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The Herald of His Grace

Presenting *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume XVI
Issue 393

God, the Cause of Perceiving, Seeing and Hearing

by — Tony Nungesser

These are the words of the covenant, which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb. And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; The great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles: Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day. And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot. Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink: that ye might know that I am the LORD your God (Deuteronomy 29:1-6, KJV).

Now, why did God do that?

For forty years He did not give them the ability to perceive, see nor hear what He was really giving to them. For forty years Israel was strewn along in the wilderness. If God had opened their perception, opened their eyes, opened their ears, then they would not have been strewn along.

Until and unless God opens up our perception to perceive, until He opens up our eyes to see, until God opens our ears to hear, we will not. Humanity, when left to themselves, cannot receive that which is of God.

For the disposition of the flesh is death, yet the disposition of the spirit is life and peace, because the disposition of the flesh is enmity to



God, for it is not subject to the law of God, for neither is it able. Now those who are in flesh are not able to please God (Romans 8:6-8).

Now the soulish man is not receiving those things which are of the spirit of God, for they are stupidity to him, and he is not able to know them (I Corinthians 2:14).

Yes, dear friend, there is *no such thing* as God giving man a choice to believe or not to believe outside of Him making it so that they will or will not believe.

(see CAUSE, page 3543)

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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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This free weekly electronic publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
 - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6);
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

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Strictly Personal

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“... a bit here, a bit there” (Isaiah 28:10).

We are launching a new publishing imprint: *Little Bit Press*. This is designed to be a series of short children's books that teach the precious truths that we hold dear.

This has long been a plan of ours, and along with the passion of our dear brother Stephen Hill, we trust it will be a reality before long. Stephen, who is an ardent student of Scripture, an able teacher, and a clear, concise author, is currently working on the text for the books.

Stephen, with two young children himself, is well positioned to co-labor with us in such a project. Well do I remember the special joy and privilege it was for me, when my children were young, to bring great truths down to their level. This is now a daily part of Stephen's life – so he is prepared by Father for this grand opportunity.

To my knowledge these will be the first books of their kind. I am unaware of such books devoted to the type of Scripture truth that will be dedicated

CAUSE (continued from front page)

When the gospel goes out from the evangelist's mouth concerning what God has accomplished for mankind through the death, burial and resurrection of His Blessed and Only Begotten Son, all humanity cannot believe it for they are not able to believe it!

God has to open their perception to perceive, open their eyes to see and open their ears to hear – then, and *only* then will they perceive, see and hear.

We thank God for our salvation, because we can-

to this project. How could you assist in this unique undertaking?

First, we are in need of someone with artistic ability who could illustrate the pages of these books. We are looking for someone who would be doing this out of a servant's heart. This would be a labor of love, as it is with all of our Scripture-based publications. Our purpose is not business, but a ministry-minded undertaking. Please contact me if you, or someone you know, have the skills needed, and a passion for such a project.

Second, if you have any material that you, or someone you know, have already designed with children specifically in mind, we would also love to hear from you. Though Stephen is laying out the initial series, we would welcome further lines of quality children's publications.

Third, we will of course need finances for this project. The costs involved in doing a series of children's books will not be insignificant. The very nature of their style will incur additional costs to set up and print that the rest of our books do not. Every *little bit* of assistance toward this “Little Bit” project will help make it a reality, and will be a lasting investment.

Until, next time dear ones,

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

not save ourselves. In thanking God we are in effect saying that God has saved us and not we ourselves.

Also, we thank God that, in the far-off future, He will do for the rest of mankind what He so graciously did for us in opening our perception, eyes and ears as is evidenced by Philippians 2:9-11 – and it is all for the glory of God, the Father.

Thank you God for saving us! Amen!

■

Are the Twelve Apostles in the Body of Christ?

by — Joel W. Finck

It is important here for the reader to understand that this question is not whether the twelve apostles were saved or lost. Rather, the question pertains to whether the twelve apostles were transferred into the Body of Christ when the new dispensation was revealed to Paul, or whether they remained a part of Israel's kingdom program. A third alternative is that they obtained sort of a "dual hope," receiving the benefits and blessings of both the kingdom program and the dispensation of grace.

To some, the question itself may seem irrelevant or even ridiculous, but before examining the evidence of Scripture on the subject, let us first show the importance of the issue. It certainly would not matter to us whether God chose to place the twelve apostles into the Body or not. God can do as He pleases, and it would not affect the wonderful blessings of grace which we enjoy as members of the Body of Christ.

However, seeing the twelve apostles (and all kingdom saints living at the time) as part of the Body of Christ raises *huge* questions with regard to their teachings and writings. For example, if Peter was added to the Body of Christ after the dispensation of grace was revealed to Paul, are we to take Peter's epistles as instructions to the Body of Christ? Are we to understand that Peter is telling the Body of Christ that we are "a royal priesthood, an holy nation" (I Peter 2:9)? If so, what "nation" are we? How does Peter's statement that "baptism doth also now save us" (I Peter 3:21) square with Paul's affirmation that Christ sent him "not to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (I Corinthians 1:17)? With regard to the return of Christ, Peter has his readers,

Looking for and hastening unto the coming day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat (II Peter 3:12).

Whereas Paul tells us to be,

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).

The two positions regarding this question are known as the "twelve-in" and the "twelve-out" positions. In answering the question of whether the twelve apostles were added to the Body of Christ we will present Scriptural evidence that *they were not*, and we will answer objections to the "twelve-out" position.

Perhaps the most striking distinction between God's plan and purpose for Israel and His plan and purpose for the Body of Christ is the positions they occupy. It has often been said that Israel's was an "earthly" hope. By this, we do not mean that their hope and destiny is unspiritual in any way. When Christ establishes His kingdom, it will be a very spiritual kingdom, but it will take place on the **earth**. Zechariah prophesies that someday,

The LORD shall go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:3-4).

Then he goes on to say,

And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD (Zechariah 14:9).

Who is the "LORD" Who will do this? It is none other than Jesus Christ Himself! He speaks of this in Matthew 25:31,

When the Son of man shall come in His glory,

and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory.

To the twelve apostles He promises,

Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28).

All of this is in accordance with God's great kingdom promises to Israel that "the meek shall inherit the **earth**" (Psalm 37:11; cf. Matthew 5:5) and "the righteous shall inherit the **land**" (Psalm 37:29).

Yet, to "the church which is His Body" (see Ephesians 1:22-23), Paul writes,

And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in **heavenly** places in Christ (Ephesians 2:6);

and to the Philippian believers,

For our conversation [lit. "citizenship"] is in **heaven**; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:20).

Of course, some day,

The Lord shall descend from **heaven** with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be **caught up** together with them **in the clouds**, to meet the Lord **in the air**: and **so shall we ever be with the Lord** (I Thessalonians 4:16-17).

Paul refers to all of this as our "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13).

With all of this in mind, our question ought to be, how could the twelve apostles possibly be members of the Body of Christ when they were promised to live on the earth, and yet the "Body" is promised to live in heaven?

Another reason to view the twelve apostles as separate from the Body of Christ is the distinctive nature of their apostleship. Paul emphasizes this distinction in Galatians 2:8,

For he that wrought effectually in **Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision**, the same was mighty in me **toward the Gentiles**.

On this basis, an agreement was reached,

And when James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision (Galatians 2:9).

If they were all members of the Body of Christ, in which "there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek" (Romans 10:12), then why did the apostles maintain this distinction?

The answer is that, while the "New Creation," the Body of Christ, was already under way with the ministry of Paul, the many "circumcision" believers still remained to whom God had promised an earthly, kingdom hope. God did not go back on His word to them, therefore Peter, James and John agreed to continue their ministries with them.

Going right along with this, Paul actually names the two groups of saints which existed during this time of transition from kingdom to grace:

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a **New Creature** [or, "creation"] (Galatians 6:15-).

This "New Creation" in which circumcision and uncircumcision no longer avail is none other than the Body of Christ, also known as the "One New Man" made up of Jew and Gentile who have been reconciled into "One Body" (Ephesians 2:15-16). Then Paul pronounces a blessing on them:

And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them ... (Galatians 6:16).

Yet, so as not to leave out that other group of saints which still existed at that time, Paul adds,

... and upon *the Israel of God*.

Who is the “Israel of God?” None other than “*the circumcision*” to whom Peter, James and John agreed to confine their ministries (Galatians 2:9).

It is sometimes asked by “twelve-in” proponents whether those who were under the dispensation of promise came under the law when it was given, and if so then why not transfer those under the kingdom program into the Body of Christ. The answer to the first question is, obviously, yes. The people from the dispensation of promise were placed under the law; but this is because the law was “*added*” to the promise, therefore it is not an entirely *new* program, but merely an *adjustment* to an already functioning plan. Paul explains this in Galatians 3:17,

And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

The dispensation of grace, on the other hand, was an *entirely* new program, not just a modification or further revelation of a previous program. Therefore we would not expect people from the previous dispensation, who were already promised a certain set of promises and a future hope, to be transferred to an entirely different set of promises and a different hope.

Now, to put our “twelve-out” position to the test, we shall consider three of the most common “twelve-in” arguments and objections and examine them in the light of Scripture.

FIRST ARGUMENT

I Corinthians 1:2 says,

Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.

Then I Corinthians 12:13 states,



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For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free.

Answer

It would appear that Paul is considering “*all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ*” to be members of the “*one body*.”

This sounds quite convincing at first glance, except for an important fact: while Paul refers to “*all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ*” in I Corinthians 1:2, he is not addressing them when he states that “*by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body*.” Note carefully that in I Corinthians 1:2, Paul simply states that the Corinthian believers are “*called saints*” right along with “*all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ*.”

Paul's whole point is that the Corinthian believers are just as much “*saints*” as believers anywhere, regardless of the program to which they belong. It is interesting that Paul ends the verse, “*both theirs and ours*,” which supports the idea that there is some sort of distinction between “*Body*” saints and “*Kingdom*” saints.

SECOND ARGUMENT

Paul's kinsmen, Andronicus and Junia were “*in Christ*” before him (Romans 16:7). Therefore, they must be included in the “*Body*” spoken of in Romans 12:5.

Answer

Two things must be remembered in response to this point. First, being “*in Christ*” is not necessarily the same as being “*in the Body of Christ*.”

While it is true that the phrase, “*in Christ*” is almost exclusive to Paul, Peter does use it as well (I Peter 3:16), and it is often used in a *redemptive* sense rather than the *dispensational* sense of being in the Body of Christ.

Secondly, in Romans 12:5 Paul is not saying that every believer living at that time was a member of the

Body of Christ. Back in Romans 2, Paul addresses the Jew (Romans 2:17) and speaks at length about what it meant for a Jew to be considered righteous:

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Romans 2:28-29).

It is true that Paul is referring to the circumcision of the heart, but the individual in question is still a **Jew**, a distinction which is done away in the body of Christ. Yet, as Paul wrote this, there was still a group of believers who were truly Jews in that they were not only from a Jewish heritage, but they had also received spiritual circumcision of the heart by faith in their Messiah. Andronicus and Junia were a part of this group.

THIRD ARGUMENT

There were doubtless many localities which included people who became believers before the new dispensation began and those who were saved afterward. If they belonged to separate groups and had different hopes there would be constant confusion in teaching.

Answer

Actually, Paul recognized this situation and tried to avoid it as much as possible. This is why he wrote,

Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation (Romans 15:20).

The whole “*twelve-in, twelve-out*” discussion seems to be one of dispensational consistency, and to hold a “*twelve-in*” position begs one final question: If it was God's plan to transfer the twelve apostles into the Body of Christ when Israel rejected the kingdom offer, and then use them to teach, instruct and write to the Body of Christ in their epistles, WHY DID GOD RAISE UP THE APOSTLE PAUL?



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