

The following are 12 articles concerning a variety of doctrinal subjects I have written for this web site and publication. Feel free to copy them for yourself. You can contact me at:

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The Secret Is Simple

Ephesians 3:4-6 says: **Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:**

Let's make the secret of Ephesians 3:6 simple. Any gentile in time past under the Law of Moses that became a Jewish proselyte, kept the Law and did what God required of the Jews could be saved, inherit the kingdom of God, become a member of the church of God along with the Jews and partake of all the spiritual blessings God promised Israel. This was prophesied throughout the Old Testament by the prophets.

The secret or mystery God revealed to ALL of the apostles in the New Testament concerning gentiles is that God is now saving Gentiles, giving them an inheritance in the Kingdom of God, placing them in the same body or church with the Jews and making them partakers of the spiritual promises of Israel (Romans 15:27) without becoming Jewish proselytes, without keeping the law or works, but by faith alone in the gospel of grace.

Even though this is a great mystery it is easy to understand so don't make it complicated as so many people do. Stick with what the BOOK says.

A Summation Of The Tongues Movement

After reading their books and listening to their sermons I find that most of what the charismatics and Pentecostalists teach about the gift of tongues is false. Most of their heresies and false doctrines concerning speaking in

tongues can be cleared up in a matter of minutes with the scriptures for any fair minded, honest Bible believer. A fair minded Bible believer is one who does not interpret the Bible by his feelings or emotions, but who interprets his feelings and emotions by the Bible. By putting our emotions aside and letting the scriptures speak we can easily see the truth about the gift of tongues and once you see the truth you will not be deceived by the lies.

(a) According to their teaching and books, charismatics say that without the baptism of the Spirit and speaking in tongues a Christian does not have full consecration or power for service and that his Christian life is incomplete and their ministries lacking. In other words, you are a second class powerless Christian without the baptism of the Holy Ghost and speaking in tongues.

If this were true, why did such spiritual giants as Luther, Wesley, the King James Bible translators, Whitfield, Moody, Spurgeon, Edwards, Bunyan, Carry, Taylor, Billy Sunday, Barnes, Clark and 1000's of others accomplish so much for the Lord without the gift of tongues? Not a one of these men spoke in tongues and most of them even opposed the tongues movement. What about John the Baptist? He never worked one miracle in his ministry much less spoke in tongues. How did he get so much done without it? What about those God did not give the gift to? Every Christian is baptized by the Spirit according to 1 Cor.12:13 but God did not give everyone the gift of tongues according to 1 Cor.12:27-30.

(b) Charismatics teach that speaking in tongues is a necessary requirement for leaders and teachers in the New Testament. If that were so, why are tongues missing from the list of requirements for the office of Pastor and Bishop in 1 Timothy 3 which is the highest office in the Church?

(c) Charismatics teach that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of the Holy Ghost. They say you don't have the Holy Ghost if you do not speak in tongues. If that is true, why didn't God give the gift of tongues to every man and why did he forbid women from speaking in tongues in 1 Cor. 14:34? In the book of Acts, speaking in tongues did not always follow the filling of the Holy Ghost. Many times in the book of Acts when people were filled with the Holy Ghost they did not speak in tongues.

See Acts 4:8, 31, 6:3-5, 7:55, 9:17, 11:24, 13:9, 52.

The real genuine evidence that a person has received the Holy Spirit is the fruits of the Spirit in his life. See Gal.5:22-23.

(d) Charismatics teach that tongues are a special gift given for personal edification and prayer. But the Bible says that God gave the spiritual gifts to edify the whole church, not just one person in the church. See 1 Cor. 14:1-5, 12.

Also, the gift of tongues was given in Acts 2 for the purpose of evangelizing the Jews out of every nation who were assembled together in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:8) It was not some personal gift to pamper the ego of a few select saints. It was a public gift given to convince sinners to believe and be saved. When men spoke in tongues in the Bible sinners were saved.

(e) In the Charismatic movement speaking in tongues is looked upon as the ultimate sign of spirituality. But, in the Bible, the Corinthians who were the most carnal, sinful and corrupt Christians spoke in tongues more than anyone. How can it be considered a sign of spirituality when carnal Christians spoke in tongues? See 1 Cor. 3:1-3.

(f) Charismatics teach that a person must strive, agonize, fast, pray and sacrifice to speak in tongues. But, in the Bible tongues was a spiritual **gift**, given freely without works. See 1 Cor. 12:1

(g) Charismatics teach that tongues are a sign to believers, but in the Bible they were a sign to unbelievers. See 1 Cor. 14:22.

The unbelievers were clearly defined as unbelieving Jews who required a sign to believe. (1 Cor.1:22) On the three occasions when men spoke in tongues Jews were always present. See Acts 2:5, 10:45, 19:1-7.

(h) Charismatics teach that if we forbid any one from speaking in tongues we quench the Spirit. In the Bible men are forbidden to speak in tongues without an interpreter and women are forbidden to speak at all.

(l) Charismatics teach that tongues are heavenly languages that no one but God understands. In the Bible tongues were foreign languages understood and interpreted by all men. See Acts 2:6-11.

(j) Most of the people who speak in tongues in the charismatic movement are women. In the Bible women are told not to speak in tongues.

(k) Charismatics violate all the restrictions God placed upon tongues and yet say they are honoring God. But God said that those who violate the restrictions he placed upon tongues break the commandments of God. See 1 Cor.14:37

Lehman Strauss wrote; *Our present generation is witnessing the growing menace of satanic activity in the realm of the miraculous. Where the Devil does not succeed in taking the Bible from us, he works hard at taking us from the Bible. And he succeeds in getting Christians to focus their attention on the claims of men and women to some supernatural experience and in so doing those seekers after the experiences of others have neither time nor interest in searching the Scriptures for God's truth.*

Years back after showing a woman in Chattanooga in the scriptures that God forbade women from speaking in tongues she said to me; *I don't care what the Bible says, I know what I experienced.*

Comparing the Doctrines of Hyper Dispensationalism with the Epistles of the Apostle Paul

Many Christians today are not aware of the doctrines of hyper dispensationalism. Many have never even heard the term “hyper dispensationalism”. They are not aware of what this religious movement teaches and how it contradicts 14 books in the New Testament written by the apostle Paul. All hyper dispensationalists claim to follow the doctrines taught by Paul in his epistles. They emphasis this over and over again in their writings and preaching. But yet they contradict, deny, and even oppose what Paul wrote over and over again. They all claim to “rightly divide the word of truth” when in fact they deny, ignore, contradict, change, and reject the word of truth.

What you are about to read is not true of all those who rightly divide the word of truth and follow Paul writings. There are many who follow Paul's doctrines and they are consistent in what they preach and teach. This is about people who say they follow Paul and rightly divide the word of truth while at the same time they contradict and even deny what Paul said in the word of truth. Keep this in mind as you read this article.

(When you read the name "Paul" in the following contrasts it refers to his epistles. When you read the names "they or these people" it refers to the hyper dispensationalists.)

Paul commanded men to repent when they believed the gospel, but these people (hyper dispensationalists) will tell you that repentance is not necessary and if you preach repentance they will accuse you of preaching works for salvation.

Paul told us three times in Romans 10 to call on the Lord to be saved and to confess him with our mouth, but some of these people will tell you that calling on the Lord is not necessary, nor confessing him with your mouth. In fact, some will tell you that calling on the Lord is "for Israel" or its works!

Paul said that if any man preaches a gospel that is different from his he is accursed of God. But these people will tell you that at the same time God sent Paul to preach the gospel of grace, he sent Peter, James and John and the other apostles to preach a gospel of works and God did not curse them.

Paul tells us that God chastises believers for their sins under grace, but many of these people will tell you he does not. They teach people that no matter what they do or what sins they commit as a Christian, God will not chastise them! They will look you straight in the face and tell you God has never and will never chastise them for sin!

Paul tells us to judge and confess our sins to escape chastisement, but these people will tell you not to judge and confess your sins. Some even teach it's a sin to confess sin!

Throughout his epistles Paul based many church doctrines on the Old Testament, (At least 60) but these people will tell you that if you base doctrine today on the Old Testament you are guilty of wrongly dividing the word of truth.

Paul claimed many promises God originally made to Israel in the Old Testament, but these people will tell you that if you claim them you are stealing promises that do not belong to you. They will call you a "Bible bandit" if you claim any promise God made to Israel.

God ordained Paul to be a minister of the New Covenant and he preached the blessings and promises of the New Covenant, but these people will tell you the church does not partake of the blessings of the New Covenant.

Paul told us to observe the Lord's Supper till he comes again, but many of these people refuse to observe the Lord's Supper. I have seen them get up and walk out of a service in defiance of the Lord's Supper.

Paul said that in Christ we are counted as the seed of Abraham and heirs to the promise and promises of Abraham, but many of these people deny they are the seed of Abraham or that Abraham is their father. They will tell you to your face that Galatians 3:29 is not true of them.

The people Paul wrote to were born of the Spirit (Gal.4:29) but many of these people do not preach the New Birth. Some don't because it is found in the four gospels and others because they say the New Birth is physical resurrection even though all of the apostles wrote their epistles to people who were born again. I have even heard them mock those who preach the New Birth and say they had never met anyone who was born again!

Paul says many promises, blessings, rewards are based upon works today, but many of these people will tell you everything is free under grace.

Paul says we can lose many promises, blessings and rewards under grace, but these people say we can't lose anything.

Paul said there are laws and ordinances under grace, but these people will tell you there are no laws or ordinances under grace.

Paul told us to fear God throughout his epistles, but these people say that there is no reason to fear God under grace.

Paul tells us in no uncertain terms that God does indeed see the believer's sins today and that our sins grieve the Spirit of God, but these people will tell you he does not see our sins.

Paul tells us that we are made nigh to the Jews in commonwealth of Israel, (Eph.2:12-13) but these people deny our relationship to them even though we are one body with them.

Paul said the church is built upon the foundation of the prophets and is edified by prophecy, but these people will tell you that prophecy pertains to Israel only.

Even though Paul preached the Kingdom of God throughout his ministry and said it is the inheritance of the church in his epistles, these people say the Kingdom is for Israel only and the church has nothing to do with the "Kingdom program".

Paul said that the coming of Christ to gather the church unto himself is not at hand, but is preceded by certain events, but these people will tell you Jesus can come back at any moment even before you get through reading this article.

Paul said the Law of Moses has been abolished forever by the death and shed blood of Christ and was replaced with a New Covenant, but many of these people say God will resurrect the Law of Moses in the future and put people under it again.

Even though Paul preached many of the same doctrines Christ preached in the four Gospels, these people say the four gospels are off limits to the church and do not contain church doctrine.

Even though Paul said the church began when God made Christ its head when he set him at his right hand in heavenly places (Eph.1:19-23) these people say it began with Paul in Acts 9, or 13 or 18 or Acts 28. (They can't even agree among themselves)

Even though Paul said those who are in Christ are in the body of Christ, many of these people teach that a believer could be in Christ, Christ in him and be one with Christ and not even be in the body of Christ!

Even though Paul said the heavenly city New Jerusalem is the mother and hope of the church, these people say the church has no part in the heavenly city New Jerusalem.

Even though Paul said Peter was justified by the faith of Christ and not by the works of the law like him (Gal.2:14-16), these people say Peter was justified by works.

Even though Paul said Peter and the other apostles were in Christ before him and part of the foundation of the church, these people say the 12 apostles are not in the body of Christ.

I am not making up the next five statements

Even though Paul said there is one hope of resurrection, these people say there are two or three hopes.

Even though Paul said our hope is the second coming of Christ, these people say there is a second coming after the second coming.

Even though Paul says the church will be resurrected at the last trumpet, these people say there is a last trumpet after the last trumpet.

Even though Paul and John say the resurrection of the church is the first resurrection, these people say there is a first resurrection before the first resurrection. (I kid you not)

Even though Paul describes the last days before the second coming of Christ in his epistles, these people say there are last days after the last days.

Paul said he persecuted the same Church of God he ordained elders in and wrote his epistles to. But these people insist the Church of God he persecuted was not the body of Christ even though Paul said it was in 1 Cor.12:13. In other words there are two Churches of God!

Even though Paul asked God to curse any man who preached a gospel different from his, these people say that in the tribulation God will send men to preach a gospel different than Paul's.

Even though Paul said the church is appointed to suffer tribulation (1 Thess. 3:3-5) and must suffer tribulation before it enters into the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22) these people say the church will not suffer tribulation. One said that Christ would never allow the church to suffer tribulation because it is his wife and bride.

Even though Paul rebuked Peter for disobeying his gospel (Gal.2:15-16), these people say God never sent Peter to preach his gospel.

Even though Peter and Paul wrote epistles to the same people, (2 Peter 3:15) these people say Paul could not and did not write a book to the Hebrews.

Even though Paul said that gentile believers are grafted into the good olive tree of Romans 11, these people will tell you they are not grafted into the good olive tree.

Even though Paul says that gentiles are made partakers of Israel's spiritual things (Rom.15:27) many of these people say they do not partake of Israel's spiritual things today.

Even though Paul said that the son of perdition who is the anti Christ will appear before Christ comes to gather the church unto himself (2 Thess. 2:1-9) these people insist the church will not witness the coming of the antichrist.

Even though Paul said all believers he wrote to were under grace (Rom.6:14-15) many of these people say the so called "Acts believers" were not because they say the "dispensation of grace" began in Acts 28. (They make the mistake of defining a dispensation as an age or period of time.)

Even though Paul said the fall of Israel took place before he was saved, many of these people say it did not take place until Acts 28.

Even though idol worshippers were saved throughout Paul's ministry and were in every church Paul founded, many of these people say that God did not save idol worshipers until after Acts 28.

Even though Paul wrote his epistles to the house of God, (1 Tim.3:15), these people say Hebrews through Revelation are not written to the church today even though they are written to the house of God. (1 Peter 4:17) In other words God has two houses!

Even though Paul called the words that Christ preached in his earthy ministry "wholesome words", (1 Tim.6:3) these people say they are not so wholesome and if you follow them you are walking unworthy of the Lord and in ignorance. (I am not making this up)

Even though Paul says the flesh in 2 Cor.5:14-17 is our flesh that was crucified with Christ, these people say it is Christ's flesh and his earthy ministry that we do not know and should not follow.

Even though many of the mysteries Paul reveals in his epistles were in the prophets, and many prophecies were mysteries, these people say that mystery excludes prophecy and prophecy excludes mystery.

Even though Paul preached justification by faith and the gospel of Christ from Moses and the Prophets, these people say they are found only in Paul's epistles.

Even though Paul said the justification of heathen gentiles by faith was promised to Abraham in Gen.22:18 (See Gal.3:8) these people say it was not written down prior to its revelation.

Even though Paul said the coming of Christ and the so called "rapture" of the church will fulfill prophecies made by the Prophets, (See 1 Cor.15:54-55) these people say it was unknown to the prophets or anyone prior to Paul.

Even though Paul said the coming of Christ for the church will be accompanied with the blowing of a loud trumpet, shouts, voices, the appearance of millions of angels and saints along with the Lord and the dead being raised up out of their graves, these people insist it will be a secret silent event!

Even though Paul preached the same hope of resurrection throughout his epistles, many of these people say he preached a different hope of resurrection after Acts 28.

Paul preached the remission of sins by the death and shed blood of Christ. (Rom.3:25) Believe it or not these people say that remission of sins is not forgiveness, but it means your sins are covered and hid somewhere until the second coming of Christ when they are forgiven.

Even though Paul said that Christ is our Great High Priest, these people say he is not their High Priest.

Even though Paul told us to come unto the throne of grace to find help in our time of need, I have actually heard some of these people say we don't have to go to the throne of grace today.

Even though Paul and Matthew say that Christ preached unto the gentiles (1 Tim.3:15, Matt. 12:17-21) they say Christ did not preach unto the gentiles.

Paul said that Jesus is God manifest in the flesh (1 Tim.3:15), but some of them say the church is God manifest in the flesh. (I kid you not)

Even though Paul said that when he died he would depart and be with Christ, (Philp.1:23) many of these people believe the false doctrine of soul sleep just like the Russelites (JW's) and other cults.

Even though Paul said that all scripture is profitable for doctrine (2 Tim.3:16) many of them teach that in Paul's epistles alone is found the doctrine for the church.

These people (hyper dispensationalists) teach that at the same time God sent Paul to preach salvation by grace through faith without works, he sent Peter to preach salvation by faith and works.

They teach that at the same time God sent Paul to preach the eternal security of believers, he sent Peter to warn believers they could lose their salvation.

They teach that at the same time God sent Paul to preach a present tense salvation, he sent Peter to preach a future tense salvation. They say those who believed Paul's preaching were saved when they believed, but those who believed Peter's preaching will not be saved until the second coming of Christ, if they didn't "lose It" before then.

They say that when God sent Paul to preach the blood of Christ he told sinners their sins would be forgiven and taken away, but when Peter preached the blood of Christ he told sinners their sins would not be

forgiven, but merely covered up and hidden which is what Moses said about the animal sacrifices of the law!

What you have read is just a sample of some of the doctrines of hyper dispensationalism and how they contradict the man (Paul) they claim to follow. These people who claim to follow Paul are in fact some of his worst detractors. They all say we should rightly divide the word of truth (2 Tim.2:15) when they deny, ignore, contradict, change and reject the word of truth in their writings and preaching.

I was once a part of this religious movement, but years ago when I began to take an honest look at its doctrines and saw how they contradicted the clear teachings and doctrines of the Bible and especially Paul's epistles, I came out of it. I asked myself this simple question: How can a movement be of God when so many of its doctrines are unscriptural and false? I don't say this lightly, but I believe the hyper dispensationalist religious movement has become another in a long list of cults that claims to believe the Bible while at the same time it contradicts and denies what it says. If you are in it, my advice is come out of it today.

Did Paul Wrongly Divide The Word of Truth?

According to the tenets of modern dispensationalism Paul was guilty of wrongly dividing the word of truth.

Let me explain;

Two major tenets of modern dispensationalism are:

(1) Doctrine for the church is not found in the Old Testament. Dispensationalists say doctrine for the Church is not found in the Old Testament and if you base Church doctrine on the Old Testament you are wrongly dividing the word of truth.

(2) The church has no claim to the promises God made to Israel in the Old Testament.

Mr. Stam says; "While as the Word of God, prophecy is fully important as any other part of the Scripture, it deals directly with Israel and the nations, not with the body of Christ".

Mr. Sadler says; "The doctrines of Grace taught by Paul are untraceable in the Prophetic Scriptures (Genesis - Acts 9 and James - Revelation)

Mr. Scoffed says: That in Paul's writings **alone** is found the doctrine, position, walk and destiny of the church

The statements of these men are the general consensus of most dispensationalists. If this is true, Paul was guilty of wrongly dividing the word of truth for he violated both premises. He based many Church doctrines on the Old Testament scriptures and he claimed many promises that were originally made to Israel in the Old Testament.

Church Doctrines Based On the Old Testament Scriptures

(1) Gentile Salvation in This Age

Gal.3:8 with Gen.22:17-18

Rom.9:24-26 with Hosea 2:23

(2) Paul's Gospel

1 Cor.15:1-4 with Isa.53

(3) The Coming of Christ and the Resurrection of the Church

1 Cor.15:54-55 with Hosea 13:14, Isa.25:8

(4) Justification by Faith

Rom.1:17 with Hab.2:4, Isa. 53:11

(5) Jews Provoked To Jealousy by the Salvation of the Gentiles

Rom.11:11 with Duet.32:15-21

Rom.10:19-20 with Isa.65:1

(6) Paul's Gentile Ministry

Acts 13:47 with Isa.49:5-6

Rom.15:21 with Isa.52:15

(7) The Inheritance of the Church

Eph.5:5 with Acts 28:23 (The Kingdom of God)

(8) Righteousness by Faith

Romans 3:21-22 (Two witnesses from the Law and the Prophets are found in Romans 4. David and Abraham.)

(9) Abolition of the Law

Heb.8:8-9 (The New abolished the Old)

(10) The Blindness of Israel in This Age

Rom.11:7-10 with Isa.29:10, Isa.6:9, Psa.69:22

(11) Freedom from Condemnation

Rom.8:1 with John 3:14-15, 5:24

(12) The Lord's Supper

1 Cor.11:23-26 with Matt.26:26-27

(13) Baptism Into Christ's Death

Rom.6:3-4 with Matt.20:23

(14) The Oneness of the Believer in Christ and Christ in the Believer

Gal.4:6, 5:6 with John 17:17-23

(15) Spiritual Circumcision

Col.2:11 with Duet.30:6

(16) The Promise of the Indwelling Spirit

Eph.1:13, Gal.3:14 with Joel 2

(17) The Guilt of Man

Rom.3:10-18 with Psa.14:1-3, 5:9, 140:3, 10:7, Isa.59:7-8

(18) Imputed Righteousness

Rom.4:6-8 with Psa.32:2

(19) Election

Rom.9:20-21 with Jer.18:1-10

(20) The Gospel of Peace

Rom.10:15 with Isa.52:7

(21) Salvation of a Remnant of Jews in This Age

Rom.11:7-8 with Isa.10:22

(22) Treatment of Our Enemies

Rom.12:19-20 with Pro.25:21-22, Duet.32:35

(23) Old Testament Commandments to Keep In This Age

Rom.13:9-10

(24) The Judgment Seat of Christ

Rom.14:10-12 with Isa.45:23

(25) Our Command to Give Glory to God

1 Cor.1:31 with Jer.9:24

(26) Blessings God Has Prepared For the Church

1 Cor.2:9 with Isa.64:4

(27) Our View of the World's Wisdom

1 Cor.3:19-20 with Job 5:13, Psa.94:11

(28) Laws of Marriage and Remarriage

1 Cor.7:10-11, 39 with Matt.19:6

(29) Financial Support of Pastors and Ministers

1 Cor.9:8-9 with Duet.25:4 with 1 Cor.9:13 with Lev.6:16, 26, 7:6, 31, 32

(30) Christ the Rock of the Church

1 Cor.10:4 with Exd.17:6

(31) Warning against Idolatry

1 Cor.10:7 with Exd.32:6

(32) Warning Against Fornication

1 Cor.10:8 with Num.25:1,9

(33) Warning Against Tempting Christ

1 Cor.10:9 with Num.21:6

(34) Warning Against Murmuring

1 Cor.10:10 with Num.14:2, 29, Num.26:63-65

(35) The Sign Gifts

1 Cor.12,13,14 with Joel 2

(36) Purpose of Tongues in the Church

1 Cor.14:21 with Isa.28:11-12

(37) Women's Obedience to Men

1 Cor.14:34 with Gen.3:16

(38) Purpose of Christ's Millennium Reign

1 Cor.15:25 with Psa.110:1

(39) The Mystery of the Rapture

1 Cor.15:54 with Hosea 13:14, Isa.25:8

(40) Paul's New Covenant Ministry

2 Cor.3:6 with Jer.31:31

(41) The Urgency of Salvation

2 Cor.6:2 with Isa.49:8

(42) Our Bodies the Temple Of God

2 Cor.6:16 with Lev.26:11-12

(43) The Call to Separation

2 Cor.6:17 with Isa.52:11

(44) The Principal of Equal Giving

2 Cor.8:14-15 with Exd.16:18

(45) The Reward of Giving

2 Cor.9:8-10 with Psa.112:9

(46) Our Relationship to Abraham

Rom.4:11, Gal.3:29

(47) Christ Cursed For Us

Gal.3:13 with Duet.21:23

(48) The Blessing of Abraham to The Gentiles

Gal.3:14 with Gen.22:18

(49) Christ Our Seed

Gal.3:16 with Gen.22:18

(50) The Allegories of the Old and New Testament

Gal.4:24 with Genesis

(51) The Promise and Promises of Abraham

Gal.3:29, Gal. 3:16

(All promised in the Old Testament scriptures)

(52) Christ the Chief Corner Stone of the Church

Eph.2:20 with Isa.28:16

(53) The Gifts of the Church

Eph.4:8-12 with Psa.68:18

(54) Our Call to Walk In the Light

Eph.5:13 with Isa.60:1-2

(55) The Church the Bride and Wife of Christ

Eph.5:31-32 with Gen.2:24

(56) The Promise to Children Who Obey Their Parents

Eph.6:2 with Exd.20:12

(57) The Revelation of the Man of Sin

2 Thess.2:3-5 with Ezk.28:1-2

(58) The Last Days

2 Tim.3:1 with Matthew 24, Luke 21 etc.

(59) Last Day Examples of Apostates

2 Tim.3:8 with Exd.7:11-12

Paul uses the expression ***as it is written*** 33 times in his epistles referring to the Old Testament. He quotes the Old Testament between 150-200 times in his epistles. If basing doctrine for the Church on the Old Testament Scriptures is wrongly dividing the word of truth, Paul was guilty in the first degree!

Dispensationalists also say the Church cannot claim the promises God made to Israel in the Old Testament. They call it wrongly dividing the word of truth.

But take a look at the following blessings Paul mentions in his epistles.

**The Gospel of Christ
Christ living in us and us in him
Hope of resurrection**

**God our Father
Inheritance in the Kingdom of God
The indwelling Spirit of God
Justification by faith
Righteousness by faith
Citizenship in the heavenly city New Jerusalem
Freedom from the law
A New nature
A New Birth
A divine Great High Priest
All sufficient, once for all sacrifice for sin
A divine heavenly mediator
An eternal heavenly intercessor
A heavenly hope
A heavenly temple
A divine mercy seat and propitiation
A divine spiritual altar
Divine Spiritual understanding
Eternal salvation
Eternal redemption
A heavenly calling
A throne of mercy and grace
Reconciliation for sin
Spiritual blessings
Heavenly citizenship
Peace of God
The grace of God
Adoption as children
Habitation of God
Light and salvation
Spiritual circumcision**

What two things do all of these blessings have in common? They are all blessings the Church now enjoys and they were all originally promised to Israel in the Old Testament. If claiming promises God made to Israel in the

Old Testament is wrongly dividing the word of truth, Paul was guilty in the first degree again!

This shows us that *rightly dividing the word of truth* does not mean church doctrine cannot be based upon the Old Testament for Paul based church doctrine on the Old Testament scriptures throughout his epistles. It does not mean the church cannot claim promises God made to Israel in the Old Testament for Paul did it constantly.

What does it mean?

Read the context in which it is found.

The context always shows us what the text means. Read what comes before and what comes after 2 Timothy 2:15. In the context in which it is found, right division means to divide and separate the word of truth from lies, false doctrine, subversive words, profane and vain babblings, and cankerous words.

God Will Have All Men To Be Saved

1 Timothy 2:4-6 says: **God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.**

The word "will" in this verse means to determine, make a positive choice, to wish or desire. The word for will in this verse is translated desire in 1:7. It's God desire, will, wish, and choice that all men and women to be saved including you. **2 Peter 3:9 says: The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.**

This verse tells us one reason the Lord has delayed his coming is because he is longsuffering. Because God is longsuffering with sinners he has delayed is coming to give them a chance to be saved because once he comes his longsuffering with sinners will end. (See 2 Thess.1:7-10)

Ezekiel 33:11 says: As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways.

It gives God no pleasure for men to perish. Man is the creation of God and God receives no pleasure if one of his creatures perishes in hell. What gives him pleasure is for them to turn to him and be saved from their wicked ways.

These verses and many others make it clear that God will have all men and women to be saved, but how do we know this is true? When God makes a claim like this, he always backs it up with proof. And the proof is overwhelming that he will have all men, including you, to be saved. But, what is the proof? What is the evidence to prove that God will have all men to be saved?

(1) The Death of Christ

1 Timothy 2:5-6 says: *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*

This verse says that Christ gave himself a ransom for all men. The word ransom literally means a price paid for the redemption of captives. For example; in war when prisoners are taken captive by the enemy the money demanded for their release is called a ransom. It is the means by which they are set free. So anything that releases someone from a state of punishment or suffering or sin is called a ransom.

We need a ransom because we are by nature captives to sin. We are sold under sin. We are under the condemnation of sin. We are under the curse of sin. And unless we find a ransom to deliver us we will perish in hell. But we have found a ransom. Paul declares Christ gave himself a ransom for all men. That is, he died in the place of sinners and God was willing to accept the pains of his death on the cross in the place of the everlasting suffering that all sinners deserve in hell.

In the same context where God says he will have all men to be saved, he gives us the proof by telling us Christ gave himself a ransom for all men. Think about this: why would Christ suffer, bleed and die as a ransom for all men, if it was not the will of God for all men to be saved? Why would God allow his Son to suffer and die such a horrible death, if it was not his will for all men to be saved?

The death of Christ is the visible and irrefutable proof that God will have all men to be saved. When you take a serious look at the cross work of Christ you can see the proof that God will have all men to be saved. Isaiah 53 says that on the cross Jesus Christ; ***Was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities...The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all... His soul was made an offering for sin... He poured out his soul unto death and he was numbered with the transgressors and he bare the sin of many.***

Every sin committed by every person who has or will ever live, was paid for by the death of Christ because God will have all men to be saved. Making that personal, God foreknew every sin you would ever commit from the cradle to the grave, and when Christ suffered and bled and died on the cross he was dying for your sins. Christ died for the sins of the world, that's history; Christ died for your sins, now that's personal. When I look at the cross I see the visible proof that God will have all men to be saved.

(2) The Grace of God

Titus 2:11 says; ***For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.***

The word "*appeared*" means; to become visible, or manifest. When did the grace of God that bringeth salvation become visible and manifest to all men? When did it appear to all men? There are two major manifestations of the grace of God and they are proof that God will have all men to be saved.

(a) The crucifixion of Christ

2 Timothy 1:9-10 says: ***God hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:***

The grace of God by which we are saved in verse 9 was made manifest at the appearing of Jesus Christ. His appearing in this verse was his first coming when he abolished death by his death and resurrection from the dead.

When we look at the cross of Christ we can see the grace of God. The death of Christ was the supreme manifestation of the grace of God. Why? Because of who he died for. Christ died for the ungodly. He died for wicked

sinners. He died for every vile person who ever lived on the face of this earth. He died for every filthy sin that has ever been committed by wicked men and women. He died for people who hated him, cursed him, reviled him, mocked him, and crucified him.

Christ didn't die for friends, he died for his enemies. That's pure unselfish grace and its proof that God will have all men to be saved. If a man saved his wife from drowning we would call that love. But, if a man saved the man who murdered his wife from drowning we would call that grace. Christ died to save those who crucified him, that's grace.

(b) The salvation of Paul

1 Timothy 1:12-16 says: And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

When you consider who Paul was when God saved him you will see the exceeding and abundant grace of God. In fact, it was so exceedingly abundant that he made Paul's salvation the pattern of salvation for all those after him.

In the crucifixion of Christ we see God offering a sacrifice for sinners. In the salvation of Paul we see God saving the chief of sinners as proof that all men were included in his sacrifice.

God saved Paul to show the world that the crucifixion of Christ was for all men, even the worst of men. In Paul's salvation we see the grace of God in action. God picked the worst of the worst to save to magnify his grace.

The crucifixion of Christ and the salvation of Paul are the visible manifestations of the grace of God. And they are proof that God will have all men to be saved and that all men can be saved. If God saved a man like Paul he can save any man and it's his will for all men to be saved.

(3) The Love of God

Ephesians 2:4-5 says: *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved.*

If God loved us when we were dead in sins that means that God loved us when we were lost. Therefore God loves lost people.

John 3:16 says: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Romans 5:7-8 says: *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

From these verses, we can plainly see that God loves the world and the world of John 3:16 is defined as ungodly sinners in Romans 5. God loves ungodly sinners and because he loves them he wants to save them and change them. The fact that God loves lost people is proof that he will have all men to be saved. How could he love all men and not want all men to be saved? If God so loved the world, then God will have the world to be saved. If God loves all sinners, then God will have all sinners to be saved.

(4) The Gospel of Christ

In Mark 16:15 Jesus said; ***Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.***

According to the great commission the gospel is to be preached to every creature in all the world. Why? Because God will have every creature in all the world to be saved. The fact that God sends men to preach the gospel to every creature in all the world tells us that God will have every creature in all the world to be saved.

In the gospel God shows us why we need to be saved. We need to be saved because we are lost guilty sinners. We are guilty because we have broken every one of God's laws and commandments. We are guilty of every sin the law of God condemns. The penalty of breaking the law of God is death, the second death of being cast into the lake of fire.

In the gospel he also shows us how we can be saved and what he has done to save us. He sent his Son to die for our sins. By dying for our sins

he paid the penalty for them and when God raised him from the dead he declared that he was satisfied with the payment Christ made to save us.

Now that the penalty has been paid in full, God sends men into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature that Christ died for. Every time the gospel is preached God calls and invites sinners to be saved. And the fact that the gospel is to be preached in all the world to every creature shows us that God invites all men to be saved. If it is not the will of God for all men in all the world to be saved why does he send men into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature? Sinners must hear and believe the gospel to be saved. The fact God sends men into all the world to preach the gospel shows us his will is to save all men.

(5) The Conviction Of The Spirit

John 16:8-11 says: *And when he (The Spirit) is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*

The ministry of the Spirit in this age is to reprove the world of sin, righteousness and judgment to come. His ministry is like that of a prosecuting attorney whose job is to prove the guilt of the accused. His ministry is essential to the salvation of sinners because God will not save anyone until they are first reprovved and convicted by the Spirit of God. God saves lost people and the job of the Spirit is to convict and convince sinners that they are lost so that God can save them.

The fact that God sent the Spirit to reprove or convict ***the world of sin*** shows us again that it is his will for all men to be saved. Why would God reprove and convict the world of sin if he did not want all men to be saved? ***If he did not want all men to be saved he would leave them alone.*** No one gets saved until they are first convicted and convinced of sin and the fact that the Spirit convicts and reprovves the world of sin shows us again that God will have all men to be saved.

In view of what God has done to save all men, if they refuse to get saved it's not because God has hindered them or that God has predestinated them to be lost. God has done everything he can do to save all men and

the proof is overwhelming that he wants to save you. The cross of Christ, the grace of God, the love of God, the gospel of Christ and the conviction of the Spirit is the irrefutable proof that God will have all men, including you, to be saved.

These are barriers that God has set up to stop you from going to hell. If you die lost, you will have to trample over every one of them. If you die lost you will have to say no thanks to the love of God, the grace of God, and the cross of Christ. You will have to resist the Spirit of God and reject the offer of salvation made to you in the gospel of Christ.

There is something else: ***The prayers of the saints***. Many people who are saved today had people who prayed for them to be saved. Why? Because they loved them and God put it in their heart to pray for them to be saved. Christians pray for their sons and daughters to be saved because they love them. They pray for their husband or wife and brothers and sisters to be saved because they love them. God puts that desire in the hearts of his people when he saves them. And many people who choose to be lost walk over the prayers of their own family.

In conclusion, it's one thing to know the will of God; it's something else to do it. I want to ask you a personal question and be honest with your answer. ***If you knew that God wanted you to do something would you do it?***

You have just seen that it is the will of God for you to be saved. God does not want you to perish in hell. Read John 3:16 again. If you are not saved that means you have not done what God wants you to do. God's will is to save you, but if you are still lost that means you are resisting the will of God which places you in a state of rebellion.

The only way for you to be saved from God's wrath is to repent and believe the Gospel. To repent means that you turn away from whatever it is in your life that is preventing you from being saved. Whatever it is, it is not worth going to hell for. (My wife had to turn from false religion to be saved)

To believe the Gospel means that you put all of your faith and trust in Christ's death for your sins. Remember, you have broken all of God's laws and some one must pay the penalty. You have a choice as to who pays; you can pay for them yourself, but it will take you an eternity in hell to do so. Or, you can believe that Christ paid for them by his death on the cross. Which will it be? Dear friend, why not bow your head and ask the Lord to save you from sin and hell. As you pray, put all of your faith and trust in him

alone to save you. If you will repent, believe and call, God has promised to save you, for He said; ***whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.***

If you are already a Christian read the opening verse again. 1 Timothy 2:4 clearly says it is God's will for all men to be saved. If that is true, then it should be your will also. 1 Timothy 2:4 is all the ***commission*** a Christian needs to win souls. It is all the ***reason*** you will ever need to win souls. It is the best ***motive*** to win souls. If it is God's will to save all men, then it ought to be our will to win all men and pay any price to do it. Christian friend what are you now doing to win souls? Get started today.

The Holy Spirit Versus The unholy spirit

God's Spirit is called the Holy Spirit because there are many counterfeit spirits in this world that are unholy. Many Christians including preachers are so carnal or blind that they can't tell the difference between counterfeit and the real.

The Holy Spirit leads believers to honor and glorify Christ, especially his sacrificial death on the cross.

The unholy spirit leads believers to glorify the Spirit first and foremost.

The Holy Spirit maintains self control of the flesh and the emotions of believers.

The unholy spirit places no control or restrictions on the flesh or the emotions.

The Holy Spirit draws men's attention to Christ.

The unholy spirit leads men to draw attention to themselves.

The Holy Spirit tests and proves all things by the word of God.

The unholy spirit leads men to follow their heart, their impulses, or the thoughts that pop up in their mind.

The Holy Spirit speaks to men through the word of God.

The unholy spirit speaks to men through impulses, dreams, so called visions or thoughts, imaginations that spring into their minds.

The Holy Spirit leads men to Christ with their sins and problems and needs.

The unholy spirit leads men to objects with their sins, problems and needs.

The Holy Spirit gives men and women a quiet and peaceable spirit. The unholy spirit gives them a loud, boisterous and restless spirit.

The Holy Spirit never distracts men's attention from the word of God when it is being preached in truth.

The unholy spirit distracts men's attention away from the word of God.

The Holy Spirit never revels in the accomplishments of men.

The unholy spirit glories in the accomplishments of men.

The Holy Spirit leads men to worship God in the spirit, not the flesh. The unholy spirit leads men to worship God in the flesh, while they think they are worshipping him in spirit.

The Holy Spirit does not limit the worship of God to a certain building on a certain day.

The unholy spirit leads men to believe that God dwells in buildings and must be worshipped there.

The Holy Spirit defines the worship of God as honoring, praising, and serving God in your body and spirit 7 days a week.

The unholy spirit defines worship as shouting, running, rolling, foaming, jerking, howling, babbling, grunting, and going into trances.

The Holy Spirit leads men to interpret their feelings and experiences by the word of God.

The unholy spirit leads men to interpret the word of God by their feelings and experiences.

The Holy Spirit constrains men to serve the Lord out of love.
The unholy spirit constrains men to serve out of fear and threats.

The Holy Spirit leads believers to use their minds and understanding when serving God.

The unholy spirit leads men to park their brains outside the church and become passive and submissive to any suggestion they hear without question.

The unity the Holy Spirit produces is never at the expense of the truth.
The unity that the unholy spirit produces is union of the flesh at the expense of truth and sound doctrine.

The Holy Spirit does not condone sin or unbelief for the sake of unity.
The unholy spirit makes people cover their sins, condone sin, compromise with evil and unbelief for the sake of unity.

The Holy Spirit edifies the saints with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs that exalt Christ, edify the spirit and humble the flesh.
The unholy spirit entertains the saints with carnal contemporary charismatic music that appeals to the flesh and dishonors God.

The zeal the Holy Spirit produces is according to sound doctrine that causes believers to renounce sin, live godly, witness, pray and abstain from all appearance of evil.

The unholy spirit provokes zeal that unleashes the flesh to act in a foolish manner that dishonors God and is a stumbling block to unbelievers.

The Holy Spirit always leads men to pray according to the will of God found in the word of God.

The unholy spirit leads men to demand God to give them what he never promised or demand that he do what he never said he would do.

The Holy Spirit teaches sound doctrine to God's people.
The unholy spirit teaches the doctrines of devils to God's people.

The Holy Spirit always leads believers to base what they believe on sound doctrine.

The unholy spirit treats sound doctrine as if it were a hindrance instead of a help to the believer.

The fruits of the Holy Spirit are genuine and real.

The fruits of the unholy spirit are artificial and false.

The Holy Spirit convicts men of sin before they get saved.

The unholy spirit quote: "converts" men, without conviction of sin.

The Holy Spirit bases his prophecies of the future on the scriptures of the prophets.

The unholy spirit bases his prophecies of the future on the feelings, emotions, and prophecies of men.

The Holy Spirit quickens and regenerates man's dead spirit to enter into the kingdom of God.

The unholy spirit reforms man's morals to make him think he will enter into the kingdom of God.

The Holy Spirit sanctifies and makes believers holy and righteous the moment they believe the gospel.

The unholy spirit teaches men that they must strive, work, agonize to become sanctified, holy and righteous and only a select few gain it.

The Holy Spirit takes up permanent residence in the believer the moment he believes the gospel.

The unholy spirit teaches men that receiving the Spirit is subsequent to salvation and that a man can be born again and not possess the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit teaches men that all they need is Christ.

The unholy spirit teaches men that Christ is not enough, what they need is "power".

The Holy Spirit is Omni present, He everywhere. : ***Psa.139 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.***

The unholy spirit is not Omni present for he must be prayed down, sought after, and invited in.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit edify the church.

The gifts of the unholy spirit divide and destroy the church.

The Holy Spirit teaches that wealth and riches drown men in destruction and perdition.

The unholy spirit teaches that God's will is for them to be wealthy and rich.

The Holy Spirit says that God's grace is sufficient for your infirmities and sickness.

The unholy spirit says that sickness is sin and God's will is for everyone to be well.

The Holy Spirit creates in the believer a divine appetite and love to read, study and hear the word of God.

The unholy spirit quenches that appetite and makes the word of God dead, boring and uninteresting.

The Holy Spirit makes edification and evangelism the number one priority of the local church.

The unholy spirit makes entertainment and "goose bumps" the number one priority of the church.

The Holy Spirit conforms us into the image of God's Son.

The unholy spirit says you don't need conforming for you are already "little gods".

*The Holy Spirit leads men to repent and turn from their works, religion and idols when they get saved.

The unholy spirit tells men that repentance is unnecessary and they don't have to turn from their religion, works and idols.

*The Holy Spirit leads sinners to call on the Lord to save them when they believe the gospel.

The unholy spirit tells men they don't have to call on the Lord to be saved.

*The Holy Spirit quickens man's dead spirit thereby giving him a new birth to enter into the kingdom of God.

The unholy spirit rejects the new birth and deceives people into believing they can get into the kingdom of God without it.

*The Holy Spirit convicts Christians when they sin and leads them to judge and confess their sins.

The unholy spirit teaches men that it is sin to confess their sins!

*The Holy Spirit warns Christians that God will chastise them for sin.

The unholy spirit teaches men that they can sin without any fear of chastisement.

*The Holy Spirit controls those he fills.

The unholy spirit controls those he fills.

*The Holy Spirit enlightens the eyes of our understanding and gives us a fuller revelation and understanding of Christ.

The unholy spirit deceives the mind and hides the truth of Christ from men's understanding.

*The Holy Spirit makes men soul winners.

The unholy spirit creates an indifferent attitude toward soul winning.

*The Holy Spirit leads us into a life of holiness and godliness.

The unholy spirit promotes worldliness and produces carnal Christians

*The Holy Spirit predicts apostasy in the last days thus arming Christians for the battle.

The unholy spirit predicts revival in the last days thus disarming Christians for the battle in the last days.

*The Holy Spirit says that suffering for Christ is a sign of godliness.

The unholy spirit says that riches and wealth is a sign of godliness.

God's Spirit is a Holy Spirit because the scriptures he inspired and preserved are holy.

2 Timothy 3:15-16: And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

The scriptures are called holy because the Spirit who inspired and preserved them is holy. If they are holy that means they are free from corruption and error. If the Bible you have has mistakes and errors in it you do not have the scriptures inspired and preserved by the Holy Spirit. His Bible is a Holy Bible.

God's Spirit is Holy because he gives us victory over the sinful lusts of the flesh.

Galatians 5:16 says: This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

If we walk in the Spirit we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. It does not say, if we walk in the Spirit the flesh will not lust. It says, if we walk in the Spirit

we will not fulfill or give into the lust or desires of the flesh. This shows us the Spirit of God is a Holy Spirit, for when we walk after him he will keep us from giving into the lust of the flesh. He promotes a life of victory over the lusts and sinful desires of the flesh.

God's Spirit is a Holy Spirit because his fruits are holy.

Galatians 5:22-23 says: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

The fruits or works he produces and promotes in the believer are holy and good like he is.

How To Get And Keep The Peace Of God

Philippians 4:5-7 says: Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

The peace of God in verse 7 is that peace that stills the heart of the believer in a time of trouble, distress, uncertainty, sickness, suffering and pain like we are now in.

No one is exempt from these bad things. 1 Thess.3:3-4 says we will suffer all these things and sooner or later we will. These things and even the fear of them can paralyze us and make us say and do things that we ought not. If we are not careful, they can make us blame God foolishly. They can make us doubt his faithfulness, his care, his love, and even his word.

But here is a promise in Philp.4:7 that we can have the peace of God in our hearts and minds when these bad things happen to us. The peace of God can keep our hearts and minds calm when these bad things happen to us. The peace of God can calm our fears and keep us from being overcome by worry, anxiety and fear in the midst of our trouble and tribulations.

The peace of God is not the absence of trouble. It is the calm in the midst of the storm. In John 16:33 Jesus promised: **These things I have spoken**

unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

In this verse there are two promises. One of them is tribulation. In the world we will have tribulation and trouble. No one is exempt from tribulation and trouble. If you haven't had any yet, just wait, it will find you.

Job 5:7 says: **Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.**

You and I are destined to trouble, trials and tribulation. As long as we are in the world we will have to contend with these bad things. There will be storms in our lives.

But there is another promise in the verse. He promised to give you peace in your tribulation. He did not exempt you from tribulation, but he did promise to give you peace when it comes. That peace will keep your heart and mind from being overcome by fear and dread and sorrow.

That is why Paul said be careful for nothing. The word careful means full of care. It's another word for worry and anxiety. It's the kind of care that torments us, distracts us, which disturbs our joy in God and destroys our peace.

We don't have to be overcome and paralyzed by cares, worries, and fear. We will always have tribulation and trouble till Jesus comes, but we don't have to be defeated by them or paralyzed by them. We can have the peace of God that passes all understanding instead.

What do we worry about?

We worry about the past.

Some worry about their past sins, if they are forgiven or not.

Some worry about their past failures which keep them from attempting anything new in the future.

Some worry about their past lives that were spent fulfilling the lust of the flesh.

Some worry about their past reputation catching up with them again.

We worry about the present

Do we have enough food to eat?

Do we have clothes to wear?

Do we have enough money to buy food and pay our bills?

Am I going to keep or lose my job, or will I find a job?

Will I ever get well?

We worry about the future

Worry and fear of the future is one of our biggest problems. Fear of sickness and disease, fear of what may happen to us, fear of the unknown, fear of losing a job, fear of poverty, fear of being disabled, fear of things that may not even happen.

The reason Paul said be careful for nothing is because worry, anxiety, and fear can paralyze us, depress us and overcome us. They can make us weary till we faint and give up in despair.

Worry and fear is a device of the devil to get us down and to keep us down. But God has provided a way to overcome worry, fear and anxiety. There is a way we can live free from worry and fear. We will never be free from tribulation and trouble, trials, or sickness. But there is a way we can experience the peace of God during them so we can get through them without fainting and giving up in despair and even retain our joy when they come.

(1) Becoming Aware Of The Presence Of God

"The Lord is at hand"

This speaks of the Lord's ever abiding presence and help.

Hebrews 13:5-6 says: For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Psalms 46:1: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

The Lord is at hand at all times to aid and assist us when trouble trials and tribulation enters our life. He knew they would happen and he made these promises to stand with us to help us when bad things happen to us.

*When Daniel went into the Lion's den, the Lord went with him

*When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were cast into the fiery furnace, the Lord went into the fire with them. He was the fourth man in the fire.

*When all the plagues fell on Egypt, the Lord protected his people from them.

*When Paul and the Apostles were thrown into prison, the Lord went to prison with them.

*When the martyrs went to the stake, the Lord was with them.

*When they wheel you into the operating room the Lord will go with you to guide the doctor's hands.

*If you lose your job, you will not lose the Lord.

*When you lose a loved one you will never lose the Lord, he is still with you. He will stand with you at the grave side while he escorts your love one in the Lord into heaven.

The Lord does not desert us in our hour of need. His presence is there at all times. You are not alone in your distress and trouble. The Lord is at hand at all times and we need to become aware of his presence at all times. If we were, we would not fear or be full of care and worry.

When I was a young child my family walked to church. In the day time it was no problem but at night I was full of fear. We did not have street lights in those days (1940's) and it was very dark. But when my father took me by the hand my fear went away. And when you sense God's hand and presence with you in the bad times it takes away your fear and worry.

(2) Pray About Everything

The last thing that many people do when they get into trouble or distress is pray. It should be the first thing you do. God invites you and encourages you to call on Him and to make your requests known unto Him in prayer.

Read these verses

Jeremiah 33:3: Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.

Psalms 18:6: In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.

Hebrews 4:15: For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

God urges you to call on him in prayer. He said call on me and I will answer thee. He said let your requests be made known unto God. Why not take him up on his offer and see if he does what He said He would do.

So many of us are full of care and worry simply because we will not take God up on his offer. He said, you have not because you ask not. He said, Let your requests be made known unto God. Do you have a request? Do you have a need that only God can supply? Are you worried about something that is serious? Is there something in the future that you fear and dread? Call out to God and pray and ask him to give you what he thinks you need to relieve your worry and take away your fear and dread. In the verses we just read He has given you an open invitation to do it.

As a child didn't you ask your father to give you what you wanted? Isn't every Christian a child of God? If so then why can't you ask your heavenly father to give you what he thinks you need?

In Matthew 7:7-11 Jesus said: **Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?**

Do you withhold your hand from your children when they come to you with needs, fears and trouble? No. You do what you can for them. Will God turn away his ear when his children come to him with needs, worries, fears, trouble and tribulation? Will God turn his back on his children? Never!

"Supplication"

Is humble and earnest prayer. It's the opposite of formal, dead, repetitive prayer. It is serious prayer from the heart. If you will get serious with God in prayer he will get serious with you with an answer. Many times our prayers go unanswered because they are not serious. We ask for things we don't need or we speak into the air or we throw a two second prayer and expect big results.

(3) Be Thankful For Everything

Being thankful for past blessings and past answers to prayer will help you get your present prayers answered now.

A man had two Sons. One Son was very grateful for everything that his father did for him. He always said thank you when he was given anything by his father. He was always thankful and showed it by obeying and honoring his father. But the other Son rarely said thank you. He was unthankful and rarely obeyed his father unless he wanted something. Which one of those two Sons will the father show favor to when they come to him to get their needs supplied?

God hates the sin of un-thankfulness and it is the sin of un-thankfulness that prevents many Christians from getting their prayers answered. God knows that if he answered them they would not be thankful or even acknowledge that he answered their prayers. I have seen Christians lose their jobs and pray for God to give them one and he did, but then they disappear from church and rarely come and show no interest in the things of God..

Every Christian ought to devote time every day thanking God for past and present blessings and especially answers to prayer. Get in the habit of doing it and you will find yourself doing it all day. And when you do, your cares and burdens will disappear. Thanks, praise and prayer are great antidotes to worry, fear and anxiety.

(4) Claim The Promises Of God

2 Peter 1:4 says: **Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.**

These precious promises are not only the things he has done for us in the past, but promises of what he will do for us in the future. We talk about them, discuss them, sing about them so why not claim them and use them?

I have known people who have gone to the doctor get a prescription to cure their ills but never get it filled. What good is medicine if you are not going to take it? And what good are promises like these if you are not going to claim and use them? The promises of God can help you overcome every worry, fear, trouble, trial and tribulation you now have if you would claim them.

Why be overcome by care and worry when God said to cast them on him?

1Peter 5:7: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Why worry about your present needs when God promised he would supply all your needs.

Philippians 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. He did not say desire or greed but need. This is a very practical promise and you need to claim it. Christ explains it in Matt.6:25-33

Why be a slave to fear when God promised you victory over fear

2 Timothy 1:7: For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Why fret about your failures when God can make all things, including your failures, work together for your good

Romans 8:28 says: And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Why fret about your future needs when God supplied your past needs

Romans 8:31-32: ***If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?***

The promises of God give us the peace of God that passes all understanding. In his promises God shows us that he is on our side and that he has our best interests at heart. He shows us that he cares about us and loves us and is working all things together for our good. These promises keep our hearts and minds from being overcome by worry and fear and dread. After all if God be for us who can be against us?

See Numbers 23:19.

(5) Trust The Great Power Of God

No matter how big your problem or need is; how desperate your condition is; how helpless you feel; how weak you are; what odds you are up against; there is nothing greater than the power of God.

Jeremiah 32:27: Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?

Ephesians 3:20: Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.

What kind of power does God have?

The God of the Bible can speak words and create a universe.

He will speak words in the future that will unravel the universe.

He can drown the whole world with water

He can dry up seas and oceans with the breath of his mouth.

He can feed millions with bread and meat from heaven for years

He can cause water to come out of solid rocks

He can destroy cities with fire and brimstone from heaven.

He can make the sun to stand still in heaven for almost a whole day to give his people a little more daylight to fight their enemies.

He can walk on water.

He can raise dead people from the grave.

He can heal all manner of sickness and disease.

He can lead people across seas and rivers without getting wet.

He raises up and brings down kings and rulers and nations.

This is the God who is working all things together for your good. Is there anything you need to fear with a God like him working for you? Is there any problem you have that he can't handle?

(6) Believe In The Divine Providence Of God

Romans 8:28 says: **And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.**

Many of the things that happen to us are foreordained by the Lord for our good even though they may seem to hurt us. The providence of God is God working all things together for our good even those which seem for a time to cause us grief. Paul was given a messenger of satan to buffet him. It caused him pain. He called it an infirmity but God did not remove it to keep him from becoming proud. If he would have become proud we may never have heard of the Apostle Paul, because God does not use proud people.

Many years ago a man was traveling on his donkey and at night fall he came upon a town to find a room in the Inn. The people in the town were mean and ran him off. So he went outside the city and found a dark, dirty cave to sleep in. He lit a light to scare off animals during the night but it was

blown out by the wind and so he had to stay up all night for fear of being attacked by wild animals. He went outside the cave in the morning and found his donkey killed by a mountain Lion. He sat down and moaned, woe is me. He went back to the town the next morning and found that during the night it had been attacked by a gang of robbers who killed everyone in town. Then it dawned on him that if he would have gotten a room he would now be dead, and if my light would not have been blown by the wind they would have seen it and came after me and killed me and if my donkey would not have been killed, they would have heard him and came after him and found me and killed me. He then rejoiced and said, the Lord has been so good to me! That's an example of Romans 8:28 at work for our good. That's an example of the divine providence of God at work in our lives.

It Is Finished

John 19:28-30: After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put *it* upon hyssop, and put *it* to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

Moments before he died Jesus said it is finished. The word means completed, ended, done, perfected, concluded, executed, discharged, filled up, and performed. In verse 28 before he also said: *all things were now accomplished*. What were the things that were accomplished and finished and concluded in the moment he died? In John 4:34: **Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.**

God gave Jesus a job to do and it was finished and concluded when he died on the cross. The death of Christ on the cross finished and completed and accomplished the work his father sent him to do. His death on the cross finished the work he came into the world to do and the work he did was the will of his father. But what was it? The answer is in Hebrews 10:4-10 which says: **For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou**

hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

This is the work Christ's father sent him to do in John 4:34. Jesus came to do the will of his father. He said it twice in these verses. And the will of his father which is found in verse 9 was for him to take away the first covenant law and establish a new covenant of grace in its place. Jesus did the will of his father and finished the work his father sent him to do when he died on the cross. By his death on the cross he abolished the law and at the same time established a new covenant of grace and mercy in its place.

When he said it is finished, he meant he had concluded the work his father sent him to do. He accomplished the will of his father; to take away the old covenant law and establish a new covenant of grace in its place that is far better than the old. One of the main reasons his father's will was for him to take away the old covenant law is because the sacrifices of the old covenant law did not satisfy him or give him pleasure. He said it twice for emphasis in Hebrews 10:6 and Hebrews 10:8. They did not satisfy him or give him pleasure because they could not take away sin forever or make believers perfect. Hebrews 10:1-4 says: **For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.** For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those *sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*

These verses explain why God the Father sent Christ into the world to abolish the old covenant law and to establish a new covenant of grace. By his death, he provided a once for all sacrifice that takes away sin and makes believers perfect.

A Summary of Hebrews 10:11-18

Hebrews 10:11: **And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.**

The reason the old covenant priests always stood is because there were no chairs for them to sit down. Why? Because their work was never done. Their work was never finished. Why? Because their sacrifices could not take away sin forever. They provided a temporary covering, but not a removing of sin. So, they were required to stand all day, week after week, month after month and year after year offering imperfect, unsatisfactory sacrifices for sin that gave God no pleasure.

Hebrews 10:12: **But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.**

Jesus offered one sacrifice and sat down. Why? His job was FINISHED. Why? Because by his one sacrifice all sins are forgiven, blotted out, remitted and removed forever. And his sacrifice gave God pleasure; not in the sense of seeing his Son suffer, but because his sacrifice removed the sins of believers out of his sight. Isaiah 53:10-11 says: **Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied:** by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

According to these verses, the sacrificial death of Christ pleased the Lord and gave him pleasure and satisfied him. Why? Because by his death on the cross he justifies sinners and when they are justified their rotten stinking sins are removed from his sight. And how do we know this is true? Because Romans 4:7-8 says: **Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.**

Hebrews 10:13-14: **From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.**

This is another reason it was the will of God for Christ to take away the old covenant and establish a new covenant by his death. The atonement he made for sin makes the believer perfect once he believes it. The old covenant could never make a believer perfect. See Hebrews 10:1.

Hebrews 10:15-16: **Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.**

The Holy Ghost said through Jeremiah the prophet that God would make a new covenant that would take the place of the old covenant. After the days this promise was made, the time came for that covenant to be established. The time came when Christ died, for that is when the new covenant promised by the Spirit in Jeremiah 31:31 was established.

Paul refers to those days and that time in Galatians 4:4-5: **But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.** (The time came after the 69 weeks of Daniel 9:25-27)

Hebrews 10:17-18: **And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these *is*, there is no more offering for sin.**

Under the new covenant, God does not remember the sins of the saints once he forgives them. This is one of many reasons why salvation is secure under the new covenant. Under the old covenant there was always a remembrance of sins, because the sacrifices could not take away sin forever. See Hebrews 10:3-4

There is no more offering for sin.

Under the old covenant, offerings for sins were made continually, but under the new covenant there is no more offering for sin. The one sacrifice of Christ made the Levitical priesthood obsolete. By his one offering for sin all sins are forgiven and all believers made perfect in Christ Jesus.

These verses in Hebrews 10 explain what Jesus meant when he said, *it is finished* in John 19:30. He finished the work his father sent him to do. The work was concluded on the cross. It was the work and will of his father for him to take away the first covenant and establish a second new covenant in its place. He said in Hebrews 10:9; ***Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.***

The old covenant gave the father no pleasure or satisfaction because the offerings for sin could not take away sin forever or make a believer perfect.

But, the one offering of the new covenant pleased and delighted and satisfied his father for by the one offering of Jesus Christ all sins can be forgiven forever and saints perfected.

Even though the new covenant was originally made with Israel, gentile believers partake of it today for there is no forgiveness or perfection outside of the new covenant sacrifice of Christ. This is why God counts us gentiles the seed of Abraham and heirs to the promises he made to his seed in Galatians 3:29. The greatest promise he made to his seed was the promise of a new covenant.

This is why God made us gentiles nigh to the covenants of promise we were afar off from in Ephesians 2:12-13. And the covenant with the best promises was the new covenant.

This is why God made us gentiles partakers of Israel's spiritual promises in Romans 15:27. And the greatest promise he made to them was the promise of a new covenant. The greatest promise in the new covenant is the once for all sacrifice of Christ that not only forgives all sins and sinners forever, but perfects all those that believe.

Additional Notes

When Jesus said it is finished and then died, the following were also finished, completed and concluded.

*All of the prophecies of the prophets concerning the sufferings and death of Christ were then finished and accomplished and fulfilled such as Isaiah 53 and Psalms 22 and Genesis 3:15.

*All of the just demands God had against our sins were accomplished and finished when he closed his eyes in death.

*The breaking down of the middle wall of partition between Jew and gentile was finished and accomplished when he died.

*The bringing in of a New Covenant gospel of grace was finished when he died.

*Reconciliation for all sins and sinners was finished and completed.

- *A full ransom for sins and sinners was finished.
 - *His tasting death for every man was finished.
 - *Pardon for all sins and sinners was finished and accomplished.
 - *Peace between God and man was finished and accomplished.
 - *The destruction of Satan's power over believers was finished and accomplished.
 - *Eternal redemption for sinners was finished and accomplished.
 - *Propitiation for the sins of the whole world was finished.
 - *Intercession for all transgressors was finished.
 - *Peace and reconciliation between Jew and Gentile was finished and accomplished.
 - *Salvation minus works was accomplished and finished.
 - *Salvation by grace was accomplished and finished.
 - *Eternal security was accomplished and finished.
 - *Sabbath days, feast days and holy day observances were concluded and finished.
 - *The Levitical priesthood was abolished and finished.
 - *The dietary laws were abolished and concluded.
 - *Animal sacrifices for sin were finished and abolished.
- These blessings show us the full scope of Christ's words when he said; ***It is finished.***

ONE SAVING GOSPEL IN THE BIBLE

In 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 Paul wrote: ***For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.***

Notice that Paul said the gospel he preached was according to the scriptures. What scriptures? The Old Testament scriptures. Therefore, the gospel Paul preached in the New Testament is the same one found in the Old Testament. This means there is ONE SAVING GOSPEL IN BOTH OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS. That one saving gospel is the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ for sin and sinners. It was preached or wrote about by the Prophets in the Old Testament, Jesus Christ in the Four Gospels and by all of the Apostles in the New Testament. But, don't take it from me search and see for yourself.

The Prophets in the Old Testament

Isaiah the Prophets gives us one of best descriptions of the sacrificial death of Christ in the Bible. He wrote the following in Isaiah 53:

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

8 He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.

11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

12 He hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

These are the scriptures Paul and all the apostles preached from in the New Testament when they preached the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ for sin and transgressions.

Jesus Christ in the Four Gospels

Matthew 20:28: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Matthew 26:27-28: And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

John 3:14-15: And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. John 12:32-33: And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.

John 6:51: I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

John 10:10-11: The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

John 10:15: As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

John 10:17-18: Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

Five times in this chapter Jesus said he would die for the sheep.

The Apostles In The New Testament

Paul

1 Corinthians 15:3-4: For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

Romans 5:6-8: For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Peter

1 Peter 1:18-19: Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

1 Peter 2:24: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

1 Peter 3:18: For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

John

1 John 1:7: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

1 John 2:1-2: My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Revelation 1:5: And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

Anyone with any spiritual sense at all can see that there is one saving gospel in both Testaments. It's the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ for sinners. Don't buy into the false doctrines of hyper dispensationalists who say there are many saving gospels in the Bible or that Paul was the only one who preached the cross for salvation. That's nonsense. Paul preached the gospel from the OT scriptures of the prophets like Isaiah. He said in Acts 26:22-23:

Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

Notice that Paul preached the gospel from Moses and the prophets.

In Romans 1:1-4 he clearly says his gospel was found in the OT scriptures: **Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:**

The mystery of the gospel in Romans 16:25 is not the gospel but that God is now saving gentiles by faith alone in the gospel without circumcision or keeping the law. (Eph. 3:6)

The point is, Paul preached the same gospel that Moses and the prophets like Isaiah wrote about in the OT, that Jesus Christ preached in the four gospels and the 12 apostles preached and wrote about in Hebrews through Revelation. If your doctrines and theories deny these simple facts then you need to change your doctrine and theories to fit the Bible.

Paul And Peter And Water Baptism

We have seen in our studies in Galatians 2 that even though Paul preached the gospel of the uncircumcision and Peter the gospel of the circumcision they preached the same message. They preached to different people, but they preached the same message to both the uncircumcision and circumcision.

Paul was called by God to be the apostle of the gentiles and when he preached the gospel of uncircumcision to the gentiles here is what he preached:

1Corinthians 15:1-4: ***Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;***

By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

Peter was called by God to be the apostle of the Jews and when he preached the gospel of the circumcision, here is what he preached:

1 Peter 3:18: ***For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.***

Both Peter and Paul preached the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ for sin to both Jews and gentiles. But, there is also something else they preached when they preached the gospel and it was water baptism. Both Peter and Paul baptized their converts and the question we need to ask and find the correct answer to is why? Why did Peter baptize his converts? Why did Paul baptize his converts? Did they baptize them for salvation or for some other reason? What saith the scriptures?

There is one thing we must be very, very sure about and that is what we must do to be saved. We must be sure we have done what is necessary to be saved, because one second after we die we can't come back and do what we failed to do. I want to be sure now that I have done what is necessary to be saved, don't you? If there is something that I have failed to do, then I want to do it, don't you?

The issue we are studying is water baptism. Is water baptism necessary along with believing to be saved today? We must be absolutely sure about this because if water baptism is necessary and you are not baptized you will end up in hell. It's a very important issue. Suppose that after you died you end up in hell because you were not baptized? If water baptism is a requirement for salvation and you were not baptized before you die, you will end up in hell. Therefore, we must search the scriptures to make sure that what we believe about water baptism is true.

First we will exam the commission God gave Peter and the 12 apostles before he went back to heaven.

Mark 16:15-16: And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

If words mean what they say and say what they mean, this verse clearly says that water baptism was necessary for salvation. The Lord did not say he that believeth only shall be saved. He did not say he that is baptized only shall be saved. He said he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. Both believing and water baptism were necessary to be saved.

Many dispensationalists agree that water baptism in Mark 16 was necessary for salvation. But, Baptists do not believe it. Baptists are quick to point out that the man who did not believe was damned, not the man who was not baptized. That's true, but that does not mean water baptism was not necessary, because water baptism was of no value to a man if he did not first believe. The man who was saved believed first and then was baptized. If he didn't believe, being baptized was of no profit. But, if a man believed he was required to be baptized. It was not an option.

Acts 2:38: Then Peter said unto them, 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.

What Peter knew about water baptism in Acts 2 is what the Lord said about it in Mark 16. He knew it was necessary along with believing to be saved because that is what the Lord said in Mark. 16:15-16. Peter clearly states that the men he preached to had to be baptized BEFORE they could receive remission of sins and BEFORE they could receive the gift of the

Holy Ghost. In Acts 2 water baptism was FOR the remission of sins. If words mean what they say and say what they mean, water baptism was a requirement in Acts 2 along with believing to receive remission of sins and the Holy Ghost.

Many dispensationalists agree with this, but my Baptist friends do not. They do not believe water baptism has ever played a part in salvation and so they change the words in Acts 2:38 to read; *on account of remission of sins*. They teach they were not baptized for or to receive remission of sins, but because they had remission of sins. In other words, remission of sins and receiving the Holy Ghost came first and then water baptism. They reverse the order. They do this because Baptist doctrine says water baptism never had a part in salvation. Because Baptist doctrine says water baptism has never played a part in salvation, they are forced to change the words in Acts 2:38 to make Peter say they should get baptized because their sins were remitted, instead of saying you must be baptized for or to get your sins remitted.

But they are wrong and that is why Baptists always lose their debates with church of Christ ministers over the issue of water baptism. The church of Christ believes Acts 2:38 means what it says and says what it means and they are right. The Baptists don't and that is why they change the verse to make it say just the opposite of what Peter said. When reading Acts 2:38 always remember that what Peter said was based upon what the Lord said to him in Mark 16:16; The Lord said: ***He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved***. That is what Acts 2:38 says; it plainly says that if a man wanted his sins remitted he had to first believe, repent and be baptized FOR not on account of remission of sins.

Any time a man has to change the words in the Bible to prove his doctrine then you know his doctrine is false. And any man who changes the words in the Bible because they contradict his private doctrine is handling the word of God deceitfully. My Baptist friends are guilty of this in Acts 2 and Mark 16.

Acts 8:12: ***But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.***

Who is Philip and why did he baptize? In Acts 6:1-7 he was one of the 7 original deacons ordained by the 12 apostles. Therefore, what he knew and believed about water baptism is what he learned from the 12 apostles. The 12 apostles were his teacher and what they taught him about water baptism is what he believed and why he baptized the people in Acts 8. In Acts 2:38 Peter and the apostles preached and practiced water baptism for the remission of sins. They did so because the Lord sent them to preach: *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved* in Mark. 16:16. Therefore, the people in Acts 8 were baptized for the same reason as those in Acts 2; for salvation and remission of sins.

The Baptists do not agree with this, but most preachers in the so called grace movement agree with this. They say what I just said; that Philip preached what he learned from the 12 apostles. And if the apostles in Acts 2 preached remission of sins by believing and water baptism then so did Philip. Most grace preachers and believers will agree with what I have said thus far, but when they see Paul baptizing they become like the Baptists.

Acts 18:8: *And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.*

Take this verse and compare it with Acts 8:12.

But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

What did the people in Acts 8 do when they heard Philip preach? It says they believed and were baptized. What did the people in Corinth do when they heard Paul preach? They believed and were baptized.

If they were baptized after they heard Paul preach, did Paul preach water baptism? It's obvious he did just like Philip in Acts 8. The people in Acts 8 were baptized when they heard Philip preach, therefore he must have preached water baptism. If the Corinthians were baptized when they heard Paul preach, then he must have preached water baptism.

This is where many of the people in the so called grace movement go astray. Many of them do not believe Paul preached water baptism, because he said in 1 Corinthians 1:17, Christ sent me not to baptize. But yet he wrote this to the very same people who were baptized after they heard him

preach. Therefore, 1 Corinthians 1:17 does not mean that Paul did not preach or practice water baptism, for its obvious he did.

Acts 16:12-14: *And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.*

And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.

And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

It says Lydia and her household *attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul*. In other words she took heed to what Paul said. When she attended unto what Paul said, what did she do? The same thing the Corinthians did in Acts 18 and what the people did in Acts 8; she and her household believed and were baptized. If she was baptized by attending unto what Paul said, then it is obvious Paul must have said something about water baptism. Therefore, to say Paul did not preach water baptism is wrong. It obvious he did by the fact that after this woman heard Paul preach she was baptized along with her household.

Acts 16:31-34: *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*

And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

After the jailor believed on the Lord Jesus Christ he washed the stripes of Paul and Paul baptized him and his family. Here is another example of Paul baptizing a man who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. He was baptized by Paul straightway after he believed, just like the Corinthians in Acts 18 and Lydia in Acts 16:12-14.

These verses in Acts 16 and Acts 18 prove beyond a doubt that Paul preached, practiced and persuaded his converts to be baptized. Preachers in the so called grace movement say Paul did not preach water baptism and some even say he did not baptize anyone, but the indisputable facts say he did. They do not believe Paul preached or practiced water baptism because they do not understand 1 Corinthians 1:17. To them this verse means Paul did not preach or practice water baptism or that water baptism *is not for today*, as they say. But the fact is he did both as you just read. The very man who said Christ sent me not to baptize in 1 Corinthians 1:17 persuaded the people he wrote it to be baptized! So they are wrong on this issue and it is an issue you better be right about. You can't just flip it off by quoting half of 1 Corinthians 1:17.

We know that Paul baptized. There is no question about that. What we must determine is why he baptized. Compare Acts 8:12 with Acts 18:8 again. They both say the same thing. If they say the same thing how do you know Paul preached water baptism in Acts 18 for a different reason than Philip in Acts 8? When the people heard Paul and Philip preach, both groups of people responded the same way; they believed and were baptized. We know that Philip preached water baptism for the remission of sins in Acts 8, because he was taught this by the 12 apostles. But how do we know Paul did not preach water baptism for the remission of sins?

The Baptists and many dispensationalists and the church of Christ do not have the answer to this question. The church of Christ says Paul baptized for the same reason Philip and the apostles did. Some dispensationalists say Paul did not even preach water baptism. And the Baptists say water baptism was never for salvation.

The answer is two events and one context:

The salvation of Cornelius – Acts 10

The salvation of Paul – Acts 9

The context of 1 Corinthians 1:17

The salvation of Cornelius

Compare these verses together

Acts 2:38: Then Peter said unto them, 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 10:45-48: And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

What you see in these verses is major change in water baptism. In Acts 2 baptism preceded salvation and receiving the Holy Ghost. In Acts 10 baptism came AFTER salvation and receiving the Holy Ghost. The order is reversed. The people in Acts 2 did not receive the Holy Ghost or salvation until they were first baptized in water. Cornelius and his family received the Holy Ghost and were saved BEFORE they were baptized. This means water baptism did not have a part in the salvation of Cornelius. He was baptized in water, but not for salvation or to receive the Holy Ghost for he had already received the Holy Ghost and was saved before he was baptized.

How was Cornelius saved?

In Acts 15:7-11 Peter describes how he was saved:

And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;

And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

According to Peter, Cornelius was saved by grace (11) through faith alone (9) without keeping the law (10) or being circumcised (Acts 11:3) and before he was baptized (Acts 10:47-48). And Peter said that as God saved Cornelius he would save the Jews.

The Salvation of Paul

In Acts 9 is found the conversion of Paul and in Acts 9:17-18 It says:

And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

By the laying on of Ananias hands Paul was not only given his sight back, but was filled with the Holy Ghost. Paul believed on Christ in Acts 9:6 when he called him Lord. But he was not filled with the Holy Ghost until Ananias laid hands on him in Acts 9:17. But it was AFTER Paul was filled with the Holy Ghost that he was baptized in verse 18. He was like Cornelius; he was filled with the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands and then he was baptized.

Acts was a period of change. Water baptism was like many things in the Acts period that changed. There were things that the saints in the Acts period did that we don't do today. We do not sell all of our houses and lands and possessions and give the money to the apostles or the church to evenly distribute to the other saints as they did in Acts 2 and Acts 4. The church of Christ is very vocal about Acts 2:38 and say we should obey Acts 2:38 but they do not obey Acts 2:44-45 which says: ***And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.*** The saints in Acts 4:34 did the same thing.

We do not worship God in the temple in Jerusalem, but they did. We do not observe feast days and Sabbath days, but many believers in Acts did. Acts is a book of change and one thing that changed was water baptism. In early Acts people were saved and received the Spirit after they were baptized. Later in Acts as in the case of Paul and Cornelius they were baptized AFTER they were saved and received the Spirit.

The Context of 1 Corinthians 1:17

In 1 Corinthians 1:17 Paul wrote: ***For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.***

I want to remind you again that what Paul wrote in this verse was written to people that he persuaded to be baptized in Acts 18:8. When the

Corinthians heard Paul preach it says; they believed and were baptized. If so, what did he mean when he said Christ sent me not to baptize? If they were persuaded to be baptized by Paul's preaching does this contradict what he said in verse 17? Put yourself in their shoes: Let's say a man persuades you to be baptized and then you receive a letter from him saying: Christ sent me not to baptize. What would you think? You would probably say that he needs to clarify what he means and Paul does just that in the context. A text is always interpreted by its context. In the context **salvation is the main issue.**

Read these verses carefully.

In verse 18 he wrote; ***For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. (The power of God unto salvation is the preaching of the cross)***

In verse 21 he wrote: ***For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (The preaching of the cross is what saves)***

In verse 23-24 he wrote; ***But we preach Christ crucified, (for salvation) unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, (unto salvation) and the wisdom of God.***

Salvation is the main issue in the verses that follow 1 Corinthians 1:17 and they give us the answer to the puzzle of 1 Corinthians 1:17. It is simple; ***When it came to salvation Christ did not send Paul to baptize, but to preach the gospel, for the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, not water baptism.***

It's obvious Paul preached water baptism for after the Corinthians and the Philippians and Ephesians heard him preach they were baptized, but not for salvation. When it came to salvation Paul preached the gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation not water baptism. When he said Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach the gospel, he is saying that it is the gospel and the cross that saves not water baptism.

Most grace preachers over look the context of 1 Corinthians 1:17. They over look it in their misguided zeal to prove Paul did not preach water baptism. But that cannot be the correct interpretation because we have seen his converts baptized over and over again. They wrest the verse out of its context to make it say something totally foreign to the context. In the context Paul is not saying he did not baptize or preach water baptism. He is showing us that water baptism does not save, but it's the gospel and the preaching of the cross alone that saves.

A smart church of Christ preacher wins the debate with the Baptists and most grace preachers about water baptism. The Baptists say water baptism does not and has never saved anyone. All a church of Christ preacher has to do is hold his feet to the fire in Acts 2:38 and Mark 16:15 which plainly say that men were saved by being baptized along with believing and he wins the debate.

Many grace preachers say Paul did not preach or practice water baptism and use 1 Corinthians 1:17 to prove it. All a church of Christ preacher has to do is show him Acts 9:18, Acts 16:15, Acts 16:33, Acts 18:8 and Acts 19:5 where Paul preached and practiced and persuaded men to be baptized and he wins the debate. Neither one has the answer because of their preconceived ideas and private doctrines about water baptism.

What about 1 Corinthians 1:14-16?

I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.

These verses must be interpreted in view of the people they are written to and from the context. All of the Corinthians who believed Paul's preaching were baptized and their numbers were many. Yet Paul said he baptized just a few of them and was glad he did not baptize all of them. Why did he say this? He said: ***Lest any should say he had baptized in his own name.*** After the Corinthians were saved they became divided up into warring factions and when Paul heard it he was glad he did not baptize all

of them. They were all baptized, but it was not Paul who did it and looking back he was glad because they would have all bragged and boasted they were baptized in the name of Paul. But they couldn't say it because he baptized just a few of them. He did not thank God they were not baptized, because they were all baptized; he thanked God he didn't do it in view of how carnal they became and the tendency they had of boasting in men.

When we interpret 1 Corinthians 1:17 from its context we see that water baptism no longer saves because when it came to salvation God did not send Paul to baptize, but to preach the gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation and not water baptism. When men lift this verse out of its context they miss this important fact about water baptism.

And going back to the beginning; when it comes to salvation we had better be sure we have done everything we need to do now to be saved, because once we die we cannot come back and do what we failed to do. This is why we must be right about water baptism, for there was a time when it was necessary for salvation. If it was necessary for salvation in the past how do we know it is not necessary today? How do we know that the church of Christ is not right about water baptism? They say it saves and quote Acts 2:38 to prove it. How do we know they are wrong when we see Paul preaching it and practicing it? If Paul preached it how do we know he did not preach it for the same reason the 12 apostles did in Acts 2?

That is why we must prove that when Paul preached water baptism it was not for salvation, but for other reasons. And we do not prove it by ignoring what the Bible says or denying what it says like many Baptists and many grace preachers and people do.

That is why it is so important to interpret every text by the context in which it appears. That is why it's important that we believe what the Bible says even when it contradicts what we already believe. If what we believe contradicts what the Bible says what should we do? Should we just ignore what the Bible says and keep on believing what we have always believed or should we change what we believe to fit the Bible? The answer is obvious.

One other thing: Most church of Christ preachers and members believe that water baptism is always for salvation and quote Acts 2:38 as their proof text. They say anyone who was baptized in the Bible was baptized for the remission of sins. They say water baptism is for no other reason than remission of sins. But what they overlook is Christ. Jesus Christ began his ministry by being baptized by John the Baptist in Matthew 3:16. Was he baptized for the remission of sins? Of course not, for he was sinless. His baptism proves there are other reasons why men were baptized in the Bible other than for the remission of sins. Christ was baptized in water but not for the remission of sins. Therefore, everyone who was baptized in the Bible was not baptized for salvation. Paul and Cornelius are two examples and so are those Paul baptized.

PAUL AND THE “MYSTERY”

By Philip Mauro (1923)

“The preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began.” (Romans 16:25)

It is astonishing to find how prevalent has become the idea that the Church was a “mystery” first revealed to the Apostle Paul, and of which other Apostles and servants of Christ were ignorant until Paul made it known. We meet this idea again and again in current writings; (1923) and when we ask what basis there is for it, we are referred to Ephesians 3:1–13 and Colossians 1:23–29. But we are unable to find a trace of that idea in those Scriptures. On the contrary, they show clearly that the “mystery” (to which Paul made frequent reference in his writings) was not the Church of God, and that Paul was not by any means the first to whom that “mystery” was revealed.

In the first place the “mystery” (whatever it be) whereof Paul was speaking in the Scriptures cited above was one which, according to his own testimony, had been made known — not to him exclusively, nor to him primarily, but — to others as well as to himself. For it was, as he himself

declares in those very Scriptures, **“the mystery of Christ which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now” — in this age — “revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit”** (Ephesians 3:5), Thus it clearly appears that Paul claimed no exclusiveness and no preeminence in the knowledge of this mystery. The Spirit of God revealed it to God’s “holy apostles and prophets,” Paul being one of the number to whom the revelation had been given. The comparison (as regards knowledge of the mystery) is not between Paul and other servants of Christ, but between the sons of men “in other ages” and God’s apostles and prophets in this age — “now.”

What Paul is emphasizing here, as in other of his writings to converted Gentiles, is that his qualifications as “a minister and a witness” to them, Gentiles, (Acts 26:16, 17) were of precisely the same sort, and from the same source, as those of other apostles and servants of Christ. In other words, the former despised Gentiles were to be no whit behind the Jews in having a duly authorized Apostle of Christ sent to them, even as had the Jews. Paul, as the “Apostle of the Gentiles,” magnified his office. His apostleship, on behalf of the Gentile aliens, was just as genuine and as Divinely accredited as was the apostleship of those sent to the favored Jews. He was appointed by Christ Himself, as they were, and received his instructions and his message from Christ Himself, exactly as they. (See 1 Corinthians 15:3, 8; Galatians 1:11–17; 2:2, etc.).

Now we ask, WHAT IS THIS “MYSTERY”? As to this, we have the clearest possible statement in the next words of Ephesians 3, following those quoted above, namely:

“That THE GENTILES should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body; and partakers of His promise in Christ by (means of) the Gospel, whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints in this grace given, that I should preach AMONG THE GENTILES the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men (i.e. Gentiles as well as Jews) see what is THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE MYSTERY, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.” Thus the great “mystery,” or Divine

secret is this: that God, although He had promised to the Jews only, the marvelous blessings of the New Covenant, had always purposed that believing Gentiles should be sharers thereof on a precise equality with believing Israelites. That was “the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (verse 11). But He had not made it known unto the sons of men in past ages. “From the beginning of the world” it had been “hid in God.” Hence it was, until God “revealed it unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit,” a Divine secret, or “mystery.” Paul reminds the (Gentile) saints at Rome that to the Israelites pertained “the adoption” (or place of sons, of Ephesians 1:5), which now is given also to believing Gentiles, “and the glory” (now also preached to Gentiles — see Romans 9:23,24, Colossians 1:27) “and the covenants” (now shared by Gentiles— see Matthew 26:28; 2 Corinthians 3:6; ... “and the service of God, and the promises” (Romans 9:4, 5).

On the other hand, Paul reminded the Ephesian saints that they, being Gentiles, had had no part nor prospect in those unsearchable riches of Christ, but had been “without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope” (compare Israel’s hope, Acts 26:7, 8), “and without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12). Thus, before the coming of Christ into the world there was a sharp line of separation between Jews and Gentiles. “BUT NOW ” a great and wonderful change in God’s dealings with men has been proclaimed. For God has now made known what had not been revealed in past ages, namely, that Gentiles who once were “far off” have been “made nigh by the blood of Christ.” (verse 13).

It is one of the blessed effects of the blood of Christ that the separating wall which God Himself had placed between Jew and Gentile “the middle wall of partition” — has been forever taken away, and the Gospel of Christ, with all its blessings for time and for eternity, is sent into all the world; or (as stated in Colossians 1:23) is “preached to every creature which is under heaven” (cf. Mark 16:15).

Verse 6 of Ephesians 3, quoted above, contains a complete and exceedingly clear explanation of what “the mystery” is. The prominent word

in that verse, fellowship, is one that is well rendered by the English word “joint” — signifying the equal participation by Jews and Gentiles in “the promise of Christ.” In other words the Gentiles are joint-heirs” (i.e. joint with Jews) “and a joint-body, and joint-partakers of His (God’s) promise in Christ by the Gospel.” Indeed the full equality of Gentiles with Jews in all the promises of God, fulfilled in Christ, is the main subject of the Epistle to the Ephesians. It is specially unfolded in Chapter 2. Glorious news was this to the Gentiles, but hard for the Jews to accept (Acts 13:45; 17:5,13; 22:21, 22).

Inasmuch as Paul was Christ’s chosen vessel to bear His Name before the Gentiles (Acts 9:15), the “mystery” meant more to him than to the other Apostles; but, so far from Paul having been the first to receive knowledge thereof, it is quite clear from the Scriptures that others learned it long before it was revealed to him. This will be shown later on.

Paul’s words in Colossians 1:20–27 are so nearly like the passages in Ephesians, to which we have referred, that it is needless to quote, them in full. Again he speaks of the dispensation (or administration) of the grace of God given to him on behalf of Gentiles, **“to fulfill the Word of God; even THE MYSTERY, which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest” — not to Paul specially, but — ”to His saints; to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which (mystery) is CHRIST IN YOU (Gentiles) the HOPE OF GLORY, Whom we preach”** etc. That is to say the mystery, once hidden from ages and from generations, but now made known to God’s saints, is that Christ has become the Hope of Glory among Gentiles, as well as among Jews. And we see that the Apostle regarded it as a high privilege that he should be permitted to preach Christ to the Gentiles, according to the revelation of that eternal purpose of God which, until the coming of Christ, had been kept a Divine secret.

To the same effect he says in closing his Epistle to the Romans: **“Now to Him that is of power to stablish you, according to my Gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to THE REVELATION OF THE**

MYSTERY, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets” according to the commandment of the everlasting God made known to ALL NATIONS for the obedience of faith” (Romans 16:25, 26). Here again the Apostle of the Gentiles speaks of the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, now made known to all nations; and he states that this mystery had been made manifest by the scriptures of the Prophets and by the Spirit to all the New Testament apostles and prophets and not exclusively by his own writings.

As to the time when it was first made known that the Gospel, with all its blessings, was to be preached in all the world, and not to Jews only, we would refer to the Lord’s parable of the Tares of the field, in explaining which He informed His disciples that “the field,” in which the good seed was to be sown, “is the world,” And this fact our Lord made known as one of the “MYSTERIES” of the Kingdom of heaven.

And when about to leave His disciples he gave them the clearest instructions that they were to go “into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15); “that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. (Luke 24:47); and that they were to be witnesses to Him “unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

This was long before the conversion of Saul of Tarsus; so it is certain that the Mystery, with which he afterwards had so much to do, had been revealed by the Lord “to His holy apostles and prophets,” long before Paul’s own ministry began.

In this connection the words of Peter, recorded in Acts 15:7–9, are in point. Speaking at Jerusalem to the apostles and elders, who were assembled there to discuss matters pertaining to “the conversion of the Gentiles,” Peter said:

“Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us that THE GENTILES BY MY MOUTH should hear THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL AND BELIEVE. And God, Which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did

unto us; and PUT NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US AND THEM, purifying their hearts by faith.”

Here Peter brings to the minds of his hearers a fact which he says was known to them all (Paul being also present), namely, that God had chosen him, Peter, to preach Christ to the Gentiles. The reference, of course, was to Peter's mission to the house of Cornelius (Acts 10). God had prepared him for that mission in a very remarkable manner, in order to impress strongly upon him the great fact that the middle wall of partition had been taken away, and that God now puts "no difference" between Jews and Gentiles.

There are other Scriptures bearing upon the subject of this leaflet; but enough has been cited to show that the "mystery" to which Paul referred in Romans, Ephesians and Colossians, is not the Church, but the fact that God's new covenant blessings are equally for Gentiles as for Jews; and farther that the mystery in question had been revealed to the other apostles and prophets before Paul's conversion.

Prophecy and Mystery

Many people say the Bible is divided up between prophecy and mystery or between the prophecy books and the mystery books. They say the Old Testament books and the Four Gospels are the prophecy books and Paul's Epistles are the "mystery books". They say the doctrine found in the Old Testament books and the four Gospels were foretold by the prophets, but the doctrine in Paul's epistles was a mystery and a secret to the prophets. They say we must rightly divide between "prophecy and mystery" and we should never mix them together. They say the great error of the church today is mixing prophecy with mystery. They say if it's in the prophets it can't be a mystery and if it's a mystery it can't be in the prophets.

According to many dispensationalists a mystery is a secret because it is not written down prior to its revelation. They assume that if something is written down, it cannot be a secret or a mystery. They say much of what Paul

preached and wrote about in his epistles was a mystery, which according to them, was never committed to writing before him. They say no one preached what Paul preached before him, because no one knew what Paul knew before him. And no one knew what Paul knew because it was not written down in the Old Testament or the four Gospels or even in Hebrews through Revelation.

These people have a problem and it's a simple one: They have a false definition of a mystery. To them a mystery in the Bible is something secret because it is not written down prior to its revelation. They assume that if something is written down it cannot be a secret or a mystery, for if it is written down everybody would see and know it. They say the mysteries Paul wrote about in his epistles could not be written down before him, for if they were they would not be a mystery or a secret.

This is wrong because a mystery in the Bible is not a secret because it is not written down prior to its revelation. There are many mysteries written down in the scriptures that remained a secret for years until God chose the right time, place and man to reveal them to. As a matter of fact, there are mysteries in the prophets and there are prophecies that were mysteries. This is something that many dispensationalists do not understand. They have a blind spot caused by a faulty definition of the word mystery. They cannot see how something can be a prophecy and yet be a mystery and how a mystery can be in the prophets and even a prophecy.

The gospel was a mystery and a prophecy.

Compare: 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 Paul said this about the gospel: ***For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.***

In Romans 16:25 he said this about his gospel: ***Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began.***

In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul said his gospel is in the Old Testament scriptures for he said, Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, but yet in Romans 16:25 he said it was a mystery kept secret since the world began. How can it be a mystery if it's written down in the prophets?

This is a puzzle to those who define a mystery as something never committed to writing before its revelation. But, the gospel Paul preached was a mystery and yet it is in the Old Testament prophets. For years dispensationalists have wrestled with this problem because they have a faulty definition of the word mystery. They define a mystery as something never written down prior to its revelation. They assume that if a doctrine is written down in the Old Testament or the Four Gospels it cannot be a mystery. But yet, we see Paul's gospel was a mystery, even though it was written down in the Old Testament prophets such as Isaiah 53.

The question people need ask is this: how can a doctrine like the gospel be a mystery if it is written down in the Old Testament? What kept it hidden and concealed from men if it is written down?

The answer:

Luke 18:31-34 says: ***Then he (Christ) took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.***

For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on:

And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.

And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.

Did Christ tell the apostles he would die and be raised again? Yes. Was it prophesied he would die and be raised again? Yes. Verse 31 says it was written in the prophets just like Paul said it was in 1 Cor.15:3-4. Did the apostles understand it? No. Why? Because verse 34 says it was hid from them. Who hid it from them? God. What did he hide it from? Their understanding. They understood none of these things because it was hid from their understanding. The gospel concerning Christ's death was not a mystery to them because Christ did not say anything about it in the Four

Gospels or because it was not written down in the Old Testament. Christ plainly told them he would die and be raised again and so did the prophets. It was a mystery to them because it was hidden from their understanding.

Now see Luke 24:44-46

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.

And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

What was hidden from them in Luke 18 was revealed to them in Luke 24. In Luke 24, they understood the Old Testament scriptures that foretold Christ's death and resurrection. Why? Because he opened their understanding that they might understand the scriptures. Their understanding was not opened in Luke 18 and that is why the gospel was a mystery and a secret to them. But once he opened their understanding, they could see it. It was no longer a mystery to them. They could see in Luke 24, what they were blind to in Luke 18.

This shows us that a mystery is not a secret because it is not written down in the Old Testament or the Four Gospels. The gospel was written down in the Old Testament and the Four Gospels, but remained a secret until God opened the understanding of the apostles to see it. So a mystery is not a mystery because it is not written down prior to its revelation. Many truths were written down in the Old Testament and the Four Gospels, but remained hidden from the understanding of men, until God chose the right time, place and man to reveal it to. The gospel is one of them.

The resurrection of the church was a mystery and a prophecy

1 Corinthians 15:50-55

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

In these verses Paul reveals a mystery about the resurrection. In verse 51 Paul said; ***Behold I show you a mystery.*** The mystery is not the resurrection itself. The mystery is about what happens to those who are alive when the resurrection takes place. The mystery is; ***we shall not all sleep.*** What does this mean? It means some saints will be caught up without dying. They will never die. They will never suffer the sting of death. Prior to Paul, the common belief was all saints would be dead when Jesus came and only a resurrection of dead saints would take place. They didn't see or know that some saints would be alive when Jesus came and would never die. But, even though it was a mystery, it was written down in the prophets. In verses 54-55, Paul quotes Hosea 13:14 and Isaiah 25:8 who prophesied that some saints would enter into the kingdom of God without suffering the sting of death. They both said some saints would rob the grave of its victory. But, even though both Prophets prophesied of this event, no one really understood it prior to Paul. This is one of those mysteries written down in the Old Testament that remained a secret, until God revealed it fully to Paul. God revealed the mysteries of the Old Testament to the apostles. He opened their understanding to see the mysteries hidden in the Old Testament. What was hidden in the Old Testament was revealed to the apostles like Paul and that includes this mystery about the resurrection.

In the four gospels, no one knew or understood some saints would never die and would enter into the kingdom of God without first going through the grave yard.

In John 11 Lazarus the brother of Martha died and it says:

Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? (John 11:21-26)

In these verses, Martha shows us what she believed about resurrection. What she knew is what most people believed at that time. When the Lord said thy brother shall rise again, she said; I know he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. But, what the Lord said to her in verse 26 was a mystery to her. When the Lord said; ***whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die***, he was talking about those who will be alive at the resurrection of the last day. He said they will never die. She didn't answer that question because she did not understand it and neither did anyone because Paul said it was a mystery in 1 Corinthians 15:51.

What was a mystery to Martha and everyone in time past is now common knowledge to all saints. We all know and understand this mystery. We know when Christ comes again, those who are alive will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and will never die. They will never feel the sting of death. They will never end up in the funeral home. They will never be buried in a grave yard. No one will grieve their death. Their name will never appear in the obituary. The undertaker will not make a dime off them. No one will have to buy a coffin for them. No flowers will be sent to their grave for they will rob the grave of its victory. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at

the last trumpet, they will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air without dying.

Even though the prophets prophesied that some would never die, it remained a mystery for many years from the understanding of men. When believers read Hosea 13:14 and Isaiah 25:8 they did not fully understand its meaning. But God opened the understanding of the apostles in the New Testament like Paul and revealed its full meaning to us. This again shows us a mystery is not a mystery because it was not written down prior to its revelation. It is a mystery because God for his own reasons keeps it hidden from the understanding of men, until he chooses the right time, place and man to reveal it to. A man can preach prophesy and mystery at the same time.