

The Word of Truth Ministry Presents Special Full Length Studies #SS21

This Do In Remembrance

[A Scriptural Examination of a Common Church Custom]

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[This work is dedicated to MILDRED - - Gracious lady and devoted wife, who has been my untiring helper for forty-one blessed years]

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THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE

CHAPTER *ONE* - - GOD HAS SPOKEN

Ever since the entrance of sin into the world the tendency of mankind has been away from God's truth. This accounts for the numerous exhortations in the Bible that urge men to be steadfast in the truth of God. With his "loins girt about with truth" the believer is encouraged to "stand" (Eph. 6:14). When giving consideration to the teachings of men, we must ever have in mind the exhortation :

To the law and *to* the testimony: if they speak not according *to* this word, it is because there is no light in them. Isa. 8 :20.

The most important fact in the universe is that God has spoken. The total believer in *Jesus* Christ insists that the record of what He has said is contained in the sixty-six books called the Bible. Since God has spoken, the supreme duty of all God-fearing men is to discover what He has said. But, alas, even professing Christian men are not doing this, so there is an ever-diminishing company of men who are instructed in the facts of the Word of God.

Many who handle the Bible are extremely careless in the use they make of it. If its statements will serve their purposes, they make use of them. If not, they feel free to ignore them. Thus they render God's truth dumb and inoperative. In relationship to many things they refuse to allow the Bible to give any testimony.

It is good to know that in the providence of God, lest the love of His truth should utterly perish from the hearts of men, He sees fit to do a gracious personal work upon the minds of many who believe in His Son, *Jesus Christ*. This is a generating work, done with the end in view that the truth revealed in His Word will become the supreme motivating factor in their lives. This is a gracious work in which God opens the eyes of men to see the importance and value of truth; in which He draws them to the truth by making manifest some of its glories; in which He quickens them to the truth by making known to them some of the truth of His Word. Thus He encourages men to take a stand for His truth, and He ever stands ready to provide strength and wisdom to those who respond to His call. All of this is done in secret, and if it is not told, it is known only to the one in whose life it has taken place.

As suggested before, this work is a gracious work, an act of love and favor to the undeserving. It is a work done for the believer. And if the one who is quickened to truth refuses to respond, that is his loss, not God's. There are others who will respond.

When a believer in Jesus Christ has responded to this gracious work, he has the conviction that it is a serious sin to be unfaithful or disloyal to the truth of God. Faithfulness to revealed truth becomes a part of his character. He will seek for the truth, even as some men seek for wealth. And he will be given truth to shape his thoughts, direct his work, and mold his life. Never again will he seek to conform to the commonly accepted religious thoughts and practices of this world. He will seek to be transformed by the renewing of his mind that he may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. He has made his choice, and he declares it in the words of Scripture, **"I have chosen the way of truth" (Psa. 119: 30)**. Unto God he says, **"I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me" (Psa. 119:93)**.

The one who has chosen the way of truth should face up to the fact that he will find little esteem among the religious men of this world. They expect, yes, they even demand conformity to their traditions, precepts, and practices. Any deviation from practices or precepts they have agreed upon is to them "an evident token of perdition." They measure themselves by one another and all others by themselves, thus setting their own standards of right and wrong, truth and error.

It is in times such as this that a believer's boast in the all-sufficiency of Christ will prove to have been true or false, For if this boast has been a true one, then in spite of all the temptations that would lead him to abandon the position that grace has led him to assume" he will not compromise and he will not temporize. To him, indifference to the truth would be indifference to the Lord Jesus Himself.

In all humility, boasting excluded, and giving glory alone to God, the writer of these lines claims to be a man in whose life God has done such a work. I claim as a definite experience with God that certain things took place in my life that caused the truth declared in God's Word to be the most important thing in the world. A gracious work upon God's part has caused me to realize the importance and value of truth in God's sight. To the best of my limited abilities I have sought to respond to this gracious work and call of God, In view of this it is utterly impossible for me to do anything in relationship to God just because well-meaning and sincere religious people believe that it should be done. They may bring a thousand arguments in favor of their practices or beliefs, and I will reply by asking just one question, "Is it the truth?" The one thing I want to know and the only thing I care about is whether it is based upon and harmonizes with the facts revealed in the Word of God.

In my own experience I have had to sit in judgment upon a practice that by tradition and custom was already firmly established in my life. My desire for truth led me to test by all that is revealed in Scripture the practice which men commonly call **"the Lord's Supper."** Men were making statements about the meaning and purpose of this that I felt to be out of harmony with anything said in the Bible. They were giving this ceremony a place and attributing to it a purpose that could belong only to the Lord Jesus Christ. [This is done by many. In an article in *The Differentiator* (Vol. 2D-No. 2), Alexander Thomson says: "May I make it clear that the Supper *is* evidently compensation to the Church of God, for the lack of the Lord's visible presence, 'until He come' " "Whatever we seem to lose by Christ's departure, that *is* made up to us by the Lord's Supper as a kind of equivalent," The error of this unfortunate statement *is* manifest in view of the Lord's statement in John 14: 16-18: "**And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because *it* seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you:**" Thus while Christ *is* not personally present, it *is* the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit whom we have as an equivalent, not some ceremony of bread and wine.]

I felt impelled to go to God's Word for the exact truth concerning this. The meaning, the purpose, the necessity, the time, the frequency of observance, and the proper title of this practice were things I wanted to establish by the Word of God. I went to God's Word to establish these facts, yes, to establish the necessity of the ceremony itself, for this had been challenged. But I came from the Word with the conviction that no ceremony involving the use of a piece of bread and a sip of wine is any part of God's purpose or plan for the present-day believer in Jesus Christ.

This was no simple decision to make, and the cost of making such a decision had to be kept in mind. Nevertheless, it was made by me twenty-nine years ago, and I

have had no relationship to this ceremony since that time.

My position on this matter has been severely criticized, as would be expected. In the years that have passed I have read almost everything written, both favorable and unfavorable. I have reconsidered the subject many times, always seeking to have an open mind. My decision in regard to this ceremony remains the same today. It is not for me.

I have written on this subject before, but all my former studies are out of print. Now, I write again to set forth my present understanding of all the factors involved. I write for the benefit of those who feel a vital relationship to God's truth, to those who have been quickened by Him to see the importance of truth in His sight. Those who care little for the truth and who have little love for God's Word will find little instruction in these pages.

CHAPTER TWO - - THIS DO

Among men, those who profess to be followers of the Lord Jesus Christ gather together at times varying from once each week to one each year for the purpose of eating a small piece of bread and taking a sip of wine as a religious observance. In so doing they claim they are fulfilling a divine requirement, and that they are doing what the Lord Jesus intended they should do when He said, **This do in remembrance of Me.**" They call this "the Lord's supper," and claim that it was instituted by Jesus as a memorial to Himself. This almost universal practice of partaking of bread and wine as a religious ceremony is one that has been handed down from generation to generation. Very few would dare to claim that their practice is the result *of* having diligently studied the facts declared in the Word of God. They pay no attention to the pronoun **"THIS"** in "this do in remembrance" and act as if it had neither antecedent nor context. Very little consideration is given to what the Lord was doing when He said, "This do in remembrance of Me."

There are some who make a show *of* great faithfulness by declaring, "The Lord *Jesus* said, 'This do in remembrance,' and that settles it for me. I take Him at His word and *obey* His commands."

It would be much easier to believe in the sincerity of those who make statements like this if we could see any evidence that they were trying to find what the Lord meant when He said, "This do." And it would also be easier if they did *not* constantly ignore many simple commands that Christ gave. For example, *Jesus* Christ said:

* **Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. Matt. 5 :42.**

* **Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. Matt. 10 :5.**

* **Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses. Matt. 10:9.**

* **Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the**

kingdom. Sell that ye have and give alms. Luke 12 :32, 33.

. Passages. such as these make it plain that *not* every command of the Lord while He was upon earth is instruction for the present day believer in Him. Every command of His including "This do in remembrance" must be considered in the light of time in which it was spoken, the people to whom it was spoken, and the context in which the command occurs. This requires a diligent kind of Bible study that few will ever do. As Myles Coverdale, in speaking of the study of the Bible, said over four hundred years ago: "*It shall greatly help ye to understand Scripture, if thou mark not only what is spoken or written, but of whom and to whom, with what words, at what time, where, to what intent with what circumstances, considering what goeth before and what followeth.*"

These are wise and weighty instructions. If they are followed out in regard to the command, "This do in remembrance," we will come to know that these words were spoken to a people who are not of the same calling as the present-day believer in Jesus Christ, and that they have reference to an institution that has nothing to do with our walk before God. In view of this I feel it is my duty to graciously urge every believer to examine his position and practice concerning this matter so that both might be brought into harmony with the truth of God. Certainly no harm can come from turning the searchlight of sacred Scripture upon anything which we believe or anything we do.

The words which form the title of this pamphlet are found in Luke's Gospel. The very heart of this commandment is found in the words, "**This do.**" And no honest student of God's Word can believe that the demonstrative pronoun *this* has no antecedent, has nothing to which it is related, and that anything we may do will fulfill this command if some bread and wine are used in the doing of it. This seems to be the attitude of the majority. Consequently we find professing Christians doing a hundred and one different things in as many different ways, and all of them feel they are fulfilling to the letter the command of Christ when He said, "**This do in remembrance of Me.**"

There are many who, ignoring the most obvious facts, would like to believe that there is unanimity in the understanding of this ritual among Protestants. They would also like to believe that there is some degree of uniformity in the mode of celebrating it. But there is no single subject in Christendom that has been more fruitful of controversy than this one. Fierce arguments have been carried on as to its meaning and the significance of the elements, whether it is a memorial or a sacrificial rite; as to the frequency of its observance, whether it should be weekly, monthly, semi-annually or annually; as to the elements to be used, whether it should be wine or unfermented grape juice; and whether the bread should be leavened or unleavened; as to the time of its observance, whether morning or evening; as to whether a common cup must be used or if individual cups are permissible-all these have been subjects of bitter

discussion. These still remain matters which none have been able to settle with any degree of unanimity by appealing to the Word of God. Thus in Christendom today we find the same condition that existed at one time in Israel: **"Every man did that which was right in his own eyes"** (Jud. 17:6).

Many Christians insist that these matters are not important, that it makes little difference what one does, how he does it, or when he does it just so he does something and his heart is right in the matter.

This is ever the refuge of those who worship in self will, who do what they do because of some human custom or tradition. But this is not a course that can be followed by the believer who has chosen the way of truth.

The obligation rests upon every believer to give diligent study in regard to what the Lord was doing when He said, "This do in remembrance of Me." The task of examining all that the Word of God reveals in regard to this matter is not an impossible one; no, not even a difficult one. There are four important passages which present all of God's truth upon this subject. These are:

Matthew 26:1-30 - - Mark 14:1-26 - - Luke 22 :1-30 -- I Corinthians 11 :23-34

I do not believe that John 6:48-58 has anything to do with this matter, but it will be considered in due course. Let us consider the first of these passages. The reader should have his own Bible open as the passages will not be quoted in their entirety.

CHAPTER THREE - - THE WITNESS OF MATTHEW

Matthew 26:1-30

1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, He said to His disciples,

2 Ye know that after two days is the feast of THE PASSOVER, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

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17 Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto Him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat THE PASSOVER?

18 And He said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep THE PASSOVER at thy house with My disciples.

19 And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready THE PASSOVER.

20 Now when the even was come, He sat down with the twelve.

21 And as they did eat, He said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me.

26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body.

27 And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

28 For this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.

30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. [The rendering of this portion by the King James translators is, for the greater part, quite acceptable. But if I were translating I would certainly say "the bread" in verse 26, and (*Covenant* in place of "testament" in verse 28].

When this portion is read with eyes that are open to the truth one fact that stands out is that it deals with an observance of Israel's Passover. It opens with the Lord reminding His disciples that after two days is the Passover, they ask Him where He would have them to prepare the Passover, He instructs them to say to a certain man that He will keep the Passover at his house, and finally we are told that the disciples made ready the Passover. Thus by a fourfold repetition, which would be a redundancy if it were not done for the sake of emphasis, the Spirit of God would impress upon the minds of all that this is the Passover. Yet His efforts seem to have been in vain, for there are indeed many who insist that this is not the Passover. Their reasons for this denial will be examined and refuted later. In the meantime let us go on to consider Mark's record of this same event.

CHAPTER FOUR - - THE WITNESS OF MARK

Mark 14:1-26

1 After two days was the feast of THE PASSOVER, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by craft, and put Him to death.

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12 And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed *THE PASSOVER*, His disciples said unto Him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat *THE PASSOVER*?

13 And He sendeth forth two of His disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water; follow him.

14 And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the good man of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat *THE PASSOVER* with *My* disciples?

15 And he will shew you a large upper room furnished and prepared; there make ready for us.

16 And His disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as He had said unto them: and they made ready *THE PASSOVER*.

17 And in the evening He cometh with the twelve.

.....

22 And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is *My* body.

23 And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them: and they all drank of it.

24 And He said unto them, This is *My* blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.

25 Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

26 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

The records *of* Matthew and Mark concerning this event are almost identical. However, in Mark there is a five-fold repetition *of* the fact that this is the Passover. This would be a still greater redundancy if it were not done for emphasis.

In these two gospels we have a report of certain things which took place at the last Passover observed by our Lord. We see Him giving His disciples first bread and then wine, doing what every master *of* a family would do at each observance *of* this ancient feast. While doing this He gave these two elements *of* the Passover a new significance, making them to be memorials of a new thing. But there is not a hint in the records of

Matthew and Mark that He was instituting a new ceremony that was to be perpetuated by them. The ceremony was an ancient one, the significance was new.

If a new ceremony were being instituted which was to be observed by all future followers of Jesus Christ, Matthew and Mark would not have failed to report that Jesus said, "This do in remembrance of Me." And yet they do not report it, leaving these words out as if they were of no great importance.

The omission of these words from any record would be tragic if the Lord Jesus were instituting a new ceremony. But if this is their ancient feast, something they had always observed and would go on to observe, then the words "this do" need not be included in a faithful record. All that is needed is to report the new meaning or significance that the Lord Jesus attached to these two elements.

Luke is the writer that gives the most complete report of what happened at the last Passover of our Lord.

CHAPTER FIVE - - THE WITNESS OF LUKE

Luke 22:1-30

1 Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the PASSOVER.

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7 Then came the day of unleavened bread when THE PASSOVER must be killed.

8 And He sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us THE PASSOVER, that we may eat.

9 And they said unto Him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?

10 And He said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.

11 And ye shall say unto the good man of the house. The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat THE PASSOVER with My disciples?

12 And he will shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.

13 And they went, and found as He had said unto them: and they made ready THE PASSOVER.

14 And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him.

15 And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat THIS PASSOVER with you before I suffer:

16 For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

17 And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:

18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

19 And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me.

20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you.

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.....

28 Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations.

29 And I appoint you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me;

30 That ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Moses declared and Paul confirmed it, that "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (Deu. 19:15, 2 Cor. 13: 1). This principle is fulfilled in these records, the witness of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. One may report more details than another, but they are unanimous in emphasizing that this is THE PASSOVER. We have already noticed Matthew's four-fold repetition of this term, followed by Mark's five-fold use of it. But Luke is even more emphatic, using the term six times, as if to settle the matter beyond all argument. He declares that it was the Passover which drew near, that the day came when the Passover must be killed, that the Lord sent James and John to prepare the Passover, that they were to inquire about a room where they could eat the Passover, that they did as He said and made ready the Passover, and finally, that when they were assembled, the Lord said to them, "With desire I have desired to eat THIS THE PASSOVER with you before I suffer: [The definite article is in the Greek, as anyone who can read the Greek alphabet may verify].

Yet in spite of all this, there are those who insist that this is not the Passover. They cannot tolerate this idea, for once they admit it, then the idea that this is a new institution is impossible.

The chief argument against this being the Passover is that the events recorded here took place on the thirteenth day of the month of Nisan, and that the Passover was to be observed on the fourteenth. This argument infers that the one thing that made the Passover was the day on which it was observed.

While the exact chronology of the Lord's last few days is difficult to establish, there seems to be no doubt but that the things set forth in the three records we have considered took place one day before the time set for the observance of the Passover in Israel. Numbers 9: 10 makes it plain that the date was not of supreme importance in connection with this ceremony. If a man were ceremonially unclean, or if he were away from Jerusalem on a journey, he was instructed to observe the Passover on the fourteenth day of the following month. If this were allowable because a man was on a journey, then no difficulty is created if He who was the Lord of the Passover should decree to observe it one day in advance because He would be journeying to the Cross.

The words of our Lord "**My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at thy house with My disciples,**" declare that while it was in advance of the fixed date, it was His time and He would observe it.

The other arguments such as "the Passover had to be eaten standing up, and they were seated," "that no one could go out of the door before morning, and they went out after they had finished" are the result of confusing the first Passover in Egypt with those that followed.

In reading the three records of this event, one cannot fail to be impressed with the important place that Israel's Passover has in these accounts. If truth is actually our goal, this should send us to the Old Testament for all the information we can find there concerning this ancient service.

CHAPTER SIX - - THE EGYPTIAN PASSOVER

It was on the night that God took Israel by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, that He established the Passover. This was several months before they came to Mount Sinai, so the Passover as originally given was separate from the law given to *Moses* there. This can best be designated as the Egyptian Passover, due *to* the fact that it was first celebrated there. However, it should be noted that it was "the Lord's Passover" *no* matter where it was celebrated. The details *of* this first Passover are recorded for our learning in *Exodus* 12. It is here we find the origin of this *ceremony*, one so full *of* meaning that Israel was required *to* re-enact it through all her generations.

After many contests with Pharaoh, the Lord told *Moses* he would bring yet one more plague upon the land of Egypt, that He would pass through the land and slay all the firstborn. This was a punishment so drastic that it would upset the entire social structure *of* that land for many years.

Then the Lord spoke *to Moses* and Aaron telling them that from that time on that month should be the beginning of months and mark the beginning *of* a new year. They were told *to* command the children *of* Israel:

Exodus 12:3 – 11

3 In the tenth day *of* this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house *of* their fathers, a lamb for a house:

4 And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number *of* the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.

5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male *of* the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats:

6 And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day *of* the same month: and the whole assembly *of* the congregation *of* Israel shall kill it in the evening.

7 And they shall take *of* the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post *of* the houses, wherein they shall eat it.

8. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it.

9 Eat not *of* it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof.

10 And ye shall let nothing *of* it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth *of* it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.

11 And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is THE LORD'S PASSOVER.

This was the Passover as originally given. And up *to* this point it seemed as if it were *to* be a thing done only once. But following this they were given explicit instructions for future observance of this ceremony as a memorial.

And this day shall be to you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. Exo. 12:14.

To this was added the feast of unleavened bread, a seven day observance which became an integral part of the Passover ceremony (Exo. 12:15-19).

Thus Passover became a memorial to be kept as a feast by a statute forever. And while there may be questions as to the meaning of the Hebrew word *olam* (translated "ever" here), yet it is plain that this feast was not to be observed only until such time as Christ should die upon the Cross. Ezekiel 45:21, when read in the light of its

context will show that Passover is to be observed after Israel's future restoration to their land under God's government. The command that Passover is to be observed forever is repeated in Exo. 12:17 and 24.

Statutes or laws that become old are apt to weaken and become inoperative. Future generations are inclined to forget or ignore them. God guarded against this by decreeing that Passover was to be a statute that flowed on from year to year, even as if it were a new law given annually.

If Israel had not failed God on their way from Egypt to Canaan they would have been in their new home before the time of the next Passover had come. Thus they were instructed:

And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as He has promised, that ye shall keep this service. Exo. 12:25.

This command is followed by a statement as to the meaning of the Passover ceremony.

And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. Exo. 12:26, 27.

It needs to be noted that to Israel the Passover did not point forward to the death of their Messiah. It pointed backward to their exodus from Egypt. Some will object to this for it has long been taught that this service was a shadow of the death of Christ, and that it was God's intent that when the substance was realized, the shadow would come to an end. However, this contradicts God's own explanation of the meaning of this celebration. He said it pointed back to their deliverance from Egypt, and that it was to be for ever.

When they were told the meaning of the Passover "**the people bowed the head and worshipped**" (Exo. 12:27). We too need to bow our wills, surrender our opinions, and believe God as to the meaning of this memorial.

CHAPTER SEVEN - - THE WILDERNESS PASSOVER

God's instruction to Israel was to keep the Passover in the new land. But by explicit command they were permitted to keep the Passover during their years of wandering in the wilderness. We read of this in the book of Numbers.

And the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, Let the children of Israel also keep the Passover at his appointed season. In the

fourteenth day of this month, at even, ye shall keep it in his appointed season: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall ye keep it. Numbers 9:1-3.

These "rites and ceremonies" are the things that accompanied the Passover, such as eating it with unleavened bread and bitters. This permission to sacrifice it in the wilderness was a temporary expedient. The final revelation and command as to where it should be observed is found in **Deuteronomy 16:1-7**. These words were spoken just before Israel crossed Jordan to go into the land of Canaan.

1 Observe the month of Abib, (Nisan) and keep the Passover unto the Lord thy God: for in the month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night.

2 Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the Passover unto the Lord thy God, of the flock and the herd, IN THE PLACE WHICH THE LORD SHALL CHOOSE TO PLACE HIS NAME THERE.

3 Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for thou earnest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life.

4 And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coast seven days; neither shall there be any thing of the flesh, which thou sacrificedst the first day at even, remain all night until the morning.

5 Thou mayest NOT SACRIFICE THE PASSOVER WITHIN ANY OF THY GATES, which the Lord thy God giveth thee: ..

6 But AT THE PLACE WHICH THE LORD THY GOD SHALL CHOOSE TO PLACE HIS NAME IN, there thou shalt sacrifice the Passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt.

7 And thou shalt roast and eat it in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose: and thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents.

These are instructions given while they were still in the wilderness as to its future observance. And when all passages are summed up we have the total of Biblical information as to what can be properly called the Jerusalem Passover.

CHAPTER EIGHT - - JERUSALEM PASSOVER

From all the passages we have considered we are able to discern how the Passover was finalized and centralized in Jerusalem. Its three essential elements were the roasted lamb, the unleavened bread, and the bitters. Together these made up what is

emphatically called "the Lord's Passover (Exo. 12:11, 27; Lev. 23:5; Num. 28: 16) . When these elements were used in this ceremony they became "holy to the Lord," and were hallowed in a peculiar way. If they were not entirely consumed, they had to be burned, not one particle was to remain until morning.

The Lamb

The reader will have noticed that not much is said about the lamb in any of these passages. Its significance was well understood, it was always a memorial of the blood that had sheltered them on that eventful night in Egypt. We are inclined to think of it as the *piece de resistance* of the Passover feast, but it was not. This feast was not a meal, it was not intended for nourishment or sustenance, and the unleavened bread and bitters were just as important to it as the lamb.

The Bitter Drink

The bitters are mentioned twice-in Exodus 12:8 and Numbers 9:11. There is no word for *herbs* in the original, a fact explicitly acknowledged by the *King James Version* translators who placed this word in italics in both references, but this obvious fact is ignored by most readers of this version. The word here is *merorim*, and it is found only three times in the Old Testament. It is a plural noun in every occurrence. It is not an adjective. It is in the third occurrence of this word that we find a *positive* clue as to its meaning.

He hath filled me with bitterness (*merorim*), he hath made me drunken with wormwood. Lam. 3:15.

The ancients prepared the *fruit* of the vine in many ways, but chiefly as sweet wine, sour wine, and bitter wine. The bitter wines were valued as tonics, appetizers, digestives, and, when strong enough, as anthelmintics. They were often prepared by steeping or macerating wormwood in either sweet or sour wine.

The passage quoted above from Lamentations is Hebrew poetry, and here we *find* Hebrew parallelism, that marvelous literary device for preserving God's revelation to mankind. By this device the meaning of a word is fixed by its synonym in a couplet. The form here is what is known as synonymous parallelism, and from this it is plain that **the "bitters" was bitter wine prepared by the incorporation of wormwood.**

This may be strange, but it must ever be kept in mind that the Lord's Passover was not intended to be a pleasant social meal, neither was it intended for nourishment or

sustenance. It was a symbolical ceremony. The only pleasant article of food was the roast lamb, but the taste of this was spoiled as each morsel was first dipped *into* the cup of bitters before it was placed in the mouth. This was intended to ever remind them of the bitterness of the Egyptian bondage when every morsel of *food* they ate came to them from the hardest work imaginable.

And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor: And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigor. Exo. 1 :13-14.

The Unleavened Bread

As to the meaning of the unleavened bread in the Passover service, the Word is quite explicit. It is called "the bread of affliction" in Deut. 16:3, but since this is followed at once by the explanatory statement "*for* thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste," it seems that this "affliction" is related to the pressure that forced them out.

And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. Exo. 12:34.

And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual. Exo. 12 :39.

Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the Lord. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters. And thou shalt show thy son in that day saying, THIS IS DONE because of that which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thy hand and before thine eyes, that the Lord's law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the Lord brought thee out of Egypt. Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year. Exo. 13:6-10.

As all the records related to the Passover are read one cannot escape the impression that the most prominent element in it was the unleavened bread.

The departure of Israel from the land of Egypt was accomplished in one night. It was not the emigration of a people from one land to another. It might better be called the extrusion of a people. We are told "the Egyptians were urgent upon the people that

they might send them out of the land in haste" (Exo. 12: 33) . But neither their desire to leave Egypt nor the pressure of the Egyptians could account for the accomplishment of this in one night. Exodus 12:37, 38 says there were 600,000 men beside children. It would be physically impossible even for a disciplined army that size to be moved in one night. The exodus was a divine miracle, and it was memorialized in the unleavened bread that was eaten with the paschal lamb and for the six days that followed. Let Israel never forget that it was God who brought them out!

It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out of the land of Egypt: this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations. Exo. 12 :42.

Thus we learn that in its virgin simplicity the Passover was an observance that consisted of a lamb, unleavened bread, and a bitter drink. By later instructions they were forbidden to sacrifice it in any city except the one where the Lord God placed His name, the city of Jerusalem.

Passover Corrupted

It is evident from the secular history of Israel that quite a few things were added to this simple ceremony, and even some changes were made. They substituted herbs for the bitter and unpleasant drink, and added other elements to the ritual. It is strange indeed, but there are many who believe that the place to go for truth about the Passover is to the Jews. This is entirely wrong. I would no more go to a Jew for information about the Lord's Passover than I would go to him for information about the Lord Jesus Christ. Even in the days of Christ the Jew had made void the Word of God by his traditions, and it is much worse 1900 years later. What the Jews are doing today has no resemblance to the Passover set forth in the Word of God. [All the information in the Old Testament concerning the Passover is found in Exodus 12:1-48, 13:6-9,34:25; Lev. 23:5; Num. 9:1-14, 28:16, 33:3; Deu. 16:1-8; Josh. 5:10-11; 2 Kgs 23:21-23, 2 Chron 30:1-18; 35:1-9; Ezra 6:19-20; Eze 45:21. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them:' Isa. 8:20]

CHAPTER NINE - - PASSOVER AND THE LORD JESUS

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law. Gal. 4:4.

Among the Jews it was customary for a boy to begin observance of the Passover at the age of twelve. The parents of Jesus observed this custom.

Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. Luke 2 :41, 42.

This was possible for them for they lived in Nazareth, about 65 miles from Jerusalem. If they had been among the dispersed in Thessalonica, Rome, or Corinth, their regular attendance at this feast might not have been possible.

This was the Lord's first Passover and there would be twenty more to follow before He came to that last one which is recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. As we have already seen, all preparations were made, and even though it is twenty-four hours in advance of the established date: "He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. And He said unto them, **With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer**" (Luke 22: 15) . The Greek says "this the Passover" (*touto to pascha*). Could the Spirit of God have been any more explicit in telling us what it is that they were doing? Could it be that He anticipated many would rise up and insist that this is not the Passover?

With great emphasis the Lord tells them that with great desire He has desired to eat this the Passover with them before He suffers. But most important of all He knows what He *is* going to do in regard to two important elements of this memorial. He *is* going to change their meaning and significance completely.

The Bread

As they were eating, the Lord took the bread. The definite article belongs here, even though many wish it were not. This is the unleavened bread of the Passover. To the words "He took ~~the~~ bread" are added "and exalting" (*kai eu/oges*). A word *is* needed here and probably "it" should be supplied. This means that He spoke favorable truth concerning this bread. We do not know what He said, but He probably spoke of its significance. Then He broke *it*, for such bread could not be cut. It would crumble under the knife, so *it* was broken. Then He distributed it to His disciples.

At this point, in harmony with the deeply ingrained teaching that had been theirs throughout their lifetimes, their thoughts turned to the miraculous deliverance of their forefathers from the land of Egypt, a deliverance that came so fast that the mothers in Israel had no *time* to leaven their dough. This is what this bread had memorialized for almost 1500 years. It was a significance which was so firmly fixed, that none would believe it could ever be changed.

But it is to be changed. Changed by the very One to whom it belonged. As He gave them the bread He said, "**Take, eat; this is My body,**" Matt. 26:26, Mark 14:22, Luke 22:19.

If the Lord here had been speaking of His physical body, that is, that this bread had been changed into *His* flesh, He would have omitted the word "is." Its presence in this statement signifies that this is a metaphor, and *it* should be understood as meaning, "**this represents My body,**"

Whatever this unleavened bread of the Passover had symbolized before, it can never have this meaning again to *His* disciples. From this day forth it must represent His body. No new ceremony is established. No new element is added. He gave one element of an ancient ceremony a significance which was more glorious and greater than it ever had before.

The revelation given in Luke adds "which is given for you" (Luke 22:19) to the words "this is My body." Many take this to be a reference to His death upon the Cross. But it was His **life** that He gave there, not His body. Furthermore, the breaking of bread cannot be the symbol of the killing of a human being. If it were used as such a symbol it would require an explicit statement of the one so using it that this was his intent.

Bread is the representative food in the Bible, and is the symbol of spiritual food. **He was the bread that came down from heaven, who gives life to the world. John 6:22-59** should be read to get the true picture of Christ as the bread of God. It is not Christ in His death, but Christ in His entirety.

The Lord Jesus not only gave the Passover bread a new significance, He made it to be a memorial of Himself. "This do in remembrance of Me", are His words as reported by Luke. As said before, the pronoun *this* has an antecedent, and the words *this do* have a context. These cannot be ignored. Under no circumstances can we agree that any thing one does will be acceptable, just so it is done religiously and with a measure of ceremony.

The Cup

Having declared the new significance of the Passover bread, the Lord Jesus took the cup. This is the well known cup, the cup that contained the bitter wine, the elements that had always turned their minds to recall the bitterness of the Egyptian bondage. This He gave to His disciples and declared, according to all three witnesses:

For this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." [There *is* reason to believe that up to this *time* they dipped *their* meat into this cup, and that here He took the cup and directed that they all drink of it. This may have been done due to the fact that in certain future celebrations of the Passover there would be no actual lamb]

Thus the Passover cup is given a new meaning. From this time forth it is to represent His blood of the new covenant.

That *diatheke* here means **covenant** and not "testament" most Bible students agree. The translators of the *King James Version* give witness to the correctness of

this by rendering this word by "covenant" in twenty of its thirty-three occurrences. **And the definite article here should be noted. It is "the new covenant."**

CHAPTER TEN - - THE NEW COVENANT

The first reference to the new covenant is found in **Jeremiah 31:31-34.**

31 Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord:

33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people.

34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

The ability of God should never be questioned. Yet it seems right to ask if God could possibly have made it plainer than He has here that the new covenant is related to "the house of Israel and the house of Judah" and that it is an agreement made with the united house of Israel. It is in no manner related to other people or other nations.

These verses speak of a past covenant that God made with the house of Israel in the day that He took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. This covenant was broken repeatedly by that generation and those that followed. This brought them under the curse of a broken covenant, and while they could never come under the blessings promised by this covenant, they were never relieved of its burdens. Thus they lived under the curse of a broken law, a law that could not bring righteousness.

In spite of all their unrighteousness, God made an irrevocable promise that the day would come when He would make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and in this covenant His laws would be written upon their hearts. Only the willfully blind can avoid the obvious truth that both of these covenants are related to the house of Israel.

In the New Testament the writer of Hebrews deals with these two covenants, showing how both of them had to be confirmed by the shedding of blood.

For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the covenant which God hath enjoined unto you. Heb. 9:19, 20.

And even as the old covenant was established by blood, so must also the new.

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause He is the mediator of the new covenant, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. Heb. 9:14, 15.

When Jesus Christ died upon the Cross, the new covenant was ratified. It became a fixed agreement between God and the house of Israel. If He does not fulfill it, He will be guilty of breaking His own agreement with that people. Since the blood of the new covenant has been shed, all that remains is for Him to fulfill what He promised to do. Among these promises is the great one that said He would bring them "out from the peoples, gather them out of the countries wherein they were scattered." Then, He declares, "I will bring you into the bond of the covenant" (Eze. 20: 33-37) .

The new covenant in its entirety is related to God's program for the people of Israel. It has no connection with the present-day believer in Jesus Christ. When Christ spoke of the cup representing His "blood of the new covenant", He was speaking of something which has application only to the people of Israel.

We who are the children of God today were never under the old covenant. We did not break it, and we were not guilty under it. To redeem those who were under the curse of a broken covenant was one purpose in the death of Christ. We do not find our forgiveness or our redemption in this aspect of His sacrificial work. This is a limited aspect, limited to those who came under the old covenant. Matthew and Mark make this plain when they report the Lord as having said "shed for many." The unlimited work of Christ is found in such statements as "Christ died for the ungodly" and "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Rom. 5:6-7. Let us quit posing as "children of the covenant", take our place as sinners and claim the Savior of sinners.

CHAPTER ELEVEN - - THE WITNESS OF PAUL

The testimony of Paul in regard to the subject under consideration is found in his first letter to the Corinthians. And if there is ever a time when we need to follow Myles Coverdale's advice to mark "not only what is spoken or written, but of whom and to whom", it is here, Very few indeed are willing to give any consideration to the position that these believers held in the sight of God. It is customary to deny of them many distinctive truths in order to make them the same as the present-day believer, then attribute to the present-day believer many things not true of us in order to make us the same as they were.

Paul's peculiar relationship to the Corinthians needs to be understood and

acknowledged, It was to this company that he boldly said:

If I be not an apostle (a commissioned one) unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of my apostleship (my commission to you) are ye in the Lord. 1 Cor. 9:1.

[The Greek word *apostellos* means a commissioned one, and the verb *apostello* means to commission with authority when used of men, and to authorize when used of animals or inanimate objects. It expresses the idea of a commission that can only be personally discharged. Nobody can commission one who is not at his disposal, so a commission of necessity always involves responsibility; the one who is commissioned is always the representative of the one who commissions him, and as such exercises his right. The word *apostello* should never be hardened into an office, for it speaks of a commission and authorization limited in time and concerned only with the business at hand, not with the person discharging it. It should not be regarded as an office with an indelible character, that is, once an apostle, always an apostle. A personal commission is the sole ground of apostleship]

Words such as these could not be spoken to those believers in Christ Jesus whom Paul addressed in the letter commonly, but erroneously, called Ephesians; or to those believers addressed in the one called Colossians. Paul knew of these people only by hearsay (Eph. 1:15, Col. 1:4, 2:1), and had had no personal contact with them. In both of these letters he writes as "an apostle (a commissioned one) of Christ Jesus", and indeed he was, but his commission had to do with the writing of these two epistles, and it is as one commissioned by Christ Jesus to write that he writes to them. But he is not "sent" to these people.

The background of the Corinthian believers is set forth in Acts 18. Paul's first contacts in this city were with "**a certain Jew named Aquila and his wife Priscilla,**" This came about because they were Jews, and also because they were of the same occupation - they were tentmakers. And even though their first association was for business reasons, Paul's employers soon became total believers in Jesus Christ and his most devoted friends. Following his usual custom, and in harmony with the divine principle "**to the Jew first**" (Rom. 1: 16), Paul went to the synagogue every sabbath day, engaging in discussions with the Jews and the Greeks seeking to persuade them. Luke does not bother to add that these Greeks were proselytes, for this is plain from the fact that they were with the Jews in the synagogue.

Paul's purpose in these discussions was to lay a firm foundation for an important proclamation he would make later. But when Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul brought the discussion to a climax, testifying "**to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ**" (18: 5). At this time the message was spoken only to the Jews. But when they opposed him and resorted to abusive language, Paul shook his garments at them saying, "**Your blood be upon your own heads! I am clean: from now on I shall go to the nations**" (18:6).

Thus Paul, Silas, and Timothy retired from the synagogue. They entered into the house of Titus Justus, a man who worshipped God, and whose house was next door to the synagogue, so they did not go very far. Their withdrawal did not end the work of God's Spirit, for we are told that Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house, and this was followed by many other Corinthians believing.

As to the national origins of these "many Corinthians" that believed, we are not told. They could be all Jews, all Gentiles, or a mixed group. We will settle this later by certain facts in the Corinthian epistle.

Later, Paul, in writing to the Corinthians concerning the early days of his work among them, confesses that he was with them **"in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling"** (I Cor. 2:3). In support of his servant, we are told:

Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. Acts 18 :9, 10.

These "many people" whom the Lord claims as His, have been the subject of much discussion. Many insist that this refers to "the elect." It is my opinion that it refers to many God-fearing men in Israel who would believe once the message that Jesus is the Christ is presented to them. Thus the Lord tells Paul to "speak, and hold not thy peace." This he did, and the result of his proclamation is a great company that believe in Jesus Christ, thus getting life through His name. This is the company to whom Paul writes, and their national origin can be settled by the epistle that bears their name. It is addressed to **"the outcalled of God which is in Corinth, hallowed in Christ Jesus, called saints"** (1 Cor. 1:2).

Strange as it may seem to us today, the Gentile believers in Corinth are completely overlooked in this epistle. This is necessary due to the privileges, advantages, and priorities that belonged to the Israel of God during the Acts period. In his later epistle to the Romans, Paul acknowledges the presence of Gentiles among those who believe, but this is only to call to their attention that they are subordinate to Israel, and to warn them of their own danger of unbelief (Rom. 11: 13- 25). Consider these facts.

1. The Corinthian believers to whom Paul writes were not lacking a single gift. Some of these are listed in chapter 12:8-10. These gifts were the full credentials of a divine commission to proclaim and present Christ to all others in Israel. Paul did not remain in Corinth, but through those who believed God continued to stretch forth His hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people (Rom. 10: 21). All ministry of proclamation to the Gentiles was performed by Paul, the one commissioned to them.

The Gentile believers were not commissioned to the other Gentiles. In the Acts period, this was solely the work of Paul. [From Pentecost onward the word was authorized to all Israelites and to all God fearing among them (proselytes). Paul declared this in Acts 13:26, "Men and brethren, sons of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation authorized" (*apostello*). Thus any Israelite who believed could take the message and proclaim it to any other Israelite. Peter, by a special commission, was sent to proclaim Christ to one God-fearing Gentile household (Acts 10). Paul was the only man commissioned to proclaim the message to Gentile sinners. He was God's commissioned one to the Gentiles (Rom. 11: 13). At Acts 28:28 the salvation-bringing message of God was authorized (made available, without restrictions) to the Gentiles. From the time of that pronouncement any man who believes the gospel can take it to others-yes, he is expected to do so]

The Gentiles to whom Peter spoke became a part of Israel, as was witnessed by their baptism by Peter, and these spoke in tongues (languages). But the converts of Paul were never incorporated into Israel. They remained a distinct group. This is seen in Paul's declaration, "**Christ commissioned (*apostello*) me, not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.**" (1 Cor. 1: 17). No Gentile, converted through Paul's ministry, possessed any of the miraculous gifts that credentialed them as God's heralds. These gifts were credentials of a commission, and Paul was the only one commissioned to the Gentiles.

2. In 1 Corinthians 5: 1, Paul states that there is fornication among them, "**and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles.**" This statement will defy all attempts of honest explanation if those addressed in this epistle are Gentiles.

3. Paul's language in 1 Cor. 9:13 shows that he is speaking to those who are entirely familiar with the things practiced in the temple of Jerusalem.

4. In 1 Corinthians 10:1, Paul addresses those to whom he writes as "brethren" and reminds them "**how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.**" 1 Cor. 10:1-4.

To the one who is willing to take God at His Word, no further proof is needed to show that the Corinthian believers, to whom this epistle was addressed, were Jews that believed.

Strong objections are anticipated in regard to this. Many will insist that 1 Cor. 12:2 changes the whole picture. And this would be true if the King James Version were true to the Greek here, but it is not. Translators have always approached this with

a preconception as to what the writers should have said, and they translate accordingly. It is crystal clear that the "brethren" in 12:1 have to be the same "brethren" as in 10: 1, and it is just as clear that the statement made in 10:1 cannot be made of those who were Gentiles. The correctness of the translation in 10: 1-4 cannot be questioned, but the correctness of 12:2 is open to serious question. The King James Version here reads:

Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. 1 Cor. 12 :2..

The Greek here, transliterated into English characters reads: *Oidate hoti hote ethnē ete pros ta eidola ta aphona hos an egesthe apagomenoi* (Nestle).

A literal word for word translation of this without punctuation would read: *You are aware that when nations ye were toward the idols the voiceless as ever ye were led being led away.*

The commentators have not been inclined to deal with this passage. They recognize no problem here, as they never consider it in view of the statements made in chapter 10:1-4. I will translate it later in this study, but first of all we need to familiarize ourselves with certain facts that have a bearing on this.

CHAPTER TWELVE - - THE ACTS PERIOD BELIEVERS

There is a statement in Acts 21 which should be fixed in the mind of every student of the Acts period. James and the elders in Jerusalem said to Paul:

Thou seest, brother, how many thousands (*muriades*) of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: and they are informed of thee that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. Acts 21: 20,21.

Two clear-cut designations should be noted here: "Jews which believe" and "Jews which are among the Gentiles." The Greek word *muriades* here means ten thousand, and since it is in the plural should read "**how many tens of thousands of Jews there are which believe.**" The believers addressed in Paul's letters to the Corinthians would qualify both as "Jews which believe" and "Jews among the Gentiles." No such statement as "tens of thousands of Gentiles which believe" could be made during the Acts period. It would not have been true. If anyone thinks otherwise, then he should be ready to produce Scripture in evidence.

We are guilty of closing our eyes to obvious truth when we fail to see the predominant number of Jewish believers throughout the thirty-three years of the Acts

period. From Pentecost (Acts 2) to the house of Cornelius (Acts 10), every believer was a Jew, either so born or a proselyte. When the believers in Judea were scattered abroad after the persecution that arose about Stephen, they went everywhere proclaiming the word, but to none save to the Jews only (Acts 8:4 and 11:19).

About eight years after Pentecost, Peter was commissioned to go to the house of one man, Cornelius (Acts 10). As a result of this, one Gentile household became believers in Christ Jesus. However, this was a household that was already God-fearing and devout, one which most certainly had some claim *upon* God. This was no Gentile idolater, thief, adulterer, drunkard, or extortioner. This was a devout man, a God-fearing man, one who gave much alms to the impoverished in Israel, and one who never prayed to anyone but God (Acts 10:2).

Peter's commission was in regard to this man, it included no others, and it was completed by Peter when He proclaimed Christ to this one household. This needs to be recognized, for the idea of God removing all barriers so that any man that is commissioned of God is now free to go to Gentiles anytime and anywhere in the Acts period is false.

Cornelius was not commissioned to carry the message and offer Christ as Savior to other Gentiles. Even though the Word was confirmed to them by a miraculous ability to speak in other languages, this was solely for confirmation and not for witnessing. This miracle also spoke to Peter, so this one believing Gentile household was merged and identified with the believers in Israel.

The next great step was the salvation of a Tarsian Jew named Saul, who after this is always known as Paul. This man ever remained a Jew that believed; however, he did become God's chosen vessel to carry the message of Christ to the Gentiles. And for the rest of the Acts period Paul was God's sole commissioned one to the nations. The heart of his gospel was always that Jesus is the Christ, but by revelation God gave him something in addition that made it possible for him to offer in his proclamation, forgiveness, redemption, and justification even to the vilest of men. Peter's proclamation of Christ was well suited to a Gentile such as Cornelius, but Paul's was suited to such Jews and Gentiles as portrayed in 1 Cor. 6:9-11. This made it possible for Paul to speak of "my gospel"

From the beginning of his ministry to his proclamation in Acts 28:28 Paul was the sole commissioned one to the Gentiles. If a Gentile heard the message which offered salvation through Jesus Christ, he had to hear it from Paul. Barnabas, Apollos, Timothy or Titus were helpers to God's apostle, but they could not proclaim the message to Gentiles. Apollos could water it, after Paul planted the seed, but Paul alone could plant the seed in a Gentile.

Thus, while there were myriads of believing Jews who could carry the salvation-bringing message to other Israelites, there was only one man to carry it to the nations (Gentiles). This man was Paul, and even his work was restricted due to the divine necessity laid upon him to proclaim the salvation-bringing message to the Jew first (Rom. 1:16, Acts 13:46).

In spite of all the traditions to the contrary, a very limited number of Gentiles became believers in Jesus Christ during the Acts period. We know the names of only three of them: Cornelius and his household, who heard the message from Peter, Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:7), and Titus (Gal. 2:3), both of whom heard the message from Paul. The picture of great myriads of Gentiles being saved during the Acts period is the product of wishful thinking and human imagination. It is not found anywhere in the Word of God.[This fact cannot be invalidated by an appeal to Romans 16:4 where the K.J.V. speaks of "churches of the Gentiles." These out-called of the Gentiles were individuals, not congregations, even as those "out-called ones" mentioned in Acts 9:31 and 16:5. It was individual out-called ones that were multiplied, not congregations. There has ever been among theologians an insistent determination to read into the Acts period great myriads of saved Gentiles, also the institutions; and even the buildings, that are today called churches. As Emil Brunner rightly says: "We may conclude that the thought of the Church as a mere means of salvation would never have occurred to Calvin, had he not read into the idea of the New Testament *Ecc/les*;^a the image of the institutional Church as it has historically developed." *The Misunderstanding of the Church*. Page 14.

The idea of Paul as God's sole messenger to the Gentiles during the Acts period will come as a surprise to many. But it is one that must be believed by all who face the facts declared in certain statements of Scripture.

1. Peter was the first man commissioned of God to herald the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 15:7). This was limited to Cornelius and his house (Acts 10:2.) No submissive and faithful man ever "fattens up" a commission. Peter did not extend his.

2. Just before this time God had declared to Ananias that Paul was an elect vessel to bear His name "**before the Gentiles, and kings, and the sons of Israel**" (Acts 9:15). Paul's first ministry was in the synagogues (Acts 9: 20), and his special service to the Gentiles did not begin until several years later. The first we read of it is in Acts 13:6-13.

3. In Jerusalem it was recognized that the gospel related to the uncircumcision had been committed to Paul, even as the gospel of the circumcision had been committed to Peter. Gal. 2:7-10. Both of these gospels centered in the fact that Jesus is the Christ, both proclaimed salvation by grace, both were based on faith (Acts 15:9, 11). However Paul's message held forth positive hope to "sinners of the Gentiles" which made it "his gospel." He alone could declare it.

4. In Romans 11:13, when Paul begins to speak to Gentile believers, he declares that inasmuch as he is the commissioned one to the Gentiles, he would magnify his

service. The definite article is not in the Greek as it is not always needed when there is only one of a kind. However, we can best express the truth by inserting it in English, but if any prefers, "**inasmuch as I am apostle to the Gentiles,**" I will defer to them. It all comes out the same. If others were commissioned, or if every Gentile believer was commissioned to go to other Gentiles, then his statement is sheer egotism. And if there were others, who were they and when were they commissioned? God's Word knows nothing of them.

5. In Romans 10: 14, 15 Paul sets forth that none can call until they have believed, and that none can believe until they have heard, and that none can hear without a herald. Then he asks the all important question: "**And how shall they herald except they be commissioned?**" (Rom. 10: 15)

There is only one answer to this question. In the Acts period, when Romans was written, no man could proclaim God's salvation - bringing message unless He were commissioned to do so. To attempt it would be to deny God and no results could come from it. Every believing Jew served under a general commission, always seeking first the will of God. Paul was the commissioned one to the nations, the only man in the Acts period who could proclaim Christ to them.

A People For His Name

All this was in harmony with God's declared purpose in the Acts period. God has not cast away or set aside His people (Rom 11 : 2) . A company in Israel was to be saved, tested and developed an elect company which was to serve Him in a special way when He governs the earth. This was a large company; however, compared to the nation as a whole, it was a remnant. As this purpose was being worked out, God visited the nations to take out of them a people for His name (Acts 15: 14). To this all the prophets give witness (Acts 15:15). This was not a large company, but it was an elect company, and they were also being developed to serve God in a special manner in the day when He would govern the earth and Christ should reign over the Gentiles (Rom. 15: 12). All this was to be accomplished in a very short time, as Paul declared in Romans 9:27, 28. **Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: For He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.**

Indeed it was a short work and it was done in a short time. It was accomplished and complete by the time that Paul completed that all day meeting in Rome, at the close of which he declared:

Let it be then known unto you that the salvation-bringing message of God has been authorized to the nations, and what is more, they will hear it. Acts 28:28 (Resultant Version).

After this pronouncement not one man was added to that elect remnant in Israel,

not one man was added to that special company of Gentiles taken out for His name. Paul's commission was ended. The one who had been sent to the Gentiles with a message now announces that the message is out of his hands. It has been authorized to the nations. And even though he is not to take it, he gives God's guarantee that they will hear it, that is, it will get to them.

Now, with these facts in mind, we will return to our consideration of 1 Corinthians 12:2. As this verse stands in the K.J.V. it flatly contradicts 1 Cor. 10:1-4. Furthermore it gives a picture of Gentiles being led into idolatry just because they were Gentiles, and for no other reason. As it stands it depreciates and disparages Gentile character - - something Paul would not do. It makes being a Gentile synonymous to being an idolaters. Many Gentiles were idolaters, and many were God-fearing, but this had no relationship to being Gentiles. And it should be noted that the "being led away to idols" was something that happened in the lifetime of those to whom Paul was speaking.

The solution here is found in the occurrence of the Greek word *pros* which immediately follows the word *ethne* (Gentiles). All translators ignore this important word, and this should not be done. This word means *toward* in the sense of movement toward. In fact there is good evidence that our prefix *pro* which comes from the Latin, in turn comes from the Greek *pros*, rather than from *pro* which means *before*. When we say that a man is pro-communist, we do not mean that he is a communist. If he were, we would drop *pro* and call him a communist. By using this prefix we speak of a man's leanings, sympathies, and his direction. In view of these facts I would translate **1 Cor. 12:2** as follows:

You are aware that when you were toward the nations (Gentiles), you were led away as impulse led you, to idols that could not speak.

It was always the tendency of the people of Israel to forsake their unique character and become like men of the nations. Again and again they were exhorted to maintain their separation, but they found it virtually impossible to maintain their national character, and the time came when even the will to resist conformity was gone. As they leaned more and more toward the Gentiles they found they were leaning more and more to idols, yes, dumb idols. Many who wanted to conform to the people among whom they lived, did not want to give up their God, but this was impossible. Every movement toward the nations was a movement away from God. This is what Paul speaks of in 1 Cor. 12:2, and it was one of the things from which they had been redeemed.

I have given much emphasis to the character of the Acts period, for it is only as we understand this that we are able to comprehend the message of the Corinthian epistle. Now we can see a more complete picture.

About the year 54 A.D. there was a large company of Jews living in Corinth. They were not there by choice, but out of necessity, due to the subjugation and dispersion of the greater part of their nation. They were never entirely welcome in Corinth, but they were tolerated. Their number had recently been swelled due to a decree issued by Claudius that all Jews should leave Rome. Those who were born in Corinth were granted a second-class sort of citizenship. This laid upon them the burdens of full responsibility to the government without enjoying its full privileges. This isolation forced them together in a tight community that centered in the synagogue. It was a great tragedy if any Jew became ostracized from this community. Together they could stay afloat, but alone they could only sink. Some of the immorality that was so prevalent and commonly accepted in Corinth had seeped in among them. Nevertheless, God was always a little sanctuary to them, as He had promised (Eze. 11: 16) . Many of them were faithful to God. They sought to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, but there were some ordinances they could not keep, due to the fact that these could be observed only in Jerusalem. One of these was the Lord's Passover, Israel's greatest and most important ceremonial. The paschal lamb could not be slain outside of Jerusalem. So when the time for the Passover came, all they could do was gather together, read the Word of God, and reflect upon the then present condition of Israel. And as tears streamed from their eyes they probably said what the Jews still say today, "Next year, in Jerusalem!"

This was the situation into which Paul came, and in which he became an active participant. As a former member of the Sanhedrin, as one well-educated and widely traveled, he was given a prominent place. But before many weeks had passed a sharp issue was injected into this Jewish community that demanded the taking of sides. The issue was Paul's declaration that their long awaited and expected Messiah (Christ) had come and that the man Jesus, the one crucified in Jerusalem is the Messiah (Christ). [Whatever the descriptive title *Christ* means, that *is* what *Messiah* means, and whatever *Messiah* means, that *is* what *Christ* means. There is no balance that can detect any difference in the value, weight, or meaning of these two terms. One *is* from the Hebrew and the other is from the Greek, and they are exact equivalents. This is settled for us by the Spirit of God in John 1:41. See the writer's booklet on *This I Believe, That Jesus Is the Christ*]

The outcome of this proclamation was a favorable reception on the part of some and a violent rejection on the part of others. This divided the community between Jews who fervently believed that Jesus is the Christ and Jews who strenuously rejected this truth. However, those who believed remained Jews in every meaning of the term. As Sir Robert Anderson has well said:

The divine religion of Judaism in every part of it, both in spirit and the letter,

pointed to the coming of a promised Messiah: and to maintain that a man ceased to be a Jew because he cherished that hope, and accepted the Messiah when He came-this is a position absolutely grotesque in its absurdity. *The Silence of God*, page 85.

To this company of Jews that believed, a number of Gentile believers were added. Their position in relationship to "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16) is set forth by Paul in his Roman epistle. They are described as wild olive branches graft into a good olive tree, so that along with believing Israel they were partaking "of the root and fatness of the olive tree" (Rom. 11: 17). They were warned against any feeling of equality with the natural branches, and were reminded that they did not bear the root but that the root bore them (11 : 18) . In the same letter Paul insists that the advantage of the Jew is great from every standpoint (Rom. 3: 1, 2) and declares that since the Gentiles had been made partakers of Israel's spiritual things, it was their duty to minister to them in carnal things (Rom. 15:27) .

The position of believing Gentiles in the Acts period was one of inferiority. Yet it is to their credit that they accepted this subordinate status, knowing well the great reward it would bring to them in a future day. They were acting in harmony with the truth expressed by Peter:

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time. I Peter 5 :6.

It was to this company of believing Jews, along with its complement of believing Gentiles, that Paul ministered for eighteen months as God's commissioned one to them. And what a ministry! He was God's spokesman. Every word officially spoken by him was the inspired Word of God. Every question they asked that was worthy of an answer brought forth a divine revelation on the matter. If we today knew all that he said in those eighteen months, we could much better understand his epistles to them. He speaks of the traditions he delivered unto them, and praises them for keeping them, and yet we do not know just what things he delivered to them. But one thing we can be sure of, since he reviews it in his epistle, he delivered to them an observance of the Passover which they could keep in the city of Corinth.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN - - THE CORINTHIAN PASSOVER

We do not know all that Paul said about this in his personal ministry, but we can be sure that every aspect was considered. However, a Passover outside of Jerusalem was such a radical departure that doubt still lingered in the minds of some after Paul had moved on. A Passover without the slain lamb probably seemed like an absurdity. In dealing with another matter Paul takes the opportunity to reiterate his teaching concerning this. Boldly he says:

For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast. 1 Cor. 5 :7-8.

This is one of the things he had delivered to them, and in regard to it we do not have a complete revelation. This need not trouble us, since this was something delivered to a company of Jews that believed during the Acts period. However, Paul does give more information, for he reviews in succinct form what he had delivered to them concerning this. His restatement of the truth concerning the Passover is found in chapter eleven. He begins by saying:

Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the traditions¹ as I delivered them unto you. 1 Cor. 11 :2.

One tradition had to do with the Jewish custom in regard to covering the head. Paul had evidently indicated that men in times of public worship should pray with heads uncovered, and that women should be covered. This was the traditional practice in Israel, but it seems that a conflict had arisen between traditional Jewish custom and Greek custom. Some seem to have been questioning as to why it should be this way. Why should they as followers of Christ adhere to this tradition? Paul answers this by an appeal to the original order of creation.

But even though Paul did praise them for keeping the traditions he had delivered to them, there was another matter in which he could not praise them.

Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. 1 Cor. 11: 17.

In examining any portion of Scripture the first question which the student should ask is, "What is the subject?" Far too much theology is based upon injecting subjects into portions which are not there. [A classic example of this is making alcoholic beverages to be the subject of Colossians 2:21, where it says "Touch not, taste not, handle not". This *is* amusing, but far more serious is the error that makes present-day believers to be the subject of Eph. 3:6, when *it* could not be plainer that the subject *is* "the nations:"]

The subject of 1 Cor. 11: 17-34 is their gathering together. This is expressed by the Greek word *sunerchomai* which *is* found in this portion in verse 17 "come together"; verse 18 "come together"; verse 20 "come together"; verse 33 "come together"; and verse 34 "come together." There can be no doubt but that this *is* the subject of this portion, and that the five fold repetition ties this portion together as a unit. It is evident that Paul had spoken concerning the value, the necessity, and helpfulness of gathering together. And even though such assemblies created opposition from the outsider, nevertheless, we can be sure they were urged "not to forsake the assembling" of themselves together (Heb. 10: 25). However, all such assemblies take on a degree of complexity, since preparations must be made for the physical needs of those who gather, especially those who come from a distance. In the early fervor of their Christian life they determined to make these gatherings a time

when their poor brethren could have at least one solid and satisfying meal. So the rich brought of their abundance and the poor brought of their poverty, and everything brought was surrendered to the Lord for the benefit and joy of all His people. No man claimed anything as his own. It was indeed "a Lord's supper." Paul probably participated in many of these dinners in his eighteen months with them.

After Paul's departure divisions arose. Class distinction between the "haves" and the "have nots" appeared. Faithful men brought reports of this to Paul, and he deals with *it* boldly.

17 Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.

18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.

19 For there must also be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.[This should read "a Lord's supper:" There is no definite article in the Greek. The word "Lord" is an adjective for which there is no fitting English equivalent. The word for supper is *deipnon*, which always means the main meal of the day. It could be more accurately rendered *dinner*. The term "Lord's supper" is never used of that which the Lord did on the night in which he was betrayed, or of that which Paul delivered to the Corinthians. It is wrong to wrest this term from its context and apply it to the ceremonies now performed in the churches.]

21 For in eating everyone taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

22 What? have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.

The nature of this dinner that they called "a Lord's dinner" and which Paul said was not "a Lord's dinner," can be seen from these passages. This common meal, this love feast, could have been a Lord's dinner, in fact, it had been that at first, but with every rich man holding control of the food he had contributed it was not a "Lord's dinner," as Paul plainly states. And even though it had become a fixed custom, it was not anything that Paul had delivered to them. The only thing he had delivered to them was a Passover ceremony that could be observed in Corinth. He summarizes and repeats exactly what he had delivered to them, since this common meal had become linked up with their annual passover observance.

For I have received of the Lord that which I delivered unto you.(1 Cor. 11:23).

There is no reason to speak here of a "special revelation," as so many do. The word *special* implies being out of the ordinary, or being conspicuously unusual. The revelation of the Lord to Paul concerning this matter was not special. It was in harmony with all other revelations of truth given to him.

That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread. (11 :23).

This takes us back to the night of the Lord's last Passover, and sends the diligent student to Matthew 26, Mark 14, and Luke 22 to find what happened there. Paul does not give all the details here since he is only reviewing and summarizing what he had already taught them in detail. The bread He took was the unleavened bread of the Passover.

And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me (11:24).

The word *klomenon* (broken) should not be in this verse. The weight of evidence *is* against *it* when all Greek texts are considered. The correct reading *is*, "**This is My body which is for you.**" Our Lord broke the Passover bread only for the purpose of distribution. No symbolism was intended in this act. The breaking of bread *is* an act upon an inanimate thing, and men do great wrong when they make this act to symbolize the death of Christ. Such a symbol would be contrary to God's declared word: "A bone of Him shall not be broken." John 19:36.

Paul briefly tells what the Lord did and reports what He said. Thus the evidence mounts up that the words "this do *in* remembrance of Me" give a new meaning to one element of the Passover memorial.

After the same manner also, He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me (11 :25).

The definite phrase "the cup" and "this cup" can mean only the one used in the Passover celebration. This was the cup that contained the bitter drink. What else could it refer to? There were no other cups related to the Passover save this one. When men speak of "four cups" in connection with the Passover they are speaking about a corrupt Passover, with its many human additions. The true Passover was a simple ceremonial, not the ostentatious thing which it was later made to be. I leave it to the reader to judge what kind of Passover the Lord observed with His disciples on the night of his betrayal. Would anyone care to suggest that when Peter and John made the preparations for that Passover that they, on their own initiative, included something extra like sweet wine, grape juice, raisin tea, or grape syrup? There are some who seem to think so.

In harmony with Matthew, Mark and Luke, Paul includes the statement "My blood of the new covenant." The definite article precedes the words "new covenant."

This cannot be any other covenant than the one God promised that He would make with the reunited house of Judah and house of Israel. The present-day believer in Jesus Christ has no connection with this covenant. We are non-covenant people. The covenants belong to Israel (Rom. 9:4).

The words "as oft as ye drink it" are taken by many as giving complete freedom in regard to the frequency of observance. But this is not so. "As oft as ye drink it" has reference to the Passover which would be observed once each year on the fourteenth day of Nisan. On this day when they drank of the Passover cup, they were to do it as a memorial to Him, particularly in reference to the fact that the blood that was necessary to the new covenant had been shed. To this Paul adds:

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup ye do shew the Lord's death till He come (11:26).

Once each year would be as often as they would do it. And it should be noted once again that it is "this bread" and "this cup." The Greek is even stronger reading "this the bread" and "this the cup." These elements were parts of "the Lord's Passover" and they were hallowed by being elements of this memorial.

The word for "shew" here is *katangelo*. This word appears 17 times in the New Testament and is translated *preach* 10, *shew* 3, *declare* 2, *teach* 1, and *speak of* 1 time. It means to announce, in the sense of calling something to public attention. There are those who insist that there cannot be any such announcement in the mere act of eating a crumb of bread and taking a sip of wine, and that there should be a proclamation by some speaker each time this ceremony is observed. They hold that it is as if Paul had said "when you eat this bread and drink this cup you should announce the Lord's death." The Greek does not bear this out, for the announcement of the Lord's death was based upon what they did, not in what was said.

One can well imagine the surprise and astonishment that resulted when the word got around that the Jews in Corinth who believed in Christ were going to observe the Passover. This had not been done before, and to many outsiders it must have seemed like a direct flaunting of the law of God. **"Thou mayest not sacrifice the Passover within any of thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee: But at the place where the Lord thy God shall choose to place His name in, there shalt thou sacrifice the Passover."** This was His clear word to them.

When the day came they observed the Passover, but the paschal lamb was omitted. It seemed as if they had forgotten the most important element. But this omission was deliberate and for a purpose. By omitting the lamb and eating the Passover Bread and drinking the Passover cup they pointed to another Lamb, even the Lamb of God, and so they announced the death of the Lord. Thus by their act they virtually shouted "We have a Lamb. Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us, and with Him as our

paschal lamb we keep this feast!" Paul did not state the negative side, but the announcement of the Lord's death was based just as much on the omission of the lamb as it was on eating the bread and drinking the cup.

Till He Come

There has been much twisting of this passage to make it say "Do this till I come," then follow it up with the argument that since He has not yet come, we are to keep on doing it. Those who use this device always put great emphasis on "Do it" or "Do this." They are given to the use of pronouns that have no antecedents. In view of this we have the right to demand of them "Do What?" And if the answer is, have a meeting, let the minister play the part of Christ, pass around *some* bread and wine, dignify it with prayer, music, and much solemnity-we reject this as being utterly childish.

Why is it that such great emphasis is put on how long it is to be done, with no consideration given as to what was to be done? Did Paul say, "Do what you think best, what you do is not important, but be sure and do it till He comes" ? He said no such thing.

The next statement demonstrates the very special and hallowed nature of the bread and cup of which Paul spoke.

Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 1 Cor. 11 :27-29.

The demonstrative pronouns are prominent in this passage. It is "this bread" and "this cup of the Lord." Other bread and other cups may be partaken with impunity, but not that bread or that cup that belonged to the Passover that Paul delivered to the believing Jews in the Acts period. This was just as much "the Lord's Passover" as any had ever been, and the elements were holy unto Him from the moment they were dedicated to this memorial. Partaking of these in an unworthy manner could result in great guilt being charged to the one so doing, a guilt so great that it is described as being "liable for the body and blood of the Lord." This was no "church ceremony." This was the Lord's Passover.

They were charged to examine themselves before eating, and as those in the clear they were to eat of that bread and drink of that cup. If they ate or drank when personally unworthy, they ate and drank adverse judgment (condemnation) to themselves. They failed to discern the Lord's body.

The meaning of some *of* these statements are hard for us to understand today. But they were all crystal clear to the Corinthians. We can be sure that in the eighteen months that Paul was among them he explained every detail. All we have is a brief resume of what he taught; therefore, it is not intelligible to us in many details.

It is entirely possible for us to understand, believe, appreciate, and appropriate truth about *Jesus* Christ which was spoken to those of other callings. He is ours as well as theirs. But it is *often* impossible for us to fully understand ceremonies and precepts which were given to other people, but which were not intended for us. We lack the divinely inspired spoken ministry which originally presented these to them. Later presentations are without this context.

In view of this let no *one* say that if I say the ceremony of 1 Corinthians 11 is not for me that I cannot lay hold of the blessed truth of 1 Corinthians 1: 26-31. Furthermore, I do not think I have ever met a believer who insisted the declaration in **1 Cor. 7:23** is for our calling. "**Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.**"

Some of the Corinthian believers were experiencing the punishment that came from eating and drinking unworthily.

For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 1 Cor. 11:30.

This is not hard to understand. By means of a divine ceremony, the Corinthian believers were acknowledging and announcing that the blood *of* the new covenant had been shed. Thus they were identifying themselves with this covenant, laying claim to all its benefits and blessings in that day when it would be a reality.

Some of the blessings under this new covenant had already been realized by them. They knew the Lord (Jer. 31: 34 and 1 Cor. 12: 3) . Their iniquity had been forgiven (Jer. 31:34 and 1 Cor. 6:11). The law had been written on their hearts (Jer. 31:33 and 2 Cor. 3: 3) . Of course all this was only in part as Paul specifically declares (1 Cor. 13:9), but they were in possession of some of the blessings promised under this covenant.

However, the new covenant did not consist entirely of promised blessings. In it was a promise of punishment for sin.

In those days they shall say no more, the fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge. Jer. 31 :29-30.

The believers in Corinth could not pick and choose in regard to the items of the new covenant. They were enjoying its blessings and they were experiencing its punishments. The covenants belong to Israel (Rom. 9:4), both the blessings and the punishments.

Paul has a final word which sheds light on the character of the gatherings in Corinth.

Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto

condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come. 1 Cor. 11 :34.

Having examined every word in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Corinthians in regard to this, only one conclusion is possible. On every hand today we see services that claim to be fulfillments of the Lord's command "This do in remembrance of Me." These services differ all the way from the ornate Mass to the simple ceremony of a Brethren assembly. But there is one thing they have in common. Not one of them can be found in the Word of God. All they find is something like it. The Catholic finds something a little like his Mass there, and the Protestant finds something like his "Lord's Supper," but it is not actually there. All that is found there is Israel's Passover. With this ceremony we have nothing to do.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN - - THE BREAKING OF BREAD

Whenever there is a shortage of definite Scriptural proof for a traditional practice, the ones who are involved in it will often be found ransacking the Bible for material they can use to buttress their theories. We find this being done by those who need support for their pale imitations of the Corinthian Passover. Some of these know enough about dispensational truth *to* realize that the present day believer should not become involved in any of Israel's ceremonies. Yet this is what happens when they turn *to* the records of the Lord's last Passover *to* find support for their practice. I remember the case of one minister, a leading dispensationalist, who wanted *to* divorce his practice from all connection with the Passover and also the new covenant. He turned *to* the Old Testament and found the record where Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine which he gave to Abraham (Gen. 14:18). From this he made Melchizedek to be a type of Christ and Abram (before his circumcision and change of name) to be a type of the present day believer, and from this he laid a whole new foundation for his service of bread and wine.

There are others who make an attempt *to* read their bread and wine ceremony into the term "the breaking of bread:" This is of great value to those who insist on a weekly observance, since they read in **Acts 20:7:**

And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech till midnight.

This *to* them is sufficient *to* indicate that a bread and wine ceremonial should be carried on each week..??

In the Scripture "to break bread" means *to* partake of food, and it is used of eating as one does in a meal. The figure comes from the fact that among the Hebrews bread was made in round flat cakes. These were always broken and not cut.

On the day of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, two of His disciples were on the way *to* Emmaus, and He joined them and walked with them as a stranger unrecognized. Arriving at the village late in the day they constrained Him *to* spend the night with them.

And it came to pass as He sat at meat with them, He took bread and blessed it, and brake, and gave it unto them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him, and He vanished out of their sight. Luke 24:30, 31.

When they reported this *to* the other disciples, they told "**how He was known of them in breaking of bread**" (Luke 24:35). Since He was the guest and not the host it was contrary to custom for Him *to* break the bread and give it to others. Somehow this departure from custom on His part caused them to see at once that this was their Lord. Imagination has led many to say that this is what they call "the Lord's Supper." A strange one indeed-broken off in the very first part and never completed.

In Acts 2:42 we read of "breaking of bread" and many imagine this to be their ceremony of bread and wine, but it is not. Eating of a common meal among Hebrews was an act of great significance. To eat together showed close relationship and common interest. The twelve had always eaten together, and now the 3,120 do the same. This announced to all their love and devotion to one another. And while the spacious houses (*oikos*) of the temple provided ample room for their assemblies, none of these halls would provide room for 3,120 to eat at one time. Yet if they split up in companies they were announcing divisions among them.. They avoided this by a constant mixing and intermingling as they partook of their main meal. Thus they broke their bread from "house to house" (Acts 2:46). The Roman Catholic Church insists the sacrament is in the words "breaking bread." Thus they justify their practice of withholding the cup from the laity. Since only bread is mentioned, they insist that the wafer is sufficient.

There is one passage that should settle it once and for all that "breaking bread" is an idiom that means to partake of food. It appears in the account of the storm that battered and finally sank the ship that carried Paul a prisoner to Rome. To all the sailors, soldiers, and passengers, Paul said:

This day is the fourteenth day that you have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing. Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you. And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat. Then they were all of good cheer, and they also took some meat. Acts 27:33-36.

It has been well said by another: "Had Gentiles been acquainted with the Hebraism, neither malice nor ignorance could have diverted these words from their simple and only meaning."

Eating His Flesh

The words of the Lord Jesus in John 6: 51-58 have nothing whatsoever to do with any ceremonial eating of bread or drinking wine. In regard to this the *Companion Bible* says concerning "eating and drinking."

The Hebrews used this expression with reference to *knowledge*. . . as in Ex. 24:11, where it is put for being alive; so eating and drinking denoted the operation of the mind in receiving and "inwardly digesting" truth or the words of God. See Deut. 8:3 and compare Jer. 15:16, Ezek. 2:8. No idiom was more common in the days of our Lord. With them as with us, *eating* included the meaning of *enjoyment*, as in Ecc. 5:19; 6:2: for "riches" cannot be *eaten*,. and the Talmud actually speaks of *eating* (i.e. enjoying) "the years of Messiah", and instead of finding any difficulty in the figure they said that the days of Hezekiah were so good "Messiah will come no more to Israel; for they have already devoured Him in the days of Hezekiah" (Lightfoot, vol. 12, pp. 296, 297). Even where eating is used of the devouring of enemies, it is the enjoyment of victory that is included. The Lord's words could be understood thus by hearers, for they knew the idiom; but of the eucharist they knew nothing, and could not have thus understood them. By comparing verses 47 and 4 with verses 53 and 54, we see that believing on Christ was exactly the same thing as eating and drinking Him. (*Companion Bible* notes on John 6:53).

Eating the flesh of Christ and drinking His blood means participation in and identification with His sacrifice. We must abandon all else and let Him give Himself for us and to us. We must appropriate by faith His blood-bought merits. His words in John 6 declare the truth that believing can be an act of *eating* and *drinking*.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN - - RIGHTLY DIVIDING

There remains one important question to be answered. When did that Passover end? By "that Passover" is meant the one in which the Lord Jesus was the paschal lamb, the one Paul delivered to the Israel of God outside the land of Palestine. There can be no question but that unbelieving Israel in the land continued to kill the lamb each year until the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. Those unbelieving Jews outside the land continued in their enforced non-observance. In later years unbelieving Israel worked out what one writer aptly calls "a memorial to a memorial", since the actual memorial could not be observed outside the land that God gave to them. This "memorial to a memorial" is still observed by Jews everywhere on the fourteenth day of Nisan. This is a movable date, like Easter. In this observance the *matzah* (unleavened bread) is eaten, a cup of wine is poured for Elijah, there are four other cups of wine, a shankbone of a lamb, a hard-boiled egg, bunches of herbs, and many other things, depending upon what rabbinical school they follow. Most Jews call this

"Seder", as they know it is not Passover, but most Gentiles ignorantly refer to it as Passover.

One thing needs to be clearly understood. I do not believe, neither do I teach that the Corinthian Passover came to an end at Acts 28:28. Neither do I hold that it is for one dispensation and not for the next. I do believe that a true Passover that could be observed outside of Jerusalem was given by Paul to the believing Jews outside of the land of Palestine. I do not believe that this observance was ever given to any Gentile who was converted through Paul's ministry. My own non-observance of that Passover set forth in 1 Corinthians 11 is not entirely based upon it being undispensational, but upon the fact that it was never given to that company of believers of which I am a part, and it is no part of the worthy walk of the calling wherein I have been called.

The best answer to this question can be found in considering the positive Biblical fact that in the Acts period there were tens of thousands of Jews that believed in Jesus Christ and they were all zealous of the law. This same zeal was true of all Jewish believers outside of Jerusalem. This is seen in the fact that when a false report was circulated in Jerusalem saying Paul "taught all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs", he took the most definite steps to demonstrate that this was not true (Acts 21: 24) . Now the question that should be asked is when did this believing remnant in Israel cease keeping the law of Moses with all its rites and ceremonies?

The answer is that they never did cease, not until the last one of that company passed from the earthly scene. Since not one was added to this company after Acts 28:28, it did pass from the earthly scene as one after another died.

This is also true of the Corinthian Passover. It was kept by those to whom it was given until there were none left to keep it.

There is one truth in the New Testament which I believe is more helpful in understanding the epistles of Paul than any other one truth I have ever discovered. Furthermore, this truth helps me to understand the nature of my calling and the walk of my calling. Once it is known we never again need to wonder if the prohibition against "blood, and things strangled" is binding upon us today as it was upon the Gentile believers of the Acts period (Acts 15: 28, 29), or whether we are grafted into Israel's good olive tree and in danger of being cut off, even as Paul's Gentile converts were in the Acts period (Romans 11: 17-21). But, first of all, for the help of those who may lack familiarity with Paul's epistles, remember that before he spoke the words recorded in Acts 28: 28 he wrote six epistles, and after that he wrote seven, as follows:

before ACTS 28:28

First Thessalonians

Second Thessalonians

First Corinthians
Second Corinthians
Galatians
Romans

after ACTS 28:28

Philippians
Colossians
Ephesians
First Timothy
Titus
Second Timothy
Philemon

The truth referred to in the previous paragraph is that of the sudden appearance on earth of a great new company of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. The appearance of this company is not as dramatic as that group which stood out as a result of the miracles and preaching on the day of Pentecost, since to produce this new company God worked in secret and their lives were hid with Christ in God. There were no open miraculous powers to bring them to Christ, and there were no confirming miracles and signs to make their relationship to God manifest to all men, as had been true of all believers in the Acts period. But they are there, a new company, a different company, **a company that still continues today, of which you and I as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ can claim to be a definite part.**

Every attempt that has ever been made rightly to divide the word of truth has been based upon the conviction of some believing student that his position before God, that is, that his calling and the walk of this calling are not the same as those children of God who lived in former times as set forth in the Word of God. He realizes that God is dealing with him in a different manner than He dealt with them, therefore, he must be living under a different administration of God, or be living in a different dispensation. His great desire is to know when this company of which he is a part had its beginning and what marks the start of the administration of God under which he lives. There are numerous opinions in regard to this.

One opinion is that this new company started at Pentecost. This is based upon the fact that a new and unique company did begin there. Yet every one of these were Jews that believed, they were all zealous of the law, and when completed at the close of the Acts period, they stood as the chosen remnant out of all Israel (Rom. 11: 5, 6; 9:27). Some think that this work of calling out a remnant has continued for 1900 years, but

in view of God's explicit declaration that He would finish the work, that it would be a short one, that is would be cut short in righteousness, it could not have continued until today.

Others make a new beginning and start a new company with the ministry of Paul in Acts 13, especially his ministry among the Gentiles, but every fact stated as to the position or calling of these Gentiles cries out in contradiction of this. Not too much is said concerning them, but what is said shows that they are not a part of God's present company of believers.

They were at a distinct disadvantage when compared to the Jews that believed (Rom. 3: 1,2), they were Gentile wild olive branches grafted into Israel's good olive tree (Rom. 11:17). They were sustained by this root and could do nothing to sustain it (Rom. 11: 17) . Their position was one that could be lost (Rom. 11:21). They were partakers of Israel's spiritual things, and were under obligation to minister to Israel in carnal things (Rom. 15:26-27)

Words such as these cannot describe the position of a present day believer in Jesus Christ. They are out of harmony with the grace that is ours in Christ Jesus. With all due respect to that faithful company . who made up that remnant in Israel and those who made up the complement from the Gentiles --we are not of this company. It is only when we see this that the New Testament becomes what God intended it to be, an understandable and consistent revelation of His works, ways, and purposes.

The New Testament covers a historical period of about 69 years. It begins with an actual event, the birth of Christ, and closes with another actual event, Paul writing a farewell letter of instruction to his beloved friend Timothy. And, as said before, one of the very strange events in this period of history is the sudden appearance, *very late in this period*, of a great company of believers in the Lord Jesus. These are the result of the salvation-bringing message of God being made available without restrictions to the Gentiles, as announced by Paul in Acts 28:28. Most of these are Gentiles, but some are Jews. About all we know of them is that Paul wrote two very important epistles - the erroneously so-called epistle to the Ephesians, and the properly called epistle to the Colossians.

Most theologians and Bible students fail to see this new and different company. They hold that it *is* nothing more than a continuation of that company that began at Pentecost, or the Gentiles that were converted through Paul's ministry after Acts 13. Thus, this important company is unrecognized and ignored. However, permit me to say that after 45 years of assiduous Bible study and teaching, I am convinced that there is nothing that will do as much to make the final epistles of Paul understandable as the recognition of this company that began after Acts 28: 28.

The work of God that produced this company can be traced out. Certain facts press upon certain logical deductions. The facts are in Scripture - the deductions are forced upon us by these facts.

In the 33 years of the Acts period every man (no exceptions) who became a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ did so as the result of a God - - commissioned (sent) man speaking to him a divinely inspired message that set forth Jesus as the Messiah (Christ) and Savior. The gospel was the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1: 16), but no man could proclaim this gospel unless he were commissioned by God to do so (Rom. 10:14-15); and since this gospel was not in writing, it had to be spoken. All believing Jews labored under a general commission which permitted any believing Jew to present the gospel to any other Jew, in keeping with the manifest leading of the Spirit of God.

When men heard this gospel they could accept it, not as the words of men struggling to set forth the gospel (as you and I do today) but as it actually was in truth, the inspired Word of God (1 Thes. 2: 13). The message and the messenger were always credentialed by divine signs and wonders, and it was also confirmed by miracles in the lives of those who received it (Heb. 2: 3, 4; Mark 16:20; 1 Cor. 1:6-7).

Thus, in the Acts period everyone who became a believer did so as the result of the proclamation of a divinely given message, given each time it was spoken, and always backed up or confirmed by miracles and wonders. These may have preceded the proclamation, or they may have followed it, but they were always there as credentials of the divine commission of the messenger and as confirmation of the truth of his message. In other words, every believer in the Acts period, Jew as well as Gentile, has to be classed as one who saw and believed. None could be classed as those who had not seen, yet had believed.

This brings to mind the words of the Lord Jesus to Thomas:

Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed, blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed. John 20 :29.

The proper application of these words go far beyond the fact of having seen the resurrected Christ. While the word *horao* (seen) used of Thomas means to perceive what is seen with the eyes, the word *eideo* used of those "having not seen" means to get knowledge by means of any or all of the senses. (See Luke 5:8, "see;" and 5:24, "know." The word is *eideo* in both of these.)

The Acts period believers always had something visible and concrete upon which to rest their faith. Even the Gentiles who came to know Christ through Paul's ministry have to be classed as those who saw and believed. As he declared in the last epistle written in the Acts period:

I will not make free to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished by me, in the way of securing the obedience of the Gentiles, by my words and by my deeds, by the force of miracles and marvels, by the power of the Spirit of God. Rom 15 :18, 19 (Moffatt)

This ministry of Paul came to an end by his own pronouncement at Acts 28:28. The one man who was commissioned (*apostello*) to the Gentiles to proclaim a message announces that the message itself is authorized (*apostello*) to the nations. Note carefully I said "this ministry" came to an end. His labors for the Lord continued. He received new assignments. But it was Paul as God's ambassador who announced:

Let it then be known unto you, that the salvation-bringing message of God has been authorized to the nations (Gentiles), and what is more they will hear it. Acts 28 :28. [I have studied the meaning and the correct translation of this passage for thirty years, and am convinced that this version of *it is* true to the Greek and true to the truth].

The salvation-bringing message had always been authorized to Israel. (See Acts 13:26, where "sent" is *apostello*). Any believing Jew could offer it to any other Jew. Paul, a believing Jew could offer it to anyone in Israel, but by means of an additional commission he could also offer it to Gentiles. At Acts 28: 28 the salvation-bringing message was authorized to the Gentiles. The time element here can be seen in the words "has been authorized", which states an accomplished fact, and "they will hear it", which is future. In other words this authorization was so recent that the Gentiles had not yet heard the gospel under this new order. This authorization cannot be backup to Acts 13. It was a man who was commissioned there, not a message. .

This authorization became effective when Paul announced it. And by this announcement he brought to an end his own particular commission to the Gentiles. Then and there he ceased to be God's commissioned one to them. From that time on he is not going to the Gentiles with that message which is God's power unto salvation. The message itself is going. But how will it get there? A message has no feet, it cannot walk! Nevertheless, God guaranteed "they will hear it," which is to say, "it will get to them." We will now consider how God fulfilled His pledge.

In Mark 4:29 we read of a planter who authorized the sickle because the time of the harvest had come.! It can be readily seen that when this man authorized the sickle, nothing would have happened if faithful workmen had not sprung into action. Sickles cannot go to the field and they cannot cut alone. They must be wielded. But the fact that this planter authorized the sickle shows that he had servants. If they were faithful workmen they would say, "Now that you have authorized the sickle, give us the tools and we will do the work."

At Acts 28: 28, as we have seen, the salvation-bringing message of God was authorized to the Gentiles. This was an unprophesied and unpredicted event. There was no previous hint that such a thing would be. But it was authorized by God, and all that faithful men could do was to submit and say, "Give us the tools and we will do

the work."

The tool, of course, is the salvation-bringing message, that message that is the power of God unto salvation, the message that presents Jesus Christ. And it is the only tool. It will not be supported with signs before it or signs following it. And even those who wield it will have to do so without personal commission or accreditation.

But where is this gospel, this salvation-bringing message? Up to Acts 28:28 it had always been spoken. It had not been written. Divine inspiration was always behind it each time it was spoken by those commissioned to do so. The epistles that Paul had written (his first six) were written to those who were believers. They dealt with the problems and needs of believers. They speak of "the gospel" and there are numerous references to it as many points are clarified, but there is no full presentation of that message which Paul had in mind when he said that he had been separated to *the gospel* of God, that *this gospel* concerns His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and that he was ready to proclaim *this gospel* in Rome.

At one point Paul does give a brief outline of the gospel he proclaimed, but this is by way of review to those he had taught for eighteen months (1 Cor. 15: 1-4). And it is so brief that it could do little more than torture a thirsty man who needed the water of life. It would be useless to those with no background. They would cry out: "But what is the Christ, and who is the Christ, when did He die, where did He die, and how did He die, who raised Him from the dead?" None of these things are told in the brief resume Paul gave of the gospel he had declared to the Corinthians. All these things must be known and believed if any man is going to qualify as a believer in the record God gave of His Son.

No, the salvation-bringing message, the gospel, the word of life, had not yet been written, and unless God Himself speaks to each Gentile, or unless God gives it by divine inspiration every time his servants speak, the true facts of the gospel will never be presented again to men of the nations. But God has guaranteed they will hear it, that it will get to them, and He always keeps His word. But how?

In the city of Jerusalem lived a man named John, prominent among the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ. His ministry in the Acts period, in connection with proclaiming Jesus as the Christ, had to do with the Jews in the land, the circumcision, as Gal. 2:9 indicates. This mission had been faithfully discharged by the twelve, so much so that even Paul declared:

But I say, Have they (Israel) not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. Rom. 19:18.

Having fulfilled his commission to proclaim the gospel to Israel, he is given a new commission, a new assignment, a new task to perform. It is to be his task and his great honor to put into written form the salvation-bringing message of God, the very one

that Paul announced had been authorized to the nations (the Gentiles) . The message he is to write will be "the gospel of God," it will be the message that concerns Jesus Christ. We find it today in the book commonly called *The Gospel of John*, but it can be called this only because he was the writer whom God used. In it he declares his commission and purpose:

There came to be a man commissioned of God. His name, John. This one came (to be commissioned) for a witness, that he should be witnessing concerning the Light, that all should be believing through him (his witness). John 1:6 (Resultant Version).

This John should not be confused with another John, John the Baptist, who is set forth later in this chapter. This John is the writer of this book. These are his credentials-a divine commission to write for the purpose of providing a witness. This witness is a written record by means of which all, without exception or distinction, might believe. This man John knew from experience what it was to have a spoken testimony that was effective when spoken to "they of the circumcision." Now a testimony was to be written, a witness to be without priority or distinction of any kind.

When he nears the end of this divinely inspired testimony to Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God causes him to add a definite statement concerning the purpose of this written witness.

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing ye might have life through His name. John 20 :30-31.

This statement can be made of no other book in the Bible-for no other book was written with the end in view that men might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. If any man would qualify as a believer in Jesus Christ, then he must come face to face with the facts set forth in the record provided by God through John.

Once the last word of John's witness was written it passed from his hands and control. From that moment on there was a book in the world, a book inspired by God for the purpose of producing believers in the great truth that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and upon believing have life through His name. Thus if any one book can be designated as "the word of life" it is this book. This is the book that can be called, as no other book can, the salvation-bringing message of God, which Paul announced had been authorized (made available) to the Gentiles.

God's Word never returns to Him void. It always accomplishes its purpose. If a book is written to produce believers, it will produce believers. And this book did that very thing. All over the known world a new company of believers sprang up. These are not the fruits of any apostolic ministry. They were not produced by miracles and signs. They were produced by the written word of God.

And even though Paul is bogged down in his own hired house in Rome, even though his commission to the Gentiles is at an end, he wants the believers in Philippi to know that the things which happened to him had worked for the furtherance of the gospel (Phil. 1: 12) . Instead of one physically weak man going and speaking an inspired message, the message itself is going, as the servants of God make the copies and send them on their way. He urges the Philippians to "shine as luminaries, having the word of life" (Phil. 2: 16). The only book that can be called "the word of life"

is John's Gospel. It had come to Philippi. They were already believers, having become such through the personal ministry and miraculous works of Paul (Acts 16:12-40). But if they would be of help to others they must now have and hold the word of life.

But God has yet work for Paul to do. This new company of believers need explicit instructions, and Paul is commissioned to write to them. This he does in the epistle commonly called Ephesians, and the one designated as Colossians. He had never before ministered to any of those whom he addresses in these epistles. He knows of them only by hearsay. To the "believing brethren in Christ which are at Colosse" he speaks of "the word of truth of the gospel" and says it is come unto (is present with) them, even as it is in the entire world, and is bringing forth fruit, even as it has done so among them, since the day they heard it and realized the grace of God in truth (Col. 1:5, 6). The man who had acted as the legs for the gospel message was one named Epaphras, described by Paul as "our beloved fellow slave," who was to the Colossians a faithful dispenser of Christ. He was not an apostle. If he had been, Paul would have acknowledged this. He always gave every man the honor due to him.

The Ephesian epistle, so-called, was addressed "**to all the saints, the ones being and believing in Christ Jesus.**" This letter is addressed to individuals. And if there is any one letter that shows it was addressed to a new, fresh company of believers in Christ Jesus it is this one. Those addressed had no background of apostolic ministry. Paul knows of them only by hearsay (Eph. 1:15). They believed "**upon hearing the word of truth, the good news of their salvation.**" We do not know who brought the copy of the salvation-bringing message to them. This was the beginning of that great company of believers of which we today are a part. This was a company that had not seen, yet had believed. Their blessings will be great because of this. Ours will be equal to theirs.

Paul's epistle to the Philippians was written to men who had believed before Acts 28: 28, but who were living on this side of the dispensational boundary line. It was written to clarify certain things that had happened, and to urge upon them humble acceptance of the disappearance of their manifest gifts. In it Paul says:

Being confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work among you will be bringing it to a full end (*ePiteleo*) until the day of Jesus Christ. Phil. 1:6 (Resultant Version).

The "day of Jesus Christ" is synonymous in time with "the kingdom of God." When this day comes and Israel is restored to her land (Eze. 20: 33-43), the Passover will be resumed by those to whom it belongs, and with a new meaning to two of its elements, it will be observed till He comes. But it is not now, nor will it ever be any part of the worthy walk of those who now believe in Jesus Christ.

The End SS21