

-THE FINGER THAT WROTE-

BUT JESUS STOOPED DOWN, AND WITH HIS FINGER WROTE ON THE GROUND. You will find this in John 8:6.

Centuries before, the same finger had written the law on the tables of stone. AND HE GAVE UNTO MOSES, TWO TABLES OF STONE, WRITTEN WITH THE FINGER OF GOD. See Exodus 24:12; 31:18. Israel broke the law and Moses broke the tables. So a second time they were written by by the finger of God, placed under the Mercy Seat, and it was sprinkled with blood. See Exodus 34:1, 28; and Deut. 10:2,4. The law is still a broken law.

Again the finger of God wrote. IN THE SAME HOUR CAME FORTH FINGERS OF A MAN'S HAND, AND WROTE. Dan. 5:5. This was a writing of judgment against a man who had broken the laws of God, who held God and all that was holy in contempt.

We find a second writing, both in the case of the law and of the woman taken in adultery. Why?

The second tables were put under the Mercy Seat in the Ark as a perpetual reminder that Israel had broken their covenant and the law of God. Only by mercy could they ever be redeemed from death, the penalty of broken law. God, by His very nature, must also be just. So to be just and at the same time show forth mercy, there had to be a SUBSTITUTE. The blood foreshadowed the Coming One who made it possible for God to be just and the Justifier of the ungodly.

Tho the woman stood there condemned by the law, who were her accusers that they should demand that righteousness be maintained? Satan also accuses, but he is the last one who would have righteousness maintained. The Lord wrote. They insisted on judgment. They received it. He wrote again. The 2 witnesses required by law did not remain. The second writing spoke of the second tables and the blood. There was no condemnation. The woman was justified; all things she ever did were counted as right.

Stop! Look! Listen! Has this been your experience?

-BORN OUT OF DUE TIME-

This expression is found in 1 Cor. 15:7. Paul has just spoken of the appearing of the Lord to the various persons and groups after His resurrection. Then last of all He appeared to Paul. But this was not the due season for Paul to see Him. Then what was the due season?

If we look at Paul's ministry during the Acts time period, we find him preaching the grace of God to Gentiles. Thru his ministry Gentiles were being blest. But as we read the promise made to Abraham, and to the nation Israel, we find that this ministry was some time to be the ministry of Israel as a nation. During Acts, Israel as a nation had no ministry.

When Israel receives the New Covenant, then they will be a blessing to the Gentiles. Israel has never yet received the New Covenant and therefore has not yet fulfilled the purpose that God set up for them. Under the New Covenant Israel will be a peculiar treasure and a priestly nation. They will be to the nations, like Levi was to the other tribes of Israel.

In a small measure, therefore, Paul was doing what Israel as a nation will some day do when they receive the New Covenant. Therefore he could say that he was as one born out of due time, an abortion. It is a fact that Israel will have to first look upon the One Whom they pierced before they will enter upon their ordained ministry. So Paul in his seeing the risen Lord foreshadowed the thing that Israel as a nation will some time experience.

But Paul's ministry was not the same as what the nation's will be. During Acts the Gentiles were blest so that Israel might be provoked to jealousy and bear fruit. Their blessing was not received thru the nation, but thru a man. The purpose that God had for the Gentiles in Acts was fulfilled and completed. It will never be repeated.

We know little about the nature of this blessing to the Gentiles. We can only guess at what their position before God will be.

-ORDINANCES AND RITUALS-

None of these has any connection whatsoever with the obtaining of everlasting life. Life is gotten thru the simple act of faith. It is received by receiving Christ. It is a gift and must be taken as such or it is not taken at all. There is not one single thing in all the universe that man can do to obtain eternal life except to believe and receive it as a gift.

The gospel of John is written around the theme of eternal life. There is no mention of the word REPENT or any form of it in all the book. There is no command for water baptism. The Lord's supper is not mentioned. Why?

Repentance was required for entrance into the kingdom, which is a calling. The kingdom was a special calling or dispensation. It was entered only by those who already had eternal life. They got the eternal life by believing. They entered the kingdom by repenting of their sins and being baptized with water. The baptism was a symbol of the repentance.

It was Israel that was called to repent and enter the kingdom. It was Israel that was to be baptised. Our Lord identified Himself with His people, the remnant or repentant Israel, and so was baptized.

Later on when the doors of the kingdom were entered by Gentiles, beginning with Cornelius the Centurion, they were baptized with water which identified them with repentant Israel. Thus they could partake of the blessings of Israel as a grafted in wild olive branch. But these Gentiles did not have repentance preached to them, but rather they had the gospel of the GRACE OF GOD. During Acts the gospel of grace was never preached to the Jews. It was Paul's gospel to the Gentiles only.

The kingdom was proclaimed to the Jew all during Acts. The condition of entrance was repentance and water baptism.

Repentance and water baptism have no place in the GOSPEL OF THE DISPENSATION OF THE MYSTERY.

-WHY THE ORDINANCES?-

So many wonder why the churches today observe the Jewish rituals and ordinances. How did the early church drift back into the bondage of the law? How did they leave the freedom of grace and submit themselves to the commandments of men?

In the first place, they rejected the GOSPEL OF THE DISPENSATION OF THE MYSTERY. That was quite general even yet in the lifetime of Paul (2 Tim. 1:15). So they tried to still preach and live under the dispensation of the kingdom, even tho the doors of the kingdom had been closed by Paul at Acts 28:28.

Since the kingdom gospel required repentance and water baptism for entrance, they tried to retain those. The word REPENTANCE began to lose its primary meaning and it was soon applied indiscriminately to Jew and Gentile alike. A church was formed by human agency and baptism became a requirement for entrance into the church instead of the kingdom. Gradually the idea grew that the church was the kingdom.

Also this going back into Judaism brot in another error. The Judaisers wanted to bring men under the bondage of ordinances so they could glory in their flesh. So they required members of their man-made church to observe the Lord's supper, even tho it had been forbidden forever for a Gentile to partake of it. It is to be wondered at that they did not require circumcision too!

Churches today realize the difference, vaguely, between the possession of everlasting life and membership in the kingdom. So they require that one obtain eternal life before he is baptized and becomes a member of their church which they fondly hope is the kingdom. There are few exceptions.

The only way this can be corrected is for folks to realize the difference between Jew and Gentile, the difference between kingdom and church, and the difference between everlasting life and a calling.

If all this is something new to you, search the Scriptures.

-SPIRITUAL WORSHIP-

Israel were an earth people. Their hope was on the earth. They looked forward to an earthly kingdom when the Lord would occupy the throne of His father, David. They were not concerned about heavenly things. There is no mention in the O T of man hoping to go to heaven.

Since the calling of Israel was an earthly calling, their rituals and ordinances were made up of earthly elements. In worship they used sacrifices and altars. They had a certain place where they could meet God and worship Him. They used music in their worship, and in the case of David, he even danced before the Lord in worship.

The tabernacle was the appointed place of worship at the first and it was pitched wherever God commanded that it should be placed. When the temple was built, it was built in Jerusalem and that was the place a man could go to meet God and worship Him.

The Samaritans broke off and they erected a temple on Mt. Gerizim. So one day the question of place of worship was put to our Lord. He did not say which was the right place, Gerizim or Jerusalem. But He did have something to say about the manner of worship in the future.

THE HOUR COMETH, AND NOW IS, WHEN THE TRUE WORSHIPPERS SHALL WORSHIP THE FATHER IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH. This worship is not confined to a certain location. Then some elements must be left out.

We have some directions for this spiritual worship for today in Eph. 5:18-21. **BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT; SPEAKING TO YOURSELVES (not to the others) IN PSALMS AND HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS (not solos and anthems to audiences), SINGING AND MAKING MELODY IN YOUR HEART (not in a church) TO THE LORD (not to a congregation); GIVING THANKS ALWAYS FOR ALL THINGS UNTO GOD AND THE FATHER IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST; SUBMITTING YOURSELVES ONE TO ANOTHER IN THE FEAR OF GOD.**

This is true spiritual worship, that which is pleasing to God.

-REPENTANCE, CONFESSION, AND RESTITUTION-

I have here at hand a **CHRISTIAN WORKER'S NEW TESTAMENT**. In looking thru the summary of references in the back I found the above caption. Under it are references in Matt., Mark, Luke, Acts, 2 Cor., Jas., 1 Pet., 2 Pet., 1 John and the Rev. But there is not a reference to repentance, confession or restitution in the gospel of John or any of the prison epistles of Paul, all written after Acts 28:28.

Repentance, confession and restitution have to do with law. They are found in connection with the gospel of the kingdom. But they do not mix with the gospel of the grace of God. Salvation by grace thru faith can never require any working of the deeds of the law. It can never require any works of the flesh, or good works. If so, then man would have whereof to boast in the flesh, instead of glorifying God for His grace.

The sinner who does not know God can do none of these things. To try to require them is only to put an insurmountable obstacle in his path. It is something he cannot do. But these things should be done by each and every believer when he falls short, when he sins, and when he fails. He should repent before God, confess to the one he has wronged, and make restitution of anything wrongfully taken or done. To repent has the idea of returning back to a former position. It comes from a Greek word which means **TO PERCEIVE AFTERWARDS**. The sinner is a slave to sin. He is powerless to do any good work of any kind. It is impossible for him to **RETURN** to a place he has never been to in the first place.

Confession and restitution must be done under the impelling and guidance of the Holy Spirit. That would be impossible for the sinner as the Holy Spirit is not in him.

Another Greek word is also translated **REPENT** in Matt. 21:29,32; 2 Cor. 7:8; Heb. 7:21. It should be **regret**. It has no idea of a return or changing one's way.

-WARNING!-

In the study of dispensational truth there is a necessity to have certain guideposts and boundries to go by. We speak of dispensations. We learn about different resurrections. We distinguish between hopes and callings. We must draw a line between salvation and reward. We learn that a race must be run lawfully, that we must study the rules. We must know that there are certain conditions for winning a crown. We see that we must first obtain everlasting life before we enter a calling with its attendant hope. All this requires knowledge.

There are some who may go into all of this with great zest and gusto just to show off their superior intellect. They may learn all the signposts, boundries, and every marker of truth, and still it may be only so much sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. Such knowledge only tends to puff up. It tends to deadness. It genders strife and division. It puts truth on the plane of personal attainment instead of by divine revelation. The teaching of the Holy Spirit does not seem to be needed by such persons. They are quick to criticize and find faults in others. They are always ready to expose what they term false teaching. When they teach, you are led to believe that all other teachers are wrong and to be avoided. But they themselves are hard to pin down to what they really believe. They are always ready to debate.

On the other hand, all these marks and boundries can be a blessed help to those who really desire truth. They can rightly divide the truth into doctrine and practice. They can rightly divide their walk. They can rightly divide the dispensations. They can more fully learn the mystery of Christ. They learn more of the love of God and His purpose for the ages. Best of all, they learn God's will for today so they can do it and be approved.

We should examine ourselves as to which group we associate with. Puffed up with knowledge and zeal, we could be wrong.

-THE LORD'S SUPPER-

The Lord's supper was forever forbidden to Gentiles (See Exodus 12:43,45,47,48). There is no Scripture that tells us that this law was ever changed. Yet today we have multitudes of Gentiles on every hand we presumptuously and wickedly intrude where they ought not and observe this ritual which was for the Israelites only.

Yeast is made up of bacteria. This bacteria generates alcohol from sugar. In the Bible, yeast is called LEAVEN. Leaven was forbidden to be in the bread for observing the Lord's supper. Yet today multitudes use leaven in the bread for the observance of the Lord's supper and never think about how wicked it might be. Neither do they think about cleansing it out of their houses during the time of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Lord's supper. Yeast, in the Bible, is a symbol of evil. It is used to describe the false doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees.

When the Lord observed this supper with the 12 (He did not command the 70, the 120, or the 500 to do it) He connected it with the New Covenant. According to Jer. 31:31 the New Covenant is to the house of Israel only. Neither Israel nor the Gentile are under covenant today. Neither one can lawfully observe the Lord's supper today. Yet we see multitudes of Gentiles trying to pretend that they are of the house of Israel and observing this ritual wickedly and out of place. In vain does the Jew observe it today. God is not dealing with him under any covenant relationship now.

Today there are some who claim a heavenly calling who observe this ritual which was for an earthly people. The church which is the Body of Christ has a heavenly calling. It is to mind the things which are above, not the things on the earth. Earthly elements cannot enter into a heavenly calling. The members of the Body are exhorted to die to the earthly things. But it seems to be man's nature to ever seek a lower level.

-STUDIES IN JOHN- BML #4.

1. To what religious sect did Nicodemus belong? 3:1
2. What was his position among the Jews? 3:1
3. When did he come to the Lord? 3:2; 7:50; 19:39
4. In using the pronoun WE, he must have been speaking for the whole Sanhedrin. What was their estimate of the Lord? 3:2
5. What is the requirement for seeing the kingdom of God (understanding the things of God)? 3:3
6. What is the simple requirement for obtaining everlasting life? 3:16
7. Must a man be born from above then to be saved, or must he be born from above to understand the things of God?
8. The Lord Disregarded the words of Nicodemus and began to answer a question that had not been asked. What was it that Nicodemus wished to know?
9. Did Nicodemus get the meaning of what the Lord said? 3:4.
10. What further explanation of this being born from above is given in verse 5?
11. What does the WATER refer to? Eph. 5:26
12. Who applies this WATER so that one can have spiritual perception? 7:38,39. How does one come to understand the Word?
13. Does entering into something have the same meaning as seeing it or understanding it? Compare verses 3 and 5.
14. Can the flesh ever be made spirit or spiritual? 3:6
15. Can the flesh ever be subject to the law of God? Rom. 8:7,8
16. Is it possible then for a man to have a CHANGE OF HEART or the old nature?
17. Can the new nature or spirit be changed or does it remain spirit?
18. Are these things the Lord is teaching to Nicodemus earthly things or heavenly things? 3:12
19. Should Nicodemus have known these things? See experience of Saul, 1 Sam. 10:6,9 Compare with Psa. 51:10

DEAR YOUNG FOLKS; I have 5 more members of the BML to report. Mr. & Mrs. Archie Smith of Long Beach, Calif.; Bertha Friel of Peru, Ind.; Richard Lindeman of somewhere above the 38th in Korea; and Helen Morel of Dunedin, Fla.

You still may join the BML (be-rean Missionary League) by answering a set of the questions on the gospel of John. This month we have the 4th set. I have some extra copies of sets 1,2 & 3 which you may have for the asking. A nice sterling silver membership pin is given to each one who sends in a set of answers. Just put down the number and the answer, leaving a little room for my comments.

If you young folks would like to receive a small magazine devoted to dispensational truth, write to Miss A. B. Harrop, 5 Scutari Rd., Dulwich, London S.E.22. Ask her for copies of THE SIGN POST MAGAZINE.

I have been enjoying the letters and wish I could share them with the rest of you, but don't have the space for it. I have appreciated the fine testimonies some of the young folks have written.

Miss Mary Hirst of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England, is planning a trip to this country shortly and will try to visit us here on the farm. We shall be glad to meet her.

Archie Smith, mentioned above, used to be on the WRSW staff and was an eager listener to the radio Bible class. He is now working for the Navy Department at Long Beach, Calif. Am always glad to hear from him and the Mrs.

I have a number of readers from the Atwood High School. Special greetings to them.

Many of you young folks will be in school now. In your school work remember; **WHATSOEVER YE DO IN WORD OR DEED, DO ALL IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, GIVING THANKS TO GOD AND THE FATHER BY HIM. WHATSOEVER YE DO, DO IT HEARTILY, AS TO THE LORD, AND NOT UNTO MEN (Col.3:17, 23).** By observing this you can more easily get those A's and B's.

Please write me a letter.

--YOURS IN HVS LOVE, Oscar M. Baker

-THE EDITOR'S DESK-

You may copy, quote, or misquote anything in this paper with or without recognition of the source.

The old '33 Dodge took me on another trip in Aug. and got me back home again. Drove to Washington, Ill. on the 18th and had a class in the Robein School that evening. Was guest at the Edw. C. Diebel home that nite. Next morning had a class of young married folks in the E U B church. Had classes in the Robein School again both in the afternoon and evening. Herb McMeen took me out to lunch and dinner. Put up at the Howard Spurgeon home for the nite and drove back home on Mon. This was my first visit to Washington. Enjoyed it very much.

Finally got 2 fields of alfalfa sowed. It is a struggle to keep supplied with hay.

Mr. & Mrs. Edward Diebel of Washington, Ill. spent a few days up in this part of the country in Aug. and had dinner with us the 8th.

For book list and prices, see last month's paper.

Our farm is 6 miles west of Warsaw on the Harrison Center Rd., or it is 4 miles south of Atwood. Also it is 2 miles east of the Harrison Center E U B church.

Sale of Companion Bibles and books was over \$220 for Aug.

Hazel Grau, Anny Nelson, and Martha Van of Evanston, Ill. were here Aug. 15-18. We enjoyed their company very much.

We expect visits yet this fall from Herb McMeen of Hanna City, Ill., and Mr. & Mrs. Edmund Mulack of Springfield, Mo.

A tape recording was made of the Radio Lesson published in the Dec. 1950 paper. It was entered in the state contest at Indianapolis in Jan. and rated a strong "second" in its category.

RECEIPTS FOR JULY 1951: C7 Ind. \$2., C8 Mich. \$18.61, C9 Calif. \$10., C10 Mich. \$10., C11 Mich. \$10., C12 Calif. \$5., C13 Ill. \$1., C14 Australia \$11., C15 Australia \$2.75, C16 Ill. \$4., C17 Ill., \$10., C18 Ill. \$1., C19 Minn. \$2., C20 N.J. \$1. Total receipts \$98.36. Expenses \$87.34. Many thank to U.

Spent a few days repairing and building fence. I know now that we have some poison ivy.

If we should not put out the paper for a few months, we hope U will understand that we have had to take a little time for "making tents" Hope we don't have to.

Have ordered 30 more Companion Bibles. They are \$12 each postpaid.

Have 1 Englishman's Greek Concordance left at \$8 postpaid. Also 1 LXX with English translation at \$6.30 postpaid.

Be sure to drop us a card if U are coming to C us. If you get lost our phone is Atwood 2684. U R always welcome here.

If you have never written to me, why not do it now? Please!

--Oscar M. Baker.

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