

**-BLESSINGS AND THE MYSTERY-**

There are special blessings in connection with the dispensation of the MYSTERY. These blessings are different from those of any other dispensation. They differ from them in three respects; PLACE, TIME and CHARACTER. Let us take a brief look at each of these aspects.

1. PLACE. In Eph. 1:3 the place is given as HEAVENLY PLACES. The Greek for this expression is EN TOIS EPOURANIOIS. This is in the dative plural and denotes the location. Also this whole expression occurs only five times and all these are in Ephesians. Let us put these in a structural outline;

A/1:3. Spiritual Blessings.

B/1:20. Christ above principalities and powers.

C/2:6. Christ and His church raised and seated.

B/3:10. Church a witness to principalities and powers.

A/6:12. Spiritual Wickedness.

It is true that the word epouranios occurs in 15 more places, but in each case it denotes the character of the thing described and not the place. So the place, the sphere, in which we will enjoy our blessings is HEAVENLY PLACES. It might be a little more accurate to translate the phrase "in the above-heavens," or "in the super-heavenlies."

In looking at the above outline we find that this is the place where Christ is. It is above all principalities and powers. It is the place of the throne of God. It is where the Church which is His Body will be seated with Him. It is the place where the church will be on display to show to all the principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God. It is also a place of spiritual wickedness and the realm of our warfare in the Spirit.

This is not the earth which was the inheritance of Abraham and the meek. It is not the New Jerusalem which is the place of THE CHURCH OF GOD. It was never known that a group of people would enjoy bles-

sings in that place until it was told here in Ephesians. It is also interesting to note that this is the very place where Satan aspired to establish his throne before his fall.

2. TIME. In Eph. 1:4 we discover that the Church of the One Body was chosen before the foundation of the world. This is an earlier choosing than that of any other dispensation in all the Word of God. The phrase occurs only three times, twice in reference to the Lord and once in reference to His Church of which He is the Head. The references are these;

(1) "Thou lovedst Me BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD." Jno. 17:24.

(2) "Christ, as a Lamb...fore-ordained BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD." 1 Pet. 1:19,20.

(3) "According as He hath chosen us in Him BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD." Eph. 1:4.

This is the same time referred to in 2 Tim. 1:9 where it is, "BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN."

This cannot refer to the CHURCH OF GOD or the KINGDOM, for in speaking of it in Matt. 25:35 the time is given as FROM (or since) THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.

So as far as the time element is concerned we are the first chosen.

3. CHARACTER. In Eph. 1:3 we are immediately reminded that our blessings are ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS. These are not earthly material blessings as were promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. These are not blessings in the flesh such as the gifts of THE CHURCH OF GOD in Acts. They are Spiritual and they are in the super-heavens. Not only that, but they are ALL. There is nothing withheld. Our Lord is heir of all things and we are heirs and joint heirs with Him, so we inherit the all-things.

Just as all spiritual things have their shadow here in the earthly things, so do these spiritual blessings have their shadow in our material lives.

-THE MIDDLE WALL OF PARTITION-

-THE JEW-		-THE GENTILE-
Rom. 9:3-5.		Eph. 2:11,12.
A/ According to the flesh -- Brethren	"No	A/ Gentiles in the flesh
B/ Israelites		B/ Without Christ
C/ Sonship	one	C/ Aliens from the Common- wealth of Israel
D/ Glory		C/ Strangers from the Cove- nants of Promise
E/ Covenants	being	B/ Having no hope
E/ Law		A/ Godless in the world.
D/ Service		
G/ Promises	a	
B/ Fathers		
A/ According to the flesh -- The Messiah.		

foreigner may enter within the enclosure around the holy place. Whoever is apprehended will himself be to blame for his death which will certainly follow." -From a slab of stone discovered at Jerusalem.

From the time of Abraham till the end of Acts we find "The Jew First" is the principle by which God deals with men. Israel was to be a priestly nation and as such was to be separate and distinct from all others. The reason God dealt with the Jew first was that up to the time of Abraham the nations had so dismally failed that God had to give them up, see Rom. 1:24, 26, 28.

During the earthly ministry of our Lord He called the Gentiles dogs (Matt. 15:26). He came only "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:6 and 15:24). His disciples were to go out only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" and were not to go into the way of the Samaritans or the Gentiles. He said, "As I have been sent, so send I you."

In the great sermon of Peter at Pentecost the only people addressed were "Ye men of Judaea" "Ye men of Israel" "All the house of Israel."

Among the three thousand that were added that day there was not a single Gentile. Notice that it says ADDED, not that a new church was formed. THE CHURCH OF GOD had its beginning with the calling of the twelve. Then we have mention of seventy, one hundred twenty, and finally 500 who were believers before Pentecost.

At Acts 10 Peter did not know anything about a church in which Jew and Gentile were one in Christ, (Acts 10:28). He would have called Cornelius a dog if it had not been for his vision at Joppa, (Acts 10:14). The tradition that the church began at Pentecost must have been started after the time of Peter. "They of the Circumcision were astonished...that on the Gentiles.. the gift of the Holy Ghost," v. 45. According to that record it was impossible that any Gentile could have received the baptism of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost.

The church at Jerusalem was just as ignorant of any church beginning at Pentecost, for they said to Peter, "Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and did eat with them!" Then finally the church recognizes that "to the Gentiles...granted repentance unto life," (Acts 11:18,19)

The preaching of Peter at the house of Cornelius was to open the door of the kingdom to the Gentiles and prepare the way for the apostle Paul and his message. There is no record that Peter ever again preached to a Gentile, or that any of the 12 ever did.

The absolute refusal of the churches to recognize these plain facts is the reason for so much confusion today. They will take tradition rather than God's Word.

Study, if you will, all the epistles written during the Acts period and you will find the same principle all thru, "The Jew First." Even in Romans, the last epistle to be written before the close of Acts, we find the principle very pronounced. There we find the gospel to the Jew first in 1:16; judgment to the Jew first, 2:9; blessing to the Jew first, 2:10; advantage and profit pertain to the Jew, 3:1,2.

The Jews held yet to their old position so much that the apostle chided them for it, Rom. 3:29.

In the diagram on the opposite page is an outline of Rom. 9:3-5 which enumerates the items which are exclusive to the Jew. Paul could call them brethren. They were Israelites, a chosen people. They had the sole right of sonship. The glory of God shone thru them as He blessed them among the nations. To them only were given the covenants and the law. They were the only ones (N.B.) who had a right to do service for God. Nowhere before Acts 28:28 is there any record of a Gentile preaching, teaching or doing any other service in the church. That was for the Jew only. The great difference between Jew and Gentile was not so much race as it was PROMISES. It was the Jews who could speak of the fathers. And finally according to the flesh, the Messiah was of and to the Jews. What a long list of advantages!

On the other hand, look at the record against the Gentiles. First they were in the flesh. Of course that was the natural state of both Jew and Gentile, but the latter had little hope of escaping it. They were without Christ, for did not the Word say, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people (the Jews) from their sins." In relation to Israel, they were just aliens. As to covenants of promise, they were complete strangers. They had nothing in them. Therefore they had no hope and since God had given them up, they

were without God and worst of all, they were in the world. That is a black picture for the Gentiles. Just remember that is the picture of the Gentiles from Abraham to Acts 28:28.

-THE MIDDLE WALL BROKEN DOWN-

Altho from Acts 10 to 28 there was a chance for the Gentile to be grafted in and receive blessings thru the Jew, the middle wall was still there and so there were two gospels, two faiths, and two sets of apostles. But soon after Acts 28:28 we find a great change.

Ephesians was the first epistle written after the Acts 28:28 crisis and immediately we find a very different message. Let us just skim over Eph. 2:14-18;

Christ is our PEACE; He has made Both Jew and Gentile ONE. (Middle wall is broken down) (Distinctive ordinances of the Jews, such as water baptism, holydays, Lord's supper or Passover, etc. are now abolished) He now creates of the TWAIN ONE new man, that is what makes the peace, so that He might reconcile the BOTH unto God in ONE body. (Enmity is slain) (Peace is preached) Thru Him we the BOTH have access by ONE Spirit unto the Father.

Anybody who will try to introduce ordinances into the church today is only trying to rebuild the wall of partition. There will certainly be terrible judgement for anyone who works against the unity and the peace of God's people by so doing.

This new position is summed up in Eph. 3:6,7;

"That the Gentiles should be --

1. Joint heirs, and a
2. Joint body, and

3. Joint partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel, whereof Paul was made a minister."

This is the charter of the Church which is His Body, the dispensation of the MYSTERY which was hid in God from ages and generations. Read the prison epistles, Eph., Phil., Col., and 2 Tim. They will furnish the details.

-TRUTH FOR TODAY-

Bible Class meets at my home each Sunday afternoon at 2:30. It is on the Harrison Center road, 6 miles west of Warsaw, 4 miles south of Atwood, or 7 miles northeast of Mentone. The class is informal and each person has opportunity to ask questions and join in the discussion. You are welcome. Bring your Bible, paper, and pencil.

Radio Class is every Tuesday night at 7:15 at the WRSW studios in Warsaw. Make it a habit to listen every week to this program. Visitors are welcome at the studios during the broadcasts.

This paper comes out each month as we find the time to work on it. It is free. If your copy is marked SAMPLE on the front, it is all you will receive unless you ask for it to be sent regularly. Just send a card asking for it. If you have any friends you would like to have the paper sent to, just send us the names and addresses.

Questions are gladly considered.

All teaching based on;

- { 1. Full inspiration of the Scriptures.
- { 2. Right division of the Scriptures.
- { 3. Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- { 4. All-sufficiency of His one sacrifice.

-THE EDITOR'S DESK-

Cluttered up as badly as ever. Found a card a few days ago that should have been answered a month before.

If I am a little slow in replying to my mail, just remember that the cows, goats, and chickens look to us for food and comfort. They come first. We have almost 80 acres here about half of which is tillable. This provides a chance to use our spare time, and also produces the eats.

Some months ago I ordered some Companion Bibles from England for some friends. The Bibles arrived a few days ago. I plan to make another order in a few days.

I was agreeably surprised by some friends who sponsored and paid for three of my broadcasts recently. Many thanks to the Milo Stump family of Hobart, Dale Hand family of Bremen, and the Harold Border family of Nappanee. This lift was greatly appreciated.

On Feb. 20 and 27 I will have charge of the Sunday morning and evening services of the Bible Fellowship of Muskegon, Mich. The class will meet as usual at my home those Sundays.

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TRUTH FOR TODAY

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