

# THE WORD OF TRUTH

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## SALVATION

Salvation is God's provision for the lost. It comes as the result of something which God does for man. It cannot come as the result of anything that man might do for God. Believers serve God because they are saved, not in order to be saved. Every sinner has the right to salvation. It is the privilege of guilty sinners to claim the Savior of guilty sinners. A sinner without the Savior is a lost sinner. A sinner with the Savior is a saved sinner. He who has the Savior is saved.

Good people, who desire to be saved, should not come to Christ. At least they should not come as good people. He came to seek and save that which was lost. He came to die for the ungodly. His ministry of salvation, is not for the righteous, but for sinners.

Salvation is by grace. Grace is undeserved favor. Men may deserve mercy, pity, sympathy or help. They cannot deserve grace. Those who work deserve wages, those who serve well deserve a reward, those who sin deserve punishment. But salvation is neither deserved wages or reward. It is undeserved favor.

If your salvation cost you anything, you have been cheated. Christ Jesus paid the cost of a sinner's salvation in full and there is nothing for the sinner to pay. If you have

God's salvation, it was free. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.

The word believe represents all that a sinner can do, all that a sinner is required to do in order to be saved. Those who do not believe will perish. There is no other alternative.

**The word believe represents something you can do without doing anything. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."-Rom. 4:5.**

"There is nothing to do, for being born dead,  
You must have another to work in your stead;  
Christ Jesus, in Calvary's terrible hour,  
Has done all the work in such marvelous power,  
That raised from the dead, He now offers to you  
Life, pardon, salvation, and nothing to do!  
No, nothing to do till you're saved from your sins.  
When the power of doing good only begins."

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## **RIGHTLY DIVIDING**

Acts 15 gives us the record of certain men who came from Judea and worked havoc among the Gentile believers by insisting, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." When these men were challenged they could point to "chapter and verse" for their doctrine and support their stand by the Word of God. Circumcision had been appointed by God and He who appointed it said that those who were not circumcised should be cut off, they had broken the covenant. It is not hard to imagine the calm assurance of these Judaizing teachers, as they unrolled the sacred scroll of the book of Genesis and pointed triumphantly to the place where it said, "Every man child among you shall be circumcised."

These men could also point to the example of Christ, who was circumcised on the eighth day and use this as an argument that all who follow Him should also be. They could also point to the words of Christ, who during His entire ministry never said one word which was contrary to the divine command for circumcision.

The foregoing has been written to set forth the positive need for rightly dividing the Word of Truth. If the words of Scripture are not divided according to their dispensational setting, then we must all be circumcised (Gen. 17:14), but if we are circumcised Christ will profit us nothing (Gal. 5:2). We must keep the feasts three times a year (Ex. 23:14), but we must not be subject to ordinances. We must sell what we have and give alms (Luke 12:33), but we must also provide for our own (1 Tim. 5:8). We must beat our plowshares into swords and our pruning hooks into spears (Joel 3:10) at the same time that we are beating our swords and spears into plowshares and pruning hooks (Isa. 2:4). We are advised to remain single (1 Cor. 7:8), but we are also advised to marry (1 Tim. 5:14). Thus God's Word, when we disobey the command of "rightly dividing," becomes contradictory and nothing but confusion results.

It is a common belief that every part of the Bible is to be interpreted as directly

referring to the "church which is His body." It is believed that it is all enforced upon every person at every time and stage of the world's history. However, those who believe this find it impossible to practice it so they have resorted to several methods of interpretation.

First, there is the "cafeteria method." The writer likes to eat in cafeteria style restaurants. In these you can select what you like, pass by that which you do not care for. This is the method of so many in dealing with God's Word. They select the commandments they like and pass by those that are not convenient to obey. They make much of the words of Christ to His disciples, when He said, "**This do in remembrance of me**" (Luke 22:19). This to them is a choice morsel but they pass by the words of the same Christ to the same disciples who said, "**Sell that which ye have and give alms**" (Luke 12:33). Those who follow the cafeteria method, include those who have favorite verses, favorite chapters and favorite books. To them "all scripture" is not as profitable or acceptable as certain portions.

Then, there is the "grasshopper method." This method is used by those who jump from verse to verse, ignoring all in between, in order to support their theories. They jump on a verse when it serves their purpose and jump off to another if someone begins to apply the verse. They are like the preacher who used 1 Cor. 16:1 when he desired a collection from the saints but backed away from it when someone wanted to use it to get a collection for the saints,

Over against all these man- devised, ridiculous methods of interpreting the Word of God we place the true method of interpretation "rightly dividing the Word of Truth."

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## THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD

It is the conviction of the writer that a new dispensation or administration began after Acts 28:28. At this point in divine history, Israel as a nation was judged and set aside. God then ceased for a time, work on the purposes for which He had called that nation. The cause of this judgment was that Israel, those Israelites in the land as well as those in dispersion, had rejected the offer of mercy through the crucified and risen Messiah. At Acts 28:28, instead of doing something which was prophesied of old, God began to do something which was not the subject of prophecy. A new calling was announced, the Church which is His body began to be formed, a new constitution was proclaimed and God revealed and began to fulfill His purposes for a realm which has been opened. This realm is a place far above all heavens.

This present administration began with the setting aside of Israel and will close when the Church which is His Body is manifested in glory with Christ its glorious Head. It is called in Scripture "the dispensation (administration) of the grace of God" (Eph. 3:2). This dispensation of the grace of God is also called "the dispensation of the mystery" (Eph. 3:9 R. V.), for it was a mystery or secret that such an administration was to have a place in the times of the ages. According to prophecy, the rejection of the crucified and risen Messiah would bring upon Israel the great Tribulation and upon the world a time of indignation. Such would have been (and will yet be) an administration of deserved

judgment and not an administration of grace or undeserved favor. However, at Acts 28:28 God made a break in the steady flow of prophetic events and brought in the present administration of the grace of God, during which He calls out "the Church which is His body."

Now when we say that the administration of the grace of God began at Acts 28:28, many people, who fail to see that we use our words as accurately as possible, accuse us of saying that grace began at that point. Thus they make us to say that there was no grace before Acts 28:28. Then they proceed to show that there was grace before that time. And having disproved something we have never said and do not believe, they claim to have refuted our contention that the administration of the grace of God began at Acts 28:28.

### **An Illustration**

At the present time, in this country, we have a Democratic administration. Now if we say that the present Democratic administration began on March 4, 1933, certainly no one would think of accusing us of saying that there were no Democrats before that time. If there should be a change of administration as the result of this year's election, then there will be a Republican administration. However, there will still be Democrats even though the Democratic administration ends.

There was grace before the administration of grace began at Acts 28:28. There will be grace after the present administration of grace ends and tribulation judgments begin. We must not confuse grace, the gospel of grace, and the administration (dispensation) of grace.

### **God's Grace to Adam and Eve**

There has been grace since the days of Adam. In the garden of Eden, God dealt with His sinning creatures in grace. They deserved to die for their sin but God in grace clothed His sinning creatures and made them fit for His presence. But even though they were dealt with in grace, God did not give them a message of grace to proclaim to their descendants. Neither did he place them under an administration of grace. Before their sin, God's administration had been one of innocence. After their sin they were placed under an administration (dispensation) of conscience.

### **Noah, a Preacher of Righteousness**

We are told that, "**Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord**" (Gen. 6:8). This was not an administration of grace for grace was manifested only to eight people, the rest were dealt with in judgment. Noah was not given a message of grace to preach for he was a "preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5). Those who have no understanding or appreciation of grace will see no difference between preaching grace and preaching righteousness, but we "speak as unto wise men."

### **Abraham**

Abraham, the idolator of Ur, found grace in the sight of the Lord and was led out to become the head of a great nation. Although he was dealt with in grace, he was given no

message of grace to proclaim to the Canaanites who surrounded him.

### **Jesus Christ and the Twelve**

When the Lord Jesus Christ came to earth He came with grace and truth (John 1:17). The people wondered at the words of grace which proceeded from His lips. He called twelve disciples in grace and dealt with them in grace. But, even the days of Christ on earth was not an administration of grace, neither were the twelve given a message of grace to proclaim. They were sent forth to preach the "gospel of the kingdom" and that message was only to Israel (Matt. 10:5-10).

### **The Cross**

At the Cross of Christ, great grace was manifested. It flowed full and free. The dying Savior prays for the forgiveness of those who crucified Him. His prayer was answered. On the day of Pentecost the message of mercy to Israel is proclaimed. It contained the element of grace but it is not the gospel of the grace of God. Only by the most wretched twisting and revising can it be made to fit into the present dispensation of the grace of God. Notice the exact words of the message:

**"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" Acts 2:38.** (Compare Eph. 1:7 and 2:8-9).

### **The Apostle Paul**

The next great object for the grace of God was Saul who became the Apostle Paul. He deserved judgment, but instead of being judged he was dealt with in grace and received a marvelous revelation of the ascended Lord. And, wonder of wonders, for the first time in divine history, this man Paul was given a message of grace, the gospel of the grace of God, to proclaim to others. This message was for Israel first but not limited to Israel. It was intended for all nations.

### **Progressive Revelation**

The revelation of the gospel of the grace of God was a progressive revelation. It was hidden in the Old Testament and God began to reveal it to Paul early in the Acts period. As it unfolded through Acts and the early epistles of Paul, the grace of God became more apparent, more grace was manifested, the revelation became more clear until the good news of the grace of God reached its majestic climax in the book of Romans. The height of God's grace is in Romans, the height of what God does in grace is in Ephesians.

Then upon the foundation of the revelation of this marvelous, matchless grace, God revealed and brought in an administration which before had been kept secret-the administration (dispensation) of the grace of God.

The recognition of this truth, that the present administration of the grace of God began after Acts 28:28, will solve many problems, clear up many difficulties, explain many Scripture passages. It explains at once why believers who misrepresent their giving

do not fall dead as Ananias and Sapphira did (Acts 5); why rulers who fail to give the glory to God are not smitten by an angel and die as Herod did (Acts 12); why men who pervert the right way of the Lord are not smitten with blindness as Elymas was (Acts 13). These events do not need to be explained away, neither must we expect to see them duplicated today. They belong to another administration and have no place in the present administration - - the administration of the grace of God.

In conclusion we say- grace began with Adam, the gospel of the grace of God began with Paul, the administration (dispensation) of the grace of God began at Acts 28:28.

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## **CHRISTS DEATH - A BAPTISM**

In our last issue we stated that our convictions on the subject of baptism were the result of calm and prolonged searching of the Word of God. We served as a denominational pastor for twelve years and not once did we study the subject of baptism from the Scriptures.

Our denominational position required us to believe certain things upon the subject. We were inclined to believe that our denomination was the divine repository and custodian of the truth concerning baptism. The deposit of truth was in print in many books and pamphlets. Thus there was no reason for discovering what God's Word had to say about it. Even if we did, we could not preach or practice our findings if they contradicted in the least our denominational beliefs and practices. We had promised at our ordination to quit the ministry of the denomination if our views ever ran contrary to the established and generally accepted teachings of the denomination.

### **Two or Three Baptisms?**

When we first began to study, we decided to separate the Scripture references to baptism, under two heads. Those that referred to "baptism in water," and those that referred to "baptism in Spirit." We began with Matthew and the first references were easily separated, even though some had to be placed under both headings. However, before we had covered the book of Matthew, we came upon a reference which could not be placed under either heading.

The setting of the verse is familiar. A request had come from the mother of James and John that her "two sons may sit, the one on the right hand, and the other on the left," when He reigns in His kingdom.

**"But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be BAPTIZED with the BAPTISM that I am BAPTIZED with? They say unto Him, we are able.**

**"And He saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be BAPTIZED with the BAPTISM that I am BAPTIZED with." Matt. 20:22-23.**

This verse could not refer to water baptism, neither could it refer to Spirit baptism. It could not be placed under either heading so we were forced to make a third heading. This brought to us the first intimation that there were three distinct baptisms in the Word of God. And the one which we had just discovered was the most glorious of all.

Those who search for treasure, always rejoice when they find it, and we rejoiced at finding this piece of treasure as one rejoiceth when he findeth great spoil. It was only an intimation of truth but we determined to follow it out and see where it would lead us.

A close examination of this verse brought forth the truth that our Lord was speaking of His death. He emphatically and repeatedly calls this a baptism. And this baptism unto death was one of which His own could and would partake. He tells James and John that they are to be "baptized with the baptism" He is baptized with. Those who have appreciated the truth of being "dead with Christ" (Rom. 6:8); crucified with Him" (Rom. 6:6); will have no difficulty in understanding and entering into the glorious truth of "baptized with His baptism."

The next reference that was placed under the third heading was **Luke 12:50. "But I have a BAPTISM to be BAPTIZED with; and how am I pressed till it be accomplished."**

How emphatic, that His death was a baptism that He was baptized with.

### **Baptized Into Jesus Christ**

Then came **Romans 6:3-6**. This portion at once began to shine with a new light and glory. A glory which heretofore we had dimmed by trying to force water or Spirit baptism into it.

**"Know ye not, that so many of us as were BAPTIZED INTO JESUS CHRIST were BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH? Therefore we are buried with Him by BAPTISM INTO DEATH: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."**

To say that this passage refers to water baptism is to make a travesty of the Word of God. Plainly we are told, that to be "baptized into Jesus Christ" is to be "baptized into His death." Yet men, who profess to glory in the Cross will say: "No, to be baptized into Jesus Christ is to be baptized into water."

### **Put On Christ**

With these truths before us it was easy to understand the next verse, which did not speak of water or Spirit baptism. **"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Gal. 3:27.**

This verse carries us back to the Cross and not to any point where we may have been dipped in or sprinkled with water. God reckons us as having died with Christ. We were baptized unto Jesus Christ and thus we put on Christ. One who would make this verse refer to water baptism has but a poor sense of spiritual values.

The climax of the truth concerning this glorious baptism was found in **Colossians 2:12; "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead."**

We are told in the Scriptures that "without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better." If we are buried with Him in baptism, it was His baptism and not ours. Christ is not buried with the believer in water baptism, but the believer is buried with Christ. in His death baptism on the Cross of Calvary.

The final verse was **Ephesians 4:5. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."** Under

which heading did this belong? Was it water, Spirit or our identification with Christ in His death? It did not take us long to decide. It was placed under the heading that designated the most glorious of all baptisms, the baptism that took place at Calvary, the baptism of which we partake with Him.

This is the truth that the Lord gave us from His own Word. Since the day we saw it, we have walked consistently in the light of it. It has not been an easy walk and we have paid a price in order to walk in it. However, we are discovering, that, "**the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.**"- **Proverbs 4:18.**

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## ALL TRUTH

This is the title of a well written book by Mr. J. Eustace Mills of Eastbourne, Sussex, England. The title is taken from the promise made by the Lord in John 16:13. Mr. Mills ably traces this promise through the New Testament and shows the fulfillment in the revelation of "the Mystery," that transcendent truth which completes the Word of God. Then, after setting forth the truth of the Mystery, Mr. Mills goes on to show the personal and practical application of this truth to the lives of those who come to the knowledge of it.

This book should be read by those who desire a complete presentation of the important truths of the Mystery. So many reports come to us of blessings received through the reading of this book that we are happy to have a part in its distribution. It contains 167 pages, is bound in black cloth and is printed in large easily read type.

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## THE ORIGINAL CREATION

The entire record of the original creation is given in the first verse of Genesis. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." This is all that is revealed in the book of Genesis concerning the original creation. No information is here given which will help us set the date of creation; nothing is revealed concerning the method used by the divine architect; nothing is revealed to tell us whether this was a few thousand or a few million years ago. We are not told whether the heaven and earth was called into existence in a split second of time, or whether the process of their formation covered a long interval of time. Speculation here is useless and irreverent. The bare fact is given as a statement of truth to be received.

### The Infinity Principle

Here is an excellent example of the -"infinity principle" of divine revelation. This principle is, that God in His Word tells everything we need to know and gives all information necessary in the realm of the finite, but He confines Himself to simple

declarations of fact in the realm of the infinite. By this, God teaches finite beings (men) to walk by faith in the unexplained infinite.

Traditional beliefs and teaching make it hard for many to see that there was a period of original creation, followed by a period of ruin long before the human race in Adam appeared on the scene. Most people confound the primitive creation of the first verse with the ruin into which it had fallen as revealed in the second verse. **Genesis 1:2** should be translated "**the earth became**" instead of "the earth was." When it is thus translated the period of original creation is fully recognized. The Rotherham Version translates **Genesis 1:2**, "**Now the earth had become waste and wild.**"

### **God Settles the Matter**

This matter can be settled by the Word of God. In **Isaiah 45:18** we have the definite statement that God created the earth "**not in vain**" but to be inhabited. The word used in Isa. 45:18 for "vain," is the same word as is used in Genesis 1:2. The latter verse says "the earth was without form and void," the former verse says "He created it not a void." Thus we know from God's own exact statement, that when He created the earth originally, it was not in the waste and empty condition in which we view it in Genesis 1:2.

We can rest assured that the original creation was worthy of the Creator Himself and that it reflected all His perfections. In Deuteronomy 32:4 we are told, "He is the Rock, His work is perfect." This was certainly true of His creative work described in Genesis 1:1.

He created it to be inhabited, therefore it was inhabited for God's purposes do not fail. That it was inhabited is seen in the command of God to Adam to "**replenish the earth.**" This command shows that the earth had been populated previous to the creation of Adam. This same command was given to Noah in Genesis 9:1. Noah was to "replenish" the earth which had been depopulated by the judgment of the flood.

Let it be fully understood that the inhabitants of the pre-Adamic earth were not men. Adam was the first man (1 Cor. 15:45). The Bible gives no statement as to who inhabited the earth before Adam. Certain intimations seem to indicate that the fallen beings, now called demons, may have been the inhabitants in their unfallen state. The Bible gives no details on these points. God has given this book as a revelation to and concerning man. It is not a revelation to or concerning demons.

Note: This study will be continued (D. V.) in some future issue under the title "The Overthrow of the World."

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## **ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS**

### **\*\*\*\*Unlimited Salvation???**

J. E., ENGLAND. In reference to my booklet on "The Scriptural Position of the Lord's Supper" you ask: "Where do you get the idea of a limited and unlimited salvation? Do you hold the teaching of universal salvation by unlimited salvation?"

In answer I would say that I have no such ideas as limited or unlimited salvation. You are putting words into my mouth which I have never used and I do not believe that which is implied in those words. In my booklet I speak of the work of Christ on the Cross and state that certain phases of that work was limited in its scope to the nation of Israel and another phase was wholly unlimited. The unlimited work is available for all but all will not avail themselves of it. I DO NOT BELIEVE IN UNLIMITED SALVATION, UNIVERSALISM OR UNIVERSAL RECONCILIATION I welcome the opportunity, which your letter gives, to declare myself upon these subjects.

**\*\*\*\*Dispensation-Period of Time**

T. W., PENNA. A dispensation is not, strictly speaking, a period of time. Yet there is a time element involved that should not be ignored. If we used the word "administration" this can be clearly seen. To say, "His administration was an economical one," is to speak of the character of the administration. To say, "His administration lasted four years," is to bring in a definite time element.

The "administration of the mystery" had a definite beginning and will have a definite ending. Thus a time element is involved. Ignoring the time element has caused many to include the Acts period at the beginning and the Great Tribulation at the close.

**\*\*\*\*Ministry**

W. M., PENNA. I am a minister of the Word and not of religion. Neither is my ministry a mixture of the Word and religion. I deal with the Word and that Word alone.

**\*\*\*\*Paul's Final Epistle**

G. I. P., PENNA. I do not believe that Ephesians and Colossians were the last inspired writings. Paul did not say that Colossians completed the Word of God, but that "the mystery" completed the Word of God. I do believe that Ephesians and 2 Timothy were the last inspired writings and I believe that 2 Timothy was Paul's final epistle. This conviction is based upon internal evidence from the Pauline epistles and this will be set forth in a coming issue of "The Word of Truth."

**\*\*\*\*Concerning Dates**

E. R., ILLINOIS. Please do not come at me with such statements as John's gospel and Revelation were written about A. D. 90 and 96. If you have the evidence to prove this you should set it forth. It will be welcomed by Bible students everywhere and I will be glad to publish it in my next issue. Dr. C. I. Scofield gives dates as follows. 1 Peter-Probably A. D. 60; 2 Peter-Probably A. D. 66; 1 John-Probably A. D. 90; 2 John-Probably A. D. 90; 3 John-Probably A. D. 90. Jude-Probably A. D. 66. You will note that he has "PROBABLY" before all these dates. But, when he came to Revelation he dropped the word "probably" and gives the date as A. D. 96, as if the matter was conclusive beyond all probability.

There is no evidence for the dates assigned to any book of the New Testament. The internal evidence will give us the time but not the year in which a book was written. I take my stand upon the statement of Paul that to him was committed an administration to complete the Word of God.

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## A CONCORDANCE TO "OIKONOMIA"

This is the Greek word for **dispensation**. It appears nine times in the New Testament and is translated by four different words. Of course it is obvious that one Greek word cannot mean four things in English. In this concordance the word printed in capitals is the word the translators used to translate the word OIKONOMIA. The word in parenthesis is the word that should be used to give a true and consistent translation. The student should mark these in his Bible.

Luke 16:2-give an account of thy STEWARDSHIP (administratorship).

Luke 16:3-taketh away from me the STEWARDSHIP (administratorship).

Luke 16:4-put out of the STEWARDSHIP (administratorship).

1 Cor. 9:17-a DISPENSATION (administration) of the gospel.

Eph. 1:10-the DISPENSATION (administration) of the fullness.

Eph. 3:2-the DISPENSATION (administration) of the grace of God.

Eph. 3:9-the FELLOWSHIP (administration) of the mystery.

Col. 1:25-the DISPENSATION (administration) of God.

1 Tim. 1:4-Godly EDIFYING (administrating) which is in faith.

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## THE DISPENSATION OF THE MYSTERY

(Continued from Vol. I, No. 2)

In our last issue we defined the meaning of the words "dispensation" and "mystery." Having done this we can now go on too consider "the dispensation of the mystery" or the administration of the secret. At first it may seem that we are overemphasizing the time element but we feel this should be our first consideration, and then in later articles we shall consider the character, purposes, etc., of the present administration.

### Prophecy and History

It has been said that prophecy is the mold of history. Prophecy is history pre-written. Man can write of events after they have happened, but God writes of events before they happen.

In the Old Testament, God apparently reveals His entire program for the future, beginning with the birth of the Messiah and consummating in a new heaven and a new earth. After the Old Testament was complete there was a silent period of four hundred years when no. new revelation was given. The whole World waited for that first great prophesied event which would make possible the fulfillment of God's entire program for His people Israel and the world as a whole.

The outline given in the following paragraphs is the pre-written history of the ages according to the Old Testament. Of course, this outline is much clearer because we now read the Old Testament in the light of the New. Nevertheless, every item of this prophetic

program is in the Scriptures from Genesis to Malachi.

### **Prophesied in the Old**

The Messiah is to be born of a virgin in Bethlehem (Isa 7:14, Micah 4:2). He is to grow up before God and minister to His own people Israel (Isa. 53:2), and his ministry is to be confirmed by such miracles as the lame leaping, the dumb singing, the blind seeing and the deaf being made to hear (Isa. 35:5-6). He is to present Himself to Israel as their king and the manner of this presentation is described. He is to ride "upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zech. 9:9). He is to be despised and rejected of men and is to be led as a lamb to the slaughter (Isa. 53:3). The manner of His death is described in detail; it is to be by crucifixion (Psalm 22). While on the Cross, He is to be smitten for the transgressions of Israel (Isa. 53:8), and is to make intercession for the transgressors (Isa. 53:12). He is to be buried with the rich (Isa. 53:9), but is to rise again and ascend on high (Psalm 16:10).

Then this crucified and risen Savior and Messiah is to be offered to the nation of Israel as their Savior and King. (This is the burden of the Old Testament, as seen from Acts 3:24-26; 13:23; 26:22-23). And this offer is not to be made only to that little group of favored Jews who lived in the land, and rejected the Messiah in the days of His humiliation, but to all of scattered Israel even unto the uttermost parts of the world (See Isa. 52:15 and Rom. 15:20-21). These would not see the miracles of Christ but they were to see greater works than those He performed in Palestine (See Habakkuk 1:5 and John 14:12). As a new and definite sign to Israel they were to hear men speaking in other tongues (Isa. 28:11-12; 1 Cor. 14:21). Every possible effort was to be made to bring Israel as a whole to the place of repentance and to receive the crucified and risen Savior as Messiah and King. If she received her Savior she could then share Him with a lost world, and thus God would fulfill His covenants with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to bless all families and nations of the earth through their seed.

As a result of Israel's stubbornness and unbelief, God is to turn to the Gentiles to call out from among them a people for His name. This is in harmony with Old Testament prophecy (See Acts 15:14-15), and even this turning to the Gentiles has Israel primarily in view, for the purpose is to provoke Israel to jealousy and anger, and thus to emulation (Deut. 32:21). It was prophesied that a remnant will receive the crucified Messiah but that the nation as a whole will not believe (Hab. 1:5), neither will they hear (Isa 28:12). Because of this a sentence of judicial blindness is to be pronounced upon Israel and the very words of the sentence of judgment are given by Isaiah (Isa. 6:9-10). This sentence of judgment is to be followed by a time of divine chastisement called "the Great Tribulation" or "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7). This period is also called Daniel's seventieth week. This time of chastisement will not fail and the purpose for which it is sent upon Israel will be fulfilled. It will bring the nation to the place of repentance and at its close the Messiah is to return in power and great glory. The blindness is to be removed from Israel, she will receive her King, become established in the land under His benevolent rule. The Kingdom is to be set up on earth, the people are to be blessed and the blessing is to flow out and over the earth. This time is commonly referred to as the millennium. Isaiah carries the prophecy even beyond the millennium and speaks of a new heaven and a new earth Isa. 65:17). This is the divine program as

revealed in the Old Testament.

### **Fulfilled in the New**

When we come to the New Testament we discover that history flows in the mold of prophecy.

The Messiah was born of a virgin in Bethlehem and was called Emmanuel (Matt. 1:18-25). He grew up before God (Luke 2:52) and ministered to Israel. This ministry was confirmed by the very miracles which were prophesied in the Old Testament (Matt. 11:5). He presented Himself to Israel as a King and came riding on an ass with a colt the foal of an ass (Matt. 21:1-9). He was despised and rejected by His people and they forced His crucifixion upon a cross. He died, was buried and rose again on the third day. Forty days later he ascended (Acts 1:9).

After ascending He poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit as spoken by the prophet Joel (Acts 2:16). The gospel was then preached to Israel in the land as foretold by the prophets (Acts 3:24-26). A remnant believed and received the Messiah but the majority remained stubborn and rejected the crucified and risen Messiah. They saw the "greater works" performed by the Apostles (Acts 5:15), but this only filled them with indignation and hatred. The Jerusalem Jews showed their rejection by the stoning of Stephen. (Acts 7). This brought about a turning of God to the Gentiles to take out from them a people for His name. This was in accord with Old Testament prophecy (Acts 15:14-18) and for the purpose of provoking Israel to jealousy and emulation.

Persecution scattered the messengers, and the work began which was to carry to every Israelite from Jerusalem to Rome the offer of the crucified and risen Messiah. God called and commissioned Paul for this service and wherever he went the offer was to Israel first. When they rejected God's offer of mercy, he turned to the Gentiles with a message of grace, and offered to them the crucified and risen Messiah as their Savior (Acts 13:46). God spoke to Israel with other tongues but they refused to hear and believe.

And just as the Messiah was rejected by Israel in the land, He was also rejected in Antioch (Acts 13:46), and in Corinth (Acts 18:6), and finally in Rome

(Acts 28:23-24). Rome was the final place and it was there that Paul pronounced upon Israel that solemn sentence of judicial blindness and used the very words prophesied by Isaiah. However, Paul made an important addition and said:

**"Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it." Acts 28:28.**

Now the next thing in order, according to prophecy, is to bring upon Israel that period of divine chastisement called the great tribulation and the time of Jacob's trouble. During the Acts period, and in the epistles written during that period, this is always seen as a very soon coming event (Acts 14:22; Rom. 10:28; 1 Cor. 7:29; 1 Thess. 1:10; 1 Peter 4:7). In this time of tribulation Israel was to be punished for her national sins. At the close of this time of chastisement, the Lord was to return, be personally present among them, remove the blindness so that Israel might welcome and receive her returning Lord and King.

However, this time of tribulation did not come. Jesus Christ spoke of it as being imminent and prepared His disciples for passing through it (Matt. 24). Paul spoke of it as imminent and gave instructions accordingly (1 Cor. 7). Peter spoke of it as being nigh (1

Peter 4:7) and James concurred in this statement (James 5:8). Yet, it did not come. Why?

Were they mistaken? The answer is "NO." Was the Word of God broken? Again the answer is "No."

The true answer is found in the realization of the fact that at the close of the period covered by the book of Acts, God made a break in the steady flow of the fulfillment of prophetic events and held in abeyance the consummation of the whole prophetic program. He did this in order to reveal and accomplish a purpose, which hitherto had been kept secret, even a secret hid in Himself (Col. 1:26). He suspends His dealings with Israel, leaves off for a time His purposes for the earth and the heavens. He begins a new out-calling, destined for a new sphere (far - above all heavens) in accord with a purpose hitherto kept secret.

. Therefore, that period of time between the close of the prophesied Acts period and the prophesied "day of the Lord" period is the time period of the dispensation of the Mystery under which "the Church which is His Body" has its beginning, outcalling, formation, completion and translation to a place "far above all heavens," called "the glory."

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## **A WORD OF WARNING**

The Lord Jesus Christ is coming back again. He will come according to His Word and at the time appointed by the Scriptures. His coming will be preceded by such definite signs that only the willfully blind can mistake their meaning. However, we feel that a word of warning is necessary to those who have become unduly exercised over things which men call "signs of the times." The majority of these things are not at all signs in the Biblical sense. Digging up so called "signs of the times" and peddling them to uninstructed believers, seems to be a profitable business. A certain magazine, published in this country, has a new "sign" every month. With this magazine it seems to be a case of twelve signs for one dollar. Such things make strong appeal to a great mass of professing Christians, for they deal with the things which are seen in the newspapers (which they faithfully read) rather than things in the Word of God (which they do not read).

Let any event reach the headlines in the newspapers, let it become a subject of general conversation, and a flock of preachers, who claim they are preaching the Word, will rush into their pulpits and exalt this passing event as a very positive sign of the times. They are always sure of a hearing from those who are living in disobedience to Colossians 3 and have their minds on earthly things.

When a sermon is announced on "The Signs of the Times," the preacher can usually be expected to follow a certain formula. He will enter the pulpit with a Bible in one hand and a sheaf of newspaper clippings in the other hand. The wise know that they are to hear a sermon from the daily press, rather than from the eternal Word. But, this sermon from the daily press will be covered with a thin veneer from the eternal Word.

The preacher of such sermons must have a text on which to hang the news paper clippings, so a portion will be read from the Word. Usually it is something with a wide

application such as "distress of nations." And with this as a text (or a pretext) the preacher launches into his message from the newspaper clippings. The wise also know that these clippings are a fresh set, for events which were hailed as positive signs a few months before have passed from the scene. These events would now be laughed at if presented as signs.

During the past twenty years a certain preacher, in a great city in the middle west, rose to great popularity. He began his ascent with a message on "Is Kaiser Wilhelm the Antichrist?" This subject was the first advertisement he ever placed in the newspapers of the great city where he rose to fame. If such a subject was good then it should be good now. But who today would preach on such a subject.

Or who today would announce a sermon on the "N.R.A." or the "Blue Eagle" Yet three years ago, these were preached as very positive signs of the near coming of Christ.

Men, who make merchandise of God's Word, well know that wild prophetic sermons and messages on the signs of the times are sure fire crowd getters; They have used this ruse to a point where the abuse has caused a frightful reaction, and this reaction is even against true prophetic preaching and teaching.

Prophetic preachers and prophetic magazines led the people through a period of years into a state of great expectation in 1934. The "things which men had denominated as signs had so multiplied that the very peak or climax had been reached. When 1934 passed and the Lord did not return, it led to a great weakening, on the part of many, of faith in God's Word. But the fault lies not with the Word but with the failure of men to handle that Word aright. In a later issue we shall show that this is simply another case of failure to "rightly divide the Word of Truth."

Some months ago a certain Evangelist and Bible Teacher announced that he was to preach in a certain great church on the subject, "The Place of Huey Long in Prophecy." The writer heard the announcement over the radio, thousands of others must have heard it also. Most of those who heard it must have shaken their heads in bewilderment, when a few weeks later the headlines proclaimed the fact that Huey Long was dead, the result of an assassin's bullet. Certainly, this should have proven to that preacher that he was dealing with the transitory trifles of earth rather than the timeless truths of God.

We will have more to say about this subject in a later issue under the heading, "The Time of the Signs."

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## THEN AND NOW

The last few verses of **Acts 12** is the divinely inspired record of the death of King Herod. The historian Josephus also gives an account of Herod's death. He agrees with the Biblical account in all the main features, but he did not know that Herod's death was by an angel of the Lord. The divine record is as follows.

**"And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's country.**

**And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, 'It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.' And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost."**

This happened during the Pentecostal administration; that period covered historically by the book of Acts.

In a recent issue of the newsmagazine "Time" we read of a letter sent to Adolf Hitler by ten responsible pastors of the German Evangelical Protestant Church. In this letter these pastors say: "Our people are trying to break the bond set by God. That is human conceit rising against God. In this connection we must warn the Fuhrer that the adoration frequently bestowed upon him is due only to God."

We are in no position to judge as to the truth of this charge. We do know that most world rulers, past and present, have been guilty of the sin. of failing to give God the glory. Even more guilty than the Herod of Acts 12. However, the swift judgment which was seen in Acts is not manifested today. This is just one more proof that the present administration, the administration of the grace of God, is quite different from that administration seen in operation during the book of Acts

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## **THE EDITOR TO HIS FRIENDS**

\*\*\*\*In the next issue, we plan to begin a series of simple studies in First Corinthians. This is one of the neglected books of the Bible. Very few believers are familiar with its contents. We will expound it portion by portion and it will be an independent exposition. It will not be a compilation of thoughts which have been obtained from the writings of others.

\*\*\*\*Many expositors go into great detail when dealing with the simple and obvious. They pass hurriedly over the difficult and obscure. We will try not to do this. If any should think we are guilty of it, they can call it to our attention.

\*\*\*\*There will also be the first of a series of articles dealing with the "Abrahamic, Old and New Covenants." These articles will set forth the vital and inseparable relationship which exists between these three great Covenants.

\*\*\*\*The best feature of the Editor's ministry is the opportunity it gives us to study and work out the truth. We are very busy, so busy that every minute has a claim upon it, yet we have ample opportunities for study. Fourteen hours out of each week are spent on trains but this time is spent in meditation, reading and study. Here is an example of how we work. Having been led to teach 1 Corinthians, we studied the book and presented the book verse by verse to our class of Bible students in Rockford. The exposition provoked comment, questions and criticisms. We then restudied the book and a few months later presented it to our class in Evanston. This brought more comment, criticism and questions. Again the book was restudied and presented to our class in Grand Rapids. Now it is being restudied and reworked and written for the magazine. This is the manner in which all our subjects are handled.

However, when it comes to writing out the material for the magazine, we are pressed for time and we are unable to give it the painstaking care that we desire. The manuscripts must be written at great speed, the proofs must be hurriedly read. We trust that our friends will understand and appreciate these facts, and that it will temper their judgment of our finished effort as it comes to them.

\*\*\*\*Remittances from foreign countries should be made by purchasing an International Money Order. This should be made payable to Otis Q. Sellers. The advice should be sent to Grand Rapids, Michigan, U. S. A., British currency is also acceptable, as we can return this to England with no loss in exchange.

\*\*\*\*When you send us the names of others, be sure to send a complete and an exact address. The Post Office will not attempt to deliver second class mail if the address is incomplete or incorrect. Neither will they forward it if the address has been changed. So be sure to send Name, Street and Number, City and State.

\*\*\*\*We are sorry that the suspicion which is attached to things sent out free is attached to our magazine. When we first considered the publication of a magazine, we discovered that it could not be supported by subscriptions. We waited and planned for one year and almost gave up hope. Then the idea came to us that if we gave it free to all who would read it, those who love the truth would support it. Thus we would not be involved in any financial risk which might harm our testimony if we failed. We are under obligations to no one and we can quit after any issue.

Now when we say that the magazine is free, we do not mean that we are scattering copies anywhere and everywhere in the hope that some one will read it. We are confident that anyone who personally requests the magazine will read it. Such requests are placed on our regular readers list and will receive every issue.

Names which are sent in by others are placed on the sample list and such receive two or three issues. If this does not bring a personal request that the magazine be continued, these names are taken from our lists.

We regret to remove any name from our lists. We earnestly desire to send our periodical to all who will read it. If your issue is marked SAMPLE COPY, you should send a request telling us to continue sending it each month

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