

The Word of Truth Ministry Presents
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#SS07

Acts 28 :28 –
A Dispensational Boundary Line

Otis Q. Sellers, Bible Teacher

This pamphlet does not have to do with religion or religious systems. It is a treatise related to the interpretation, understanding and appreciation of the Word of God. It does not deal with service for God. It deals with the truth of God. The writer sincerely believes that the truth presented in this study is a key that unlocks much of the New Testament. Experience has demonstrated to him that the recognition of Paul's declaration in Acts 28:28 as a dispensational dividing line will provide answers to Biblical questions that have long seemed unanswerable, solutions to problems that have seemed insoluble, that it will clear away what heretofore have been insuperable difficulties, and provide honest explanations of contradictions that have puzzled students of Scripture down through the centuries. An ever deepening conviction has come to him that the full acceptance of the principle of interpretation set forth in these pages will permit the student of the Word of God to feel assured that he has fully obeyed the divine command set forth by Paul to Timothy:

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

Furthermore, it is his conviction that the full acceptance of this principle by a sufficient number of faithful men would bring about a sorely needed revival of interest in the Word of God, opening up as it does new avenues of Bible study into truths of Scripture which have baffled many who have tried to explore them.

Because the things set forth in these pages are so much a part of the life, ministry, study and message of the writer, because they are not merely beliefs in his head but truths in his heart, and because he feels such a close personal relationship to the things presented herein, the reader of this study will understand if he writes in the first person from this point on.

Dispensational Truth

Some who read these lines may never have heard of dispensational truth. Others may have received a false impression of it due to faulty presentation. To help all such as much as possible, I will, as best I can, give a simple and non-technical explanation of this term.

A dispensation is an administration, and in this pamphlet these two terms will be used interchangeably. A dispensation or administration is a way *or* method of dealing. An administration *of* God is God's manner, scheme, plan *or* system of dealing with the world *or* with His own people in the world. A careful examination *of* the sacred Scriptures show that God's ways with men have differed :it various times. This must be taken into account if one would properly apprehend His truth and walk in the light of it. The desire to do this becomes intense when the believer realizes that God has no greater joy than to hear that His children walk in truth. See 3 John 1 :4.

All who read this study will have by experience become quite familiar with the difference between a war-time administration and a peace-time administration, so far as the government is concerned. In 1941 our government was forced by circumstances to change immediately to a war-time administration. From experience we learned that some things that were true under a peace-time administration were no longer true under a war-time administration. And we also learned that many things not vitally related to war or peace remained true under both administrations.

Some may ignore it and others may deny it, but it is a positive fact that there are different dispensations or administrations in the Word of God. The word *dispensation* is an eminently Scriptural term. If any object to it, if any repudiate what they slightly call "dispensationalism", then let them be honest and admit that they are objecting to and repudiating something that has a solid foundation in the sacred Scriptures. It may not appear in the creeds of the churches; the works of certain theologians may be searched in vain for it; nevertheless, it does appear in the Word of God. In Ephesians 3 :2 we read:

If you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given me to you-ward.

One does not need to be a profound thinker to learn from this that there is a dispensation or administration of the grace of God, and that it is based upon a divine revelation given to the Apostle Paul more than thirty years after the death of Christ. This passage alone establishes the fact of dispensational truth, and the related fact that God's present manner, method, scheme, plan or system of dealing with the world, or with His own people in the world is one of grace. If this is not taken into account, God's truth will never be properly apprehended, and the joy that comes to God when His children walk in the truth will never be produced by the believer.

I have learned from experience that the moment a writer begins to press a truth from the Word of God, most professing Christians will cast the pamphlet aside, dismissing the matter as unimportant. They resolutely refuse to be exercised by the truth or to feel that it has any claim upon them. Truth alone and as such has never had anything to do with shaping their thoughts or directing their lives. The love of the truth is not in them. They deaden the conscience by deciding that their thoughts or beliefs are the truth, then claim that they have and hold the truth. But, as a rule, they have some good fleshly reason for believing everything they hold to be the truth, and apart from such reasons they believe nothing. Either it is generally believed, their denomination teaches it, their creed confesses it, or they get comfort out of it, is, as a rule, their reasons for believing a thing to be the truth.

I regret to say it, but this seems to be especially true of many who make their living from the churches. It is an accepted principle that the duty of the minister is to maintain the *status quo*, to increase the influence, prestige and attendance of the churches. In the life and work of churches the truths presented in this pamphlet are of no importance. Churches cannot change, and the work will go on so much better if all questions concerning truth are kept in the background. "Confess your faith and then forget about it" seems to be the general attitude of today. Very little truth is needed in conducting a successful and popular church. The less Bible a person knows, the better church member he makes. Choirs will sing, boards will function, and committees will serve just as well if the truths presented here are never heard of. However, as stated in the beginning, these studies have no connection with religion or religious systems. They have to do with the believers acceptance of and relationship to the truth of God. And the believer who accepts God's truth and seeks to walk and live in harmony with it will find himself more and more out of harmony with "organized Christianity".

The man of faith who honestly seeks to stand perfect and complete in all the will of God is the only one who ever has or ever will care about the truth. Those who "seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" will dump the truth overboard at any time that it conflicts with their purposes.

The unity of the organized churches can best be promoted *by* giving up the truth, *by* relegating the Bible to the Sunday School, *by* truckling to ritualism and musical programs, *by* seeking to keep everything upon a level where men who know not and who care not for the truth will immediately feel at home. The unity of the Spirit is best kept *by* men who prize truth above every other possession.

But we have digressed from our subject, and must return to our consideration of dispensational truth.

The fact of dispensational truth is well established. Men may differ as to the conclusions that are drawn from this great fact, but the fact itself is inescapable. Every sincere believer in and follower of the Lord Jesus Christ is a dispensationalist. Any man is a dispensationalist who trusts in the blood of Jesus Christ rather than bringing to God an animal sacrifice. Anybody who admits that certain practices were the divine will at one time but are not the divine will now is a dispensationalist. Therefore, to a certain degree every Christian is a believer in dispensational truth. He may be only a partial dispensationalist, applying this principle only to those commands and ordinances of God which he does not desire to practice. Or he may be a complete dispensationalist who will apply this great principle to every matter and practice irregardless of his personal desires or wishes in the matter. Nevertheless, whether partial or complete, every Christian is a dispensationalist.

It is only by means of dispensational truth that the believer can know and do the will of God. There is a copy of the Bible in most American and British homes. Many of these are never read, but if they are, the readers cannot fail to see that the will of God for His people is not the same at all times. This being true, if we would stand perfect in the will of God, it becomes our solemn duty to know God's will for the present time.

Listed among the mighty men of King David were the children of Issachar, of whom it is said, "they were men who had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do." 1 Chro:1icles 12 :32. Today it is only those who understand the times, who know the character of God's present administration, who are able to say what God requires of those who are related to him in this present dispensation.

Simple logic will convince anyone that the two truths set forth in the following passages are contradictory:

Every man child among you shall be circumcised. Genesis 17:10.

If ye be circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. Galatians 5 :2.

Some apart from careful thought will immediately exclaim that one of these truths is related to the Jew while the other is to the Christian. But they fail to take into consideration that the man Abraham, to whom the command of circumcision was given, was not a Jew in the sense of any meaning that can be attached to that term. He was not different from the Galatians to whom Paul spoke so strongly against this ancient rite. Furthermore they forget Paul's declaration in Romans 3 :1-2 that circumcision is profitable.

The man of God who has made "all Scripture" his study knows very well that God's commandments at one time may not be in force at another time, and he also knows that God's commandments to one people may not be applicable to all people.

Therefore, the man who permits the Word of God to be his all-sufficient rule in regard to life, worship and service must have some divine rule or principle by which he can rightly interpret the Word that God has given. Without such a principle, he can do little else than try to wrest the statements of Scripture to make them mean what he thinks they should mean, taking such passages as are pleasing to him, but ignoring or rejecting the witness of all that do not meet his approval or the approval of the system or creed he has determined to follow.

The man who desires God's truth above all else does not want anything to do with such carnal handling of the Word of God, even if such handling is dignified by calling it "the harmonistic method of interpretation." He must have a divine principle or rule of interpretation, *sq* that in handling the Bible it will teach him what God intended it should teach. And the God-given principle of interpretation that will do this very thing is that of "right-division" or dispensational truth.

There are truths set forth in the Bible that are as eternal as God. They are subject to no change, and are not affected by changes in administration. Our God has seen fit at certain times to change His administration, that is, to alter His method of dealing with the human race and His household upon the earth. The truths that are affected by such changes are dispensational in character.

The Acts 28 :28 Dispensational Change

It is my earnest conviction that the most radical, revolutionary and far-reaching administrative change in the Word of God took place when Paul as God's ambassador spoke the words recorded for our learning by the Spirit of God in **Acts 28 :28 :**

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

Only when a new revelation from God is given does a dispensation change. Here we have a new revelation from God, a message which declares that a radical change is being made; therefore, here we most positively find a change in dispensation or administration.

In this country, if the executive and legislative branches of the government are, by the votes of the people taken from the Democrats and given to the Republicans, a change of administration has most certainly taken place. And when the salvation of God was taken by God from Israel and sent to the Gentiles, a change of administration most certainly occurred. The words in Acts 28:28 positively mark a dispensational change.

The full meaning and the far-reaching effect of Paul's declaration will not be understood by the mere reading of these words. Many will say, "I do not see it," and to these I would kindly say that this is because you do not know what this declaration means. You do not appreciate the breadth, and length, and height of truth contained in the term "the salvation of God." When the meaning of this is learned from other Scriptures, it will be plain to every honest student that this pronouncement *does* mark one of the most radical changes that God ever made. It brought about a suspension of a work that God was doing and brought into action a work that was quite different. In fact, this declaration suspended the great tribulation, the second-coming of Christ and the millennial kingdom--events which were "at hand" during the period of time covered by the Gospels and the Acts. Truly, this is a dispensational boundary line. In fact, it is the most important division in the Word of God.

"Pearl Harbor" -an Illustration

An illustration of these things is seen in the words "Pearl Harbor." The experience of the past six years demonstrates, and time will prove it still further, that these two words have become the most significant in American history. Not just because of the words, but because of all that is involved in them and related to them. These two words now set forth a boundary line in American history, marking as they do the end of a dispensation or administration of peace and the beginning of one of unparalleled war. Very quickly after December 7, 1941 these words became prominent in the thoughts and conversation of every American. We soon realized to how great an extent "Pearl Harbor" affected and changed our personal lives. "Was that before Pearl Harbor?" was a question asked repeatedly about a multitude of things.

Today a scoffer might hear the words "Pearl Harbor" and say with contempt: "Pearl Harbor! I see no significance in those words. They can be of no importance in American history. Pearl Harbor is nothing but a naval base. It was there long before December 7, 1941, so it could not possibly be a boundary line in our history. That was only a local occurrence that happened there and it could have no effect upon the lives of millions who were far removed from it."

To such a one we would answer: "Whether you see it or not, there is a significance in the words 'Pearl Harbor' for millions of Americans. True, it was only a naval base, and those words may still signify nothing more than a naval base to you, and it is also true that it was there long before that dreadful 'day which will live in infamy.' Nevertheless, in the words 'Pearl Harbor' there is more significance than any other two words in American history."

Even so it is with the declaration found in Acts 28 :28. The change these words brought about reaches out and touches the life of everyone who is or who desires to be related to God. These words declare the change that brought about the administration under which you and I now live. Here, we should be willing to let Scripture mean all

that it can mean. And we should also be willing without prejudice to seek for the fulness of truth contained in the proclamation:

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

Let us examine the circumstances under which this great declaration was made. These words were spoken approximately thirty three years after the death of Christ, and they bring to a close the record of history that is set forth in the book of Acts. The reader of Acts will know that Paul, despairing of any fair judgment of his case in Jerusalem, appealed unto Caesar while being examined before Festus. This took the case out of the procurators hands and made it necessary that Paul be sent to Rome, at which city he arrived many months later. Three days later he summoned the chief of the Jews and related unto them the reasons for his appeal unto Caesar. Later, upon a designated day, they assembled again in his lodging and he rehearsed unto them from morning to evening the message he had proclaimed for so many years. In response, some believed the things he set forth and some believed not. As a result, they fell into bitter controversy among themselves, whereupon Paul dismissed them, but not until after he had spoken unto them certain words.

First of all he laid hold of the words first-spoken by Isaiah on a previous occasion when Israel had failed to respond to the works and words of Jehovah. See Isaiah 6 :9-10. Previous to Paul, our Lord had made use of the words of Isaiah when Israel had rejected his personal proclamation. See Matthew 13 :13-15. He used them again when Israel had refused to respond to the testimony of His mighty works. See John 12 :37-40. And when Israel, all the way from Jerusalem to Rome had rejected the words and works of the Apostles whom the Lord Jesus Christ had sent, Paul, directed by the Spirit of God, laid hold of these same words of Isaiah and used them as the preface to those great words that brought about the dispensational change. Here are his prefatory words:

Well spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing, ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Acts 28:25-27.

These words are the appropriate preface to the declaration that brought about the great dispensational change at Acts 28 :28. *They had nothing to do with the change.* These words brought upon the nation of Israel a sentence of judicial blindness, judicial deafness, and judicial hardness of heart; but they declare no change in the administration of God that had prevailed since the day of Pentecost. This is emphatically declared because certain critics are insisting that there could have been

no dispensational change at the close of the Acts period inasmuch as the words spoken there had been spoken to Israel on three previous occasions. They ask, "Was there a dispensational change when Isaiah first spoke these words? Did any change occur when Christ first quoted them? Did a new dispensation begin when He quoted them the second time? How then could they bring about a radical change when quoted by Paul at the close of Acts?"

This argument may sound irrefutable to its proponents, and it may help them to justify themselves in ignoring the change that most certainly took place at the close of Acts, but it is merely a bit of specious reasoning. Those who use it are doing nothing more than refuting something which they themselves have said. I know of no teacher who recognizes the Acts 28 :28 dispensational boundary line who holds that these words of Isaiah quoted by Paul brought about a dispensational change.

The judgment that came upon Israel at the close of the Acts period, came about because they once too often rejected the works and words of Jehovah. No more appropriate words could be found to describe Israel's spiritual condition than those first spoken by Isaiah. That is why the Lord used these words on two occasions, and why Paul used them to set forth Israel's spiritual condition after they rejected the crucified and risen Messiah.

As an example of this, we might consider the immortal words of Abraham Lincoln: "that government by the people, of the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth." These words have been quoted by thousands of speakers on as many occasions. They used these words because no better words could be found to express the truth they contain. In fact, it is always more effective to quote the familiar words of Lincoln than to use new expressions.

Even so it is with the matter under consideration. The Holy Spirit first gave these words to Isaiah when Israel faced the Babylonian captivity. They had rejected the works and words of Jehovah and seventy years captivity was the judgment that awaited them. These words were familiar to every Israelite, so they came with tremendous force when spoken by the Lord Jesus after Israel had rejected His message and miracles. However, no judgment came upon them when He spoke these words. Upon the Cross He prayed for their forgiveness, and after His resurrection the apostles went forth with power to perform even greater works than His in connection with their proclamation of the gospel of God.

This proclamation, and the signs that confirmed it, was rejected by Israel in four great centers: Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth and Rome. In Rome, Paul took up the words of Isaiah once again and used them to set forth the blindness of Israel's eyes, the dullness of Israel's ears, and the hardness of Israel's heart. Following these words he added the great declaration that brought about the dispensational or administrative change:

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.

These words--not the words that prefaced them--brought about the great dispensational change. No such declaration as this had ever been made before in the Word of God. No such thing as this had ever happened before. This is the first time that the salvation of God had been sent to the Gentiles.

Objections Considered

I anticipate strong objections to this statement. Voices will exclaim at once that the gospel was first preached to the Gentiles twenty-five years before in the house of Cornelius as recorded in Acts 10. This is entirely true, but we must make distinctions in things that differ. The gospel being preached to a Gentile and the Gentile being blessed through it is a far different thing than the salvation of God being sent to them. Israel lost nothing when the gospel went to the Gentiles in the Acts period. In fact, they actually gained by it for it worked in their behalf to provoke them to emulation. But when "the salvation of God" was sent to the Gentiles, Israel lost everything until that day when His salvation returns to them. The clear distinction between "the gospel of God" and "the salvation of God" will not be understood by those who are familiar with *the gospel* but have no understanding of *the salvation*. This distinction will become crystal clear when one knows from the Word of God the full meaning of the descriptive phrase "the salvation of God". This is to be considered in detail, but it must wait until other objections have been considered.

Some will point to the events recorded in Acts 13 and 18 in which Paul turned to the Gentiles. These incidents are taken to be identical with Acts 28 :28. This is not true, and to insist that it is indicates that the mind is closed to that great truth contained in Paul's pronouncement at the close of the Acts period.

Acts 13:46 reveals that Paul declared in Pisidian Antioch after the Jews had rejected his message:

It was necessary that, the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

Having fulfilled his obligation to preach the gospel "to the *Jew* first" in Pisidian Antioch, Paul was free to turn to the Gentiles in that place. Nevertheless, the gospel was still to the *Jew* first, so in the next chapter they are seen at work in the synagogues. See Acts 14:1, 17:1-2, 18:4.

In Corinth Paul's message was violently rejected causing him to say:

Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. Acts 18 :6.

Thus we see that in both these cities Paul did most certainly turn to the Gentiles. And we can also rest assured that God directed his steps in this matter; therefore, God sent Paul with a message to the Gentiles in these cities after the Jews had rejected it. But, unless it can be proven that Paul and his message are identical with "the salvation of God", then what happened in Antioch and Corinth is not the same as that which occurred in Rome.

In other words, in both of the earlier incidents Paul turned and went to the Gentiles. In Rome Paul did not go to the Gentiles but remained two whole years in his own hired house. It was the salvation of God that was sent to the Gentiles at Acts 28 :28, not Paul with a message. In fact, there is as much difference between what took place in Corinth and what happened in Rome as there would be between Britain's King sending a messenger with a message to some of his subjects, and the King going in person. This will be clear when we have learned from God's Word the meaning of "the salvation of God."

The Salvation of God

In the presentation and understanding of these truths the greatest obstacle to be overcome is the traditional and stereotyped meaning that men have fastened upon the word *salvation*. Someone has suggested that it would be good to have a rescue mission for fallen words--a place where words could go and be redeemed from the false meanings into which they have fallen, and be restored to the high and holy place they have in the Word of God. This is true of the word *salvation*. It has been taken by men and restricted to mean redemption and forgiveness, or to the experience one passes through when he enters into these blessings. In fact, I know from experience that many who read this pamphlet will, when they read the word *salvation*, think of it as being something "that happens to a sinner when he goes to the front in a revival meeting."

The majority who read of the salvation of God being sent to the Gentiles will take this to mean nothing more than the opportunity to be saved being offered to the Gentiles. When we turn to The Word of God to find how He used the word *salvation*, we will discover how incomplete, immature and false these fleshly concepts are.

The Old Testament saints made much use of this word. In Hebrew it is the word *Yeshuwah*. It was first used by the man Israel in **Genesis 49 :18** when he said: **I have waited for thy salvation, O Jehovah.**

These words coming from the man who wrestled with Jehovah and lost the contest (Genesis 32) cannot mean that he was waiting for forgiveness, redemption, or for any experience connected with these. In other occurrences of this word we read:

Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion. Psalm 14:7.

He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved. Psalm 62 :2.

Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified. Psalm 70 :4.

He hath remembered His mercy and His truth toward the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Psalm 98 :3.

Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation. Isaiah 12.2.

I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth. Isaiah 49:6.

The Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. Isaiah 52:10.

Passages such as these could be multiplied, but this is unnecessary. When these are prayerfully considered they will bring the conviction that *Salvation* is the name or descriptive title of a person, and that person is the Jehovah of the Old Testament and the Lord Jesus Christ of the New. The Salvation of God is a *person*, not a *thing*. The Salvation of God is the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, beginning with this paragraph the word *Salvation* will be capitalized in all occurrences where it refers to Him.

That the Salvation of God is the Lord Jesus Christ is demonstrated beyond all question by the beautiful and impressive record found in Luke 2 :25-35. Among the seed of Abraham who waited for the consolation of Israel was a just and devout man named Simeon. The Spirit of God rested upon this man, and it was revealed unto Him by the Spirit that he would not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ. Led by the Spirit of God, he came into the temple at the moment that the parents of the Lord Jesus brought Him in to do according to the requirements of the law. Taking the infant Christ in his arms, he blessed God and uttered some of the most magnificent words to be found in all literature:

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen THY SALVATION, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people: a light to lighten the' Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. Luke 2:29-32.

This passage provides an immovable rock for our feet. Upon it we can take our stand and proclaim to the universe that the Salvation of God is a person and this person is the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation is one of His names; a highly descriptive name full of meaning and truth.

"They that know thy name will put their trust in thee", is the witness of David to the importance of the names of Jehovah. Every name and title He bears is full of truth for us. Therefore, in our quest for the fullness of truth we must seek to know why He is called **Salvation**. If we gain this one point of knowledge, our trust in Him will increase.

If we should ask why men are called doctor, soldier, sailor, carpenter or governor, the answer is obvious. It is because of work they do, services they perform or offices they hold. And this is why Jesus Christ is called the Salvation of God. It is because of an office He holds and a work He does. But we will need to consider other truths and link them up with this in order to appreciate this office and work.

Source and Channel

One of the most important truths in the Word of God, a truth that is seldom fully comprehended is that God the Father is the source of all things and that God the Son is the channel through whom these things flow. This is set forth in **1 Corinthians 8 :6**, but the truth is almost lost in the weakness of the translation.

But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom (out of whom) are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by (through) whom are all things, and we by (through) Him.

Of God the source of all we read in **James 1 :17**:

Every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Of Jesus Christ, the channel of all we read in **1 Timothy 2:5**:

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

How true-every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights. And, while it is not stated in this passage, it is also true that the channel through whom these gifts flow to man is the Lord Jesus Christ.

We sing, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." This is true. We mean this to the very letter. But let every man keep in mind whenever he sings this doxology that these blessings flow to us through God's appointed channel the Lord Jesus Christ.

If the Bible is carefully examined from Genesis to Revelation it will be found that God is always set forth as the source of all and His Christ as the channel of all. This is true from the very beginning, for it must be remembered that the Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Lord Jesus Christ of the New. By Him were all things created. Every blessing that has ever come to or ever will come to this earth, every blessing that has ever come to or will come to Israel, every blessing that has come or ever will come to the individual must flow through the divinely appointed channel, the Lord Jesus Christ. There is not a single exception to this. There is one mediator between God and man, and God deals with man, God acts toward man, and God gives blessing to man only through that mediator, the Lord Jesus, the divine channel, the Salvation of God. Christ declared that no man could come unto the Father except through Him, and it is just as true that God never comes to any man except through Jesus Christ.

A complete study of the word *salvation* is not possible within the limits of this pamphlet. An examination of all occurrences would show that the word is used at times to set forth the *blessing* rather than the *Blessor*; nevertheless, the term the Salvation of God as applied to Jehovah--Jesus is a descriptive title bestowed upon Him because of the place He fills as the divine channel through which every blessing of God flows. The title is connected with blessing because Salvation has to do with that which is salutary, that is, beneficial to man or to the earth. Let no man ever expect anything from God except through this channel. Let no man ever attempt to return anything to God, not even one word of praise, unless he does it through Jesus Christ. Man may be prone to set Him aside, but God never will.

Channels have such a prominent place in the modern world that numerous illustrations of this truth come quickly to the mind. When I take my glass to the faucet in search of a refreshing glass of water, I am drawing upon all the resource of mighty Lake Michigan which is more than forty miles from where I live. When the resident of Los Angeles turns on his faucet, he may be drawing upon a mountain lake or reservoir that is 200 miles away from him. We are able to do this because the water has been channeled to us. The fact that there is pure, cold water in the mountains could do nothing but give mental anguish to a thirsty resident of Los Angeles if this water were not in some way channeled to him.

Even so it is with the rich and sorely needed blessings of God. When by faith we lay hold of *Jesus* Christ, we are drawing upon all the resources of God. He has all that groaning creation needs, He has all that suffering Israel needs, He has all that the sinner needs. *But* if it were not for His channel the world would never be free from its travail, Israel would never be restored and enjoy the millennial kingdom, the sinner would never be redeemed and the saint would never be blessed. Thank God for the channel, thank God for His Salvation, thank God for Jehovah--Jesus. And let it be noted carefully, he who does not have both Source and Channel has nothing of God at all.

God's Salvation-From Adam to Abraham

If the first 2000 years of human history is reviewed, that period of time between Adam and Abraham recorded in the first twelve chapters of Genesis, it will be seen that God was working among men upon the earth, engaged in bringing some to Himself, that they might be blessed in Him. Among those blessed of whom we have record are Adam, Eve, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth. There must have been many more of whom we have no record, since those whose experiences are set forth were recorded in order to reveal God's works and ways with men. In that period of time, the Salvation of God, the channel through which God blessed men, was operating toward the whole human race; The very One who later became flesh was in the world. From Adam to Abraham, no man could claim any special privilege, priority or special favor. To as many as received Him to them gave He the right to become the children of God. During that time faith could cause the channel of blessing to flow, and there is also evidence that the channel carried grace to some men in order to bring them to faith. Lack of faith was the only hindrance. God's Salvation was in the world. See John 1 :10-13.

God's Salvation After Abraham's Call

In the twelfth chapter of Genesis a change took place. The Salvation of God was turned toward Abraham and his descendants after him. God separated him unto Himself and gave to him and his descendants after him such a glorious wealth of promises that it is evident that the channel of blessing was toward them. "To Abraham and his seed were the promises made," is the divine declaration in Galatians 3 :16. Some of these promises were:

- 1. I will make of thee a great nation. Genesis 12:2.**
- 2. I will bless thee and make thy name great. Genesis 12:2.**
- 3. Thou shalt be a blessing. Genesis 12:2.**
- 4. I will bless them that bless thee. Genesis 12:3.**
- 5. I will curse him that curseth thee. Genesis 12:3.**
- 6. In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Genesis 12:3.**
- 7. Unto thy seed will I give this land. Genesis 12:7.**
- 8. The land which thou seekest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. Genesis 13:15.**
- 9. I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth. Genesis 18:16.**
- 10. Tell the stars if thou be able to number them, so shall thy seed be.. Genesis 15:5**
- 11. I will multiply thee exceedingly. Genesis 17:2.**
- 12. I will make nations of thee. Genesis 17 :6.**
- 13. Kings shall come out of thee. Genesis 17:6.**
- 14. I will be a God unto thee and thy seed after thee. Genesis 17:7.**
- 15. Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. Genesis 22:17.**

These fifteen things promised to the seed of Abraham represent wealth deposited to their account. The single promise, "I will be a God unto thee," signifies that God had taken them to Himself, while at the same time He gave Himself to them. In other words, from Genesis 12 on the Salvation of God, the channel that brings God's blessings to men is with and among the seed of Abraham. This becomes more evident after they become a nation. The words of Jehovah to Israel give positive evidence of this.

And I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God. Exodus 6:7.

Thus saith the Lord, Israel is My son, even My firstborn. Exodus 4:22.

For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon Him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? Deuteronomy 4:7-8.

But the Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto Him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day. Deuteronomy 4:20.

For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from one side of heaven unto the other, whether there be any such thing as this great thing is, or bath been heard like it.. Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of fire as thou hast beard and live? Or, hath God assayed to go and take Him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptation, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? Deuteronomy 4:32-34.

For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. Deuteronomy 7 :6.

These passages show that God's Salvation, His channel of blessing was with and among Israel in a distinctive manner not granted to other nations. Israel's lack of faith (See Romans 9:32) may have greatly hindered the outflow of God's blessings from His channel; nevertheless, it was with and among them.

However, we do not need to base this truth upon inferences. It is emphatically and forcefully stated in several places. Balaam the prophet, speaking by the Spirit of God declared:

He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel; the Lord his God is WITH him, and the shout of a king is AMONG them. Numbers 23:21.

When Israel thirsted in the wilderness they murmured saying, "Is the Lord AMONG us, or not?" God answered their murmurings and showed that He was among them by giving water from the rock. See Exodus 17 :7. Again and again Moses declared that Jehovah was among Israel.

And I will dwell AMONG the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell AMONG them: I am the Lord their God. Exodus 29:45-46.

Ye have despised the Lord which is AMONG you. Numbers 11:20.

They have heard Lord that thou art AMONG this people. Numbers 14:14.

The Lord is AMONG them. Numbers 16:3.

The Lord thy God is AMONG you. Deuteronomy 7:21.

This same truth was expressed quite dramatically by Jeremiah in the days of Israel's great sin. He confessed the guilt of his people, but interceded for them by saying:

O the hope of Israel, the Savior thereof in time of trouble, why shouldst thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that tumeth aside to tarry for a night? Why shouldst thou be as a man astonished, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet THOU O LORD, ART IN THE MIDST OF US, and we are called by thy name; leave us not. Jeremiah 14:8-9.

Here, Jeremiah joins with Moses in declaring the great truth that must be written over that entire period of time from Genesis 12 to Acts 28:28-JEHOVAH IN THE MIDST (OR, AMONG) HIS PEOPLE ISRAEL. Jehovah was not with them as a guest (stranger), neither was His relationship that of a visitor (wayfaring man). He was among them. They were related to Him and He was identified with them. This is the great fact that gives the peculiar character to that period of time from the call of Abraham to the day that Paul announced a radical change by declaring that the Salvation of God had been sent to the Gentiles. This fact is a great general truth. Every other good thing that was true of Israel was based upon this fact. God had placed His Salvation among Israel for the avowed purpose of blessing them, then blessing all other nations through them.

God's Salvation After the Birth of Christ

The average reader of this pamphlet will readily agree that the things set forth above were true before the birth of Christ, but will insist that they were no longer true after His advent into the world. Many hold the figment that His ministry was to the whole world without distinction. They ignore the great truth that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers. See Romans 15 :8. When the record is honestly examined without bias it will be found that after the Salvation of God became flesh and stood upon this earth, it is more evident than ever before that the channel of blessing was directed only toward Israel.

When the twelve disciples were instructed and sent forth they were commanded by the Lord to restrict their ministry to the people of Israel:

These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, **Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But' go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matthew 10 :5-6.**

This truth, that His ministry was limited to Israel, is made so emphatic in the record of His dealings with the Syrophenician woman that if any, after reading this in Scripture, continue to deny it, further discussion of the matter with them is a waste of time. This record is found in Matthew 15 :21-28 and Mark 7 :24-30.

This incident took place in the third and last year of Christ's public ministry. The Lord had acted graciously toward many in Israel. The sick had been healed, demons had been cast out, blind had been made to see, and even some who were dead had been raised. When He came into the borders of Tyre and Sidon a woman, described as being a Greek and a Syrophenician by nation, came to Him saying:

Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. Matthew 15 :22.

One can easily imagine the anguish of this woman that caused her to seek relief from this awful tragedy that had overtaken her daughter. In desperation she had come to the One who had infinite power to heal, and laid her case before Him in a few words. But her plea was fruitless, for, we are emphatically told: **He answered her not a word. Matthew 15 :23.**

Innumerable expositors have set forth that the explanation of the somewhat harsh treatment accorded to this Gentile woman is found in the manner in which she addressed Him. Scofield says, "Addressed by a Gentile as Son of David, He makes no reply, for a Gentile has no claim upon Him in that character. Addressing Him as

'Lord,' she obtained an immediate answer." It is my judgment that in this matter Scofield is in error. Such an interpretation belittles the character of our Lord, making Him to be One who made much of proper titles and forms of address. All who believe this should stand ready to say what form of address she should have used in order to obtain the desired blessing. None of His blessings were ever given or withheld because of the manner in which men addressed Him. Neither is it true that she obtained an immediate answer when she addressed Him as "Lord," as an examination of the passage will clearly show. There was an infinitely greater reason for His silence, as we will discover.

It is evident that this woman was not easily discouraged. Her desperate need forced her to try again. Getting nothing but silence from Him she made intercession to the disciples, probably going from one to another until the twelve had been covered, then starting over again. The disciples came to the Lord and begged Him to send her away. In response the Lord did not say: "Let her learn to properly address One such as I," as some would like us to think. He answered the disciples' appeal by saying: **I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matthew 15 :24.**

Thus, from His lips, we have the reason why He had not helped her. No doubt but that His heart had been touched and He desired to be gracious unto her, but there was a divine limitation upon His ministry. The Salvation of God was toward Israel, and as long as this was true He could not act in behalf of the Gentiles until Israel had first been blessed. See Mark 7 :27.

When the Lord stated the difficulty that blocked Him helping her, she threw herself at His feet saying: "Lord help me." But to this pathetic appeal He answered: **It is not meet (right) to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs. Matthew 15 :26.**

Up to this point, our *Lord* had said nothing that gave this woman any opportunity *for* faith. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. If He had said one sentence to her, she would have had a message from God to act upon. But, at her first request, He said nothing to her so there was no opportunity *for* faith. His first statement concerning the matter was made to the disciples, and not to the woman. His second statement was to the woman. It was a message from the lips of God and gave her an opportunity *for* faith. It was not a pleasant message, and there was no comfort in it, but it was a message from God. It called the woman a dog, and set forth the Israelites as children. The woman readily admitted the truth of this, but reminded Him that the dogs (little dogs or puppies) eat of the crumbs that fall from the master's table. She took the dogs place, but claimed the dogs portion. Our *Lord* described her attitude as one of great faith, and granted her the blessing she desired.

This proves that faith can surmount every dispensational barrier if an opportunity for faith is given. From the time of Abraham these opportunities were falling upon Israel like summer showers. They came to the Gentile only as he sought the Lord. This woman's opportunity *for* faith rested in the fact that He had called her a dog. In this message *of* one word was an opportunity to take Him at His word and respond accordingly. This she did, and the result was the fulfillment of her desire.

During the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus only two who were not of Israel secured any blessing from Him. The Syrophenician woman got healing for her daughter, and a Roman centurion got healing for his servant. Luke 7 :9. **Both of these blessings were obtained by faith, but the opportunity to secure faith was held out to no other Gentiles.** Even the Greeks who desired to see Him were not permitted an audience. See John 12 :20-24.

If the four gospels are examined, nothing will be found that contradicts the view that during the Lord's earthly ministry, He limited His activities to the children of Israel. Their lack of faith, choking the outflow of the channel, caused it to appear as if the channel were not among them. Nevertheless, it was, even if the flow of blessings was almost imperceptible.

The Salvation of God in the Acts Period

We have seen that to the Syrophenician woman and to His disciples the Lord Jesus said: **I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel Matthew 15 :24.**

After His resurrection the Lord Jesus said to these same disciples: **Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. John 20:21.**

He had been sent solely to the lost sheep *of* the house of Israel and after His resurrection He sent the disciples to these same lost sheep. The words *as* and *even so* declare that their ministry was limited to the same extent as their Lord's. When we examine the book of Acts we find they faithfully accepted these limitations, never once extending their ministry until expressly ordered to do so.

The book of Acts can be divided into two sections. The first nine chapters cover a time when the gospel was proclaimed to the Jews only. The gospel gave them the opportunity *for* faith and to secure the rich blessings that faith would bring. The Gentiles were given no such opportunity. Even if one had listened, it was always made plain that the message was not to them. Therefore, so far as the gospel and the blessings that came from it were concerned, the word *monopoly* can be written over the first nine chapters *of* Acts. To the Jew only was the distinctive truth of that time. Even those believers who were scattered abroad as a result of the persecution that

broke out after the stoning *of* Stephen, traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch preaching the word to none but unto Jews only. **Acts 11 :19.**

At Acts 10 a change within the dispensation took place. The Lord altered the instructions He had given in John 20 :21 and Peter was sent to one Gentile family, the house of Cornelius. This did not change in the least the fact that the Salvation of God was still among Israel, for God used a Jewish vessel to carry the water of life to a Gentile. This was in complete harmony with the avowed purpose of God which He declared when He first placed His Salvation among Israel. "In thee shall all the nations (Gentiles) of the earth be blessed" was His declaration to Abraham's seed. From Acts 10 Israel no longer had a monopoly on the gospel message, but they did have an absolute priority. It was no longer to the Jew only, but it was to the Jew first. See Romans 1 :16.

When Paul began his active ministry among the Gentiles, he recognized this absolute priority on every occasion. And every time the Gentiles heard the gospel it came to them through a Jew that believed. In the thirty-three years of the Acts period, no Gentile was ever used by God in any manner in the performance of any service. No Gentile ever preached to anyone, ever baptized anyone, ever laid hands on anyone, or performed any other divine service. The Israelite had no monopoly on the hearing of the message after Acts 10, but he did have an absolute monopoly upon the service of God.

Whatever the Israelite received from God, he could pass on to others. The Israelite could be a channel leading from the main channel, but the Gentile could be. nothing more than a recipient. Furthermore, there was only one small company of men who were engaged in ministering to the Gentiles. This was Paul and his companions. And these companions could engage in no independent Gentile ministry of their own, for Paul was the Apostle to the Gentiles. He had to proclaim the message to Israel first, and only after they rejected it could he turn to the Gentiles. Therefore, it is plain that with only one man sent to the Gentiles, and that man duty -- bound to preach to the Jews in each city. first, the ministry to Gentiles was greatly limited in the Acts period.

The Witness of Romans

The Roman epistle was the last Paul wrote before the Salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles. This epistle gives the most positive evidence that God's Salvation was still with and among Israel.

In Romans 1:16 Paul declares that the gospel of Christ which was the power of God unto salvation is to the Jew first. This is in complete harmony with the covenant God made with Abraham when He said: "I will bless thee... .thou shalt be a blessing.... and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The declaration, "to the Jew first," meant not simply that the gospel was to be preached to the Jew first, for it

meant also that the gospel that reached the Gentile had to be received first by a Jew and then carried by him to a Gentile.

In Romans 3:1 Paul asks, "**What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?** He answers these questions by saying, "**Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles (utterances) of God.**"

In Romans 9 :4-5 Paul declares that the adoption, glory, covenants, giving of the law, service of God, promises, fathers, and even the honor of being the nation through which Christ came, belong to Israel.

In Romans 15:8 he says that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made *to* the fathers; and in Romans 15 :16 he states that he was performing a priestly ministry in relationship to the Gentiles. . As a Jew that believed, he could do this for the Gentile, but no Gentile could do it for a Jew or for another Gentile. This would violate the Abrahamic covenant.

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In the brief space of these pages we cannot make a full examination of the book of Acts or of the epistles written in the Acts period, but if the reader will do this for himself he will find that just as the words "Jehovah among His people Israel" must be written over that period of time from Abraham to Christ, even so must the words "Jesus Christ among His people Israel" must be written over the sixty-six years covered by the .Gospels and the book .of Acts.

Acts 28 :28

The blindness of Israel became more complete as the Acts period ran its course. Everywhere the messengers went, the results were the same. Some believed the things that were spoken, and some believed not. When Paul reached Rome the attitude of the Jews there was the same as in Jerusalem, Antioch and Corinth. Some believed and some did not. The purposes of God for Israel could not be worked out through individual believers. It had to be a national repentance. The promises could not be fulfilled to "some" that believed, for to Abraham and his *seed* were the promises made. God did not say "seeds" as of many, but "seed" designating a unit, or the nation as a whole. . Not only must the nation be a unit in their faith, but Christ must be among them before they can claim the promises. See Galatians 3 :16.

Paul's words in Acts 28 :26-27 did not impose blindness upon Israel. His words declared that their blindness had reached its climax. They had closed their own eyes, dulled their own ears, and hardened their own hearts. This brought upon them a divine pronouncement concerning their condition. Such blindness had descended upon Israel before, but never before had the nation closed its eyes to such light as was their portion in the Acts period. Their rejection of God's gracious ministry to them caused God to declare through Paul:

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.

In the Old Testament, Israel had rejected Jehovah, but this had not caused them to lose the favored place that God had given them. The Salvation of God remained with and among Israel. God always labored with them to bring them back to Himself.

In the Gospels they rejected the Lord Jesus, but even this great sin did not affect the position they held before God. Upon the Cross, the Lord prayed for their forgiveness. After His resurrection, He sent the Apostles to the same lost sheep of the house of Israel to whom the Father had sent Him. To these lost sheep the Apostles proclaimed:

Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away everyone of you from his iniquities. Acts 3 :25-26.

In the Acts period Israel rejected the testimony of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles. This was their most grievous sin. In the Gospels they rejected the Son but in the Acts period they rejected the Spirit. We have Scripture warrant for saying that this was a more grievous sin. See Matthew 12 :31-32.

Upon the final and decisive rejection of the testimony in Rome, a thing happened that had never been predicted, prophesied or suggested. The Salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles. Not once in all Scripture was there even a threat that such a thing would take place. They were warned of judgment, and they knew He might stop the flow so that no blessing came through the channel, but never did He threaten to take it from them and send it to the Gentiles.

At times in Israel's history, Jehovah had withdrawn from among them, but at no time was His Salvation turned toward the Gentiles. God held their privileges as a precious deposit until His punishment of them was over and He could restore His Salvation to them again. However, at Acts 28 :28, He not only took His Salvation from Israel; He sent it to the Gentiles.

As an illustration of this we might consider that most residential property is roughly divided into two parts called "front yard" and "back yard". In the summer if there is insufficient rain, it becomes necessary to sprinkle the lawn. This is usually done by means of a hose which is simply a channel for carrying the water to the point one desires to sprinkle. If it is directed toward the front yard, the lawn there will be green and flourish, but the back lawn will be drying up. To avoid this the channel is alternated so that both yards get a good soaking.

The distinction in the Word of God between Israel and the Gentiles is not a rough one. It is a sharp cleavage ordained by God Himself. For more than 2000 years there was a channel of God among Israel that caused her to flourish. At Acts 28:28 the channel was removed from Israel and sent to the Gentiles. And just as the truth that dominated the time between Genesis 12 and Acts 28:28 was "Jehovah among His people Israel," the truth that dominates the present time is "Christ among the Gentiles." This truth is found in Colossians 1 :27 even though it is obscured and almost lost by a faulty translation. In order to *fully* appreciate this truth we will need to examine Colossians 1 :24-27, the portion in which it is found.

Paul declares that he is able to find cause for rejoicing in his sufferings for them, inasmuch as he knows his suffering is related to making known the truth that Christ suffered to make possible. He had been made a dispenser of this truth in accord with the administration of God which had been given to him to give to them, in order to complete the Word of God. He states that this truth is the secret, which had been hid from all ages and generations but is now made manifest to His saints. To these saints God would make known the glorious wealth of this secret among the Gentiles which is: CHRIST AMONG YOU, the hope of glory.

The *King James Version* reads, "Christ in you". However, the word *you* is the dative plural and is the antecedent of "the Gentiles". The preposition *en* appears twice in this same sentence. First it is translated *among* and then *in*. When *en* is used with the plural, as it is here, it implies *among*, and should be so translated in both occurrences in this sentence.

This is the truth that had been hid in God. This is the Secret which is now manifest. Christ (the Salvation of God) is now with and among the Gentiles. This gives us the right to expect the glory. We who now believe will never have a subordinate place in Israel's kingdom. We will not be partakers of Israel's spiritual things. We will not be blessed with Abraham. Our expectation is glorious-it is the hope of the glory.

All this sums up into three great truths. When these are understood, the dispensational change at Acts 28 :28 is understood.

1. Jehovah, the Salvation of God, with and among Israel. Jeremiah 14 :8.
2. The Salvation of God sent to the Gentiles. Acts 28 :28.
3. Christ the Salvation of God, with and among the Gentiles. Colossians 1 :27.

When these truths are *fully* entered into, it cannot be questioned, it cannot be doubted-Acts 28:28 is a dispensational boundary line. As said before, it marks the most radical, the most revolutionary and the most far-reaching change in the Word of God.

From Genesis 12 to Acts 28 :28, every position, privilege authority and gift that the individual Israelite possessed was because the Salvation of God was among Israel. This included every position and privilege held by the believing Israelite of the Acts period. If Peter could heal by his shadow, if he could raise the dead at his command, if he could lay his hands on men and they receive the Holy Ghost, he could do so because the Salvation of God was with and among Israel. If this, the greatest of Israel's possessions is taken from them, then all else will go with it, except those things which are theirs as a result of their own personal faith. The power that is in a wire to light a lamp or produce a shock will come to an end the moment it is severed from the source of power. In a bank there may be such offices as president, secretary and cashier. However, if the bank fails these titles cease to have any meaning. The powers related to such offices automatically cease when the firm ceases to exist as a solvent institution.

In Matthew 16 :19 the Lord Jesus gave Peter the keys of the kingdom of the heavens and told him that whatever he bound or, loosed upon earth would be bound *or* loosed in heaven. This same power was given to the assembly of believers in Matthew 18:18. However, such an office and such powers were dependent upon the Salvation of God being with and among Israel. If this is taken from them, all such offices and powers will likewise come to an end.

The Apostle Paul was a Jewish believer. He held the great office of "the Apostle to the Gentiles". Before Acts 28 :28 he was a Jewish tributary carrying God's blessings from the main channel to the Gentiles. This great office and ministry came to an end at Acts 28 :28. After he pronounced the judgment upon Israel he remained two whole years in Rome, going to no one but receiving all who came to him. After these two years he received a new commission which sent him to dispense the truth of ~~the~~ Secret, but this was to all men alike. His message was now bitter to the believing Jew, but sweet to the believing Gentile.

The distinctions that exist between the Acts period and God's present administration are numerous. Let us consider some of these.

BEFORE(B) AND AFTER(A) ACTS 28 :28

1B. The Salvation of God was with and among Israel. Deut. 7:21, Jeremiah 14:8-9, Acts 13:32-33.

1A The Salvation of God is with and among the Gentiles. Acts 28:28, Col. 1:27

2B. The seed of Abraham were Ammi, or, God's people.

2A The seed of Abraham are Lo Ammi, or, not God's people

3B. There was a purpose hid in God, the truth of which no man knew. Eph.3:5.

3A The truth which had been hid in God is made manifest to his saints. Col. 1 :26.

4B. Paul declared nothing in his messages which was not in some way covered by the writings of Moses and the prophets. Acts 26 :22.

4A Paul declared transcendent truths which Moses and the prophets knew nothing about. Eph. 3:9

5B.. The proclamation of God's Word was always confirmed by the signs that followed. Mark 16:20, Hebrews 2:4, Romans 15:19.

5A The proclamation of God's Word has no confirmation except the declaration that God has spoken

6B. God's administration was not one of pure grace. Some of His acts were gracious, others were acts of justice, and some were punitive. Men died for their iniquity. Acts 5:1-11.

6A. God's administration is one of pure grace. All of His acts are gracious. None of them find their source in His justice, and all judgment against human sin is in abeyance. Eph. 3:2.

7B. The administration of God was not one of pure faith. Men were not shut up to the Word of God alone. Much depended upon sights, sounds and experiences.

7A. . God's administration is one of pure faith. We are shut up to the Word of God alone. Nothing depends upon sight, sound or experiences

8B. The gospel of the grace of God was being proclaimed. Romans 1 :16.

8A. The gospel of grace is a feature in the administration of grace. Eph. 3:6.

9B. The gospel was to the Jew first. The Jew had the priority on the opportunity for faith.. Acts 3 :26, 10:36,13:32-33,13:46, Romans 1:16.

9A. The gospel is -no longer to the Jew first. All priorities are abolished. The Gentiles are joint partakers of God's promises in the gospel. Eph. 3:6.

10B. There was an advantage in being a Jew, and circumcision was profitable.
Romans 3:1-2.

10A. There is no advantage in being a Jew, and there is no profit. circumcision.

11B. Paul circumcised Timothy. Acts 16:3.

11A. Paul counts circumcision as refuse. Phil. 3 :5-8.

12B. The Jew possessed the oracles or utterances of God. Romans 3 :2.

12A. We now possess oracles or utterances that are peculiarly our own, and all Scripture is open to us. Eph. 3:1-2, 2 Timothy_3:16.

13B. The great tribulation, the second coming and the kingdom were "at hand". They had not been postponed. Rom. 13:12, 16:20, I Cor. 7:29, Heb. 10:25, Jas. 5:7, 5:8, I Peter 4:7, I John 2:18.

13A. The tribulation, the second coming and the kingdom are no longer "at hand". They have been postponed and are in abeyance. They cannot take place until after the Salvation of God returns to Israel.

14B. Every covenant that God had made -with Abraham's seed was in operation. Some of the blessings that came to them were the result of God keeping a covenant. Acts 3:25-26, Acts 13:32-33.

14A. No covenant is in operation because the people to whom they were made have no standing before God. Gal. 3:16. Every blessing that comes to us is the result of God acting in grace

15.B The blessings that came to the Gentiles were related to God's desires and purpose for Israel. They were given to the Gentiles in order to provoke Israel to jealousy. Romans 11:11.

15A. The blessings that come to the Gentiles have no relationship to Israel. Our blessings are not the result of a work God is doing that has Israel in view. Our blessings will not provoke Israel to jealousy. They do not want our Savior.

16B. God was visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. Acts 15:14. This work was prophesied. Acts 15:15.

16A. God's present position with and among the Gentiles cannot be regarded as a visit. His present work among the Gentiles is not the subject of prophecy.

17B. The Church of God was the corporate testimony or witness to and for God upon the earth. When a man became related to God by faith, he automatically became a member of the Church of God. All the early epistles witness to this truth.

17A. There is no corporate testimony or witness to and for God upon the earth. Relationship to God has nothing to do with a man's relationship to any company of people upon the earth. God's unit today is the individual. Ephesians, Colossians and 2 Timothy witness to this truth.

18B. The churches on earth were the Church of God, and they had every right to act as such.

18A. The churches on earth are not the Church of God, in spite of all their claims that they are and their attempts to act as such

19B. There was an elect remnant of Israelites called "the Israel of God". A Jew believed and remained a Jew. God's purposes for Israel in the Acts period concerned only this remnant, and His purposes for the remnant were fulfilled. Romans 11:5, Gal. 6:16, Rom. 10:27-29.

19A. There is no elect remnant of Israelites. A Jew that believes does not remain a Jew in the sight of God. He is severed forever from all connection with Israel, but he gains a better portion.

20B. There were two distinct orders of believers. These were called "Jews that believe" and "Gentiles that believe". There were different rules of life and requirements for these two groups of believers.

Acts 21:20-25.

20A. No such distinction exists among God's saints today. God's rule for one is God's rule for all. What He requires of one, He requires of all.

21B. The full company of believers were not a joint-body. One member was not necessarily the equal of every other member. 1 Cor. 12:28.

21A. The full company of believers is a joint-body. Every saint is the peer of every other saint, even though all may not have the same realm of service in the life to come.

22B. The good olive tree, representing Israel in all that God had made her to be, was still standing. Some of the branches had been broken off and some wild olive branches had been grafted into it. Romans 11.

22A. The good olive tree is no longer standing. It fell when the Salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles. The stump remains in the earth. Israel as a nation has never perished. Some day that stump will begin to grow. But not until the Salvation of God returns to Israel.

23B. Paul justifies his Gentile ministry by setting forth that he was performing a priestly ministry in relationship to them. He offered the Gentiles to God and God accepted them. Rom. 15:16.

23A. Paul did no priestly work among the Gentiles in connection with dispensing the truth of the Secret.

24B. Paul was a prisoner in relationship to the hope of Israel. Acts 28 :20.

24A. Paul was a prisoner in relationship to the dispensation of the grace of God, the truth of which had been given him to give to the Gentiles. Eph. 3:1-2.

25B. The Gentile believers were guests at Israel's table. They were partakers of Israel's spiritual things and were in debt to them. Rom. 15:27.

25A. The Gentile believer is not a guest at Israel's table. He has blessings of his own by God's grace. Israel's possessions were not transferable, and we have blessings that are no part of those allotted solely to Israel. We are not in debt to Israel for any blessing we possess. We owe Israel just what we owe all men-a debt of love.

26B. Paul could heal by his word, a handkerchief or by his touch. The power to heal was always with him. Acts 19:12, 28:8-9.

26A. The power to heal is no longer with Paul. He advises Timothy to take wine for his stomach's sake and for his repeated infirmities. He is forced to abandon his traveling companion Trophimus at Miletum because he was sick. 1 Tim. 5:23. 2 Tim. 4:20.

27B. Men could go to Jerusalem and have their controversies settled authoritatively by men who spoke in harmony with the Holy Spirit. Acts 15 :2, 28.

27A. In times of controversy men can turn nowhere but to the Word of God. They may receive help from men taught in the Word, but the source must be the Word.

28B. There were men on earth and companies of men who had the God-given power to bind a thing on earth and it was bound in heaven, or to loose a thing on earth and have it loosed in heaven. Matt. 16:19, 18:19.

28A. No man on earth and no company of men on earth have any such power. This power was nullified when God's Salvation was taken from Israel.

29B The believing Israelites were denominated a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation. 1 Peter 2 :9. This fulfilled a promise God made to Israel. Exodus 19:5-6.

29A. Neither the individual believer nor any company of believers can rightfully claim to hold any such position today. We are not a chosen generation, we are not royal priests, we are not a holy nation.

30B. Paul advises the widows and the-unmarried not to marry. 1 Cor. 7:8.

30A. Paul advises the younger widows to marry. 1 Tim. 5:14.

31B. The believing Gentiles were blessed in Christ and with faithful Abraham.
Gal. 3 :9.

31A. The believer is blessed in and with Christ. Eph. 1:7, 2:6.

32B. The proof that men possessed the Holy Spirit was seen in their speaking in languages which they had never learned. Acts 2:11, 10:46, 19:6.

32A. The proof that we possess the Holy Spirit is based upon the revelation of this fact in the Word of God. Eph. 1:14-15, 2:22.

33B. Water baptism was an essential requirement along with faith for salvation. Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38.

33A. Water baptism is not essential to our forgiveness or redemption. Eph. 1:7. It has no place in an administration of pure grace that operates solely by faith

34B. Every major event that took place was the fulfillment of some prophecy. Acts 1:20, 2:16-21, 3:24, 13:47, 15:15, Rom. 1:2.

34A. Nothing that has happened since Acts 28 :28 has fulfilled any prophecy. Not even the destruction of Jerusalem at A. D. 70.

35B. Tongues, signs and visions were God's order for that day. 1 Cor. 14:18, Acts 10:3, 16:10.

35A. Tongues, signs and visions are not God's order for today. All who seek them are out of the will of God. All who claim to have experienced them have been deluded.

36B. Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians and Romans. All of these books get their character from the facts that they were written while Israel was still in the place of privilege and priority, before the kingdom was postponed, and while the Salvation of God was with and among Israel.

36A. Paul wrote 1 Timothy, Titus, Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon and 2 Timothy. All of these books get their character from the facts that Israel no longer held a place of privilege and priority, that the kingdom had been postponed, and that the Salvation of God is with and among the Gentiles. In these epistles there is a progressive unfolding of the truth that before Acts 28:28 had been a secret hid in God.

These thirty-six contrasts are only a few of the distinctions which must be made between God's administration before Acts 28:28 and the administration that followed it. The change in administration resulted from the Salvation of God being sent to the Gentiles. **The character of the administration while the Salvation of God is among the Gentiles is declared to be one of the grace of God.**

This dispensation or administration under which we live, the administration of the grace of God, had its beginning in an act of God, which if viewed from one standpoint was an act of judgment, but if viewed from another standpoint was an act of transcendent grace. The sentence of judicial blindness pronounced upon Israel in Acts 28 :25-27 was an act of judgment and cannot be considered gracious from any standpoint. But the words spoken in Acts 28 :28 told of an act of judgment upon Israel and an act of grace toward the Gentiles. Israel lost the Salvation of God and the Gentiles came into possession of it. Since that time through 1900 years of human history every act of God has been gracious, an act of love and favor to the undeserving. Nothing that has happened has ever caused Him to change in the least, to be anything else but gracious.

However, even though it has continued for 1900 years, the dispensation of the grace of God is neither permanent nor continuous. The time will yet come when God will decree its end. When this takes place the Salvation of God will be taken from the Gentiles and restored to long-suffering Israel. Thus this dispensation will end somewhat as it began. It will end in an act of judgment toward the Gentiles. They will lose the Salvation of God. It will be an act of grace toward Israel. The channel that carries the blessing of God will be with and among them again.

When the Salvation of God returns to Israel, the day of Gentile opportunity will be over, and Israel's new day of opportunity will begin. That work of the Spirit of God that has resulted in millions of Gentiles being brought to the place of faith in Jesus Christ, and into the marvelous blessings that faith in Jesus Christ brings, will be at an end. The Spirit's efforts and activities will be directed toward the seed of Abraham.

Apart from the work of God that convinces men of sin, quickens them to the Word, draws them to Christ and calls them to faith, no man would ever enter into relationship with God. This four-fold work of God in behalf of the sinner is called "seeking" in the New Testament. In other words God is seeking sinners, but this does not mean He is trying to locate lost people. The word *seeking* describes that work of God which is for the purpose of bringing men to the place where belief or faith is possible.

This gracious work of God is performed in vain upon millions of souls, for even after He has convicted, quickened, drawn and called, men refuse to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, millions have responded to this gracious work, resulting in

their deliverance from the power of darkness and being translated into the realm of the Son of His love.

For 1900 years the activity of God has centered in and among the Gentiles. The results are manifest. But this activity of God is not to be among the Gentiles forever. The time will yet come when the most intense activity upon the part of the Holy Spirit will be directed toward Israel. When this takes place the results will be amazing, even to the extent that one message will bring 3000 Jews to Christ as Peter's message did at Pentecost. At that time **Hosea 2 :14-15** will be literally fulfilled.

Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came out of the land of Egypt.

This prophecy has to do with a period of time that precedes the great tribulation, also with a time when the Salvation of God is again among Israel. God has declared that He will allure or persuade her, and even though He may lead her into the wilderness, that is, into separation from all other nations, yet He will speak directly to her heart. Then He will enrich her from this position, and even though she stands face-to-face with the great tribulation (the valley of Achor), she will know that this valley of trouble through which she must pass is in reality the door of hope, for just beyond it for her is all the promised glory of the kingdom.

The work that God will do among Israel after the Salvation of God returns to her will result in practically every Israelite upon earth becoming a professing Christian, that is, a Jew that believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. And while it is true that some of the professed followers of Christ will be false (See 2 Peter 2:1), nevertheless, the people of God in that day will be Jews that believe and not Gentiles that believe as it is today.

When the Salvation of God has returned to Israel, it will produce a great multitude of Jews that believe. Further, blessings upon these Jewish believers will result in the restoration of Israel to her own land, great prosperity in the land, an autonomous state and a rebuilt temple. Then, and not until then, will the stage be fully set for the acting out of that great drama revealed in Matthew 24. This culminates in the second-coming of Jesus Christ and the full establishment of the kingdom.

There is no direct statement in the Word of God that the Salvation of God will some day return to Israel and be with and among the descendants of Abraham again. All who seek for such a declaration will be disappointed. That the Salvation of God will return to Israel is known from the facts in the case and not from any direct statement in Scripture. These facts are: (1) The Salvation of God was with and among Israel before Acts 28 :28; (2) The Salvation of God was taken from Israel at Acts 28 :28 and was sent to the Gentiles; (3) The Salvation of God is now with and among the Gentiles; (4) The unfulfilled prophecies of Scripture set forth a time when the Salvation of God is with and among Israel again; (5) Therefore, it must return to them.

Prophecy takes up with Israel just where it left off with them. When prophecy concerning them begins to be fulfilled again they are in the land, the temple is standing on its ancient site, and a settled government is functioning. There is no direct statement in the Word that unbelieving Israel will return to the land, rebuild their temple or establish their government. Nevertheless, since these things are not true now, and since they are true in the future, it logically follows that they will return, rebuild their temple and establish an autonomous government.

Even so it is with the Salvation of God. When Israel's Biblical history closed at Acts 28 :28, the Salvation of God which had been among them, is seen being sent to the Gentiles. When their prewritten history (prophecy) is resumed, the Salvation of God is with and among them again and God is actively working in their behalf to bring them to faith. He draws them to Himself in fulfillment of Hosea 2 :14-15, and provides every blessing necessary to carry them through the great tribulation and bring them to the millennial kingdom. The kingdom is Israel's greatest blessing, and it will never be realized until the channel of blessing is with and among them again.

The Riches of the Glory of this Secret

In Colossians 1 :27 the Apostle Paul declares that God would make known to His saints "what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles". This is a very weak translation. Weymouth hints at the truth hidden by this weak rendering by making it "make known how vast a wealth of glory for the Gentile world is implied in this truth."

Israel's rejection of the crucified and risen Messiah reached its climax in Rome. The work that God did in the thirty-three years following the Cross was prophesied, and all of God's purposes in that work were fully accomplished. Paul sets this forth in Romans 9, 10 and 11 where he shows that God's purpose had to do only with a portion and covered only a remnant. He declares that God's purposes for and concerning the remnant were accomplished, then goes on to show that God's greater purpose for Israel embraced the nation as a whole. See Romans 11 :5 and 26. God had also visited the Gentiles and had taken from them a people for His name. This was also a prophesied work. See Acts 15 :15. Since a remnant had been saved and the full number of Gentiles in that calling had been blessed, the next step in God's prophetic program was to fulfill His purposes for the nation as a whole, then bless the world through that nation. But instead of proceeding with His prophesied program for Israel and the world, God did a thing never predicted or hinted in the Scripture. He sent His Salvation, His channel *of* blessing, His ownself in the person of Christ, to the Gentiles, bringing to us a vast wealth that is seldom realized and often despised.

The secret (mystery) in Colossians 1 :26 is the truth, "Christ among you Gentiles". God would now make known to His saints how vast a wealth of glory is contained in this truth—a truth which had been hid from ages and from generations but has now been revealed to His saints. This is **THE SECRET**, and all other truths revealed in Ephesians and Colossians were made possible because the Salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles and is now among us.

Has the reader ever contemplated the work of the Cross? Has he in some measure realized all that God accomplished in the death of Christ? Has the Spirit of God impressed upon his mind the great boon that God provided for men at Calvary? If so, then let him remember that this boon would never have reached us and the blessings provided for guilty men would never have been ours unless the Salvation of God had been sent to the Gentiles.

Just because there is a faucet in my kitchen I can obtain a refreshing drink in a matter of seconds. And just because the Salvation of God is among the Gentiles the man of faith can obtain any blessing needed. And if man has no faith, it will not be because of lack of opportunity, for the grace of God that brings blessing has appeared to all men.

Is the reader a redeemed, forgiven and justified man? Has he been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the realm of the Son of His love? If so, would he dare to say that these Blessings would have been his even if the Salvation of God had never been sent to the Gentiles? It will be rank unbelief if he does say so, for we need to realize that while these blessings were made possible by the Cross, they would not have been ours if the Salvation of God had not been sent to the Gentiles at Acts 28 :28. Man may vainly think that he would have had his spiritual wealth apart from it, but God would have him know that our wealth is contained in the great truth, "Christ among you Gentiles."

Has the reader ever considered the frightful iniquity that is dormant in the hearts of men, but which now and then stirs itself and results in some terrible crime? Has he ever considered what a holocaust it would be if all restraint were removed and the latent iniquity that is in men's hearts should manifest itself in a carnival of murder, rape and pillage? Does he realize that the Gentile world has been restrained in its iniquity and has changed little since Paul ascribed it in Romans 1 and 3? And, does he know that the reason why that while iniquity has ever sought to engulf the Gentile world but has not succeeded is because that at Acts 28 :28 the Salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles? As long as Christ is among the Gentiles, the saint can live with a measure of safety in this vile world.

Think, man, and consider it well ! We have an unrealized wealth of riches in the truth that the Salvation of God is among the Gentiles. May the Spirit of God lead us into a full appreciation of this wealth.

Is there at least one reader who will join me in making request unto God that He by His spirit will lead us into full knowledge of that which God desires to make known to us, the vast wealth of riches we have in the truth that God in the person of Christ is now with and among the Gentiles as the channel of blessing?

The End SS07

APPENDIX

The teachings set forth in this pamphlet have been presented to and considered by Bible study groups in Grand Rapids, Michigan; Chicago and Rockford, Illinois; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Los Angeles, California. This aided greatly in the developing, seasoning and testing of these studies. I know that my presentation of these truths is far from perfect, and I would remind all readers that flaws in my arguments do not indicate flaws in the truth. From experience, I know that certain questions are bound to arise, and some of these are dealt with in this appendix.

Note on Translation

The "neuter pronoun that appears in the last part of Acts 28 :28 ("**they will hear it**") has created a difficulty in the minds of many. They ask, "If the Salvation of God is a person, would he be referred to by the pronoun IT?" This difficulty vanishes when we look at the Greek. There is no pronoun in the original. It was supplied by the translators who may have felt that the passage spoke of a *thing* instead of a *person*. "They will hear," is the correct translation.

Others ask why the term "the Salvation of God" was used, instead of saying, "Christ is sent to the Gentiles." The term "the Salvation of God" was used because it expresses the exact truth the Spirit of God wished to reveal. It must be remembered that Jesus Christ is also the channel through which the judgments of God will some day descend upon the earth. God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained (Acts 17:31). By declaring that it was the Salvation of God that was sent to the Gentiles, God also revealed that it would be for blessing and not for judgment.

The phrase "the Salvation of God" is the translation of the Greek *to soterion tou Theou*. The word *of* is the sign of the genitive case, and here it denotes the genitive of apposition. In this construction the noun *Theou* (God) is set in apposition to the noun *soterion* (salvation). By this the noun *Salvation* is defined and explained by the noun *God*. Therefore, this would read literally: "Be it therefore known unto you that this Salvation, that is, God is sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear." This tells us emphatically what took place at Acts 28 :28. God in the person of Christ was sent to the Gentiles. This results in the great truth, "Christ among you Gentiles."

Israel's Blessings

It is a mistake to think that when God's channel was turned toward the Gentiles that it brought to them any blessings that were already promised to Israel. Since the channel is called "the Salvation of God" it must bring to us blessings and not judgments for the term "Salvation" has to do with that which is salutary or beneficial, but it will never bring us a one of Israel's blessings. Israel's blessings and promises are not transferable for when God made promises to Abraham, He confirmed these promises with an oath. Jesus Christ came as a minister of the circumcision to confirm the promises made to the fathers. The blessings that come to us through Christ are not the peculiar blessings that God promised to Abraham and his seed.

Salvation

There are numerous occurrences of the word *salvation* in the New Testament where it could not mean Christ. Philippians 1 :12 is an example of this. The Greek word for *save* is *sozo* and the word for *salvation* is *souria*. The words *save* and *salvation* would be excellent translations of these words if it were not for the fact that a theological meaning has been fastened upon them and this meaning intrudes and creates confusion each time they appear in our English versions. Both the Greek and the English words are flexible, getting their exact meaning from the context in which they are found. The verb can mean bless, deliver or preserve, and the noun can mean blessing, deliverance or preservation. In many occurrences the word *salvation* represents the blessings that come to us through the channel of Salvation. Thus the channel gives His name to that which comes through Him.

The modern theological meaning that has been fastened upon the words *sozo* and *soteria* does not properly represent these words. However, this is not the fault of the translators, for in old English the word *save* means bless, as well as deliver or preserve. This usage is still preserved in Britain's national anthem "God Save the King," which means "God Bless the King." If we would cease to fasten a theological meaning upon this word and seek its meaning from the context of each occurrence it would explain many difficult passages.

Take for example 1 Timothy 2 :15, "**Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing.**" How simple this becomes when we recognize that *saved* means *blessed* and read it, "**She shall be blessed in childbearing.**" Thousands of godly women can witness to the truth of this.

[Editor's Note - - this booklet, and the material contained, were generated by Mr. Sellers in the year 1947, so obviously do not contain his later light , although the applicability of his writing even over 50 years later is remarkable]

End SS07

