

The Kingdom Messianic Gospel

In the Synoptic Gospels and the book of Acts

(Chapters 1-7)

In the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus Christ presents the truth pertaining to His earthly Kingdom, which according to Old Testament prophecy will be established upon His earth (Psalms 9:6-7; Matthew 4:17; 25:31-34). This Kingdom will operate on the basis of the Law of the new Covenant, the requirements of which are actually more stringent than the Mosaic Law (Matthew 5; 21-48; Jer. 31:31-34).

In the first seven chapters in the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit through the Disciples offered the Kingdom, which was presented in Matthew, Mark and Luke, to Israel. A clear example of the offer of the Kingdom to Israel is made by the Holy Spirit through Peter in Acts 3:17-26, makes a clear example of the offer of the Kingdom to Israel: 17-26. The thought is that if Israel had repented, God would have immediately sent Jesus Christ from heaven to establish the prophesied Kingdom. Instead of repenting, the leaders of Israel persistently rejected the Holy Spirit's offer of their Messiah, the King and His Kingdom; this rejection was consummated by their stoning of Stephen to death (Acts 7:59-60). In view of Israel's rejection of the offer of this Kingdom does this mean that God's promise to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses, which was confirmed by the prophets is now null and void? Actually the answer would be yes if God's promise to Abraham and his descendants were conditional. That is if it was contingent on their response.

Even as God called Abraham out of a heathen background with an unconditional call, He also unconditionally promised to make His descendants a great nation, to give them a land extending from the river of Egypt (the Nile) to the Euphrates River, and to bless all families of the earth through them (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:18; 17:7-8, 19; 28:13-14; 35:9-12).

The fact that the prophesied Kingdom will be established on this earth is clearly stated in the Bible (Isaiah 9:6-7; 24:23; Jer. 10:10; 31:31-34; Psalms 145:10-14; Acts 1:6; 3:19-25; Revelations 20:4-6). The apparent reason God first offered this Kingdom to Israel on a conditional basis, that is repentance and water baptism, was to prove to them the fact that they are totally depraved sinners and as such, without excuse (Romans 1:20). So having confirmed Israel as a part of the human race, with their sinful depravity, God as a final addendum to the Law thus reinforced the fact that neither they nor any man can save himself and is without excuse. The manifestation of this depravity should have caused mankind to recognize his need of God's grace provided in the essence of Jesus Christ.

Accordingly when we have considered the rejection of the Kingdom and its potential to stimulate a consciousness of sin, we acknowledge that God's eternal purpose to bless all the families of the earth in conjunction with Christ's earthly Kingdom was temporarily set aside to a later period. It must be clearly understood that the Mosaic Law was God's method for governing His people (Israel) "only" **up** to the cross, **not beyond** the cross (Galatians 3:23-25).

While under the old Covenant (the Mosaic Law), Israel looked **forward** to the time when it would be **replaced** by a new Covenant, involving the **death** and **reign** of the son of David, **the son of God**, over an earthly Kingdom (Jer. 31:31-34; Isa. 9:6-7). Note the **cross** was the basis on which **even** this new Covenant was to be established, thus making it possible for God to forgive **their** iniquity and sin (Jer. 31:34).

If Israel had accepted Jesus Christ, His sacrificial death and His Kingdom, then God's prophetic program would have continued as set forth in the Old Testament. However, due to Israel's rejection of her Messiah – (King and His Kingdom), God's prophetic program has been temporally put on hold (Romans 11:26). It is held in abeyance until the time when God will sovereignly establish His Son as king over Israel and extend the kingdom blessings to **all** His people (Genesis 12:1-3). It should be clearly understood that this is God's program for the kingdom on **earth!**

A very important question is raised and that is; what about the interval between Israel's **rejection** of Christ and His Kingdom and God's sovereign establishment of His son Jesus as king over the **whole** earth in the millennium. It should be noted here that this interval is rapidly approaching 2000 years since the old covenant was terminated in favor of the new Covenant (**the Kingdom**), which was rejected by Israel's leaders. So with this temporary cutoff of God's purpose set forth in Old Testament prophecy, what has been God's response? Does it mean that he has been defeated by the sinfulness of those whom he has created?

The answer is recorded in Psalms 76:10 where David writes 'Surely the wrath of man shall praise you'. Also, in Romans 9:17; the Apostle Paul in explaining the basic reason for Pharaoh's wrath; quotes Exodus 9:16, wherein God states "For this reason I raised you up that is (Pharaoh); that I might show in you my power and that my name may be declared in all the earth". So the wrath of man caused Israel to reject Jesus Christ and His Kingdom, effectuates a minimum of two things namely

1. The increase of the awareness and consciousness of Man's sinful nature.
2. It opened the door for God to reveal the **exceeding riches** of His grace, the Mystery truth regarding the body of Christ, the church.

As one focuses on time and dispensation (**economy**) wise and examines God's enactment of that which is inserted in place of the rejected kingdom; reflection is made on the changes that were taking place at Antioch during this transitional period, which followed the rejection (Acts 8:1-12:25). First, the crux of the message continued to confirm that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah deliverer of Israel). Second, during this time the emphasis was on believing rather than repenting. Third, it should be noted that there was a waning emphasis on water baptism. Fourth, the disciples there were the first ones to be called Christians. Fifth, as an approach is made toward the end of this period the trappings of the law were dissipating – making room for something new.

In contrast note, that most of the Jews in Jerusalem and its environs who believed that Jesus is the Messiah were also, to a greater or lesser extent, entangled in the Mosaic Law (Acts 21:20-21; Gal. 4:24-25; Heb. 13:13). So the question arises, why was there such a big difference between the doctrines of the disciples in these two cities (Antioch and Jerusalem)? The answer is traced back to **one** man, Saul of Tarsus, who was soon to be given a new name, the Apostle Paul.

Notice in Acts 13:2, the Holy Spirit said 'Separate to me Barnabas and Saul for the work which I have called them'. The Greek verb "**a pho re sa the**", translated "separate" as used in this context means that they were to be "set apart" unto the work to which the Holy Spirit had called them. Here the emphasis in this verse is not so much on them being separated from the other teachers at Antioch, but on then being separated unto **a new work** by the Holy Spirit. But why was Saul separated? First, because the Lord had already begun to give him special insight into the salvation aspect of a new gospel (Acts 20:24; Gal. 1:11-12;

Eph. 1:13). Second, because God was going to continue to reveal to him the mystery aspect of the gospel, which Paul designates as "the **Mystery of the Gospel!**" (Ephesians 6:19; 3:2-9; I Corinthians 2:6-10). Now you must **clearly** understand that both of these aspects of the gospel constitute the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24). So the question may now be posed----why was Barnabas separated **with** Saul? Because of his close association with Saul, he knew that salvation is by grace

through faith. Also he was the best-qualified Senior Minister, the Holy Spirit **had** at that time (Acts 11:24).

Note here the significance of two important changes, first the name of Saul of Tarsus is changed to Paul, as one full of the Holy Spirit he stood against Elymas, a son of the devil (Acts 13:6-11). The fact that the Lord gave him a new name **emphasizes** that he was indeed **separated** by the Holy Spirit unto a **new work**, a **new gospel**, apart from the works of the law (Acts 13:38; Rom. 3:20). Second, after the change of Saul's name to Paul, the next time his relative position in the missionary party is mentioned, he is the leader. From this time on it is **"ee peh ree pahv lon"** or Paul and his party", "Those around him "or his company" (Acts 13:13).

This indicates that the Apostle Paul was not only the **one** to whom the **new** gospel of the grace of God had and was being revealed, but he was also the **leader** in promulgating and making it known (I Corth. 9:16-22). The fact that Saul's original Hebrew name was replaced by the new name Paul and Barnabas, who could be influenced by Judaic Legalism, was replaced by Paul as leader, indicates that the Holy Spirit wanted the new grace gospel separated from the laws of both the Old and New Covenants (Gal 2:13; Romans 6:14-15). Here it should be clearly understood that the message of the Mystery and the gospel of the grace of God in its contents is completely void of, distinct and separate from **any** of the promises of the Old Testament Laws, prophecies or covenants (old and new). Including Jer. 31:31 and the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke), also the first seven chapters of the book of Acts.

It is very important to keep in mind that nothing is mentioned about the Church, (the body of Christ) in the Old Testament. It is not part of the truth, which was prophesied in the Old Testament. The Greek phrase **"grafeen profh tee keen"** in Romans 16:26, "is correctly translated "prophetic writings", and refers to what the Apostle Paul and those associated with him wrote (Romans 16:25; I Cor. 2:6-8; Eph. 3:4-5. In these as well as **other** passages of scripture in the epistles of Paul, he refers to the new truth, which God revealed to replace the prophesied Kingdom truth, and to **"meesteereeon"**. This Greek phrase transliterated into English forms the phrase "the Mystery". This same Greek phrase translated into English means "the secret". This transliteration is a misnomer as it relates to the true contents of Paul's gospel. For when we think of a mystery, we think of that which is hidden, but being unrevealed or undisclosed. In view of this the preferred contextual approach is to expand the meaning of the word mystery to include what has been kept secret, but is **now** revealed or uncovered or **disclosed**. The mystery revealed to the Apostle Paul was the **secret**, a secret body of truth exclusively disclosed to him (I Corth. 2:7; Eph 3:3,8-9; Col. 4:2-3).

According to our study of the word of God here at the Grace Gospel Church Ministry, we have concluded that the gospel of the grace of God contains two aspects:

1. Truth, which relates to salvation and justification.
2. Truth, which specifically relates to the body of Christ.

In our examination of Paul's epistles, we have grouped his writings into two groups. The first group comprised of Paul's earlier writings during the transition to the churches at Ephesus, that is Ephesians Colossee, i.e. Colossians, Phillipi i.e. Philippians and to certain individuals, Philemon Titus, first Timothy and second Timothy and we are thoroughly convinced, also Hebrews. In Paul's earlier writings he focuses on salvation and justification in his later writings his primary focus is only the body of Christ, the Church.

Upon evaluating the first group of epistles in light of the second group, one should be able to discern between what is Jewish (Kingdom) in nature and what is for the body of Christ. As one seeks to establish a standard for church truth, one can historically determine what is and what is not applicable to members of the body of Christ.

In essence we who are of the Grace Gospel Church Ministry believe that there are lessons to be learned by the children of God from every portion of the Bible. But the value of truth for members of the body of Christ must conform to and be in alignment with what God through the Holy Spirit has disclosed in the epistles of Paul. True growth and maturity, joy and peace will be realized by those who bask in the revelation of those truths written specifically to, for and about the body of Christ (this Church in this dispensation).