

Salvation Message in the Epistles (II)

Israel Set Aside

The One New Man NOW Center Stage

This article continues with the salvation message seen throughout the epistles, a salvation message previously seen beginning with Moses, with the salvation in this message ultimately realized following time and events referenced in the Book of Revelation.

For companion articles, refer to:

“Salvation Message in the Gospels” (I, II)

“Salvation Message in Acts” (I, II)

“Salvation Message in the Epistles” (I)

“Salvation Realized in Revelation”

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood [‘a regal priesthood’; *cf.* Ex. 19:5, 6; Rev. 5:9, 10], an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;

Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (I Peter 2:9-11).

Though God brought into existence and dealt with the Church in Acts, *ISRAEL (continuing from the gospels) remained His MAIN focus of attention throughout the book.*

God used *the one new man* “in Christ” (et al.) throughout Acts to carry a *continued message FROM the gospels TO the nation of Israel.*

But once God had completed His work with Israel in this respect, He then turned completely to *the one new man* (a new creation, “in Christ,” separate from both Jew and Gentile [II Cor. 5:17]), *the one NOW in SOLE POSSESSION of a kingdom which had been offered to Israel in the gospels, re-offered to Israel in Acts, and NOW completely taken from Israel.*

And that is *the centerpoint of the message in the epistles* — Pauline, Hebrews, the general epistles, and Rev. 2, 3. *EVERYTHING in these epistles, after some fashion, centers around and relates to THIS message.*

And since the Pauline epistles occupy almost three times as much space in the New Testament as Hebrews, the general epistles, and Rev. 2, 3 combined, most of the material in this part of the chapter will be taken from and reference places in the Pauline epistles. But it would matter little if this were reversed, for exactly the same thing can be seen in all the other epistles, though from different perspectives.

(Relative to the authorship of Hebrews, which many assign to Paul, it is a simple matter to show that Paul didn't write the book, though it is impossible to show who did write the book.

Different things about the book — the Greek text, the subject matter and the way that it is laid out — would *suggest* that someone other than Paul wrote the book.

But note Heb. 2:3. *The author of Hebrews was evidently not among those who had personally seen and heard the Lord. Paul though had spent a considerable length of time with the Lord, possibly as long as three years, taught by Him personally [cf. II Cor. 12:1-7; Gal. 1:15-19; Eph. 3:1-3].)*

The Gospel Message

The word “gospel,” as it is used in the New Testament, means *good news, glad tidings*. And the type good news, glad tidings in view *MUST ALWAYS be determined from the context.*

Then “salvation,” as seen throughout Scripture, both Testaments, always refers to *deliverance*. And the type deliverance in view, as when reference is made to “the gospel,” *MUST ALWAYS be determined from the context as well*.

But, a major problem in relation to *the gospel* and *salvation* exists throughout Christendom today. Bible students, far more often than not, when they see the words “gospel” and/or “salvation,” think of only one thing, regardless of the context — the simple gospel message having to do with Christ’s death and shed blood, and salvation from eternal damnation.

However “salvation” in Scripture, having to do with “the gospel,” with “good news,” has *past, present, and future* aspects — *I have been saved* (Acts 16:30, 31; Eph. 2:8, 9), *I am being saved* (I Cor. 1:18; James 1:21), and *I am about to be saved* (Heb. 1:14; I Peter 1:9). And the context *MUST ALWAYS* be referenced to ascertain which of these three aspects of salvation, which of these three aspects of the overall gospel message, is being dealt with in the passage.

And when one does this, he will find, *FAR, FAR MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, that present and future aspects of the gospel, of salvation, are being referenced, NOT the past aspect*.

Thus, one can immediately see that *something MAJOR is wrong in Biblical interpretation* when only the past aspect of “the gospel” and “salvation” seemingly come to mind when the words appear in Scripture. A large part of Scripture is being *erroneously dealt with* (actually, *well above eighty percent of the times* “salvation” or “the gospel” are referenced), *resulting in erroneous interpretation on the one hand and the door being closed to correct interpretation on the other*.

The Mystery, Paul’s Gospel

“Paul’s gospel” is inseparably related to *the mystery revealed to him*. And Paul’s gospel, along with the mystery

revealed to him, are part and parcel with the way that the gospel and its salvation message are seen *throughout ALL of the epistles*.

And the preceding is what this part of the chapter is about, showing how the epistles deal with the whole of the matter.

To begin, note the following verses and sections of Scripture relative to *the gospel and the gospel's salvation message*, with *ALL of these verses and sections pertaining to present and future aspects of this gospel and its message*, as will become evident in this part of the chapter:

“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (Rom. 2:16).

“Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Rom. 16:25).

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

How that by revelation he made known to me the mystery (as I wrote aforetime in few words,

Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ),

Which in other ages [‘other generations’] was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

Whereof I was made a minister...” (Eph. 3:1-7a; cf. 6:19, 20).

“For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit; and in much assur-

ance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit" (I Thess. 1:5, 6).

"Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions [the handing down of information] which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (II Thess. 2:14, 15).

The epistles (Pauline, Hebrews, general epistles, and Rev. 2, 3) were written by at least five — probably six — different men (as previously seen, the author of Hebrews is unknown), and certain individual, distinguishing qualities and characteristics of the writers can be seen in their writings.

In Paul's case, his extensive use of the word "gospel" — how and why he used the word — forms a major trait which makes his writings different from those of any other writer of a New Testament book.

Paul, for evident reasons, appeared almost *obsessed* with this word, using it *FAR MORE EXTENSIVELY* than any of the other writers.

And he used the word both alone and through qualifying it various ways (e.g., "gospel," "gospel of God," "gospel of Christ," "gospel of his Son," etc.), usually referring to the same facet of the gospel, though possibly with different emphases.

Paul's writings comprise slightly less than one-third of the New Testament, but of the one hundred thirty-two times that the word "gospel" appears throughout the New Testament — in both its noun and verb forms (*euaggelion* and *euaggelizo* respectively) — almost two-thirds of these occurrences are found in the Pauline epistles.

The word appears twenty-three times in the synoptic gospels, seventeen times in the Book of Acts, six times in the general epistles, and three times in the Book of Revelation. But Paul used the word *eighty-three times* throughout his epistles.

Why did Paul use this word so extensively? The writer of Hebrews only used the word twice; James didn't use the word at all; Peter only used the word four times; John didn't use the word in either his gospel or his epistles, though he used it three times in the Book of Revelation (but not in chs. 2, 3); and Jude didn't use the word in his epistle.

And beyond that, what was Paul referring to when he used this word?

As previously seen, the word "gospel" simply means *good news*. What was *the good news* to which Paul referred?

Invariably, people want to associate the word "gospel" with only one thing — *the good news pertaining to Christ's finished work at Calvary*.

They see the word "gospel" in Scripture, and this is what invariably comes to mind. And, looking at the word after this fashion, they seek to understand any portion of Scripture where this word appears solely in the light of the gospel of the grace of God.

And, interpreting Scripture after this fashion, they usually end up with a perversion, for, as previously seen, the word "gospel" is used *far more often than not* — including the Pauline epistles — referring to good news *other than Christ's finished work at Calvary*.

And erroneously understanding the word "gospel" to refer to Christ's finished work at Calvary, in a text where it doesn't, *will NOT ONLY do away with* that which the text does deal with *BUT* it will also often result in *a perversion* of the message pertaining to the simple gospel of the grace of God.

An example of the preceding would be the manner in which I Cor. 15:1-4 is usually understood. The word “gospel” appears in the first verse, and all four verses are usually looked upon as referring to the same thing — the gospel of the grace of God. But both the text and the context reveal that *such an interpretation is NOT correct at all.*

Paul used the word “gospel” in connection with that which is stated in verses one, two, and four; but it is evident that *this has NO reference to the gospel of the grace of God.* Salvation in these verses is spoken of as *an ongoing process in the lives of those to whom he was writing,* and it is also spoken of as something which *could be lost.*

Neither would be true relative to the gospel of the grace of God which Paul had proclaimed to them “*first,*” referred to in verse three (referred to apart from the use of the word “gospel”).

And when individuals combine these four verses and attempt to make everything pertain to the gospel of the grace of God, the truths referred to in verses one, two, and four *are ALWAYS done away with;* and the gospel of grace, referred to in verse three, *is OFTEN corrupted* (through bringing elements [from vv. 1, 2, 4] over into this message, *where they do NOT belong*).

And the manner in which this passage is normally handled would be true numerous places in the Pauline epistles when the context is ignored and the word “gospel” *is made to refer to something which the text DOESN'T refer to at all.*

(I Corinthians 15:1-4 is dealt with in a more extensive manner later in this part of the article, following some preliminary material, allowing the passage to be better understood from a contextual respect.)

Paul’s extensive use of the word “gospel,” particularly

his extensive use of this word to refer to something other than the gospel of the grace of God, goes back to his experiences at the outset of his ministry.

Before Paul ever launched out on the ministry to which he had been called — *to carry the good news rejected by Israel to the Gentiles* — the Lord took him aside and taught him all the various things about the message which he was to proclaim.

And after this, as Paul went about fulfilling his calling, it was only natural for him to use the word “gospel,” meaning *good news*, to refer to the good news (which the Lord had personally taught him) which he had been called to proclaim to Christians throughout the Gentile world.

This “good news” had to do with *the mystery* revealed to Paul by the Lord (evidently after he had been taken to Arabia, then into heaven [II Cor. 12:1-7; Gal. 1:11-17])

It had to do with believing Jews and Gentiles being placed together in “the same body” as “fellowheirs [‘joint-heirs’]” (Eph. 3:1-11); and these Jewish and Gentile believers (Christians), together, possessed a “hope” relative to one day occupying positions of honor and glory with Christ in “his heavenly kingdom” (cf. Col. 1:25-28; II Tim. 4:17, 18; Titus 1:2; 2:11-13; 3:7).

And Paul referred to *the good news* pertaining to this message as “my gospel” (Rom. 16:25), “our gospel” (II Cor. 4:3), “the glorious gospel of Christ [*lit.*, ‘the gospel of the glory of Christ’]” (II Cor. 4:4), “the gospel of God” (Rom. 1:1; II Cor. 11:7), “the gospel of Christ” (Rom. 1:16; Gal. 1:7), etc. Then, numerous times Paul simply used the word “gospel” alone to refer to this good news (Rom. 1:15; Gal. 1:6-12).

The fact that the mystery had been revealed to Paul (cf. Eph. 3:1-6; 6:19, 20), with Paul called to carry this message to Christians throughout the Gentile world, is the evident

reason why he used the word “gospel” so often in his epistles. It was only *natural* for him to refer to the message which he had been called to proclaim through the use of a word which meant “good news,” for *the message was good news*.

For the unsaved, Christ’s finished work on the Cross was “good news.” As unsaved individuals, this was THE BEST NEWS that they could ever hear.

But once *they had been saved*, they were then to hear the “good news” about *why* they had been saved. And, *as saved individuals*, this was, as well, *THE BEST NEWS that they could ever hear.*

And Paul’s ministry centered around *the latter, NOT the former*. Paul’s ministry centered around proclaiming that which the Lord had revealed to him following his conversion. And the message contained therein dealt with the reason an individual had been saved (*cf. Deut. 6:23*); and this gospel, Paul’s gospel, was *THE BEST NEWS redeemed man could ever hear*, which was why Paul let *NOTHING* stand in the way of his proclaiming this message.

This “good news” had to do with *the greatest thing God could offer redeemed man — occupying positions as co-heir with His Son, from a heavenly realm, in the coming kingdom*. To reference words which the writer of Hebrews used, it was “so great salvation” (Heb. 2:3).

And Paul’s repeated reference to the message pertaining to this offer as “good news” is one of the distinguishing characteristics of his writings.

1) The Mystery

“The mystery” revealed to Paul, “hid in God” *from the beginning* (the beginning of the ages), of necessity, forms an integral part of the Old Testament Scriptures.

There is *NOTHING* in the New Testament that *does NOT* have its roots in one or more places in the Old Testament. The New is simply an opening up and unveiling of that drawn from foundational material previously set forth in the Old, *drawn mainly from the types* (cf. Luke 24:25-27, 44; I Cor. 10:6, 11; Eph. 3:9-11; Col. 1:16-18, 25-27).

And, aside from the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, the New Testament has to do mainly with *one major facet of Old Testament revelation*:

The New Testament, in this respect, has to do mainly with *numerous things pertaining to the heavenly sphere of the coming kingdom* — first, as these things pertained to Israel (offered to Israel in the gospels, re-offered in Acts); and then, as these things presently pertain to the one new man “in Christ” (to whom the kingdom is presently being offered, after having been rejected by and taken from Israel).

“The mystery” was revealed to Moses first, though remaining *a mystery, remaining veiled*.

Then, some fifteen centuries later, God took Paul aside (evidently to Arabia [the same country to which he had previously taken Moses to reveal things pertaining to the theocracy], then into heaven [II Cor. 12:1-7; Gal. 1:11-17]); and, in the person of His Son, God *opened up and unveiled* various things which He had previously revealed to Moses and other Old Testament prophets (cf. Luke 24:25-27).

(A “mystery [Gk., *musterion*, meaning, ‘a hidden thing,’ ‘a secret’]” in the New Testament can be defined as *something previously hidden in Old Testament revelation but now revealed* [cf. Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:4, 5].

Contrariwise, a mystery *CAN NEVER* be thought of as a reference to something not found at all in previous revelation, for, again, there is *NOTHING* in the New Testament that does not have its roots in one or more places in the Old Testament.

Thus, a “mystery” pertains to something dealt with in previous revelation [seen mainly in the types] but not opened up [or fully opened up] to one’s understanding until a later point in time [seen mainly in the antitypes].

[Note that the Word made flesh (John 1:1, 2, 14) before a single word of the N.T. had been penned would have been *incomplete* had something later appeared in the N.T. that had not previously appeared in some form in the O.T.].

And the opening up and unveiling of a mystery [such as the mystery revealed to Paul following his conversion] could occur *ONLY through Divine intervention* [cf. Col. 1:25-27]. *ONLY the same Person* Who had previously established the mystery [via revelation, through one or more of the Old Testament prophets] could open up and make known the mystery [via revelation, to one or more of the New Testament writers].

And, in Paul’s case, this can be seen through that which he himself testified concerning how he came into possession of a knowledge of the message which he had been called to proclaim among the Gentiles.

The Lord Himself took Paul aside, then moved Paul into His presence, and personally taught him — *One-on-one* — the message which he, in days ahead, was to proclaim to individuals [Christians] and groups of individuals [Churches] out among the Gentile nations.

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself *personally* opened up and explained things to Paul which had previously been revealed through Moses and the Prophets [Gal. 1:11-18; Eph. 3:1-11; Col. 1:20-28; cf. Luke 24:25-27]; and Paul had been called to take these truths and proclaim them *to the one new man* “in Christ” out in the Gentile world, in both verbal and written form.)

Progressive revelation of this nature can be seen in Peter’s reference to angels desiring “to look into” things pertaining

to *the salvation of the soul*, things which the Spirit moved him to write about, and things intimately associated with the mystery revealed to Paul (I Peter 1:3-11).

These angels could only have previously seen, *in the Old Testament Scriptures*, that which was being opened up and unveiled to Peter (and others).

These were things which they desired to know more about; but, *apart from later revelation, which opened up and provided additional light on these things*, the saving of the soul in connection with sufferings and glory could be little understood.

Thus, “the mystery” revealed to Paul was simply *an opening up and an unveiling of things which had lain in the bosom of an existing revelation — a revelation wherein the roots of all Biblical doctrine lie*.

And, as previously stated, these things lay centrally in the types, which God had established in the beginning. Then, the various types which deal with the bride of Christ, and thus “the mystery,” do so in different ways.

For example, Genesis chapter two deals with the bride being removed from the body; Genesis chapter twenty-four deals with the bride being taken from the family; Genesis chapter forty-one, Exodus chapter two, and Ruth chapters three and four deal with the bride being taken from among the Gentiles.

And there are numerous other types as well, which, together, deal with *all the various facets of the matter*.

Further, “the mystery” has to do with revealed truth surrounding believing Jews and believing Gentiles — forming *one new man* “in Christ” (where there is neither Jew nor Gentile) — being *heirs together*, “of the same body.” It has to do with “Christ in you [*lit.*, ‘Christ being proclaimed among you’], the hope of glory” (*cf.* Eph. 2:12-15; 3:1-11; Col. 1:24-28).

Note again how “the mystery” is explained in so many words in the Book of Ephesians — a book centering around Christians one day realizing an “inheritance” *in heavenly places* (ch. 1), a sphere presently occupied by the incumbent rulers, Satan and his angels (chs. 1, 3, 6 [also, note how Paul closes and encapsulates the contents of the book in 6:19, 20]):

“How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery...

That the Gentiles [believing Gentiles] should be fellow-heirs [with believing Jews], and of the same body [forming *the one new man* ‘in Christ’], and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel [which, contextually, could only be *the gospel of the glory of Christ, NOT the gospel of the grace of God*]” (Eph. 3:3a, 6; cf. Eph. 2:11-15).

And a type which, among other things, would have to do with Jews and Gentiles together in one body would be the account of Caleb and Joshua’s experiences, beginning in Numbers chapter thirteen and extending through the Book of Joshua.

The name “Caleb” means *dog*, and the name “Joshua” means *salvation*.

It was the “Gentiles” who were looked upon by the Jews as *dogs*, for whom *salvation was provided through the Jews* (John 4:22). And Gentile believers, with Jewish believers, are destined to realize *an inheritance together in a heavenly land*, just as Caleb and Joshua realized *an inheritance together in an earthly land* (cf. I Cor. 9:23-10:11).

And though God, in the beginning, designed various Old Testament types to reveal these things, once He had called *the one new man* “in Christ” into existence and Israel had rejected the re-offer of the kingdom, these things had to be *opened up and further revealed* to those comprising this new

creation. Apart from such an opening up and unveiling, God's purpose for the present dispensation and the place which the Gentiles would occupy in this purpose could not be properly understood and realized (*cf.* Acts 10:45-48; 11:15-18; 15:12-18).

This is the reason that the Lord took Paul aside shortly after his conversion and provided extensive instruction concerning this whole overall matter, for these things comprised *the heart of the message* which he was to carry to individuals out in the Gentile world.

And this is the reason that Paul's ministry dealt mainly, *NOT* with the gospel of the grace of God, *BUT* with the gospel of the glory of Christ. And, correspondingly, this is also the reason that *the EMPHASIS in ALL of his epistles* is, likewise, on the gospel of the glory of Christ rather than the gospel of the grace of God.

2) *Paul's Gospel*

As stated at the outset, the manner in which Paul used the word "gospel," meaning *good news*, *MUST ALWAYS be understood contextually*.

Paul did not use this word as it is used, almost without exception, in theological circles today — as a reference only to the gospel of the grace of God. Rather, Paul used the word, time after time, as a reference to *the good news* which had been delivered to him by "the revelation of Jesus Christ," following his conversion (Gal. 1:11, 12).

And, as previously stated, as well, Paul used the word, *FAR MORE OFTEN THAN NOT*, as a reference to the main crux of his ministry — *the good news pertaining to that encompassed within the mystery*, which had been delivered to him, which he, in turn, had been called to proclaim to Christians throughout the Gentile world (Eph. 3:1-11; Col. 1:25-29).

And the Christians to whom Paul ministered *would have easily understood his use of the word “gospel” from the context of that which he had either said or written* (for an example of the preceding, refer to the author’s article, “Antichrist Cannot Appear Until...”).

This *central thrust* of Paul’s ministry becomes *self-evident* as one reads through the Book of Acts and the Pauline epistles.

Paul proclaimed both the gospel of *the* grace of God and the gospel of the glory of Christ, but he proclaimed the good news pertaining to *the* grace of God with a view to his then being able to proclaim the good news pertaining to *the* glory of Christ.

Paul explained to individuals *HOW they could be saved*, with a view to subsequently being able to explain to them *WHY they had been saved*.

For example, note how plainly the matter is outlined in Paul’s final message to the Christians in Ephesus, through their elders (Acts 20:24-32). Or, for that matter, note also how plainly the matter is outlined in Paul’s epistle to the Christians in Ephesus (1:7ff; 2:1ff; 3:1ff). And a similar structure can be seen in other epistles as well, though the emphasis is *ALWAYS* on matters beyond salvation by grace.

But, because of an existing confusion in the dual nature of I Cor. 15:1-4 in this respect, attention will again be called to this passage in order to illustrate the point. As previously noted, this passage is invariably used erroneously by Christians, not in a dual respect, but in a singular sense — as a reference *only* to the gospel of the grace of God.

This passage though begins with *the gospel of the glory of Christ* (vv. 1, 2), then briefly moves back to *the gospel of the grace of God* (v. 3), and then comes back to where it began, to *the gospel of the glory of Christ* (v. 4) — *providing the complete gospel message, covering past, present, and future aspects of salvation*.

Paul, in this passage, *began* with the central message which he had been called to proclaim; *then he briefly moved back* to the message of the gospel of the grace of God, which, of necessity, must be proclaimed first to the unsaved; *then he came back* to the message which is to be proclaimed to individuals once they have heard the gospel of the grace of God — *the central message which he had been called to proclaim throughout the Gentile world.*

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures;

And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (I Cor. 15:1-4).

The problem emerges when a person attempts to *NOT ONLY* make Paul’s reference to “the gospel” in verses one and two a reference to the gospel of the grace of God *BUT* make that stated in these verses pertain to his entire statement having to do with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ in verses three and four.

It is the “death” of Christ *ALONE* which pertains to *the gospel of the grace of God*. The “burial” and “resurrection” of Christ *move beyond this* and have to do with things pertaining to *the continuing good news, the gospel of the glory of Christ*.

Note the type beginning in Exodus chapter twelve. “Death” *ALONE* is seen in this chapter. “Death” had been decreed upon the firstborn, but God provided a way for this death to be carried out *in a vicarious manner*.

And it is EXACTLY the same today. "Death" has been decreed upon the firstborn, but God has provided a way for this death to be carried out in a vicarious manner (I Cor. 15:3).

In the type, this was done through the death of paschal lambs and the proper application of the blood from these slain lambs.

In the antitype, *this is done EXACTLY the same way*. The Paschal Lamb has died in the stead of the firstborn, but the blood *MUST* be applied (through believing [Acts 16:30, 31; Eph. 2:8, 9]).

"Burial" and "resurrection" though move beyond this in the type (the Red Sea passage and emergence from the Sea on the eastern banks [cf. I Cor. 10:2; Col. 2:12; 3:1ff]).

And it is EXACTLY the same in the antitype (I Cor. 15:4).

a) 1 Corinthians 15:1, 2

Verses one and two refer to the good news (the gospel) which Paul had previously proclaimed to those in Corinth, which they had accepted and upon which they presently stood. This good news had to do with *present and future* aspects of salvation (not past, as seen in the gospel of the grace of God), it had to do with *holding fast* to that which had been proclaimed (with the possibility that there could be *loss*), and it had to do with Christians in Corinth either *believing* or *not believing* the message with reference to a *purpose (or cause)* in view.

The present and future aspects of salvation in this gospel are shown by the words, "By which also ye are saved [*lit.*, '...ye are being saved']"; *holding fast* to the message proclaimed is shown by the words, "if ye keep in memory [*lit.*, 'if ye hold (are holding) fast'] what I preached unto you"; and *believing* or *not believing* the message with reference to a *purpose* in view is shown by the words, "unless ye have believed in vain [*lit.*, '...believed apart from a purpose' (or, '...believed without a cause in view')]."

The present and future aspects of salvation have to do with the salvation of the soul (cf. James 1:21; I Peter 1:4-9).

The eternal salvation which we presently possess — *the salvation of the spirit*, wherein man passes “from death unto life” (cf. John 5:24; Eph. 2:1, 5) — places man in a position where he can realize *the salvation of his soul*.

And these two aspects of salvation *MUST ALWAYS be kept completely separate, one from the other.*

The thought of Christians *holding fast* to those things in the message being proclaimed can be seen in the second and fourth warnings in the Book of Hebrews. The same word appearing in the Greek text of I Cor. 15:2 appears twice in the second warning (3:6, 14) and once in the fourth warning (10:23).

Holding fast in the second warning is with reference to “the heavenly calling” and “the hope” set before Christians (vv. 1, 6); and *holding fast* in the fourth warning is with reference to this same hope — “the profession of our faith [lit., ‘the confession of the hope’]” (vv. 23-25).

Then, the thought of Christians *believing without a purpose (or cause)* is a reference to the fact that a person has been saved *for a revealed purpose* — a purpose seen, in its entirety, in the gospel of the glory of Christ. And that purpose is the same as the purpose pertaining to man’s creation in the beginning — “...let them have dominion” (Gen. 1:26, 28).

Man has been saved with a view to his one day occupying *a position of power and authority with Christ in His kingdom*, which has to do with realizing the present aspect of salvation at a future date — *the salvation of one’s soul*.

Believing without a purpose (or cause) in verse two leads a *person nowhere*. An individual has been saved for a purpose, which can be seen and understood *only through believing the gospel which Paul referred to in the previous verse*; and this is a purpose *which can one day be realized ONLY through presently governing one’s life accordingly, set forth in verse two.*

b) *I Corinthians 15:3, 4*

Note the way verse three begins. Paul's statement in verse three is *NOT AT ALL* a continuation of his subject matter from the first two verses. And this is really *self-explanatory*; Paul states this in so many words.

Verse three begins, "For I delivered unto you *FIRST OF ALL* that which *I ALSO* received..." That which he is about to reference is something which he had delivered unto them *FIRST* (prior to delivering the good news which he had previously referenced, in vv. 1, 2), and this is something which *he had ALSO* received (that is to say, *he had received this IN ADDITION to the good news referred to in vv. 1, 2*).

The message which Paul delivered unto those in Corinth *FIRST* can be seen by going back to I Cor. 2:1, 2:

"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

Paul, when he *first* went to Corinth, couldn't begin with a message pertaining to the gospel of the glory of Christ, referred to in I Cor. 15:1, 2 (and also in I Cor. 2:1, preceded, as in I Cor. 15:1, 2, by a proclamation of the gospel of the grace of God [2:2; 15:3]).

When Paul *first* went to Corinth, after being rejected by the Jews and then going to the Gentiles (Acts 18:6), he found a city filled with unsaved Gentiles. And he *had to first* minister to those in Corinth on this basis. He *had to first* proclaim the simple message pertaining to the gospel of the grace of God unto them. He *had to begin* with "Jesus Christ and him crucified." He *couldn't begin* elsewhere.

But, once individuals had believed, once individuals had passed "from death unto life," *then Paul could move*

beyond this message.

And this is exactly what he did. *Paul spent one and one-half years in Corinth “teaching the word of God among them [among those who had been saved under the preaching of the simple message pertaining to the gospel of the grace of God]” (Acts 18:11; cf. I Cor. 2:3ff).*

And this is why Paul, in I Cor. 15:1, 2, could allude to these things through simply calling their attention to “*the gospel [‘the good news’] which I preached unto you...*” They would know *EXACTLY* what he meant, for he had previously spent *an extensive period of time* teaching them things pertaining to this gospel.

And they would *also understand* the distinction when he moved back in time and referred to the gospel of the grace of God which he, of necessity, had proclaimed to them *at the very beginning* (v. 3).

And, though moving back in this manner, Paul was then able to easily come back to the place where he had begun — *referencing things pertaining to the central message which he had been called to proclaim throughout the Gentile world* (v. 4).

And this is the reason that Paul’s ministry dealt mainly, *NOT with the gospel of the grace of God, BUT with the gospel of the glory of Christ.* And, correspondingly, this is also the reason that the emphasis *in ALL of his epistles* is, likewise, on the gospel of the glory of Christ rather than the gospel of the grace of God.

That is to say, Paul spent his time proclaiming *THAT which he had been called to proclaim, THAT which the Lord had taught him personally — as previously seen, taught him One-on-one over a period of time evidently encompassing about three years* (II Cor. 12:1-7; Gal. 1:11-18).

And the Pauline epistles, to be PROPERLY dealt with, MUST be UNDERSTOOD and TAUGHT accordingly.

Hebrews, the General Epistles, and Revelation 2, 3

And *EXACTLY* the same thing as seen in the Pauline epistles can be seen in Hebrews, the general epistles, and the seven epistles in Rev. 2, 3.

The emphasis in ANY of these epistles, as in the Pauline epistles, is NOT on the gospel of the grace of God (corresponding to that foreshadowed by God's restorative work on day one in Gen. 1) BUT on a continuing aspect of salvation (that foreshadowed by God's continued restorative work on days two through six in Gen. 1).

And, whether Pauline, Hebrews, the general epistles, or Rev. 2, 3, this is *ALL* with a view to God's complete work in man's salvation, with a time of rest (that foreshadowed by God resting in Gen. 2:1-3 [cf. Heb. 4:1-9] following six days of restorative work).

It was *ALL* laid out at the beginning, in the opening thirty-four verses of Scripture.

Understand matters correctly at the beginning, and things in subsequent Scripture, in a natural respect, will fall into place.

BUT, misunderstand or ignore the way God laid it all out at the beginning, and you are left without a base for all which follows, providing a main reason, if not the main reason, for much of the error which exists today.

Concluding Thoughts:

A question could only be in order at this point in the article:

IF the central subject matter in the epistles (Pauline, Hebrews, the General Epistles, and Rev. 2, 3) exists as previously described — which, as clearly shown, DOES exist — WHY the silence on this subject from the pulpits of the land today?

OR, that question could be applicable in previous

Scriptures, in Acts, and then the gospels, with related things being asked about these parts of Scripture as well.

In relation to the epistles, some facet of a message concerning the coming kingdom of Christ, associated with the contents of Paul's gospel, *SHOULD BE* at the center of *ANY* ministry from *ANY* pulpit on *ANY* Sunday, or at *ANY* other time, throughout the Churches of the land today.

An individual simply CANNOT deal with the central subject matter in the epistles apart from following some semblance of the preceding! And the subject matter in preceding revelation (Acts, the gospels, then the O.T.) CAN ONLY be seen as closely aligned, for later revelation flows out of earlier revelation, with a central subject seen throughout.

But, resulting from the woman placing leaven in the three measures of meal early in the dispensation in Matt. 13:33, that is far from the way matters exist today.

And this act, after two millenniums, near the end of the dispensation, has ultimately brought matters to pass as seen not only in Matt. 13:33 ("the whole... leavened") but also in Rev. 3:14-20 — a Church which thought of itself as "rich," "increased with goods," and needing "nothing"; but, in reality, was "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

(*Ref. the author's books: Chapter VI, "Parable of the Leaven," in *Mysteries of the Kingdom*, and Chapter XI, "Seated on the Throne," in *Judgment Seat of Christ*.)*

Because of all this, *IF* the epistles were dealt with after a correct fashion today, in almost any Church of the land — fundamental and liberal alike — the message would very likely be seen *as heretical*.

On the other hand, the converse of that is equally true.

That being taught and accepted in today's Christianity is invariably material dealing with the epistles presented in an incorrect manner in this respect (*e.g.*, things surrounding Paul's gospel being presented as having to do with salvation by grace — something almost universally taught).

And that's where we are in today's enlightened Christianity, which is why, at the time of Christ's return, He will not find the true message seen throughout the epistles (or Scripture as a whole [O.T., N.T.], leading into the epistles) being taught in the Churches of the land:

“...When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith [‘the faith’] on the earth?” [Luke 18:8b].

A negative response is designated by the manner in which the question is asked in the Greek text. And the reason for this negative response is given in Matt. 13 and Rev. 3 — *a rejection of Paul's gospel, over time, resulting in a completely leavened Church, one thinking that they are “rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,” BUT, in reality, are “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”*

