



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume 23  
Issue 570

# Right Division

(AN OVERVIEW OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH)

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

## Part 10

### Israel's Place in God's Plan

#### A Brief Survey of the Greek Scriptures: The Book of Acts (Section 1)

#### THE DIVINE BARRIER

Before moving forward with our consideration of the book of Acts, it will help to consider the important issue that Paul called "the middle wall of partition" (Ephesians 2:14).

When God called Abraham, He placed a *division* between his descendants and all of the rest of humanity. God established a "barrier" between Jew and Gentile, Israel and the Nations. Paul called this division a "middle wall of partition." The *Concordant Version* calls it "the central wall of the barrier." The *Dabhar Version* renders it "the middle wall of the blockage."

How interesting these words are: partition, barrier, blockage. The Greek word used to translate these is φραγμός (*phragmos*), meaning "a fence, or inclosing barrier" (Strong<sup>1</sup>), "that which separates, prevents two from coming together" (Thayer<sup>2</sup>).

When reading through the Scriptures, it is vitally important that we ask ourselves two simple questions:



1. Is this *middle wall of partition* up, or is it down?

2. If it's up, which side of the wall are we on?

Recognizing and answering these crucial questions is an important key in following Paul's instruction found in II Timothy 2:15 of "rightly dividing," "correctly cutting"<sup>3</sup> or "correctly partitioning"<sup>4</sup> the "Word of truth."

As we read through the book of Acts, asking ourselves these two important questions we will see that the middle wall remains firmly in place, all the way until the end. As members of the nations, we therefore find ourselves on the outside looking in. It will not be until we get to Paul's epistle to the Ephesians that we see this barrier removed.<sup>5</sup>

#### MOVING ON FROM THE GOSPELS TO THE BOOK OF ACTS

As when moving from the book of Malachi to Matthew's Gospel, when we turn the page from the Gos-

1. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*.  
2. *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*.

3. *Concordant Version*, 1976 – 6<sup>th</sup> Edition.

4. *Concordant Version*, 1927 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.

5. For a further look at the "middle wall of partition" see *The Middle Wall*, Charles H. Welch, [Bible Student's Notebook #550](#).



pel accounts to the book of Acts many assume that the theme changes. However, the book of Acts is the sequel and continuation of the Gospel of Luke. We might title Acts "Luke: Part Two,"<sup>6</sup> with the doctrinal thrust remaining unchanged: *the expectation of a literal, physical, earthly, Abrahamic and Davidic Kingdom which rules over the rest of the nations.*

We'll briefly note a few examples of the expectation that was found in the Gospels, now being continued throughout the book of Acts.

### Acts 1:3

*To whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.*

After His resurrection and prior to His ascension into heaven, Christ conducted a 40-day seminar with His apostles. He opened "their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24:45). If there ever was anyone who had an understanding of the theme of Acts, it would have been Christ's apostles.

### Acts 1:6-7

*When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, "Lord, will you AT THIS TIME restore AGAIN the Kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know*

6. Cf. Acts 1:1-3. "Acts is a continuation of the account of our Lord's ministry as recorded by Luke, who presents Him as Son of Mankind." – A.E. Knoch, *Concordant Commentary on the New Testament*

*the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in His own power."*

Here we have a vital question asked by the apostles along with a telling answer provided by Christ. Having been enlightened from the Scriptures, Christ's apostles fully and legitimately expected their nation to be restored. They were rightfully looking to possess the promised Kingdom.<sup>7</sup> Their only question was not whether the Kingdom would be restored, but rather about its timing.

In His answer, Christ cast no doubt whatsoever upon the fact that their Kingdom *would* be restored. Instead, He simply informs them that it wasn't for them to know the divine timing of their national restoration.

Christ could not have answered "Yes" to their question, since, as we now know through the ministry of Paul that a Secret Administration would in effect "postpone" its restoration. Neither could He have answered "No," for it was not yet time to reveal the Secret that would result in its "delay."<sup>8</sup> So Israel's Messiah gave them the only appropriate answer that He could,

*It is not for you to know the times or the sea-*

7. "Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the Kingdom" (Daniel 7:22).  
8. The words "postpone" and "delay" are used here in a relative sense (*i.e.*, from the human viewpoint). As the circumstances related to Israel, it would have *seemed* to them as a postponement and delay. However, from the absolute sense (*i.e.*, the divine viewpoint) there never was or would be any "postponement" or "delay," as all was in accord with God's perfect, predetermined timing.



48 pp., PB

## The Ages: God's Time Periods

by — Edward Henry Clayton (1887-1972)

Chapters:

The Purpose of the Ages	The Number of Ages	The First Two Ages
Eonian Life	(Eons)	(Eons)
The Ages (Eons, Aeons)	The Present Age	The Purpose of the Ages
	The Ages (Eons) to	(Eons)
	Come	

See order form.

sons, which the Father has put in His own power.<sup>9</sup>

### Acts 2:1, 14, 16, 22, 36

*When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ... But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said to them, "You men of Judaea, and all you that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words ... This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel ..."*

*You men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as you also know ... Therefore let all the House of Israel know assuredly, that God has made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

Many wrongly assume that something completely new begins at Pentecost<sup>10</sup> as recorded in Acts chapter 2, that a dispensational change was taking place here. Without ever seriously stopping to consider why, they then move ahead to establish their doctrines concerning today with this Holy Day from the Mosaic Law as their key.

However, none of this is actually the case. Instead, what took place on Pentecost set in motion the next stage of development in God's prophetic dealing with Israel.

In the following considerations, we'll be able to see

9. "He had been telling them about the kingdom of Israel, but did not tell them *when* it would be restored to them. He does not correct their ideas as to the *character* of the kingdom, but keeps them in suspense as to the *time*. That would depend on the reception accorded their testimony, hence could not be foretold without unfavorably affecting its proclamation. Indeed, we are kept in suspense throughout the book, till the very close, when the kingdom is rejected by the Jews in Rome, and even then we are referred to Isaiah's question, "Till when?" God alone knows when, though in these days there are many signs that the longed-for time is near." – A.E. Knoch, *Concordant Commentary on the New Testament*

10. Pentecost (*i.e.*, the Feast of Harvest, or the Feast of Weeks) was held fifty days after Passover. The word Pentecost comes from the Greek word meaning "fiftieth."

"Pentecost is a picture of the salvation of a first fruit of the nation. This is what occurred, both on the day of Pentecost and during the entire period covered by this book (James 1:18)." – A.E. Knoch, *Concordant Commentary on the New Testament*

why the events of Pentecost were but a continuation of Israel's prophetic program.

- The "church"<sup>11</sup> present on the day of Pentecost was Jewish.<sup>12</sup>

The usage of the word "*church*" here in Acts chapter two is not an indication that there is a change in divine programs. Rather, this "*church*" was in place *before* the Day of Pentecost, as we can see by the fact that those who believed on that day were "*added to the church*" already in existence (:41, 47).<sup>13</sup>

The "*church*," to which the believers of Pentecost were "*added*," was the Kingdom Church and was based on Peter's confession that Jesus was the Christ (or Messiah). Peter was then given the keys to this Kingdom Church with power to "*bind*" and "*loose*."<sup>14</sup>

- Pentecost was a Jewish feast day given in the Law of Moses.<sup>15</sup> It was a part of Israel's holy days which Paul would later refer to as "*weak and beggarly elements*" and "*bondage*."<sup>16</sup>
- Peter addressed only the physical descendants of Abraham at Pentecost. Notice the words, "*You men of Judea*," "*You men of Israel*," "*Men and Brethren*" and "*House of Israel*" throughout the passage.
- Pentecost clearly was a fulfillment of Jewish prophecy: "*This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel*" (:16); that which was "*the promise*" (:4, 33, 39).

Clearly we see that "*the middle wall of partition*" between Jews and Gentiles (*i.e.*, Israel and the members of the nations) remains firmly in place. ►

11. The Greek word often rendered "*church*" in most English versions is ἐκκλησία (*ekklesia*, or *ecclesia*), a compound word meaning "called-out" (*ek* = "out"; *kaleō* = "called"). The *ecclesia* is God's "called-out" ones.

12. Therefore it is *not* to be confused with Paul's revelation of "*the Body of Christ*" – "*the church, which is His body*" (Ephesians 1:22-23), which was hidden until it was revealed to and through him.

13. In fact, there was even a "*church*" in Israel's prior history, made up of those who were *called out* of Egypt – "*the church in the wilderness*" (Acts 7:38).

14. Matthew 16:15-20; cf. John 20:23.

15. Leviticus 23:15-16; Deuteronomy 16:9-10.

16. Galatians 4:9-11.

### Acts 2:38

*Then Peter said unto them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

Part of the message that Peter preached on Pentecost involved water baptism as a requirement for salvation. Water baptism has no part in the gospel message committed to Paul for the Body of Christ, let alone a prerequisite for salvation today.<sup>17</sup>

### Acts 2:44-45

*All that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.*

The Kingdom Church, in accordance with the Kingdom teachings of Christ,<sup>18</sup> sold their possessions and established a common treasury in expectation of their coming Kingdom.<sup>19</sup>

### Acts 2:46

*They, continuing daily with one accord in the Temple ...*

If there were any dispensational changes, the Apostles were completely unaware of them, for they continued at the Temple throughout the book of Acts.<sup>20</sup> Such Temple activity means that “*the middle wall of partition*” remains firmly in place.

### Acts 3:6-8

*Then Peter said, “Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have I give you: **in the name of***

17. Ephesians 4:5. Even the spiritual baptism of Pentecost, where Christ was the baptizer and Israel was baptized into the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11-12; Acts 1:5) is set in contrast with the spiritual baptism of this current dispensation, where God’s spirit is the baptizer and the believer is baptized into the Body of Christ. The student of Scripture should learn to make a difference where God makes a difference. There are two different spiritual baptisms: one is to the Kingdom Church, the other is to the church which is His Body. One is associated with signs and wonders, and the other is not.

18. Matthew 19:21; Mark 10:21; Luke 12:33; 18:22.

19. Acts 3:6; 4:32-35.

20. 3:1, 3, 8, 11; 5:20-21, 25, 42, etc.

*Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. ... and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the Temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.*

Just as we had noticed in the Gospel accounts, the natural result of the ministry of Israel’s Kingdom was that their message was accompanied by healing.

*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 (Matthew 9:35).*

Now, Messiah’s apostles follow course. The many healings recorded throughout the book of Acts were a foretaste – a sampling – of all that *Israel’s restored Kingdom* was prophesied to be when it was established.<sup>21</sup>

Christ, and now His apostles, not only proclaimed the Good News of the Kingdom, but demonstrated it to them!<sup>22</sup> These healings were tangible demonstration of what was in store when Christ would restore again the Kingdom to Israel. The nation was having a foretaste of,

*The powers of the age<sup>23</sup> to come (Hebrews 6:5).*

### Acts 3:13

*The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His Son Jesus ...*

21. “*the inhabitant shall not say, ‘I am sick’*” (Isaiah 33:24).

“*Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing*” (Isaiah 35:5-6).

22. “*And it came to pass afterward, that He went throughout every city and village, **preaching and showing** the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God*” (Luke 8:1).

23. Some translations mistakenly render αἰων (aion) as “world” (and even in other places as “eternal” and “for ever”) when the word clearly means “age,” or “eon.” For a further look at this subject see:

*Eons and Worlds: A Preliminary Overview*, Frank Neil Pohorlak, [Bible Student’s Notebook #446](#).

“*Ages*” or “*Eternity*” and the English Versions, John Dokas, [Bible Student’s Notebook #309](#).

*Definition of Bible Terms: Aeon and Kosmos*, Arthur P. Adams, [Bible Student’s Notebook #517](#).

*Definition of Bible Terms: Eternity*, Arthur P. Adams, [Bible Student’s Notebook #518](#).

*Forever, Eternal and Everlasting*, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. [Bible Student’s Notebook #83](#).

Acts continues with references to the covenant God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.<sup>24</sup> He was Israel's God. Paul would later say, looking back on this time,

*That at that time you [Gentiles, i.e., members of the nations] were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world (Ephesians 2:12).*

### Acts 3:19-21

*Repent therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, Who before was preached to you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the age began.*

We have before us the first real “offer” of the Kingdom to Israel. Peter lays before them a plea for their national repentance which would bring about the return of their Messiah to cleanse them of their sins and re-establish their Kingdom. These three verses are literally filled with nuggets of truth related to Israel's Kingdom hope.

- Peter calls Israel to national repentance so that their “sins may be blotted out” (:19).
- Throughout the book of Acts their national sins are enumerated, the least of which was not the rejection and murder of their promised Messiah. Their indictment was plainly declared:

*You men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you ... you have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain (2:22-23).*

*You denied the Holy One and the Just ... and killed the Prince of life (3:14-15).*

*Be it known ... to all the people of Israel,*

<sup>24</sup>. Cf. Acts 7:32.

*that ... Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Whom you crucified ... (4:10).*

*Jesus, Whom you slew and hung on a tree (5:30).*

*Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of Whom you have been now the betrayers and murderers (7:52).*

- If they repented, these national sins would be blotted out. However, notice that it was not at that time that they would be blotted out, but in the future:

*... when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord (3:19).*

- Israel's “times of refreshing” (:19) will come at the Second Coming when God “shall send Jesus Christ” back to them (:20).
- These “times of refreshing” (:19) will begin the “times of the restitution of all things” (:21).
- “The restitution of all things” (:21) is a reference to Jewish prophecy – that “which God had spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the age began.”

These prophets were God's spokesmen to Israel, declaring their national destiny and purpose. This “restitution” is the national “refreshing” when God will “restore again the Kingdom to Israel” (1:6).

- This “refreshing” by “restoration” was the central theme of all Hebrew prophecy, as it “was spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets” (:21).

With this first real “offer” of the Kingdom to Israel, we see that “the middle wall of partition” between Jews and Gentiles remains firmly in place.

### AN IMPORTANT DISTINCTION

At this point it is extremely important that we make note of something critical concerning right divi- ►

sion. In Acts 3:21 preparation has been set in place for a future contrast to be made by Paul, the apostle to the nations.<sup>25</sup>

From the beginning of this age<sup>26</sup> there has been this single continuous theme being developed: a literal, physical, earthly, Abrahamic and Davidic Kingdom, **“spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the age began.”**<sup>27</sup>

However, in Paul’s closing words of Romans, he provides a “trailer” of what is to come in his Ephesians epistle by declaring **“the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the age began”** (Romans 16:25). Note the unmistakable contrasts.

<b>Scripture:</b>	Acts 3:21	Romans 16:25
<b>Spokesman:</b>	Peter	Paul
<b>Theme:</b>	Prophecy	Mystery
<b>Emphasis:</b>	“Spoken ... since the age began”	“Kept secret since the age began”

Things that have been “spoken ... since the age began” can’t possibly be the same things that have been “kept secret since the age began.” Thus, it is imperative to recognize the divine difference between the message of Peter in the book of Acts and the one that Christ would later reveal to and through Paul.

**Spoken ... since the age began** (Acts 3:21).

**Secret ... since the age began** (Romans 16:25).

This can’t be stressed enough: what Peter taught to Israel had been spoken since the age began; what would later be made known through Paul had previously been kept secret since the age began. Things that are different are not the same. It is crucial that we learn to make a difference when and where God makes a difference.<sup>28</sup>

*(to be continued)*

**28.** Thus the true goal of right division is to look for the many dividing marks (or distinctions) that God Himself has placed within Scripture.

**25.** “I speak to you Gentiles [i.e., members of the nations], inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles” (Romans 11:13).

**26.** There are a total of five ages in God’s revealed plan. We currently live in the third “evil age” which began with the flood of Noah and continues until the Second Coming of Christ. For a further look at God’s plan of the Ages (or Eons) see:

A “Handy” Chart of the Eons, E. Lynwood Crystal, [Bible Student’s Notebook 518](#)

The Eons of the Bible (with Concordance), Joseph E. Kirk, [Bible Student’s Notebook 433](#)

The Divine Calendar, A.E. Knoch, [Bible Student’s Notebook 434, 435](#)

The Eons of the Ages (a chart) [Bible Student’s Notebook 353](#)

The Purpose of the Eons (a chart) [Bible Student’s Notebook 352](#)

The Ages: God’s Time Periods, Edward Henry Clayton, Part 1: [Bible Student’s Notebook 371](#), Part 2: [Bible Student’s Notebook 372](#)

**27.** We have previously noted this same phrase in our consideration of Luke 1:70.



72 pp, BK.

*See order form.*

## The Myth of Easter

“The Christian Mythology” Series

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

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## Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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This free electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation that God will 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 in ages past" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 1:1-3);
- 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);
  - union in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6);
  - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication. 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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### ABBREVIATION KEY

<i>Scripture Version</i>	Concordance (Knoch)
(Unless otherwise noted all Scripture quotations are taken from the <i>Bible Student's Version</i> ).	CL: A Critical Lexicon and Concordance (Bullinger)
CV: Concordant Literal Version	CWS: Complete Word Study Dictionary (Zodhiates)
DAR: Darby Translation	FoS: Figures of Speech (Bullinger)
DT: Dabhar Translation	SEC: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance
FF: Ferrar Fenton Bible	TGL: Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon
KJV: King James Version	UR: Unsearchable Riches
RE: Rotterdam's Emphasized Bible	VED: Vine's Expository Dictionary
WT: Weymouth Translation	YAC: Young's Analytical Concordance
YLT: Young's Literal Translation	
<i>Reference Sources</i>	<i>Reference Notations</i>
AA: Analytical Analysis (Welch)	<i>cf.</i> – compare
BDB: Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon	<i>e.g.</i> – for example
CB: Companion Bible Notes & Appendixes (Bullinger)	<i>et al.</i> – and others
CC: Concordant Commentary (Knoch)	<i>etc.</i> – et cetera (and so on)
CKC: Concordant Keyword	<i>ff.</i> – and the following
	<i>i.e.</i> , – that is

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