

Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume 28 Issue 677

Are Bride and Body Identical?

Part 5 of 10

by — F.H. Robison (1885-1932)

He who has the Bride is the Bridegroom (John 3:29). He is the Head of the Body, the Ecclesia (Colossians 1:18).

THE PAROUSIA

The gospel of the Kingdom as proclaimed by Paul in the synagogues is briefly set forth in Acts 17:3. The relation which Messiah's suffering and resurrection bore to the Hebrew Scriptures is the main theme of his discourse. From the Thessalonian letters we learn that he told them much of the events preceding (I Thessalonians 2:14-19) and connected with our Lord's Second Coming – the same Coming, by the way, which had been long foretold; for the word *parousia* (as connected with our Lord) is never used of anything bearing on the Body-ecclesia of the present dispensation.

The activities of Acts 17:1-19:20 bring in the eleventh-hour laborers of the vineyard-penny parable. The parable related not at all to the ecclesia of the present time, for there was no such thing when the parable was given. We must not read subsequent revelations back into former circumstances.

The believers, both Jew and Gentile, of this transition period, the "ecclesia of God" (I Corinthians 10:32) as it then existed, would all have found their place in the Kingdom on Earth (as far as revelation then showed) had not the nationwide and individual apostasy of Israel made necessary the suspense of all matters relating to that Kingdom, the readjustment of the ages (Hebrews 11:3) so as to do a work now that would seem to belong after the Millennium, the readjustment of the saints (Ephesians 4:12) to the

new conditions and the revealing of purposes and destinies never known or dreamed of by any prophet from Adam down to Paul.

Moreover, believers of the Acts 13-28 period, precisely like those of the Gospels and Acts 1-12, will have their portion on Earth, where they expected it, save for those who were reached in the purpose of God through Paul's ministry, a ministry not shared by the Twelve. This will be more apparent as we proceed.

SIGNS AND WONDERS IN DECLINE

A crisis is reached in Acts 19:21, which indicates that there was at least coming a change in Paul's ministry. The glowing times of Romans 15:19 were about to pass. The "mighty signs and wonders" began their decline, and later failed altogether, as was promised just about this time (I Corinthians 13:8).

Christ as the *Son of David* and consequent *Heir* to the *throne*, as preached in Acts 13, has given place to Christ as the Son of Abraham and heir of the *land*, as set forth in Romans and Galatians. That friendship teaching in turn gives place to Christ as the Supplanter of Adam and Heir of the unlimited dominion of the *Earth* and members of God's *family*.

This brings in the ministry of conciliation from II Corinthians 5:14-21 on, but there is something more grand, or if not more grand then more specific, ▶

than this general son relation. It is the matter of allotment to joint heirship in the heavenly realms. The reconciliation is shared by all. All enemies, both in Heaven and on Earth, are made into friends – more than that, appreciative, responsive, and single-heart-

ed sons (Colossians 1:20) - but all will not share the same destiny or allotment; at least not during the ages or eons, and beyond that the Scripture does not go.

From Servitude to Glory

We are thus led through a four-semester course in God's school.

- (1) Servitude, which is associated with "pardon," dependent on "repentance";
- (2) Friendship, with its "justification" in response to "faith";
- (3) Sonship, with its "reconciliation," according to the "good pleasure of His will"; and
- (4) JOINT-REGENCY, with its "weight of GLORY," issuing from nothing but sovereign "grace."

Whatever the lesson or whenever learned it is always One: Lord, God, Father, and Heart-Despot; over all, through all, in all;1 Creator, Sustainer, Parent.

Although Paul's ministry² was undergoing a gradual

- 1. [Editor:] For a further look at the Divine Cycle, see:
 - Romans 11:36 The Cornerstone Truth (Portals: Gateways to Divine Orientation - Part 1), Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Bible Student's Notebook #508;
 - All is Out of God, A.E. Knoch, <u>Bible Student's Notebook #429</u>;
 - Circularity, J.E. Jacobsen, Bible Student's Notebook #539;
 - The Pre-Creation Era of the Universe: God Alone All in God, M. Jaegle, Bible Student's Notebook #644;
 - The Law of Circularity (May 1); All is of God (May 8); God is the Creator (May 28), Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Daily Goodies [book] (see order form).
- 2. [Editor:] Paul had an early ministry (diakonia; G1248) to the members of the nations (Romans 11:13, cf. Galatians 2:7; II Corinthians 4:1) which purpose was to provoke Israel to emulation (Romans 11:14). It was a ministry of grace (Acts 20:24), spirit (over against death; II Corinthians 3:8), righteousness (over against condemnation: 9), and conciliation (5:18). For a look at the subject of Paul's priestly ministry, see:
 - Paul's Priestly Ministry, Adlai Loudy , <u>Bible Student's Notebook</u> **#532**;
 - The Priestly Ministry of Paul, A.E. Knoch, Bible Student's Notebook #532;
 - Paul's Previous Ministries, A.E. Knoch, Bible Student's Notebook
 - Onward and Upward: Paul's Priestly Ministry Transitioning Toward His Celestial, Vladimir Gelesnoff, Bible Student's Notebook **#509**;
 - The Administrations, Adlai Loudy, <u>Bible Student's Notebook</u> #497:

change, still there is a great difference between the things which he said to the Ephesian elders in his farewell to them at Miletus and the things said in his later letter, generally bearing the Ephesian ascription. Those later things, being entirely spiritual in point of destiny, were committed to no ecclesia by word of mouth, but to all alike – by letter.

Quite probably there is a hint of a future ministry in unmixed grace in Acts 20:24 when reference is made to "testifying the gospel of the grace of God" (cf. Ephesians 3:2). In no case can we read into the "whole counsel of God" of Acts 20:27 revelations which were made only after that and which belong to another ministry and dispensation,

hid from ages and from generations, but now ... made manifest to His saints (Colossians 1:26).

About the same time it was that Paul besought the believers in Rome to pray with and for him that he might be delivered from the *stubborn* in Judea. The stubborn were not the unbelievers as is erroneously suggested by the Common Version, but the believers who resisted the grace of God, those who were baffled but not defeated at the Jerusalem conference. During the intervening years the Judean believers were augmented in numbers by the tens of thousands (Acts 21:20), and they were the ones who did all in their power to kill Paul on his last visit at the hard Jewish capital.

Another Pentecost

Acts 21 involves another Pentecost, but sadly different from that first one after Christ's death and resurrection. Then the believers hastened to give evidence that their faith in the Kingdom was strong. They "endured a great fight of affliction" and did it gladly. All of the believers clung together. Now the most prominent herald of the Kingdom is hated and mobbed by Pharisaical believers. The myriads (Greek for tens of thousands) of believers were "all zealous of the Law," but not so zealous of the Word of God. They passed by in silence Paul's allusions to Jesus as the nation's

- The Readjustment Administration, Adlai Loudy, Bible Student's Notebook #492;
- The Divine Calendar, A.E. Knoch, Bible Student's Notebook #434;
- A New Administration at the Close of Acts, Adlai Loudy (Part 1, Bible Student's Notebook #562; Part 2, Bible Student's Notebook #563).

Messiah (Acts 22:8, 10, 19), for they themselves believed that, and was it not Paul's step-father who had carried the cross of Jesus, and was not his sister among them? However, the single word "Gentiles" (Acts 22:21) prodded the sore into frenzy.

Paul had about fulfilled the ministry which was given to him at his conversion, to bear the Lord's name (1) before the Gentiles, (2) and kings, (3) and the children of Israel. There remained only the testimony before kings and the sizable fragment of the Jewish dispersion which was at Rome.

There was no more work in Jerusalem for Paul, so, being warned by his nephew of a plot to kill him,³ he was transferred as a prisoner to Caesarea, where the hearts of Japhetic Gentiles had first been purified by the faith which is in Jesus Christ.

Probably Cornelius was not any longer there, but Philip was; and so were his four prophetically-endowed daughters. Luke also was there; and there, at the "limits of the earth," where the rock-bound, almost harborless Jewish land touched all too unsympathetically the unstable Gentile-picturing sea, he may have written his Gospel and much of Acts during the two years of waiting.

SHIPWRECKED KINGDOM HOPES

The view was prevalent in the early centuries of this dispensation that Luke's Gospel was the one more specially written for Gentiles, as Matthew's is distinctly Jewish. This is only a half-stated truth. As previously mentioned, the Gospels were never intended to be identical and could not be, any more than views of four sides of the same house would likely be identical. Matthew witnesses of our Lord as the King. The throne is the throne of David and therefore peculiarly Jewish. Luke witnesses of the Lord as the Son of Man, God's human Son, like Adam in the matters of sonship and worldly dominion, but quite unlike him in the way of experience and knowledge. Luke is the only evangelist who mentions Adam. For this reason it may be said that Luke's Gospel is singularly understandable by Gentiles, because the work of the Son of Man goes as far as the Earth reaches.

David, Moses, Adam, God are, therefore in some senses representative of the undercurrent of facts in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.

The shipwreck of Acts 27 was not unlike the hopes of the Kingdom. If the helmsmen of the Jewish ship had taken Paul's advice their hopes need not to have gone to the bottom of the sea – howbeit they shall be recovered and planted again!

Though the Jewish ship, trusting as of old in Egypt, was wrecked and the Kingdom hopes jettisoned, still Paul and his immediate companions, together with many Gentiles, were individually saved from the wreckage and were given better things than they could have had otherwise.

Yet the shipwreck was only a picture, and that which it foreshowed could still be averted. Would the Jewish group in Rome avert or seal the doom?

While the third and final judicial sentence of blindness (Isaiah 6:9-10; Matthew 13:14-15; John 12:39-41; Acts 28:26-27) remained unspoken there were still Kingdom powers; and these were freely used on the island of Malta, to the blessing of yet more Gentiles.

Paul's Pivotal Period

Acts 28 brings Paul to Rome and to the rejection of his message by the Jewish colony as such. He brought them a message which would free them not only from the yoke of the Mosaic ritual but also from the yoke of the Roman Empire. Yet, like their prototypes, they chose again, "We have no king but Caesar."

After the sentence we learn that Paul was active in Rome for a space of two years "proclaiming the Kingdom of God, and teaching that which concerns the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 28:31). Was this not the same kind of testimony to the Kingdom that was given to the Jews, as mentioned in :23, "certifying to the Kingdom of God and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and the prophets"? The answer is, No.

The ministry which followed the rejection of Israel we have in Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and II Timothy; and most of those things could not ▶

^{3.} The nephew would hardly have had access to such information had not the plotters been believers.

be deduced from the law and the prophets, for the adequate reason that they were not there. Furthermore, "Jesus" was our Lord's personal name and is associated with His humiliation by and among His people Israel. That humiliation is made into a mark of honor, it is true, but the name "Jesus" is not His official title. That phase of the divine sovereignty which was proclaimed after the rejection is intimated by the qualifying clause, "and teaching that which concerns the Lord Jesus Christ."

Since Acts⁵ is a history not of the ecclesia as we now know it but of Israel's rejection of the reoffer of the Kingdom - as they had refused it under our Lord's personal offer – we would not expect to find any elaboration of Paul's prison message here. However, the "both Lord and Christ" with which the name of Jesus is bounded certainly suggests, if nothing else did, that he was not proceeding with the selfsame ministry that had occupied his efforts when first arriving at Rome.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The term "Kingdom of God" is a very broad one. It is generic. It names the genus, and distinguishes from the Kingdom of God's adversary. It encompasses both Heavens and Earth. Where a specific phase is referred to, something will be found to help us know

- 4. [Editor:] For more information on the names of God the Father and His Son, see:
 - The Use of Names and Titles of God (Part 1), Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Bible Student's Notebook #511;
 - The Names of Jesus, E.W. Bullinger, Bible Student's Notebook #325;
 - "Christ Jesus" and "Jesus Christ," A.E. Knoch, <u>Bible Student's</u> Notebook #325;
 - God is God, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Daily Goodies (May 27) book (see order form): - Companion Bible, E.W. Bullinger, Appendix #4 (see order form);
 - The Divine Names and Titles, E.W. Bullinger (see order form).
- **5.** [*Editor:*] For more on the period covered by the Book of Acts, see:
- - The Acts Transition and the Pentecostal Dispensation, Sir Robert Anderson, Bible Student's Notebook #507;
 - The Acts of the Apostles And Paul's Epistles: Considered Historically and Dispensationally, J.J.B. Coles, Bible Student's Notebook #613;
 - The Earlier and Later Chapters of the Book of Acts, Sir Robert Anderson, Bible Student's Notebook #526;
 - Acts 28: The Dispensational Boundary, Charles H. Welch, Bible Student's Notebook #550;
 - Before and After Acts 28, Oscar Baker, Bible Student's Notebook #595;
 - The Acts Period and the Acts Period Epistles, Tom Ballinger, Bible Student's Notebook #604;
 - The Dispensation of the Grace of God, and Acts 28:28 A Dispensational Boundary Line, Otis Q. Sellers (see order form).

the species of kingdom under that general head. All well-instructed teachers of God's Word proclaim all phases of the Kingdom of God, but they do not invite or urge men into something that is either past or in abeyance.

SEQUENCE AND ORDER OF GREEK BOOKS

If the Greek Scriptures are read through, omitting the signed epistles of Paul, we find that there is no apparent discrepancy and no confusion. There is the Jewish garment and skirt and a more or less prominent Gentile fringe. The Gospels follow on from the Hebrew writings. Acts follows on from the Gospels, showing a merciful extenuation of opportunity to the favored nation. Jewish epistles follow on from Acts, giving instructions for believing Jewish individuals, either when the city was about to be destroyed or after it had been ruined, so that the faith of Pentecostal Kingdom believers might not be entirely lost. Revelation, the Unveiling, follows on from the Jewish epistles, to give encouragement particularly in the future in the trying times preceding the coming of their Messiah in power and great glory.

The arrangement of the books in the three oldest Greek manuscripts, as well as church history for the first three centuries, reveals the fact that there was always a distinction made between the Jewish writings and those of Paul.

At all events, in view of the evidence of the manuscripts it seems appropriate to proceed with our examination by taking up the Jewish epistles next, as they follow on from and belong to the Gospels and Acts, wherein we have found nothing that is fairly comparable to the message to, and of, the ecclesia of this dispensation.

THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS

Merely for chronological reasons we turn first to the book of Hebrews, which is Jewish both in its name and content. The writer was both prophet and priest to the believing Jews, to admonish and comfort and encourage the fainting believers among Israel, after they had been nationally cast aside, and when, as in the dark days just prior to the Babylonian captivity, the just had nothing to live on but his faith (Habakkuk 2:4).

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Everything that they had been taught to hope for was about to be submerged in the blackness of judgment.⁶ Though faith in and hope for the immediate fulfillment of the Kingdom promises were necessarily dim, that should not break their faith in God as Creator, Sustainer and Father.

So, it was to help the believing Jews to withstand the shock of the destruction of their city and the general dispersion of their people that the book of Hebrews was written. If any prefer to think of it as written by some other than Paul, by Apollos, by Barnabas, by Luke, by Silas, or yet another, well and good. Who wrote it is not vital: its divine authorship is. The writer's name was, in any case, *purposely* omitted: and that is highly significant.

THE HEBRAIST PARTY ADDRESSED

The Hebrews, or Hebraist party among the Jews, and the believing section of them, were the recipients of this letter. Unless our ethics are so loose as to permit us to think it proper to forge the endorsement of a check made out to some other person with a view to obtaining the money for ourselves, unless we could do that we cannot consistently steal anything from Hebrews in the way of special promises or specific instructions. We are not Hebraists nor even Hellenists. We are not Jews of any kind, nor Israelites of any kind whatsoever. We are believing Gentiles joined to Christ by faith without regard to Israel or even Abraham. Our relation to God is strictly individual and not national. So far from being national, it is not even tribal, nor denominational, nor "move-

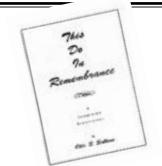
mental," nor family.

Let us, therefore, leave the book of Hebrews right where it was put by divine direction and supervision – to the Hebrews. They needed it in the past and will yet need it after the Body of Christ is complete. Its noblest word is beggared, its highest hope over-sped by what we have in the celestial sphere as the Body of Christ. We have as little need to steal from the Hebrews as a baron would have need to pilfer a bag of wheat from one of his yeomen.

Let there be no misunderstanding. *All* of the Bible is *for* us; but it is not all directly *to* nor *concerning* us. It is all profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. Without it all and without a right apportionment of it all, the man of God is but poorly furnished and incompetent for every good work, because he will bring in confusion as respects the divine purposes.

If there were any doubt about the superscription, "To the Hebrews," there can be none about the reference to the "fathers" (Hebrews 1:1). They belong to the "Israelites," Paul's "kinsmen according to the flesh" (Romans 9:3-5).

Hebrews is linked to the Gospels and Acts by 2:1-4. It is connected with that which "began to be spoken by the Lord," i.e., the period of our Lord's earthly ministry, covered by the Gospels, "and was confirmed unto us by them that heard," i.e., the first part of our Lord's heavenly ministry, the period of the activities of the Twelve who had companied with Jesus from the day of His baptism to that of His ascension. There is not even a hint here of the things which our Lord saved for the second part of His heavenly ministry, which things were never uttered or even known by the ▶



This Do in Remembrance

by — Otis Q. Sellers

A scriptural examination of a common church custom, by independent student and teacher of the Word of God and editor of *The Word of Truth*.

60 pp., PB

See order form.

^{6.} [Editor:] For a look into the subject of judgment, see:

Judgment: Its Nature and Purpose, A.P. Adams, <u>Bible Student's</u> <u>Notebook #388</u>;

Father's Judgments Are Remedial (Kolasis: A Word Study),
 Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Bible Student's Notebook #308.



Twelve but made known by special revelation only through Paul and ministered by him through letters and by those whom he had instructed.

FAILURE THROUGH UNBELIEF

The time from Pentecost on to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. (its twentieth destruction) parallels the time from the giving of the Law and the making of the covenant at Sinai to the entrance of Beulah (the married land). Indeed, this period may safely be called an antitype of the wilderness. Back there they entered not in because of unbelief. They entered not into that Married-Kingdom blessedness to which they had been publicly espoused at Sinai. Here, too, there was grave danger of the same thing.

Nationally, it had been already determined that they should not enter the Kingdom; however, the individual believers, like Caleb and Joshua of old, might have their allotments held over until the Kingdom state was entered into, if they did not perish after the same example of unbelief. Note the "ifs" in 3:6, 14.

Yet Christ, as a Son over His house - Whose house we are, that is, if we should be retaining the boldness and the glorying of the expectation confirmed unto the consummation.

For we have become partners of Christ, that is, if we should be retaining the beginning of the assumption confirmed unto the consummation.

GREATER THAN

The substance of the book is a setting forth of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Agent of God (1:2), Who as such is necessarily greater than the prophets (1:1), greater than the angels (1:5-14; 2:2), greater than Adam - though to Adam was first given the dominion of the Earth (Genesis 1:28; Hebrews 2:6-8), greater than the Adversary (2:14), greater than Moses (3:3), greater than Joshua (4:8), greater than Aaron (7:4-7), greater even than Melchizedek, who most closely pictures Him, inasmuch as the reality is greater than the picture of it.

Christ is everything in substance that the Jews had had in type; therefore if every drop of that typical

stream were to dry up (as it was about to do) they would still have the Fountain Head, they could live by a magnified faith, as had all of the holy men both before the Law and under it.

All of this is of value to us as Body believers, because love neglects nothing which proceeds from and is a manifestation of the one it loves. If God has taken the trouble to institute and fulfill a series of types and shadows and has shown the kindness to explain what they mean, then the least we can do is to be instructed. That does not mean that we are the subjects of the book, nor even the objects of its admonitions, threats and exhortations. Like the priesthood, "no man taketh this honor unto himself" (Hebrews 5:4) - though it must be feared that many have tried to do so.

We must not rush in ungraciously and affect to preempt everything to ourselves. In this case, if we do that it will be to our loss. Who would fight for a job as sheriff when the governorship was not only open but presented as a gift?

ANOTHER CRISIS

We must bear in mind the situation: the tens of thousands of Jewish believers in the Messiahship of Jesus all remained strong Mosaists too. They had seen that the advent of the Messiah meant blessing for the people of Israel and through them to the Gentiles. They had brought forcibly to their attention, at the time of the Jerusalem conference, that this blessing of the Gentiles was not to be after the manner of full observance of Moses' law but in a simpler and more direct manner.

Yet in spite of this lesson they were reverting from the grace in Christ Jesus back to Moses and worse; or some of them were turning to idols and to the obscene practices attendant upon idol worship. Some were at least in danger of "departing from the living God," and that term is always used in contrast with idols.

These believers, along with the other Jews, had long known of the promise of a New Covenant, which of itself implied a new priesthood, since the two were intimately connected. Indeed, as has been seen in

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the early part of this treatise, covenant, kingdom and priesthood were all tied together. The espousal vows at Sinai were the basis of Israel's hopes for becoming a nation of kingly priests. The nation back there failed. Now they were at another crisis.

WATER AND BLOOD

As the Old Covenant had been established by blood mingled with water and as that Covenant was the espousal covenant between Jehovah and His chosen people, so now Jesus had shown His love, not by slaying bulls and goats but by offering Himself on the place of skulls outside of the city of Jerusalem. There the water and the blood flowed out. There the rock was smitten which gave forth blood and water, as the Hebrew of Psalm 78:20 indicates (I Corinthians 10:4).

At Sinai water was mingled with the blood, so we are told (Hebrews 9:19). This was the custom when time was to elapse between the drawing of the blood and the sprinkling of it, as was the case here when Moses set forth the terms of the covenant before sprinkling the people. So the water, outpouring with the blood from our Lord's riven side, suggests the possibility of an interval between the time of the shedding and the sprinkling.

That blood was the pledge and basis of the New Covenant (Matthew 26:28; I Corinthians 11:25). With whom was that New Marriage Covenant to be made? As long foretold, "with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah," with all the Twelve Tribes, exactly as it had been made at Sinai.

Mark this: the antitype pulls nothing away from Israel; for both covenant, kingdom and priesthood in both type and antitype belong to Israel and to no one else. Certainly no one else could rush in and take them without divine warrant or authorization. A man's wife is chosen by either the man or his parents. People could hardly hold their reputation for respectability by presuming to occupy a relationship so peculiarly selective without being of the Twelve Tribes. Yet, what about "spiritual Israel"? The only answer is, What about it? Where is it even mentioned, much less defined in Scripture?

THE NEW COVENANT IS OF GRACE

The New Marriage Covenant was to be a covenant of grace over and above that manifested at Sinai, because in the meantime centuries of unfaithfulness on the part of His first married then divorced wife had piled up her sin, so that, the sin being so abundant, the grace is seen to be yet superabundant.



See order form.

Suffering: God's Forgotten Gift

by - Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Two gifts given to the believer are mentioned by Paul in Philippians 1:29. The first is "to believe on Him." This is a glorious gift. Every believer has been given this gift from God. Those who possess it may not even fully recognize it as a gift from Him, but indeed faith is God's wonderful gift to us. Faith is a rich gift from God, but there is also another gift from God to the believer, mentioned by Paul in Philippians 1:29, that is equally as glorious. The second gift is "also to suffer for His sake." This, too, is a glorious gift. Every believer has been given this gift from God as well, but those who possess it often do not fully recognize it for what it is. Indeed, suffering for His sake similarly is God's wonderful gift to us. Paul teaches us to embrace this second gift as well as we do the first!

"After over 40 years of seriously searching the Scriptures with the aid of writings from men of many varied walks, no literature has so profoundly changed my life as this book. It needs to be in the hands of every believer!" -LA

"It is rare to find someone who even mentions the topic of suffering, but you wrote an entire book on it, which I highly recommend to everyone!" – *Facebook*

"After being surprised by a very unexpected and major surgery for stage III cancer, your book on Suffering was most welcome, putting a lot of things in perspective." – WI

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In the Old Covenant ceremony gifts were bestowed upon the people in the shape of laws; but at Pentecost, while still the ceremonies of the New Covenant were [in effect] (Pentecost being an anniversary of the giving of the Law), there were sent forth not the stony tablets, as hard, cold and unresponsive as the people's hearts, but there were sent forth certain gifts of the spirit, such as are appropriate from a bridegroom to his bride, the beginning of the sprinkling of all of the people, the beginning of that restoration and reunion on the soil of the Promised Land which Jeremiah mentions in connection with the covenant.

So the foundation had already been laid in the prophets (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27) of better things and promises not dependent, in the last analysis, on the deeds of the people. The superiority of these promises consists in the fact that the divine will, the will of the Husband if you please, no longer comes as a bare command but comes as a living and working thing into the hearts of His people. In consequence thereof a living knowledge of God is to be the common blessing of all of the members of the Covenant, and the distinctions between prophets and non-prophets, priests and non-priests, is to fall away, and the ground of this is stated to be the forgiveness of sins wrought solely by the grace of God.

It was for this reason that Jeremiah could predict that all of the Old Law economy, even the Chest of the Covenant itself, would be no more an object of longing to the people (Jeremiah 3:16-17; Joel 3:1 ff; Isaiah 11:9; 54:13; Ezekiel 11:19).

Well then, the believing remnant of Israel as the "Bride" experiences reconciliation, does she not? Absolutely; and if we experience reconciliation (Colossians 1:20) does it not prove that we are of the "Bride"? Absolutely not; reconciliation is to be experienced between God and all of His unconciliated creatures, both in Heaven and on Earth, and surely no one would take hold on angels to make up the "Bride" when the Lord takes hold on the seed of Abraham!

We are not of the "Bride" because (1) we are not invited to that honor, and because (2) we are invited to something else, far greater.

(edited)
(to be continued)

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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).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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