instructed the church at Corinth concerning the teachings of Christ who said "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, **I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom**" (Matthew 26:28-29). He was giving instruction concerning the New Testament and the "Hope of Israel" and not the revelation of the mystery and Christ in the believer, "the hope of glory."

After the setting aside of National Israel in the closing chapter of the book of Acts, the apostle was no longer a minister of the new covenant, which was promised through the prophet to the "house of Israel and the house of Judah" (Jeremiah 31:31-34), but he was "a minister, according to the dispensation of God" which was given to him "to fulfill the word of God" (Colossians 1:24-25). The Lord's supper, which was the anti-type of the Lord's Passover, had a place in the New Testament Church of the Acts period, but it has no place in the church which is the body of Christ, which is now being called out during the Mystery Dispensation.

As I understand the Word, the Lord's supper along with all other externals must be left behind by those who would "go on unto perfection" in body truth. We say with Paul of old: "Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the

world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using); after the commandments and doctrines of men?" (Colossians 2:20-22).

Under the old covenant, the Passover lamb was slain and its blood covered the sins of the people. Under the new testament, Paul said, "Christ **our Passover** is sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7), but in the Mystery Dispensation he declares that Christ is "**our peace**, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh" (Ephesians 2:14-17). There was a place for the Lord's supper among those who were looking to Him as their "Passover" but there is no room for such an ordinance among we members of the body of Christ who know Him as our "peace."

Some of the doctrines of other dispensations have been brought over into the Mystery Dispensation and the things which God has brought across we rejoice to preach and practice. However, it seems clear that both water baptism and the Lord's supper are not only left out of Paul's Mystery Dispensation, but they are forbidden by such Scriptures as Ephesians 4:5; Colossians 2:14, 20-23; and Colossians 2:9-10.

THE KINGDOM AGE

(The 1000-Year Reign of Christ)
Revelation 20:1-4

Immediately after the tribulation and **immediately preceding** the setting up of Christ's Kingdom on earth, God shall manifest His mighty ruling power through signs in the heavens and signs on the earth.

Both "The heavens, and the earth" and even "the sea" shall be shaken by "A great earthquake" (Haggai 2:6-7, Hebrews 12:25-29, Revelation 6:12 and Zechariah 14:4). All the heavenly lights shall be turned out and the whole world shall be left in total darkness (Matthew 24:29), and **then** "they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30).

THE EARTHLY REIGN OF CHRIST

is introduced in Revelation 20:1-4: "And I saw an angel come down from Heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him A THOUSAND YEARS, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the THOUSAND YEARS should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them which were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ A THOUSAND YEARS."

During, this ONE THOUSAND YEARS the "Hope of Israel" for which Paul was bound in chains will be realized. From Genesis 12:1 to Acts 28:28 God spoke through holy men of old to His chosen people Israel concerning the earthly blessings of the Kingdom of Heaven. This long period of time is covered by the inspired statement found in Romans 10:21: "But to Israel He said,

All day long have I stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.” Israel’s day of opportunity to receive the kingdom, according to the promises made unto the fathers, closed with Paul’s last message to the dispersed Jews in Acts 28:17-28. Nightfall and darkness came to the chosen people with the proclamation of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Acts 28:28. They shall not see the light of day again until “the Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in his wings” (Malachi 4:2), mounts the throne of David and begins His reign on earth for a day of ONE THOUSAND YEARS.

At the very beginning of this thousand year period, Satan shall be bound and cast into the bottomless pit where he is to remain throughout the millennium. The “tares” which He shall scatter among wheat of the Kingdom shall be gathered out by the angels and cast into “a furnace of fire” (Matthew 13:40-43). As I understand the Word, the gathering of these tares will be in fulfillment of Luke 17:34-37 where “one shall be taken and the other left.” The furnace of fire is undoubtedly that terrible battle of Armageddon where the eagles shall gather to feed upon “the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great” (Luke 17:37 with Revelation 19:17-19).

During this future dispensation of one thousand years, the righteous king, Jesus Christ, shall “judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’s den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: **for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea**” (Isaiah 11:4-9).

During these days “many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up 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. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isaiah 2:34).

At the beginning of this thousand years of peace and quietness among the nations the Lord will lift the curse from the earth and for the first time since the judgment of Genesis 3:17-19 “the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: And it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off” (Isaiah 55:12-13). In that day, “the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God” (Isaiah 35:1-2).

Zechariah refers to this age of glory, saying, “And it shall come to pass, that everyone that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. ... In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the Lord’s house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts” (Zechariah 14:16-21).

This THOUSAND YEARS will be an age of glory for Israel and for the nations. The body and the bride of Christ, having previously received their glorified bodies, will participate in the administration of righteousness. They will both have special duties

to perform according to the direction of Christ, their “head” and “bridegroom.” “We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now,” but then “The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Romans 8:20-21).

SATAN’S FINAL REBELLION

“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Revelation 20:7-10). We call attention to the fact that before Christ began His millenium of peace, the beast and the false prophet were “cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Revelation 19:20), and at the end of the thousand years Satan was cast into the same lake of fire and brimstone “where the beast and the false prophet” were still alive (Revelation 20:10). This will put an end to the work of Satan among men.

THE WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

is pictured in Revelation 20:11-15. This throne shall be set up in space for at that time the earth and the heaven shall flee away (Revelation 20:11) because of the fiery judgment described in 2 Peter 3:10-12: “Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Peter 3:13). As I understand the Scriptures, the wicked dead of all ages will stand before the great white throne of judgment to be judged “according to their works” and will be justly sentenced to eternal separation from God in the lake of fire and brimstone “prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41). This judgment will take place while the earth and the

heaven are being purged by fire. After the white throne judgment and after the fiery judgment upon the earth and the heaven, the wicked will be in their place with the devil and his angels and the righteous will be in the place prepared for them according to the promise of the one who “loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”

THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH

are described in Revelation, chapters 21 and 22. The key verse of the two chapters is 21:5: “And he that sat upon the throne said, behold I make all things new.” The prophet, Isaiah speaks concerning this new creation, saying, “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.”