

WHAT HAPPENED THEN?

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| (1) At Bethlehem. | (5) At Acts 10. |
| (2) At Matthew 13. | (6) At Acts 28:28. |
| (3) At Calvary. | (7) THEN! |
| (4) At Pentecost. | |

In order to sustain the interest of the reader in this little pamphlet, it has been divided into seven parts as above.

(1) Bethlehem

The children of Israel had been for some hundreds of years under a foreign yoke, always under the domineering control of Babylon, Rome or someone else. Such was the unhappy condition of God's ancient people. Some of them no doubt - possibly many - were wistfully looking forward to the fulfilment of the prophecies which they had read so often. When would it be true: 'Unto us a Child is born, a Son is given, and **the government shall be upon His shoulder**'? When would they be able to throw open wide the gate and sing 'Who is this King of Glory? The LORD of Hosts He is the King of Glory'. Eventually something did happen. Two babies were born in the Land of Palestine. Nothing extraordinary in that. But one was the Forerunner, the other **The King**. At His birth the Angels praised Him, the shepherds adored Him and many marvelled at what had happened at **Bethlehem**.

(2) Matthew 13

Of course the Child grew. He 'waxed strong in spirit and filled with wisdom'. As a King among His subjects He proclaimed from His Mountain Throne the Regulations of the Kingdom. Matthew chapters 5, 6 and 7. 'Moses saith unto you ... but **I** say unto you'. 'It was said by them of old time ... but **I** say unto you'. 'Ye have heard that it hath been said ... but **I** say unto you ... '. The people declared 'He speaks as one having authority'. Of course He did! He spake as the **King**. He showed them the signs of the Kingdom as had been prophesied. 'The blind received their sight, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, and the poor had the Gospel preached to them'. He set aside their traditions. He broke their Sabbath regulations. He showed up the Pharisees in their hypocrisy. He drove the money-dealers from the temple courts. (His Father's house needed cleansing). He thus stirred up their opposition and they rejected Him. They rejected Him as Prophet (Matt. 12:41). They rejected Him as Priest (Matt. 12:6). They rejected Him as King (Matt. 12:42).

So He began to speak in parables because 'This people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them' (Matt. 13:15).

Thus the Kingdom went underground. That happened at **Matthew 13**.

(3) Coronation Day

They brought Him to judgment. 'What accusation bring ye against this man?' They answered, 'If He were not a malefactor we would not have delivered Him up unto thee'. H'm so that was the case for the prosecution. What a terrible crime! What a malevolent criminal!

'Crucify Him! Crucify Him!' Anyhow, they declared Him innocent. Of course they did. They could not do anything else. Pilate said, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just man'. His wife declared Him innocent, she sent a message: 'Have thou nothing to do with this just man'. The centurion declared Him innocent, he said 'Truly this was the Son of God'. The malefactor who was crucified with Him declared Him innocent. He said, 'This man hath done nothing amiss'. So as He was innocent they spat upon Him! They bound Him! Beat Him! Cursed Him! Mocked Him! Crowned and crucified Him!

'Is there diadem as monarch that His brow adorns?
Yea a Crown in very surety, but of thorns'.

Pilate wrote His accusation and he wouldn't alter it. 'What I have written I have written!'

'This is the King of the Jews'.

And thus 'He bore our sins in His own body on the tree'. Don't blame the Jews. The Gentiles lent a hand. We were all in it.

That happened at **Calvary**. For you - for me.

(4) Pentecost

Did you say that Pentecost was the beginning of the Church as we know it today? Nonsense! Oh! but all the denominations say it was. Sorry, but they were all Jews at Pentecost. No Gentiles converted there. '**Ye men of Israel**', said Peter. Yes, but what about all those Parthians, Medes, Elamites, dwellers in Mesopotamia, Egypt, part of Libya, about Cyrene, strangers of Rome, etc.? Yes, but don't stop there, it says 'Jews and proselytes'. Jews or naturalized Jews. Besides, Peter did not say it was the beginning of the Church, he said, 'This is that'. He couldn't speak much plainer. Oh! but Peter could not be speaking to Israel, not after the Crucifixion surely! Ah! but he was though! It was just God's boundless mercy, God's forgiving grace. Give them another chance perhaps this time. 'Repent', said Peter, 'and Jesus Christ will come again' (Acts 3:20). Again there are signs of the Kingdom at hand. The lame walk, prison doors are opened, the sick are healed. The Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. Things which were to happen in the last days - according to Joel's prophecy - were taking place around them. 'Repent' said Peter. Many did repent - maybe 10,000 ... but the Sanhedrin, No! The Pharisees, No! The Elders, No! The Nation, No! Not at **Pentecost**.

(5) Cornelius

Still God is loath to give them up. He loved them and His purpose was to use them. He would have used the Jew as a means of bringing the Godless Gentiles to a knowledge of the One True God. The Children of Israel had a knowledge of God already. They should evangelize the world. They should be a nation of 'Kings and Priests' unto Him. But how can they be persuaded to repent without compulsion? Perhaps if they see the Gentiles seeking and finding Him without their aid. Perhaps that will move them. Maybe they will see their folly. Perhaps they will be moved to emulation.

‘Rise, Peter, kill and eat’. ‘Not so, Lord’. Ah, yes, but Peter has the ‘Keys of the Kingdom’. He must open the door to Cornelius. He does, and thus Cornelius becomes Gentile No. 1. That happened at **Acts 10**.

(6) **Acts 28:28**

The door opens wider. Now Paul is being used, The apostle to the Gentiles. But he must go to the Jew first. Wherever he goes on his missionary travels he goes first to the Synagogue. He reasons with the Children of Israel from the Scriptures, and then goes to the Gentiles. Even so these Gentiles must be grafted into the parent tree (Rom. 11:17). More and more they come in. Will the Children of Israel be penitent? No! They are not penitent, they are angered. Now Paul goes to Rome. The last place and the last chance. Paul reasoned and argued. So the Jews appointed him a day. From morning till evening Paul expounded, testified, persuaded, but all to no avail. ‘They agreed not’. So the door was shut! Once again the Children of Israel are ‘Lo-ammi - Not My people’. That happened at **Acts 28:28**.

(7) **Then**

What now? The tree is cut down and the grafting is finished. What *can* happen now? Is there no hope for the world? ‘Oh how great is the God we adore’. What boundless love! What marvellous wisdom! Paul can now reveal his secret (Eph. 3:3). A secret never before made known (Eph. 3:9). The Jew as God’s chosen people is finished, for the time being, anyway. The prophetic clock has stopped. The door is shut, but like the revolving doors, as one shuts another opens and now it is ‘whosoever will’, Jew or Gentile - all **One body in Christ**. What then is the special secret that Paul revealed? Well here it is. Ephesians 2:12, That we being in times past Gentiles in the flesh ... That at that time we 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 we who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

What a glorious dispensation of Grace (for by grace are ye saved, through faith). Do we not partake then in the promises covenanted to Israel? Abraham was promised a seed ‘as the sand of the seashore’. Again he was promised a seed ‘as the stars of heaven’. Do we not take our place with them? Oh, no! (Eph. 2:6) ‘He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ’. And where is He? Why He is (Eph. 1:21) ‘Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come’. God be praised! Our place is with Him THERE.

Hallelujah!

One day - it may be soon - the times of the Gentiles will be over. The prophetic clock will start again, but ‘that’s another story’.

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| (1) Bethlehem. | ï | Kingdom proclaimed. |
| (2) Matthew 13. | ï | Kingdom underground |
| | ï | (Parables). |
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| (3) Calvary. | ï | |
| (4) Pentecost. | ï | Kingdom preached a |

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| | | · | second time. |
| (5) | Cornelius. | · | Gentiles grafted in. |
| (6) | Prophecies ceased. | · | Door shut. |
| | | · | |
| (7) | Now. | · | No prophecies - but |
| | | · | 'Whosoever will'. |
| | | · | |
| (?) | When? No time | · | Prophecies concerning |
| | given. | · | Israel recommence. |

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