

# THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AND THE BODY OF CHRIST

## MATTHEW AND EPHESIANS A COMPARATIVE BIBLE STUDY

Perhaps you have heard of the Jewish rabbi in London who said to one of the leading evangelical pastors of that city, "Doctor, it was not your Jesus who gave to you the evangelical Christianity which you preach and practice; it was the apostle Paul." "Your Jesus was a religious Jew, born as a Jew, who lived among the Jews and taught the Jews." The rabbi was not altogether in error, though he was not altogether correct in his statement. He undoubtedly was more familiar with the synoptic Records, Matthew, Mark and Luke than he was with John's Gospel which teems with evangelical truth. However, even in John's Record, Christ said, "we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews." John 4:22.

While that rabbi was apparently ignorant of the fact that Paul received his messages from Christ in heaven he knew from reading Matthew, Mark, Luke and John the truth that every Christian should know, the truth of Romans 15:8: "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." He had read the plain statement of Jesus Christ in Matthew 15:24: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Millions of Christians, who have read this plain statement of the Lord Jesus, obviously do not believe it. They have read Acts 13:23 and Acts 5:29 to 32, but the very large majority of them have paid little or no attention to the most important facts stated in these Scriptures. Note them: "Of this man's (David's) seed hath God, according to His promise, raised unto ISRAEL a Saviour, Jesus." "Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour for to give repentance to ISRAEL, and forgiveness of sins." Where did the Gentiles come in? They came in when Israel was set aside. Romans 11:15. But is not the Divine Record clear in its dogmatic statements that Jesus Christ was raised up in incarnation to be ISRAEL'S Saviour and that He was raised up in resurrection to be ISRAEL'S Saviour? Only as we understand these plain and important Bible statements can we understand what is meant by the statement that "He (Christ) came unto His own and His own received Him not." John 1:11. His own did receive Him; for many, many Jews received Jesus as Saviour before His death and many more after His death and resurrection. Yet it is true that His own received Him not. This last statement is contrary to fact unless we are led by the Holy Spirit to understand from the study of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts, that God was carrying on a two-fold program until after the nation Israel was set aside, or during the years that the gospel of the kingdom was proclaimed. Jesus Christ was offered as Saviour to individual Jews, but He was born to sit on David's throne, to reign over the house of Jacob and deliver the nation Israel from Gentile subjugation. Luke 1:27 to 33 and Luke 1:67 to 77. This was just as true after the resurrection of Jesus Christ during the years when the twelve apostles were the principal human actors.

Undoubtedly all Christians, who have diligently studied the Book of Acts, have learned that beginning with the thirteenth chapter and on to the close of the Book we find the record of the sayings and doings of one man and only such other men as had dealings with that one man,

Paul. After the twelfth chapter of Acts we find in that Book no mention of the spiritual activities of any of the twelve apostles except as they had dealings with the apostle Paul. Moreover we learn in Acts 15:7 that one mouth of the twelve mouths was chosen by God to speak to Gentiles, but at the time that Peter thus referred to himself he agreed that he and his fellow-apostles would go to the Jews and turn over to Paul the responsibility of evangelizing the Gentiles. Galatians 2:9. As we search the Scriptures and learn that God sent salvation to the Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy, as stated in Romans 11:11, we know that Jesus Christ did not do this while He was here on earth, as the Minister of the circumcision. And as to the twelve apostles, as we diligently search the Four Records, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, we learn that while Christ was on earth the only opportunity that they had to preach to a Gentile, so far as there is any written account, they said, "send her away." Matthew 15:23. In the light of the plain command of Jesus Christ, should they not have said this? Note this command, "go not into the way of the Gentiles." Matthew 10:5 to 8.

As we go into our study it will perhaps help us to keep in mind that Jesus Christ, God's Son, was made under the law to redeem them that were under the law. Galatians 4:4. And note this important truth, so far as there is any written record in detail in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, Jesus Christ on earth gave a blessing to only one Gentile man, and that man was a Roman centurion who loved the Jews and built them a synagogue and sought the Lord's blessing through Jewish intercessors. Luke 7:1 to 12 and Matthew 8:1 to 12. As we keep this in mind, let us also remember that while Jesus Christ was here on earth He did not interfere with the ceremonies, feasts and sacrifices that were conducted by Israel's religious rulers. In this statement the reference is especially to the offering of animals to the Lord at the time the Jews observed their Passover and other holy-days. So we know that if a Gentile was saved while Jesus Christ was here on earth, under the law, a minister of the circumcision, that Gentile became an Old Testament Jew or proselyte. Most assuredly no one had Divine authority, while Christ was in the land of the Jews, to proclaim the truth of Romans 10:12, "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek." There was a great difference between the Greek dog and the Jewish children. Matthew 15:21 to 27. Mark 7:24 to 30. There was a great difference between the Jew and the Gentile after the resurrection of Jesus Christ up to Acts 10:28 and Acts 11:18.

With these simple but important statements in mind we shall give ourselves more intelligently to the comparative study of Matthew and Ephesians.

## DIFFERENT DISPENSATIONS

Now and then we hear of some Christian leader or teacher who carelessly makes the statement, "The Gospel of Matthew is not for members of the Body of Christ"; "Members of the Body of Christ have nothing to do with the Sermon on the Mount." These men are not only reckless and unwise, but if they mean by this that all of the instructions of the Lord Jesus as recorded in Matthew, are to be ignored by members of the Body of Christ as having no place in God's present "grace" program, they are as ignorant as they are careless. But more frequently men are falsely accused of making such statements by religious people who are opposed to dispensational Bible divisions.

Nearly one hundred percent of all intelligent and spiritual students of the Scriptures are agreed that very many of Christ's messages and commands in the Book of Matthew are neither taught nor practiced by members of the Body of Christ during this age of grace and that they

could not be brought over into this dispensation for the obedience and practice of members of the Body of Christ without frustrating the grace of God.

Therefore, Christians are presented with a real problem, and that problem is to know what part of the program of Jesus on earth should be brought over and made a part of the program of the Church of the Mystery, described in Ephesians 2:15 to Ephesians 3:11, and what part should be relegated to that “kingdom of heaven” program presented by Jesus of Nazareth and His twelve apostles to Israel, but was never intended for the Church.

We take it for granted that the great majority of Christians know that during this age of grace, in the program and purpose of God, there is one and only one Church, which is called the JOINT-BODY in Ephesians 3:6, the ONE BODY in Ephesians 4:4 and 5, the FULLNESS OF CHRIST in Ephesians 1:19 to 22. God is building ONE NEW MAN. Ephesians 2:15. The ONE BODY is, with Christ, ONE FLESH. Ephesians 5:30 to 32. We learn in Colossians 1:23 to 28 and in Ephesians 3:1 to 11, that this ONE BODY was “THE CHURCH OF THE MYSTERY”, concerning which Israel’s Old Testament prophets were both silent and ignorant.

The great majority of sectarian and nonsectarian Christians teach that the New Testament Church, as they call it, began either when the resurrected Christ breathed upon the apostles, according to John 20:22, when they received the Holy Spirit, or some days later when the day of Pentecost was fully come. Acts 2:1. While the writer believes that “the dispensation of the mystery”, mentioned in Ephesians 3:9, began with Paul and the setting-aside of Israel some years after the Pentecost of Acts Two, yet the general agreement is that the Body of Christ, described in Ephesians, did not have its historic beginning until after all of the events recorded in the Book of Matthew had taken place.

If then we agree that the words of Jesus Christ, recorded in Matthew, were not spoken to members of the Body of Christ, which had not been formed at that time, then of course we ask the question, was the Lord Jesus during the years of His incarnation on earth giving instructions in one dispensation that were to be carried over into a future dispensation? Did the Lord Jesus have in mind the program of “grace” for the members of the Body of Christ when He taught His disciples the messages and parables and lessons recorded in Matthew? By what Divine authority or Scriptural rule have the great majority of all church pastors, elders, rulers and teachers eliminated from their church creeds and programs more than fifty percent of the orders and ceremonies given to the apostles for their obedience and practice while Jesus Christ was here on earth?

When the Lord Jesus said to the Jews, in Matthew 21:43, “the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof”, what did He mean? If He meant that the same program and message which He presented to the Jews would be presented to the Gentiles, then we are unanimously agreed that there is not one group of Christians in the world carrying on the Lord’s program. If we have arbitrarily revised that program without explanation or apology, and without Divine authority, we had better cry with the modernist, “back to Jesus”, and decide that Paul was a self-appointed, deluded apostle, who claimed to have special revelations from the resurrected Christ with a message, commission and program which was given Him from heaven concerning the gospel of the grace of God, the dispensation of the mystery, and the Body of Christ, but was in fact either an impostor or a man very much deceived.

Well, let us agree that we shall not be guilty of any wholesale discard of the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth on earth, that we will agree that we live this side of Calvary in a new and different dispensation, and we shall diligently search the Scriptures and make a sincere effort to

find in God's Word His Divine principle for the interpretation, appropriation and application of all Scripture which is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." II Timothy 3:16 and 17. Surely God wants all of His children to be workmen who need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth. II Timothy 2:15.

## TEST THINGS THAT DIFFER

Let us carefully note some very important instructions in Philippians 1:9 and 10:

"And this I (Paul) pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment. That ye may test things that differ; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ."

"That ye may test things that differ." The translation from the Greek in most Bibles is, "that ye may approve things that are excellent." But the Greek word should be translated "differ."

Christians should be sincere. They should be without offense. They cannot be unless their love abounds more and more in knowledge and in judgment and unless they test things that differ.

As an example, would any servant of the Lord have had Divine authority, during the days of Jesus Christ on earth, to preach, "there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek?" This is the message of Romans 10:12. The answer is found in Mark 7:24 to 30 and Matthew 15:21 to 27. A great difference. "Test things that differ."

What would have happened, had the twelve apostles preached Colossians 2:16 and 17 while Jesus of Nazareth was a Man approved of God in the midst of Israel? Acts 2:22. Note carefully Colossians 2:16 and 17:

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath, Which are a shadow of things to come: but the Body is of Christ."

This command was the Lord's command to the members of Christ's Body some years after the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross. But the servant of the Lord would have been wholly out of the will of God, had he proclaimed that message before the death and resurrection of the Saviour. "Test things that differ."

In this connection let us compare Matthew 5:17 and 18 with Colossians 2:13 and 14 and with Ephesians 2:13 to 17:

Note the words of Jesus of Nazareth in Matthew 5:17 and 18:

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

Now note Colossians 2:13 and 14:

"And you Gentiles being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses: Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross,"

Now note Ephesians 2:13 to 17:

"But now, in Christ Jesus, ye (Gentiles) who sometime were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who hath made both (Gentile and Jew) one, and hath broken down the middle-wall of partition; Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, the law of

commandments in ordinance, for to make in Himself of twain One New Man, making peace; And that He might reconcile both unto God in one Body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; And came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) which were afar off, and to them (Israel) that were nigh.”

While Jesus of Nazareth was a Man in the midst of Israel He was under the law. Galatians 4:4. What the religious leaders of Israel did for the Holy Child Jesus, as recorded in Luke 2:21 to 39, was according to the law of Moses. They fulfilled all the law. Luke 2:39! From babyhood until His death, the Lord Jesus was under the law with His own nation. Right before His death He respected, with His apostles, a Jewish holyday: “Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, go and prepare us the Passover.” Luke 22:8. When Christ was before Pilate the Jews said, “we have a law, and by our law, He ought to die.” John 19:7. Christ was born under the law. Christ was circumcised under the law. When Christ was thirty years old we read concerning Him, in Luke 4:16: “And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day.” Christ had been trained in childhood to be a religious law-keeping, Sabbath-keeping Jew. How inconsistent He would have been, had he preached Colossians 2:12 to others during those years. Note carefully His words in Matthew 23:2 and 3: “The scribes and Pharisees SIT IN MOSES’ SEAT; THEREFORE.” Note the “THEREFORE.” Because they sit in Moses’ seat, “all whatsoever they bid you observe; that observe and do: but do not ye after their works: for they say and do not.”

So we see that Christ was born under the law, that He lived and ministered under the law and that He died under the law.

When the Holy Spirit led Paul to write the second chapters of Ephesians and Colossians what had become of Moses’ seat and Moses’ law? II Corinthians 3:5 to 17 answers this question. Abolished. Done away. So we see that Christ was born under the law, that He lived and ministered under the law and that He died under the law. Even the babe in Christ should be able to test these things that differ: the fact that the middle-wall of partition was standing between the Jew and the Gentile while Jesus of Nazareth on earth was doing the things and saying the words that are recorded in Matthew, whereas at the time the truth of Ephesians was made known that middle-wall of partition had been taken out of the way, broken down by the Father and the Son. Therefore, many of the Divine rules that governed the people of God while Jesus of Nazareth was on earth cannot be applied to members of the Body of Christ, with God’s sanction.

#### “THE ‘OUR FATHER’ PRAYER”

Let us carefully compare Matthew 6:12 to 15 with Ephesians 4:32, in the matter of Divine forgiveness. Surely then we should be workmen not ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth. Let us test these things that differ:

“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors . . . For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

With this read Matthew 18:34 and 35:

“And His lord was wroth, and delivered Him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.”

We read in Colossians 2:13, “Having forgiven you all trespasses.” Now before reading Ephesians 4:32, let us read Acts 13:39 and Romans 8:33 and 34:

“And by Him (Jesus Christ) all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” “It is God that justifieth.” “Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us.”

Then in the verses that follow is recorded the fact that nothing or nobody can separate the child of God from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Note now Ephesians 4:32.

“And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for CHRIST’S SAKE hath forgiven you.”

Note that God had forgiven these believing sinners for Christ’s sake. God had not forgiven them all trespasses because they had forgiven others who had trespassed against them. They were dead in trespasses; but God was rich in mercy and great in love. Ephesians 2:1 to 4. These believing sinners were saved by grace, that not of themselves. Note Ephesians 1:7; “In Whom (Christ) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. according to the riches of His grace.”

Gentile believers received mercy because of the unbelief of the Jews. Romans 11:30.

## LAW AND GRACE

“The law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 5:20 and 21.

In testing things that differ let us keep in mind that the Lord Jesus Christ was, with His disciples, under the law when He taught them the “Our Father” prayer. Certainly no one at that time had any Divine authority to proclaim the message of Titus 2:11, “The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” Christ’s own words are in Matthew 15:24, “I am not sent but unto Israel.” The “Our Father” prayer is in the sixth chapter of Matthew. Note its “kingdom” setting in Matthew 4:17 and Matthew 10:5 to 7: “Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” “These twelve Jesus sent forth . . . Go not into the way of the Gentiles . . . Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go preach, saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick; raise the dead.”

Let us ask this question, is it sound exegesis or even consistent or sensible to teach that the “Our Father” prayer is for members of the Body of Christ described in Ephesians and yet not preach (to Israel only) that the kingdom of heaven is at hand and heal the sick and raise the dead? Surely God is not the author of confusion and the Holy Spirit cannot be held responsible for the hit-and-miss, snatch-grab method that is used by preachers who claim to be intelligent students and teachers of the Word of God.

Again we ask the question, why should we insist that the “Our Father” prayer is compatible with the gospel of the grace of God which the Lord committed to Paul (Acts 20:24 and Ephesians 3:1 to 4) and is for the obedience of members of Christ’s Body and at the same time wholly ignore the plain instruction which the Messiah gave to Israel in the context? “Enter the closet and close the door.” Matthew 6:6. “Anoint thine head, and wash thy face.” Matthew 6:17. “Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? Or What shall we drink? Or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?” Matthew 6:31. “Agree with thine adversary quickly.” Matthew 5:25. “If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out.” Matthew 5:29. “Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away.” Matthew 5:42. “If any

man sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.” Matthew 5:40. “Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses: Nor script for your journey; neither two coats, neither shoes.” Matthew 10:9 and 10. “Sell that ye have and give alms.” Luke 12:33. “Shew thyself to the priest and take a gift according to the law of Moses.” Matthew 8:3 to 5.

Is it any wonder that we have disunity, divisions and controversies among members of the One Body of Christ when men of God, who claim to be evangelical messengers of grace, eliminate from the Lord’s grace program anything found in the Synoptic Records of the Lord’s earthly ministry that may disagree with their stereotyped, sectarian creeds and programs and hold on to others without offering explanation, excuse or apology? They decide they cannot fit into Paul’s dispensation of grace much of the kingdom and legalistic teaching of Jesus of Nazareth on earth; but they agree among themselves that they will bring over the “Our Father” kingdom, legalistic prayer, even if it is contrary to the Divine message of forgiveness in the age of grace.

At Sinai God said to Israel, “if ye will, I will.” In the “Our Father” prayer God says “I will, if you will.” In God’s message of grace, we have the forgiveness of all of our sins, for Christ’s sake, according to the riches of God’s grace, and therefore, we should forgive those who trespass against us. But if the “forgiveness” petition in the “Our Father” prayer is for the obedience and practice of members of the Body of Christ, very many of them are headed for the tormentors. Matthew 18:34 and 35.

## ON THE EARTH AND IN THE HEAVENLIES

In the Book of Matthew we find the word “earth” twenty-eight times. There we read that the meek shall inherit the earth. Matthew 5:5. The Book of Matthew has much to say about Christ’s political spiritual kingdom on the earth with Himself as the reigning King. He was born King of the Jews. Matthew 2:2. He died as King of the Jews. Matthew 27:37. He promised to come back as the Son of man to be a King of an earthly kingdom. Matthew 25:31 to 43. On that earthly throne of His glory Christ is to be the judge of the nations. The twelve apostles are to sit with Him on twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Matthew 19:27 and 28. It is not just by chance that there is no record of the ascension of the resurrected Christ in the closing chapters of Matthew. The Lord gave the so-called great commission while He was on earth.

By way of contrast in the Epistle to the Ephesians. Christ is far above in the heavenlies. Ephesians 1:19 to 23 and Ephesians 4:7 to 13. One of the keys to the Epistle is “in the heavenlies” found several times in the Epistle. The believers, saved by grace, are seated in the heavenlies in Christ. Ephesians 2:6. They are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. Ephesians 1:3. As the Church of Christ they are to make known the manifold wisdom of God to principalities and powers in the heavenlies. Ephesians 3:10. In the heavenlies, far above, Christ is the Head of the Body. Ephesians 1:10 to 23 and Ephesians 4:7 to 13. Members of the Body of Christ wrestle against principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies. Ephesians 6:11 to 20.

Again, in the Book of Matthew more than thirty times we find mentioned, “the kingdom of the heavens.” In the Epistle to the Ephesians we find “The Body” mentioned seven times. Paul is the only apostle who called the Church, “The Body”, so far as we have any record.

Again, in the twenty-eight chapters of Matthew we do not find the word “grace” once. In the six chapters of Ephesians we find the word “grace” twelve times. Of course the connecting Epistle is Romans and in the sixteen chapters of Romans we find the word “grace” more than twenty times. To be sure there was “grace” during the reign of law and the reign of law is found

in the Book of Matthew, so Matthew is very much a mixture of grace and law and religion. In the Epistle to the Ephesians the apostle Paul is the custodian and dispenser of “the dispensation of the grace of God”, unmixed with law and religion. So we must test things that differ. We should certainly know the difference between grace in a dispensation and “the dispensation of grace.”

## THE KINGDOM AT HAND—GRACE AT HAND

Let us again compare the statement in Matthew 10:6 to 8 with the statement in Titus 2:11. There is a great difference between the kingdom of heaven at hand for Israel, “go not into the way of the Gentiles”, and the grace of God that bringeth salvation at hand for all people. Note what the twelve apostles said when they had an opportunity to minister to a needy Gentile while Christ was on earth, “send her away.” Matthew 15:23. Christ was sent only to the house of Israel. Matthew 15:24. So also the twelve apostles. Matthew 10:5 to 8. Test things that differ.

## THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM AND MIRACLES

Note Matthew 9:35 and 10:8 . . . “And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.” Then note in Matthew 10:8 Christ’s instructions to the twelve apostles after He had said preach to Israel, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (This is the gospel of the kingdom). “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons.” Then note verse twenty-three: “ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come.”

All through the Book of Matthew are recorded the miracles of Christ. In Matthew He was “Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God in the midst of you (Israel) by miracles and wonders and signs.” Acts 2:22. In chapter after chapter we read of supernatural demonstrations and visitations and miraculous healings of every kind of physical ailment. Matthew is a Book of miracles. “The Jews require a sign.” I Corinthians 1:22.

John the Baptist was the Lord’s messenger to Israel. Acts 13:24. Luke 1:16 and Luke 1:80. Jesus Christ was born of David’s seed to be Israel’s Saviour. Acts 13:23. Jesus Christ was raised from the dead to be Israel’s Saviour. Acts 5:29 to 32. Acts 13:33 to 41. Christ was born unto Israel to take David’s throne and to reign over the house of Israel. Luke 1:27 to 33. Jesus Christ was raised from the dead to occupy David’s throne and to reign over the house of Israel. Acts 2:27 to 33. Acts 3:19 to 21. Acts 15:13 to 18. Christ said to His disciples, “I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” Matthew 26:29. In Matthew 24:14 to 51 the Lord Jesus told Israel that the gospel of the kingdom would be preached as a witness to all nations and that He would return as the Son of man in the clouds with power and great glory and save them out of their great tribulation.

By way of contrast, in Ephesians, the apostle Paul was not preaching in the cities of Israel, the gospel of the kingdom. Jesus of Nazareth is not on earth in the midst of Israel approved by miracles and wonders and signs. It is not a witness to Israel by miracles. But a mystery to the Gentiles by revelation. Paul had already declared the truth of II Corinthians 5:16, that henceforth Christ was not to be known after the flesh. Signs and miracles had ceased. Paul had been preaching the gospel of the grace of God to Gentiles. Acts 20:24 and Romans 15:16. He called it “my gospel” Romans 2:16 and Romans 16:25. Believing Jews and believing



Gentiles were in one Body. God was making of twain One New Man. Ephesians 2:15. Believers with Christ were one flesh. Ephesians 5:30 to 33. Christ, the Head, was far above in the heavenlies and members of His Body were identified with Him in His death, burial, resurrection and ascension. No miracles of healing are recorded in Ephesians.

It will prove interesting and instructive to compare Acts 5:29 to 32, where Christ had been raised from the dead to be Israel's Saviour, with Ephesians 1:19 to 23 where Christ raised from the dead is the Head of the Body made up of redeemed Jews and Gentiles. Test things that differ.

### THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Read carefully Acts 5:29 to 32 where it is stated that the twelve apostles were witnesses of the fact that God had raised Jesus Christ from the dead to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. Then note verse 32: "And we (twelve apostles) are witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Spirit, Whom God have given to them that obey Him." But Israel's rulers resisted the Holy Spirit, as Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, saw Jesus, the Son of man standing at God's right hand in heaven. Acts 7:51 to 60. Again in Acts 13:45 and 18:5 we learn that Israel blasphemed against the witness of the Holy Spirit.

### ISRAEL'S UNPARDONABLE SIN

This brings to our minds the truth of Jesus of Nazareth concerning the pardonable sin against the Son of man and the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit. Matthew 12:31 to 33. In these verses we learn that Israel would be pardoned if they sinned against the Son of man. The Son of man had to be sinned against. Matthew 26:24. Acts 2:23 . . . Acts 4:27 to 28. The death of Jesus Christ was predestinated and prophesied and He had to die at the time and in the manner that He was put to death. His death was inevitable. Acts 3:18. Therefore, God was willing to say that Israel sinned against the Son of man, in ignorance and they would be forgiven or pardoned, if they would repent. Acts 3:19 to 26. "I wot that through ignorance, ye did it, as did your rulers." Acts 3:16. Thus we also learn of the efficacy of the prayer of the Lord Jesus on the cross, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34.

Because of this prayer, and because that Christ was delivered according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, because the Son of man was made lower than the angels for the suffering of death (Hebrews 2:9 and I Peter 1:18 to 21), Israel's sin against the Son of man was pardonable. But Israel's rulers sinned against the Holy Spirit Whom God sent from heaven to witness that He had raised Christ from the dead to be Israel's Prince and Saviour. This was Israel's unpardonable sin.

Note in this connection John 7:38 and 39 and John 16:7 to 14 that while Jesus of Nazareth was doing His miraculous works in the land of the Jews (Acts 10:36 to 41) the Holy Spirit was not yet sent down from heaven. It was expedient for Jesus Christ to go back to heaven before the Holy Spirit would be sent

Note how different in the Epistle to the Ephesians. There we learn in Ephesians 1:13 and 14 and in Ephesians 4:30, that the Gentile believers, as well as the saved Jews, were sealed with the Holy Spirit the moment they believed the gospel of their salvation; that the Holy Spirit was not a witness to Israel that Christ was in heaven as the Son of man standing and ready to come back to Israel, but the Holy Spirit in Ephesians was the believers' earnest of the inheritance to be

received on the day of redemption. Surely there was no unpardonable sin in the “grace” program and message of Ephesians 2:1 to 10. In those verses we read that the Gentiles had been the children of wrath, walking according to the course of this world, dead in trespasses and sins. In Ephesians 4:18 we learn that they had been alienated from the life of God. In Ephesians 2:11 and 13 we learn that they had been aliens from Israel, in the world, atheists, without hope. They had committed every known sin. But not one sin that they had committed was unpardonable. They were all unpardoned until they had experienced Ephesians 2:8 to 10. Then their sins all of their sins-were pardoned, and they had learned the truth of Romans 5:20, that where sin had abounded grace did much more over abound. So in the dispensation of grace no sin is unpardonable. It was Israel who committed the unpardonable sin, not while Christ was on earth, but after He went back to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit down from heaven. Some will ask, “is not the sin of unbelief unpardonable Certainly not, for that sin with all other sins, is pardon when the believer is saved by grace. “God who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us Even when we were dead in sins, hath made us alive together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)” Ephesians 2:4 and 5.

No publican’s prayer here, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” Luke 18:13. That was the prayer of a back-slidden Jew the other side of Calvary, before Paul was called to proclaim the truth of Romans 3:28, Romans 4:4 and 5 and Romans 3:24, “declared righteous without the deeds of the law, without works and without a cause.”

In Ephesians there is no place for a tarrying-meeting to wait for the Holy Spirit from heaven, to receive a second blessing, or for power from on high. The member of Christ’s Body is blessed with ALL spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ and to him and for him is all the power of God, the same mighty power that He wrought in Christ when He raised Christ from the dead and placed Him far above. Read it in Ephesians 1:3 and 1:19 to 23. The believer may grieve the Holy Spirit, and every believer does, but he is saved by grace and sealed unto the day of redemption. In Ephesians the believer is sainted, saved, sealed, seated in the heavenlies and he is secure, identified with the crucified, buried and resurrected Christ in an inseparable and eternal union accomplished by the one Divine baptism of Ephesians 4:5; not of works, lest any man should boast. “God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

## THE BELIEVER’S GOOD WORKS

The new creature is God’s workmanship, and to please God in His behaviour he is to behave as becometh a saint, he is to walk worthy of the vocation, wherewith ye are called.

Surely in His Sermon on the Mount the Lord Jesus Christ commanded His disciples to do good works. He went so far as to command them to be as perfect as God in heaven. But after the Beatitudes the Lord Jesus commanded those disciples to do many things that had their proper place under the law in “the Kingdom of heaven” program, but have no place in God’s spiritual program since God set aside His religious nation with their religious program. In this connection let us note again in Galatians 4:4 that the Lord Jesus was under the law, whereas in Romans 6:14 the Word of God assures members of the Body of Christ that they are under grace, but not under the law. In Galatians 5:1 we read: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” It would be impossible for a member of the Body of Christ to obey this and at the same time obey all that is commanded in the fifth to the eighth chapters of Matthew. Note Matthew 8:4: “Go thy way, show thyself to the

priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded.” Even in that wonderful Golden Rule note what the Lord Jesus said: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.” Then note what He added in the same verse: FOR THIS IS THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS.” Matthew 7:12.

Now let us compare with some of these statements some truths in God’s messages of grace, remembering that Israel, under the law, received the spirit of bondage unto fear, and that they were a race of servants, whereas we have received the Spirit of adoption and are a race of sons. It is no longer “thou shalt” and “thou shalt not.” Note Romans 13:10: “Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” Again note Galatians 5:21 to 23: “Love is the fruit of the Spirit; and against such there is no law.” Note in II Corinthians 3:7 to 9, that the law is the ministration of condemnation, but in Romans 8:1 we learn that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus frees the believer from the law of sin and death, from the penalty of sin. Then note what that say Divine law enables the believer to do, in Romans 8:4:

“That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

The righteousness of the law is the fruit of the Spirit. And Christians please the Lord when they walk in the Spirit and manifest the fruit of the Spirit, always remembering I Corinthians 13:11: “and now abideth faith, hope and love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” I John 3:14. “Love is the end of the commandment as Christ is the end of the law for righteousness.” I Timothy 1:5—Romans 10:4 and 5.

By carefully comparing the Beatitudes in Matthew with the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22 and 23, we learn that what the Lord Jesus commanded in Matthew is found in the Christian who walks in the Spirit. It has often been said that what law demanded grace provided. In the Sermon on the Mount the peace-makers are called the children of God. In Ephesians Jesus Christ is the Peace-maker and believers are children of God by faith in the redemptive work of the Son of God, who made peace by the blood of His cross. Colossians 1:20 . . . Ephesians 2:15 to 20 . . . Galatians 3:26 to 28. In the Sermon on the Mount the meek are to inherit the earth. In Ephesians believers are seated in the heavenlies in Christ, and meekness is the fruit of the Spirit. In Matthew 24:13 we read, “he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved.” The end of what? Read it. In Ephesians the believer has been saved by grace, not by enduring, not of works, lest any man should boast. He is God’s workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

So as we test things that differ let us be of love and power and a sound mind, in obedience to II Timothy 1:7, and let us never make the foolish statement that there is nothing in Matthew or the Sermon on the Mount for members of the Body of Christ. Let us rather be unashamed workmen and find God’s Divine principle that will enable us to know what part of the spiritual programs which God gave to other ages and generations can be brought over into this age of grace, for the obedience and practice of members of the Body of Christ, that is compatible with the truth revealed to Paul by the risen Christ and revealed to us in Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians and in his other Epistles, knowing also that even Paul’s earlier Epistles must be studied and applied in the light of his last written Messages.

SEVERAL BAPTISMS : : : ONE BAPTISM

Let us note carefully Matthew 3:11; the words of John the Baptist, remembering that John the Baptist was a minister of the circumcision, and that he came baptizing with water that Christ might be made manifest to Israel. Acts 13:24. Luke 1:16 and 1:80, John 1:31.

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire.” Matthew 3:11.

Here then we have three baptisms: With water, John’s baptism; With the Holy Spirit, Christ’s baptism; With fire, Christ’s baptism.

Then note Matthew 20:22, “Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” They said they were able. One who replied was James, the brother of John. In Acts 12:2 we learn that he was beheaded. That was James’ baptism. Christ spoke in Luke 12:50 of His own death on the cross and called it His baptism. So here we have the fourth baptism in Matthew, the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Then note Matthew 28:19 and 20, the “so-called” great commission; “baptizing them into (or unto) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. This makes five baptisms in Matthew.

Then by way of comparison let us carefully read Ephesians 4:3 to 7, that the members of the Body of Christ are to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit, and acknowledge One Spirit, One Church and One baptism. Are Christian ministers to contend for One Church and One Faith? By all means. Are they to contend for One Baptism? By all means. But now this interesting and thought-provoking question, “Which one of the five baptisms of Matthew is referred to in the One Baptism of Ephesians 4:5?” It is certainly not John’s water baptism that Christ might be manifested to Israel. Israel was set aside, between the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the revelation of the Mystery in Ephesians. We referred to Matthew 28:19 and 20 as the “so-called” great commission for this age. We say “so-called,” that members of the Body of Christ might know that Paul received a new commission by revelation. He learned from Christ that reconciliation for Gentiles began when and because Israel was set aside (Romans 11:15), and therefore II Corinthians 5:18 is a greater commission for God’s workmen today than is the Matthew commission. Read carefully this great commission in II Corinthians 5:16 to 21.

Every member of the Body of Christ received His baptism when by the Divine operation he was made a member of that Body. Then and there he was baptized into the death of Christ. In this sense the all important baptism in this day of grace is the “death” baptism, a baptism not made with hands. Colossians 2:12 and Romans 6:3 to 6. The disciples of Jesus of Nazareth in Matthew had to wait many months after they received John’s water baptism before they received the Holy Spirit, for they were saved before Christ’s “death” baptism took place, and after that they received no so-called Christian water-baptism as a witness to the world that they had been buried with Christ by the Lord’s baptism.

May we, in closing ask you to carefully and prayerfully read Ephesians 3:9 and then answer this simple question: “Are you endeavoring to make other Christians see what is ‘the dispensation of the mystery’ revealed in Ephesians, or are you not rather joining with the religious Christians who are hiding the mystery under the religious program of Matthew?”