

# SCRIPTURE RESEARCH - VOL. 1 - NO. 4

(Inside front cover) **LISTENING IN** J. Clyde Stillion

Yes, when the Scriptures were complete, God became silent. The "Hope of Israel" was an "Old Testament Hope," and included both comings of Christ. Acts 26:6-7. Acts 28:20. Get your "Chronology of Scripture" right and your doctrine will be right. The "signs of the times" always have to do with Israel. Everything connected with the Church which is His Body is of a "secret" nature. You won't succeed in finding contradictions in a rightly divided Book. They are not there. When the Pauline Epistles speak of "the Truth," they speak of a distinct body of Truth. The first nineteen chapters of Revelation deal with the sunrise of the Day of the Lord. The remainder of the chapters deal with its sunset. Follow a rightly divided Book, and every "?" becomes an "!" God who knows the end from the beginning is able to reveal the end from the beginning. Three men were carried out of their own time into the age to come: Ezekiel, Daniel and John. This is the dispensation when faith depends not upon outward signs but upon the naked Word of God. Teach the Word! Teach !! and TEACH!!!

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"KNOWN UNTO GOD ARE ALL HIS WAYS"

He knows from the beginning! He moves forward to a purposed point and a glorious goal. Man often fails to finish what he begins, but God never begins what He does not finish.

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QUESTION: Please explain the position or standing of a member of the Body of Christ.

ANSWER: In a brief request you have offered us a large task. The position of a believer in the present dispensation is that standing in Christ accorded to and predicated concerning every believer who is in "The Body of Christ." This position is as God views the relationship to Himself of those who are "in Christ." In the Epistle to the Romans, the Holy Spirit reveals that in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ every believer is reckoned to have died, been buried and risen in Christ (Rom. 6). Thus the wondrous eighth chapter of Romans places every true believer on resurrection ground. When we pass to the Epistle to the Ephesians, we discover something new in this respect. There we find that God reckons that every believer not only died and rose when Christ died and arose, but when Christ ascended and became seated in the heavenlies, the believer ascended likewise and is now positionally seated with Christ in that glorious position. This is our standing according to the Word of God (Eph. 2:6-6; Cp. Col. 3:1). One day, what is now our perfect standing will become our perfect state. What is now our supernal position will become our glorious experience (Col. 3:4; Phil. 3:20-21; R. V., Titus 2:11-13). Space will not permit us to display here a number of remarkable comparisons and contrasts in connection with the standing and state of the believer. (Robert A. Hadden)

UNLESS YOU RIGHTLY DIVIDE, How will you reconcile these two prophecies: Isa. 2:4, "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks," and Joel 3:10, "Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears."

### **WHAT IS GRACE? (Part 3) by Russell H. Schaefer**

#### Introduction

No other apostle scales the heights and depths of the grace of God as does Paul. To his pen we owe the knowledge of the glory of His Grace (1), the engraving (2), of the believer in the Beloved (3), the riches of His grace as the measure of His redemption and forgiveness (4), the exceeding riches of His grace as the untapped treasure of the believer in the on-coming ages (5), a saving by grace through faith in order to quicken and seat a Gentile company with Christ in the heavenlies (6), a Gentile household of believers ruled by grace, called a dispensation of grace (7), and, not least, a discipline by grace, not law (8).

- (1) Eph. 1:5, 6
- (2) A. V. "Accepted"
- (3) Eph. 1:6

- (4) Eph. 1:7
- (5) Eph. 2:7
- (6) Eph. 2:5, 8, 9, 10
- (7) Eph, 3:2
- (8) Titus 2:11
- (9) John 20:22, 23

### **Charisma (continued from Vol. 1, No. 3)**

The *charismata*, that is, graces or gifts of grace, sign-gifts, have been taken up briefly in Vol. 1, Nos. 2 and 3. We would add the gift (i.e., grace-gift, Gr.) of government as in I Cor. 12:28. The word *kubnesis*, translated government in the A.V., comes from *kubernao* to guide, govern. The helmsman in Acts 27:11, as the shipmaster in Rev. 18:17, was a *kubernetes*.

The divine governing for the Book of Acts program and hope are seen in those receiving the Power from on High when Christ breathed on those disciples and apostles and gave to them the power to remit sins or not to remit sins (9). Israel's future for forgiveness or for glory was bound up with the close (not only on earth, but in the heavens as well).

The exercise of this office is seen in Peter's offer to Israel in Acts 2 and 3. It is seen in the apostolic conference in Acts 15:2, 6, called to decide whether circumcision and other Mosaic laws were binding on Gentile believers (2). It is seen in the momentous decision of Galatians 2:9 where Paul and Barnabas were confirmed in their Gentile ministry while Peter, James and John would henceforth confine their ministry to the circumcision. It is seen in the death sentence passed and executed upon Ananias and Sapphira for thinking a lie (3), upon Elymas the Sorcerer, the judgment of blindness (4), the deliverance to Satan for destruction of the flesh for those involved with certain sex acts (5), and in the judicial "sin unto death" of I John 5:16. It is also seen in the great "turnings" from Israel throughout the Book of Acts (6). It is here that the thirteenth chapter of Romans "fits" in. These were God's ordained men - holding the power of life and death -- aye, even of raising the dead (7). To suppose that during the Acts they were merely functioning as our present church "boards" function is to belie the evidence; or to suppose that under our present dispensation of Grace (8) these "governings" are operative is to make a mockery of the order obtained during the Acts.

- (1) Matt. 16:19 (5) I Cor. 5:1-5
- (2) Acts 15:24, 28; 21:25 (6) Acts 13:40-48; 18:6; 28:25-29
- (3) Acts 5:1-10 (7) Acts 9:37-41, cp. Matt. 10:1-15

- (4) Acts 13:11 (8) Eph. 3:2

We are prone to interject the past into the present, and the feeble order of ecclesiastical power everywhere evidenced today makes some think that if we were only spiritual enough the same results would follow. We need only to point out that carnality was a product of that day as well as ours. They were closer to the "earthly Jesus" but just as close to paganism. Proximity to His earthly life and ministry was no assurance of "spirituality" then or later. Then, too, we have to do with an ascended, seated Christ Who gave to the Gentile church (1) through the Apostle Paul all things needful for their perfection (2), and the Ephesian list omits almost all of the things given previously in I Cor. 12. It may shock many that there are now no more divine "governings" by apostolic authority. Now, with the death of the apostles and those associated with their teaching ministry, no new revelations are forthcoming from God. The Apostle John, that Seer of Patmos (3), carried the prophetic time schedule forward to the new heavens and the new earth (4) and cautioned against anyone's adding to that revelation (5), while to Paul it was given to complete the Word of God (6), especially the revelation of the Grace of God. One might well ask, "What then are we to do?" "What is the role of the minister and teacher now?" Paul's words to Timothy hold true for us (7): "Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me," "that good deposit guard" (8), "the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (9), and "preach, i.e., proclaim the Word" (10). According to II Tim. 3:17 the equipment of the man of God, the "fitting out," is the Inspired Scriptures. Can we hope to see men who will be "ministers of the Word" instead of religion? We hope so.

- (1) Eph. 4:8-12 (7) II Tim. 1:13
- (2) Eph. 4:11 i.e., re-adjustment (8) II Tim. 1:14.
- (3) Rev. 1:9 (9) II Tim. 2:24.
- (4) Rev. 21:1 (10) II Tim. 4:2
- (5) Rev. 22:18.
- (6) Col. 1:25, A. V. fulfil, Gr. *plerosai*, to fill up complete

### **Charizomai (Verb)**

The word *charisma*, grace-gift (on which the previous study was based), is a derivative of the verb *charizomai*, which verb will now be considered.

The beauty of this verb also related to *charts*, or *charis* grace, delights the believer's heart when it is translated "frankly forgave" in the account of the bankrupt debtors (Luke 7:41-50). In those days a man could be imprisoned for

his debts, small or large; and whoever had heard of a money lender forgiving either a \$9.00 or \$85.00 debt? The real point of the account is that the woman loved the Saviour much because she had been forgiven much. This forgiveness incident sets forth the Lord's Person as Israel's Saviour-God. Should we not all love Him much because we have been forgiven much? How much more in the full light of redemption's price? Simon was looking at the ointment through materialistic eyes -- eyes that saw only dollar signs. How tragic if we do the same!

In Acts 27:24, all who sailed with Paul were to be delivered from shipwreck: "both given thee." These all were bounteously, graciously, given to Paul. How like God! If Paul the Apostle in chains was to be delivered and kept until his task was finished, how like God to save the whole! Paul was graced with everyone who sailed with him! What stories little verbs can tell!

In Romans 8:32, Paul uses the argument that, since God has not withheld Christ from us, how could He withhold the "all things" that accompanied the giving of the Saviour? So we have "freely given" as the translation here. No strings are attached to God's gifts unless they are dispensationally incompatible with the present purposes of God. Certain genuine evidences followed those who believed during the Book of Acts (Mark 16, Hebrews 2) that are allegedly seen now, but (we are convinced) only in the form of spurious imitations.

In Ephesians 4:32, "forgiving (*charizomenoi*) one another, even as God for Christ's sake (lit., even as God in Christ) hath forgiven you," and Colossians 2:13, "Having forgiven (*charisamenos*) you all trespasses." What a wonderful forgiveness to have! Because we have been forgiven, on this basis we can do no less than to forgive others. Grace-forgiveness! What an odd thing to have! Forgiveness of all trespasses -- past, present, future. Trespasses here are *paraptomata*, fallings aside from truth and equity; faults, or trespasses. This forgiveness is again referred to in Eph. 1:17: "the redemption through His blood," His sacrificial death for sin, provides a more than ample provision for sin, of which sin we have forgiveness! The overt act of sin is a result of this "moral inner fault" and is likewise dealt with in Col. 1:14. All our sins were future when Christ died for them; a beggarly view of forgiveness of sin thwarts the perfect redemption God has provided "according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1:7) and causes the impoverished child of God to look within to still greater defeat. In this realm even prayers for forgiveness are too often a cover-up for unbelief! God says He has forgiven you. Do you believe God?

This verb occurs again in Phil. 1:29 and is translated "given." The passage speaks of the joyous grace given to the believer of suffering for His sake. In verse 30 Paul speaks of this suffering as his conflict, his agony. The term is from the gladiatorial arena with its contests, agony, and death. Paul again refers to this in Col. 2:1. In both passages the context is dispensational. In the one, that they may acknowledge the Mystery; in the other, that they behave as citizens of a heavenly commonwealth (i.e., "your conversation," *politeuma*, Phil. 1:27).

Suffering for this "good deposit" may take strange forms, not the least of which is the supposed lack of service for God in the recognized religious churches or in their forms and societies. Many may miss the vested choirs, the ordered ritual, the robed clergy, the accepted norms of Christendom. Others, the last of communion services, baptism, etc., or, more simply, the Ladies' Society. It should be with "graciousness" that one should stand for the truth of grace.

Philippians 2:9 uses this word in regard to Christ: "Given Him a name above every name" should read "gave Him THE NAME above every name." First, the term gave Him refutes once more the fallacy that anything of grace must be "unmerited." In other passages under *charis* it reflects that act of God The Father to His own. In this passage, almost too vast for our comprehension, The Father gives The "Name above every name" to the One Who had emptied Himself to become a bond-slave. The Name? This can only be The Name Jehovah, and this Name is given to Jesus (using His earthly name). In this Name, given to Jesus, every knee shall bow (cf. Psalms 8:1; Isaiah 45:23-25).

The measure of His exaltation by The Father is the measure of His condescension for our salvation. Divested of all that was involved "in form -- God" to become a lowly bond-slave and bearer of our sin, so that He became an object of The Father's GIVING, divested of office, Name and Title. He now receives from The Father's hand what had been "stored at home" for Him. Should we not bow these prideful knees in happy, simple adoration to such a Saviour-Lord?

-To be continued next issue-

TEACH THE TRUTH WITHOUT TRIFLING, TIMIDITY OR TRIMMING.

**HELP WANTED**

Positions are open for an unlimited number of people, regardless of race, color, or creed. If you desire to become a member of an exclusive company which guarantees your future, this is your opportunity.

The benefits offered in this company are almost unbelievable.

Your age, social standing, financial status, or credit rating are unimportant.

All members of this company share jointly; in fact, this company is a joint-body.

Qualifications for this position have been kept to a minimum in order that anyone may meet the requirements.

If, after reading the remainder of this article, you are able to make a sincere affirmative decision, you qualify for this position.

Sound too good to be true? Yes, it does, but look at these facts.

The Head of this company wants you to become a member, for "He is the Head of the body, the church," (Colossians 1:18) and "He would have all men to be saved" (I Timothy 2:4).

Jesus Christ, who is God The Son, has made all the necessary arrangements because "Christ died for our sins" (I Cor. 15:3), and "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses against them" (II Cor. 5:19).

Will you take God at His Word and believe these facts? If so, you qualify for the position of BELIEVER and will rejoice in reading Ephesians 2:1-10 and Colossians 2:8-17.

"Be disposed to that which is above, not to that on the earth, for you died and your life is hid together with Christ in God. Whenever Christ, our Life, should be manifested, then you also shall be manifested together with Him in glory." Colossians 3:2-4

ACTS 27:28.

Divine Ownership — "Whose I am."

Human Obligation — "Whom I serve."

## **PANORAMA OF GOD'S REVEALED PROGRAM (Part 2) By Ray I. Psalmonds**

### Unique Ministry Of Paul

As the household of Abraham began to reject their Messiah more and more, and therefore another chance to become the channel of blessing to other nations of the earth, God saved Saul. Saul was a leader of the persecution against the believers as recorded in Acts 9:1-2, but God saved him and made him the Apostle to the Gentiles, for we read, "I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office" (Rom. 11:13). Saul's name was changed to Paul as recorded in Acts 13:9, and he ministered, during the Acts period, to the Israelites FIRST, confirming the New Covenant made with the household of Abraham. Notice Paul's statement, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament (Covenant); not of the letter, but of the Spirit" (II Cor. 3:6). Also the statement, "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ" (Acts 17:2-3). Then Paul says, "Now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers" (Acts 26:6). The ministry of Paul to the Gentiles was on the basis of reconciliation, for we read, "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God, for He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (II Cor. 5:17-21).

The Gentile had no direct covenant relationship with God, so Paul could appeal to them only on the basis of what God had promised to Abraham before he was circumcised. This is clearly defined by, "Blessed is the man to whom The Lord will not impute sin. Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? ... For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that the righteousness might be imputed unto them also: and the father of



circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised" (Rom. 4:8-13). From these statements of Scripture we can see the two ministries of the Apostle Paul during the Acts period, namely, (1) the reaffirming of the promises made to Abraham and their relationship to the New Covenant, and (2) the message of reconciliation to the Gentiles as correlated with the New Covenant.

The Gentiles were saved by faith, by believing what God said concerning the fact of reconciliation which was made available with the New Covenant. Jesus Christ had paid the price for sin with His death on Calvary. The sin question is settled for all. The only thing necessary for any person to be saved is to take God at His Word, and believe that reconciliation has been made by Jesus Christ. (Please note that reconciliation is NOT salvation. The fact of reconciliation must be believed by the individual in order to obtain salvation.) Very simple, indeed, yet many insist there must be something else added. Those who would add something else to God's plan of salvation, which is by grace through faith, only do despite to the all-sufficient work of Jesus Christ, for God says, "By grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). God has become reconciled to the world by accepting the work of Jesus Christ on Calvary; but any person, in order to be saved, must believe this to be true and rest his faith on that fact.

As the number of unbelievers among Israel continued to increase, God revealed to the Apostle Paul more of His program. God declares that only those members of the nation Israel, who by faith receive Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour, are to be known as true Israel, or Abraham's household. Proof of this is found in, "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (Rom. 9:6-8). Those who rejected Christ as the Messiah were blinded, according to Romans 11:7, which states, "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." The few of Israel who believed were identified as the "elect," or "remnant," and recognized as true Israel, for we read, "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11:15). Those of Israel who would not believe were "cut off" because of unbelief (Rom. 11:20).

[Position Of The Saved Gentile During The Acts Period](#)

God declares that the Gentiles, who received Jesus Christ as Saviour, were to be "grafted in" to occupy the position left vacant by those of Israel who, because of unbelief, were "cut off." This is made clear in Romans 11:17-21, which states, "If some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree: boast not against the branches... for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He spare not thee also." This was an act on the part of God to provoke Israel to jealousy (Rom. 11:11). When the unbelieving Israelite saw that God had granted to the saved Gentile the position which, by covenant, should be occupied by the Jew, it was God's desire that this would cause the unbelieving Jew to turn back to Him. This "blindness in part" of Israel was to continue until that full number of Gentiles had become a part of God's chosen household. These "grafted-in" Gentiles, along with the saved Israelites, made up the household of Abraham to whom the Kingdom was promised (Gal. 3:29). This explained to everyone what was happening to the Israelites, as well as the saved Gentile, in the latter part of that period of time covered by Acts.

The Acts period covered approximately forty years, and during that time God caused to be written the following Books of the Bible: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, I and II Thessalonians, Hebrews, James, I and II Peter, I, II, and III John, Jude, and Revelation. All these writings deal with the program of God which was focused on His chosen household, the "seed of Abraham," or Israel. This is the household which God dates "FROM" the foundation (casting down) of the world. Any and all who believed God, from Adam to the writing of the Book of Hebrews, are to come into the same promises according to Galatians 3:29, which states, "If ye be Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Also notice Hebrews 11:39-40, "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

### Household Of Abraham Temporarily Set Aside

At the close of the Acts period, the household of Abraham had become so small in number, due to the unbelief of the multitudes, that God temporarily interrupted His program with them as evidenced by the statement, "The heart of this people is waxed gross; and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear" (Acts 28:27-28). Soon after this statement

God sets aside, for a time, the chosen household of Abraham. This postponed all their promises until a future date when God will again pick up His chosen household of Abraham and fulfill all the promises He has made to them (Jer. 32:37-39).

The Kingdom program, which was related to Israel and the earth, was also interrupted. This Kingdom program, which God designed for the specific hope of Israel under the New Covenant, carried with it the many Gifts of the Spirit. These Gifts are in evidence from the time Jesus began to declare the Kingdom program until the close of the Acts period, when the Kingdom program was interrupted. Due to the unbelief expressed by the nation who was to head this kingdom program, God set it aside. The signs, miracles, and gifts used in connection with the Kingdom program were used by the Lord to confirm the fact that God was dealing with His chosen household of Abraham, for we read, "The Jews require a sign, but the Greeks seek after wisdom" (I Cor. 1:22). The nation Israel had been instructed throughout all their generations to expect these gifts from anyone who was performing the service of God in His Kingdom. They were also instructed not to recognize anyone who came in the Name of the Lord unless they had these gifts. Knowing these facts, we can realize how important these gifts and signs were to the chosen household of Abraham to whom the Kingdom belonged. The general expectation, as stated in Mark 16:17-18 is, "These signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

When God suspended the Kingdom program, with its associated household, after the close of the Acts period it most naturally followed that the signs and gifts for that program should cease just as abruptly as the program ceased. Many sincere believers have become alarmed and confused because of their inability to perform the miracles, or experience the signs, which were so much in evidence during that period of time covered by the Book of Acts. The answer to this problem is found in the fact that the Gifts of the Spirit were given only to those who belonged to God's chosen household of Abraham. These Gifts were essential for the out-working of God's Kingdom program, but when that program was suspended, so were the Signs and Gifts. With the suspension of the Kingdom-program and the setting aside of God's chosen household of Abraham after the close of the Acts period, the normal question would be, "What did God do then?"

[Secret Program Revealed](#)

If we will read those Books of the Bible which God revealed to the Apostle Paul after the close of the Acts period, we will receive the answer to this most important question. The Books revealed by the Spirit of God, through Paul, after the close of the Acts period are: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I and II Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. Only in these Writings do we find introduced the "mystery" (secret) plan and purpose which had been "hid in God" from the beginning of the world. Notice the statement in Ephesians 3:9: "Make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ." There is no mention of this mystery in any of the Books written before the close of the Acts period, for we read, "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God; even the mystery, which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but NOW is made manifest to His saints" (Col. 1:25-26). Also notice, "Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ which in other ages was not known unto the sons of men, as it is NOW revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. 3:4-5). (These are the apostles and prophets of the mystery.)

In the Books of the Bible written after the close of the Acts period we find God's revelation of a "Secret" (mystery) program which has to do with another household of God. This household of the secret is dated by the Lord as "BEFORE the foundation (casting down) of the world." Proof of this is found in the statements, "He hath chosen us in Him BEFORE the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4), "In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised BEFORE the world began" (Titus 1:2), and "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus BEFORE the world began" (II Tim. 1:9). This household of the secret is the only one that is connected to that period which was "BEFORE the foundation (casting down) of the world." This household, which was revealed after the close of the Acts period, has many unique characteristics which are not related to the household of Abraham, or Israel. We shall list some of these characteristics:

1. The program for the "household of the Secret" was revealed through the Apostle Paul ONLY, for he was chosen by the Lord to "fulfill" (complete) the Word of God by this special revelation (Col. 1:25-27).
2. This "household of the Secret" was "chosen in Christ before the foundation (casting down) of the world" (Ephesians 1:4).
3. This household is declared to be "raised together and made to sit together in heavenly places in Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 2:6).

4. In Jesus Christ this household is made a "joint-body" (Ephesians 3:6).
5. This household is on display to the "principalities and powers in heaven" (Ephesians 3:10).
6. Members of this household have their citizenship in heaven (Phil. 3:20).
7. The individuals of this household are declared to be "complete in Christ" (Col. 2:10).
8. This present household is enjoying, with the Godly principalities and powers, the joint-headship of Jesus Christ (Col. 1:18; 2:10).
9. This household has only "one baptism" (Eph. 4:5 and Col. 2:12).
10. Gifts of the Spirit, as displayed during the Acts period, are no longer in evidence with this household (II Tim. 4:20 and I Tim. 5:23).
11. The HOPE of this present household is "to be manifested with Christ in glory" (Col. 3:4; Titus 2:13).

These unique characteristics will prove to any earnest believer the vast difference between the "household of Abraham" (Israel) and the "household of the Secret" (joint-body of Christ).

The "joint-body of Christ" had its beginning in the plan and purpose of God BEFORE the foundation of the world, but was kept secret until the chosen household of Abraham was set aside after the close of the Acts period. These two households are the ONLY households with which the program of God deals throughout all the Bible.

All those who have believed God's Word, and taken Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour, since the close of the Acts period, belong to the "household of the Secret," for we read, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places" (Eph. 1:18-20).

The present program of God, which was kept hid in Himself until after the postponement of the Kingdom program, has to do only with saved people, or saints. Nowhere do we find the unsaved addressed in any of the Books written after the close of the Acts period. Note the statements in each Book, "To the saints which are at Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 1:1), "To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi" (Phil. 1:1), "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse" (Col. 1:2), "Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith" (I Tim. 1:2), "I call to remembrance the

unfeigned faith that is in thee" (II Tim. 1:5), "To Titus, mine own son after the common faith" (Tit. 1:4), "Unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow-labourer ... and to the church in thy house" (Phil. 1:1-2). The fact that all the Books written after the close of the Acts period are addressed to saints, or faithful in Christ Jesus, is proof that the present program of God is concerned with making known the position of those individuals who by faith are trusting in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

The message of Reconciliation, as delivered by Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles, is still the message for the unsaved today (II Cor. 5:18-20). This is one of the Truths which was proclaimed during the latter part of God's program dealing with the household of Abraham, and is also used in God's present program to reach the unsaved.

The major difference between the present "household of the secret" and the former "household of Abraham" lies in the position, and hope, one enjoys after believing the message of reconciliation. Without the fact that reconciliation has been made unto the world by our Lord, no one could be saved. During the time when God was dealing with the household of Abraham, the person who was born an Israelite had an advantage over all others because of the covenant God had made with their father (Rom. 3:1-2). At the present time, while God is dealing with the household of the Secret, there is no covenant in effect. No man NOW has any advantage over any other man. All must come to God the same way, simply taking God at His Word by grace through faith, for we read, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast....Remember that ye being in time past, Gentiles; that at that time ye 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: but now, in Christ Jesus ye who were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:8-13).

The revelations, instructions, and admonitions contained in the seven Books written after the close of the Acts period are all we know about the "secret" plan and purpose which God had kept hid in Himself since the foundation of the world. These are the only Books addressed specifically to the present household of God. There are many Truths in these Books which will not apply to the household of Abraham. Also, there are many Truths in those Books written before the close of the Acts period which will not fit into the present household of the Secret. Any attempt we make to determine what Truths pertain to us of this present household, and what pertain to the former household, must be made according to the principle expressed in II Timothy

2:15, "... Rightly dividing the Word of Truth." If we fail to do this we are not only confused, but unfaithful and need to be ashamed.

May I suggest a simple rule to help in the matter of "right division": Determine from the context of any particular Scripture which household is under consideration; then apply the facts contained in that Scripture to that specific household. With the use of this rule we have ONLY three possible applications for any Truth in God's Word, namely, (1) it belongs to the "household of the Secret," (2) it belongs to the "household of Abraham," and (3) it belongs to both households. This "rule" of right division has helped solve many of the problems confronting us in trying to ascertain which Truths of the Word are for the present household.

Let us rejoice in the Truth of God. But as we study His Word, let us NOT be robbers of those hopes and promises which were given to the household of Abraham, but "rightly divide" the Word of Truth and rejoice in those hopes and promises addressed to us, the "household of the Secret," or joint-body.

We do not have any information in the Bible concerning when God will finish His dealing with the present household of the secret. When the program of God for this present household is fulfilled, those who have died as members of this household will participate in the "prior resurrection" spoken of in Philippians 3:11. (The literal translation of this verse is, "The out-resurrection, out from among dead ones." This implies a resurrection which precedes other resurrections.) Those who are alive at the time God completes the present household will experience Philippians 3:21, which states, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." So then, whether we be dead or alive at that time, we will all be manifested together with Christ in the heavenlies, for God declares, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3:4).

After the present household of the Secret is manifested with Christ in the heavenlies, God will again pick up the household of Abraham and complete all the promises and hopes He gave them. The record of this future dealing with the household of Abraham is found in the books of Revelation, Daniel, Matthew (chapter 24), I John, etc.

We can praise God, and rest assured, that He will fulfill every promise He has made to each of His two households, for He declares in II Timothy 3:16-17, "All Scripture 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, throughly furnished unto all good works."

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## DO NOT WRITE ASKING FOR OUR CREED

### EVERY MAGAZINE TELLS THE STORY, PRACTICE AND POSITION

Position and practice are actually related, yet there are important distinctions to be noted. Something has been done for us and with us, and there is something to be done by us.

Our position in Christ is one thing; our practice upon earth is quite another.

Before we note some of these distinctions, it is important to consider the fact that the position of a believer in the present dispensation is distinctly not the position in strict accord with any other dispensation.

As to points of contrast between the believer's position and practice we note the following:

- 1—The POSITION is in Christ in the heavenlies. The PRACTICE is in flesh upon the earth.
- 2—The POSITION is perfect. The PRACTICE is imperfect.
- 3—The POSITION is unalterable (there is no possibility of change). The PRACTICE is alterable (change is possible).
- 4—The POSITION is eternal. The PRACTICE is temporal.
- 5—The POSITION is according to His good pleasure. The PRACTICE ought to be according to His good pleasure.
- 6—The POSITION is a matter of decree before all ages. The PRACTICE is in this present dispensation.
- 7—The POSITION, by His grace, can not be improved. The PRACTICE, by His grace, ought to continually improve.

There are other contrasts to be noted. This will all become clear to the earnest student by considering carefully between what is revealed as to our POSITION in the first chapter of Ephesians, and what is urged as to our PRACTICE in the fourth chapter of Ephesians.

Kindly note:—

- 1— In chapter one Paul speaks as "an apostle of Christ Jesus." In chapter four Paul speaks as "the prisoner of the Lord."



- 2— As an apostle he sets forth great and gracious facts. As a prisoner he makes strong, urgent appeals.
- 3— In chapter one Paul shows what has been done in and by the Lord. In chapter four Paul shows what is to be done in and by the believer.
- 4— In chapter one it is all the doing of God. (Note: "will of God," "peace from God," "who hath blessed," "He hath chosen," "having predestinated," "He hath made us," "His blood," "riches of His grace," etc.) In chapter four it is the doing of the believer. (Note: "that ye walk," "endeavoring," "speaking," "that ye walk not," "put off," "put on," "let," etc.)

One's position in Christ cannot be affected, changed or altered by what one does or does not do. Our practice upon earth cannot affect our position in the heavenlies, but our position in the heavenlies can affect our practice upon earth.

One does not work to be saved, but because he is saved.

The only incentive for a walk pleasing in the sight of our Lord is our perfect position in Christ. This is clearly shown by Col. 3:1-3.

Each and every appeal in the Pauline Scriptures is based on a perfect position secured by grace. In view of that work, we walk.

Some may be inclined to argue that:

"As one's position in Christ is perfect, unalterable, fixed, eternal, then it cannot matter how one acts or does; he is saved anyway."

Our answer is: WOULD A TRUE CHRISTIAN ENTERTAIN SUCH AN IDEA IN VIEW OF GOD'S LOVE AND GRACE IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD? Howard Nathanael Bunce, Ph.D.

Ephesians 3:14-21

GENEVA – 1557

myght bae knowen by the Churche, the manyfolde wysedome of God, 11 accordyng to the eternal purpose, which he wrought in Christe Iesus our Lord. 12 By whome we haue boldness and entrance with confidence, by the fayth which we haue in hym.

13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not, because of my tribulations for your sakes, which is your glorie. 14 For this cause, I bowe my knees vnto the Father of our Lord Iesus Christ: 15 Of whome is named the whole familie in heauen and in earth, 16 That he myght grante you according to the riches of his glorie, that ye may be strengthened by his Sprite in the inner man 17 That Christ may dwel in your harts by faith, that ye, being roted and grounded in loue, 18 May be able to comprehend with all Sainctes. what is the breadth, and length, depth, and heyght: 19 And to knowe what is the loue of Christ, which loue passeth knowledge: that ye may be fulfilled with all maner of fullness which commeth of God. 20 Vnto hym therfore that is able to do exceeding abundantly aboue all that we aske or thinke, according to the power that worketh in vs, 21 Be prayse in the Church by Christe Iesus through- out all generations for euer. Amen.

In succeeding issues of *Scripture Research* the above passage will be presented as it appears in approximately one hundred versions of The Holy Scriptures. These should prove interesting.