

# Paul Had None of What Christianity is Filled With!

By Jan Lilleby

Whoa...now hold on for a minute! "You mean to tell me that Christianity has things or doctrines which Paul did not teach?"

Spot on!

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John had not yet come out with their historical writings on Jesus' life and ministry. These books were not available on the market before 18-20 years after Paul had written Ephesians and Colossians around AD 62-63.

Their writings were published in anonymity, and names were not in their headings before AD 200!

In other words, his free Grace Gospel, which we find in Ephesians and Colossians only (!) was preached and taught by Paul, long before any of the gospels had been published; Gospels which almost the entire Christianity is basing its Doctrine of Faith upon. The oldest one is possibly Luke in AD 73, but it is disputed. Matthew came in AD 80 in Hebrew language. Mark in AD 83.

'You know, John was baptizing in water, so let us do the water baptism. The apostles baptized in water, so let's do water baptism'. A vulgar 'Hill Billy' way of reading the Bible, having no understanding that Paul had already filled his part of the world with his free Grace Gospel before anything of Matt. 28 and Mark 16 told of 'go out into all the world and baptize - and lay hands on the sick and they shall be cured'. Col. 1:23.

Paul did not base any of his teachings on Matt. 28 or Mark 16. He based his teachings on the 'Revelation of the Mystery' - Eph. 3:1-9; Col. 1:25, 26.

All teaching, which Paul used to establish the early Christian Churches, is found in his two mentioned epistles. Here we find that one Gospel Paul had preached and dominated his ministry establishing Churches on that free Grace Gospel long before the four gospels.

Christianity is teaching of a 'Future Rapture of the Church into heaven' - based on what Paul preached and wrote to the Thessalonians, several years before he was sent to the Gentile world with the free Grace Gospel. 1.Thes. 4:14-18 was the teaching to that Church of how it would be with the coming of the Lord to establish the promised Kingdom for Israel, and it was then a scenario which would take place

IF Israel had repented and believed on Jesus as their Messiah.

The nation never received Christ, on the contrary they rejected their King and they persecuted the King's servants, and the King got angry and sent His armies against them and burned their city, Jerusalem. Matt. 22:7. AD 70 was the

year.

This so-called 'Rapture of the Church' has been called off by the fall of Israel as a nation, and shall never occur. That is why we cannot find *anything* of this promise in Paul's teachings *after* Israel had fell from God in Acts 28:25-28.

Actually, the whole issue of 'The Second Advent' is not mentioned at all in Ephesians and Colossians.

But he wrote instead of *'Appearing with Christ in glory'* - Col. 3:1-4, and of a certain future day for the Church, *'...the day of redemption'* - Eph. 4:30.

No Second Advent mentioned - a doctrine which Christianity is filled with!

No Rapture up in clouds - a doctrine which Christianity is filled with!

No Mark 16 of 'Laying hands on the sick' - a doctrine which Christianity is filled with!

No water baptisms in any form whatsoever - a doctrine which Christianity is filled with. ☐

Paul taught of 'One baptism' pointing to the *death of Christ* on the cross. By coming to faith in Christ, every believer *is thus baptized* into the death of Christ. It is also likened to circumcision *not by hands (of men)*, but by God. Eph. 4:5; Col. 2:11, 12.

No 'Confession of sins' - which Christianity is so ferociously practicing and filled with.

There is *no salvation* by the confession of sin. You can only be saved through faith, it is not by us, ourselves, - it is the *gift of God*, lest any man should boast. Eph. 2:8, 9. ☐

Confessions won't do it (James 5:15, 16); baptism in water (or the Pentecostal Holy Spirit baptism in Acts 2) won't do it, - showing your faith by works as taught by James 2:24 won't do it. Today in the Grace dispensation established by Paul, it is a heresy to teach that works can make you righteous!

'Abstaining from pork and certain food' and keeping Sabbath won't do it. ☐

Any such thing must be considered in our time with the free Grace Gospel, as sheer heresy. Paul clearly taught in Col. 2:16, 17 - pointing to Christ's victory on the cross, *"...let no one sit in judgement on you in matters of food and drink, or with regard to a feast day or a New Moon or a Sabbath."*

This also falls nicely in with his teaching to the Ephesians in chapter 2, verses 14, 15,

*"For He is our peace. ☐ He has made us both Jew and Gentile, one body, and has broken down (destroyed, abolished) the hostile dividing wall between us, 15: By abolishing in His own flesh the enmity caused by the Law (of Moses) with its decrees and ordinances (which He annulled); that He from the two might create in himself one new man, so making peace."*

This 'One new man' can only be a fact if God first abolished the entire Law of Moses, which was a dividing wall between Jew and Gentile! Paul here says that the Body of Christ, which is the very same as that 'One new man', cannot exist unless first that Law of Moses was abolished. Sabbath was abolished, feast days were abolished, food ordinances were abolished. Because in the Church, the Body of Christ, Jew and Gentile is equal before God, and so in unity in the faith.



In Paul's Church epistles, Ephesians and Colossians, written 18-20 years before the four gospels were issued, we find no more feast days, no food ordinances, no Sabbaths, no confessions of sin, no works demanded to show our faith, no water rite, no miracles and healings by the laying on of hands, no preaching on the Second Advent, no rapture of the saints up in clouds, no nothing!

Illustration: Can you imagine Paul's pointing finger?

And yet, over the centuries Christianity lost it and got mixed up with the teachings found in the four gospels, and Acts and epistles written in the Acts time period.

Salvation by grace alone, by faith as in Eph. 2:8, 9 still shines through the thick dark clouds of Christianity's misconceptions of the Gospel teachings.

Their unfortunate confusion of the 'Gospel' in Acts – the Kingdom of God for Israel, and the free International Grace Gospel of Ephesians and Colossians, which have never had anything to do with the teachings of the Acts period.

This confusion is for all to observe, in that Christianity are made up of numerous denominations which failed to observe Paul's free Grace Gospel and be true and faithful to that one Gospel.

Paul had none of what Christianity is filled with! Confusion.

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## When Did You Last See a Genuine Miracle of God?

By Jan Lilleby

Well, let me be the first one to reply to the question in this headline: I cannot ever recall that I saw one single miracle of healing in my entire life!

Oh, of course I have 'seen' miracles...that is – seen and heard people saying they experienced a 'miracle' after some Christian evangelist or pastor laid hands on them in prayer. But there are 'galaxies' between a person saying he had gotten a healing miracle from God, and the true fact that such a 'miracle' ever took place. No one can present solid confirmations from serious doctors that they have been healed miraculously by God. So all we have are their own 'impressions' of having been 'healed' – often in a fired-up and ecstatic revival campaign abroad or domestic, whatever. It is not genuine true miracles performed by God – it is just the believer's own *imagination and high hopes* in ecstasy making them think that they got healed. Also, we cannot overlook the Biblical fact that miracles/wonders *can be done by occult powers* – even in Christian meetings. The Bible speaks of Jesus, Who will rebuke certain people even as these people persists on having worked miracles in the name of the Lord! I refer to Mat. 7:22, 23 – this is clear evidence that a person can work miracles which seems like something from God, but even if they cast out demons and they had prophesied and done many powerful things in His name, Jesus tell them that He do not know them and that they shall 'get lost'! This means that we cannot cry "look! a miracle of healing!! God has healed me"...etcetera. It actually means that *we do have to check this out to see if it is of God or of occult/satanic powers.*

Whenever people claims that miracles took place in our time, we will already know that such are NOT genuine miracles from God – simply because such signs were only given to Israel's Messianic believers in the times of the apostles.

When did you last see a *real healing* take place in any Christian meeting?

I have seen videos, heard speeches, watched lots of people coming forward to receive the laying on of hands for healing, but I have never seen a real healing miracle following such actions. And I also think this is true of every other person on earth, Christians or not. *There have not been any miracles, signs and wonders after the times of the Acts and the apostles. There is no Biblical report of any such miracles after the apostolic era ended in the first century.*

How so?

Because God performed, through His **special elected apostles** – Paul being one – miracles, signs and wonders like those we learn from reading the Book of Acts **aimed at Israel's people only**, so they could believe that Jesus Christ was their rightful Messiah of God, the promised King to take throne on Zion in a coming millennial Kingdom (Dan. 2:44).

Paul taught that to the Corinthians, using the spiritual gift of tongues as an example, saying, "Thus tongues are meant for a sign, **not for believers but**

for unbelievers, while prophesy is not for unbelievers but for believers.”

How can we know that this was aimed at Israel's Jews in particular, and not to the Gentile world?

Paul explained that in the previous verse, saying, “It is written in the Law (of Moses), by men of strange languages and by the lips of foreigners will I **speak to THIS PEOPLE (Jews)**, and not even then will they listen to Me, says the Lord.”

Paul thus quoted what Isaiah had prophesied, (Isa. 28:11, 12).

This was a special sign to Israel and Jews only, NOT to us Gentiles at all! But none of the nine supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit described in 1 Cor. 12-14 were ever meant to be for us Gentiles.

They were signs and wonders to be shown forth to God's segregated people on earth, namely Israel.

Crusading evangelists in our time are totally out of line as they think that signs and wonders should be for the multitudes out in the third world, and should follow the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentile multitudes. Its way out of line; and it is a total fraud!

Compare if you will, the following quote from Acts of Paul's ministry, with that of evangelists of our day, and you will notice that there is a huge difference in the apostle Paul's ministry compared to 'healers' of our time, Acts 14:1-11: (Using NASB) –

“In Iconium they entered the synagogue of the Jews together, and spoke in such a manner that a large number of people believed, both of Jews and of Greeks. 2: But the Jews who disbelieved stirred up the minds of the Gentiles and embittered them against the brethren. 3: Therefore they spent a long time there speaking boldly with reliance upon the Lord, **who was testifying to the word of His grace, granting THAT SIGNS AND WONDERS BE DONE BY THEIR HANDS.** 4: But the people of the city were divided; and some sided with the Jews, and some with the apostles. 5: And when an attempt was made by both the Gentiles and the Jews with their rulers, to mistreat and to stone them. 6: they became aware of it and fled to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the surrounding region; 7: and there they continued to preach the Gospel. 8: At Lystra a man was sitting who had no strength in his feet, lame from his mother's womb, who had never walked. 9: **This man was listening to Paul as he spoke, who, when he had fixed his gaze on him and had seen that he had faith to be made well,** 10: **said with a loud voice, “Stand upright on your feet”. And he leaped up and began to walk.** 11: When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they raised their voice, saying in the Lycaonian language, “The gods have become like men and have come down to us.”

The response of Paul's extraordinary miracle of healing at

Lystra, made the Gentile crowd 'go bananas' – they thought that their false idols/gods had come down in human form! □

But wait a minute: Paul cannot have spoken about that at all, could he? He spoke the Gospel of the Kingdom on earth, in which Christ will be the King. And still, the people thought that it was THEIR gods who had performed such a great miracle.

Gentiles cannot handle miracles at all. It's a fact. They are totally stuck in the admiration of their own idols – in this case it was Zeus and Hermes (Mars and Jupiter in Greek astrological mythology).

But Jews in the times of the apostles were notorious for raising persecution against them, and here we see that they even managed to fire up the Gentiles present...and the apostles had to flee the place in a hurry to save their lives.

Paul and his fellow ministers had performed miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit, but as he told in 1 Cor. 14:21 – the Jews would still not listen to the Word of the Lord. □

I will dare suggest that seeing healing miracles and wonders really made more effects and more solid conviction than that of speaking in tongues. They would neither take to the faith by hearing tongues, nor by seeing great apostolic miracles and healings!

Gentiles have not walked through the Red Sea as on dry ground, Gentiles were not seeing that huge pillar of smoke at the entrance to the Hebrew's camp at Sinai or the same pillar turning to fire at night, watching at the gates there. Gentiles had no experience of having birds falling from the sky to feed over 600 000 people out in the desert – every day for forty years. Gentiles had no experience of seeing that their shoes and clothes were like all new and fresh every morning for forty years in the desert. But Israel's children in the desert had. And it became a permanent part of their religious culture. They knew what it meant when their prophets spoke of miracles and signs. But Gentiles did not!

When did you last see a healing miracle, a genuine miracle of God, healing or otherwise?

Pentecostal-Charismatic groups of believers are known to be the foremost promoters of such beliefs, that miracles and signs, wonders, healings, tongues and prophesy, all are things given the believers by God, in our time. We have as believers, inherited the power and ministries of the apostles, they say. □ But no – the Bible says otherwise: no such miracles were ever promised to the Church dispensation, but only to Israel's Messianic believers such as we learn from Acts.

Biblical miracles of healings are of such divine nature that one cannot confuse these with sick people getting gradually cured by the use of medicine. □ "Oh, thank God, my wife has gotten well...she is now out of the hospital recovering. It



was a miracle of God!" ☐☐☐☐ Sorry, but such experiences of getting well after having spent days or weeks in a hospital, is NOT a miracle of God. It is nature taking its course helped by medicine or surgical operations made by skilled doctors. Of course we may☐☐ (and we should)☐☐ thank God for people getting well from sickness. But this is NOT miracles or wonders.

Had anyone of us been present there at Lystra as Paul healed that disabled man, we would have had our 'socks blown off' in awe and pure astonishment! Genuine miracles had that effect, I tell you.☐☐ It☐☐ *may be*☐☐ that when Christ has returned to earth to establish the millennial kingdom in Israel, the world may witness outstanding miracles again, performed by Jesus in person and His priesthood at the new temple in Jerusalem. We can only wait and see.



Miracles and wonders are always exactly like that one which I referred to from Acts 14:1-11 with the apostle Paul. It was a healing which☐☐ *happened instantly*☐☐ by the God given power of the Holy Spirit through Paul.

This man there at Lystra was born with defected feet, he had never walked. But in a tenth-of-a-second...voila!...jumping up and stood and immediately walked around, for the entire☐☐ crowd to witness. ☐☐ It was actually a double-miracle: first God made his feet come right, but following this, God had to heal him or 'make him able to have instant balance' so he would not fall on his face. ☐☐

Tell me, please, when have anyone ever seen something like this...after the apostles died?

I have explained to you why we don't see such fabulous☐ miracles and signs in our time☐☐ - it is because these things were only given to the Messianic Jews in the times of the apostles, so Jews☐☐ could believe that this was☐☐ works made by God Jehovah and His Son Jesus Christ.

After the fall of Israel as a nation of God (see Acts 28:25-28 of their final disastrous unbelief) – followed by their total destruction in A.D. 70 – God no longer reveal Himself to mankind. Heaven is entirely silent, and shall remain so until He send His two prophets to Israel to trigger the 'Great Tribulation' to get Israel back as a nation for Him (Rev. 11).

As Israel fell spiritually,☐☐ in the sight of God – confronted by Paul in Acts 28:25-28, God revealed His secret to Paul, a Mystery that had been kept hidden in God from before creation. This Mystery is taught in Eph. 3:1-9 and Col. 1:25, 26. A body of believers which has Christ as its Head, and Heaven up above (Greek: epiuranos) as hope of salvation.☐☐ Namely, believers such as ourselves, the present

dispensation of the free Grace of God by faith in Christ, and no works demanded of us for salvation, only regular faith in Jesus Christ, Eph. 2:8, 9.

Paul for this revelation – the free Grace Gospel to the entire world – he wrote the two epistles, *Ephesians and Colossians*, in which we find the faith doctrine for the Church dispensation. And nowhere in these can we find any “signs, wonders, miracles, healings, tongues, laying on of hands, etcetera. No Mat. 28 and Mark 16 of any ‘Great Commission with miracles following’.

When did you last see a genuine miracle of God?

Whatever you think that you saw, it was not a miracle of God. You have been deceived if that is what you thought. We need to make right division of the Word of God so we can learn what is for us today.

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## Is Jesus Performing Healings And Miracles For Believers In Our Time?

By Jan Lilleby

Unfortunately it is pure disaster to have to listen to and observe many types of evangelists and preachers today, whether from their pulpits or as we observe them on the internet such as with YouTube media.

I am thinking mostly of that which concerns healings and wonders promised the audiences ‘*If you only believe*’.

In my article found here in my website on ‘*The Great Commission*’, I am giving an expository scrutiny of Mat. 28 and the command from Jesus to ‘Go out into all the world’ and so forth, and Mark 16 with its ‘Laying on of hands and casting out demons’ and so on and so forth – and the Biblical stern fact that we can by no means use any parts of the four gospels as if they are faith-doctrine to the Church in our time, the ‘One New Man’ which Paul called the Body of Christ.

The four gospels were written *only as historical* documents on the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and His twelve apostles. As soon as one steps out of that specific Bible truth, using these gospels as faith-doctrine to the Church, you will be victim of a hailstorm of errors and misunderstandings what concerns to speak the truth from the pulpit. We shall have a brief look on this



below, some selected few examples of rather *weird and quirky* ways of putting forth lies about miracles and healings.



Shortly before I wrote this article I happened to come over a video clip (a Norwegian evangelist abroad on a crusade-podium) in a fired-up-speech to a multitude of people on a green field – it was found on this evangelists own website, using it to gain more followers and supporters for his campaigns abroad (Asia) – and he came up with (shouting over the P.A. system) several Bible passages taken out of context.

One of those was the known words of Jesus spoken to His disciples *“Where two or more of you are gathered in My name, there I shall be in the midst among you”*. (quoted from the mentioned video clip.)

Thus suggesting that Jesus was there, among the people present, to perform miracles and healings. He used this in a typical manner which we often see with these Pentecostal evangelists, trying to ‘Fire up’ an expectation that the Lord will do miracles in the meetings. *If you only believe!*

The audience filmed responded with loud shouts of praise and hallelujahs and clapping of hands etc.

But – is this a true and sound way to understand the Bible in our time?

The quote by this evangelist on Jesus in their midst...to start performing healing-miracles in that meeting...was very much taken out of the true context.

Ampl. Bible, Mat. 18:19, 20 says:

*“Again I tell you, if two of you on earth (in the land) agree about whatever they may ask, it will come to pass and be done for them by My Father in Heaven. - -*

***For wherever two or three are gathered in My name, there I AM in the midst of them.”***

These words, was actually a promise given His disciples, and was never promised the Church dispensation at all. It is for certain that this was things Jesus told His followers – the Messianic Jews – and thus it was in the context of those believers as entirely ***segregated*** according to the Law of Moses. All other people were ***shut out*** of this. The world was not ‘God’s people’ on earth, but ONLY Israel was. That is why Jesus said to the heathen woman in Mat. 15:24:

*“...I was ***sent only*** to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”*

Consequently, ALL OTHER PEOPLE were not included in Jesus' promises to His disciples. Jews only! This is a Biblical fact you can take to the bank.

Israel, since the days at Sinai they were God's property and His own people, set aside from the nations so they could become a holy priesthood for God.

Jesus practiced the very same segregation which first came to expression by Moses and Aaron at Sinai, Ex. 19:5, 6 quote from Ampl. Bible:

"Now, therefore if you will obey My voice in truth and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own peculiar possession and treasure **from among and above all peoples**; for all the earth is Mine. - - And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, set apart to the worship of God. These are the words you shall **speak to the Israelites.**"

**Thereby I have proven for certain that  
the  
promise of Jesus to be among them when  
they  
are gathered, was not for others than the  
Jewish  
Messianic believers as we observe them  
in the gospels and in Acts.**

It were those that Jesus clearly said He was sent to, people of the house of Israel!

It is not complicated.

These believers were on the inside of that 'Wall of Partition' which Paul, thirty years later, wrote in Eph. 2:14, 15 were torn down at Israel's falling away from God. The segregation of Israel as a chosen people for God, ceased in 62-63 A.D. - when Paul wrote the epistle to the Ephesians from his jail cell at Rome.

But that wall between the Jews and the Gentile-world was still up, during Jesus' earthly ministry in Israel as well as the following ministry of His apostles described in Acts. When pastors and preachers cannot (or will not?) understand such a simple and straight forward Bible truth - Jesus' own words on His segregated ministry to Jews only - that is pretty unique. Do they reject such Bible truth just so that they can keep on with their lies and false gospel-preaching from their podiums, and nobody stopping them?

Notice also, that Jesus never promised that He should be present in huge multitudes, He explicitly said 'for wherever two or three are gathered...' - while in the images in the video I mentioned, you can see at least ten thousand people gathered on that plain, if not more. Thus we have at least two barriers stopping those who think this is for the entire world to grab. One, you will have to be a Jewish Messianic believer in the capacity of being one

of the Lord's disciples. And therefore one of those segregated Jews at that time. Two, Jesus never promised it to multitudes like we find in many crusades held by evangelists abroad, or domestic. He said 'two or three' people, and that's it.

Sorry to say, but many unlearned Christians are using the Bible as if it is a Super-Market from which shelves they pick with them everything they want to bring along. They own no understanding or concepts of God having a system for what He is doing and saying. Paul taught that God is a God of order and thus also of strict principles!

Jesus' promises to His disciples were *never transferred to the dispensation of the Church, the Body of Christ.* In our time the Jews/Israel are no longer sat above any nations, but they are just one *among* the nations.

In this particular case, in which I don't mention that evangelist's name, I can inform you that I have had a substantial dialogue with him some time back via emails. I also sent him some articles on these issues to try to have him realize he had gotten things quite askew regarding healings, miracles and all those things. But in spite of this he just continues to ignore my polite warnings of errors, and he is thus guilty of doing doctrinal error willfully. He can no more say that he 'acted in good faith'. However, I am not saying that he speaks lies on Jesus as Savior and the core of the Grace Gospel, which is salvation by faith alone. He have got those things right.

But he keeps on attaching false promises to the preaching of the Gospel, promising that if they only have faith then they will be healed miraculously. And the entire Pentecostal-Charismatic fractions of Christianity are dominated by this very same *doctrinal errors and misunderstanding* of what exactly belongs to the Gospel preaching.

***You don't need a PhD education in Bible logics to be able to understand something so simple as what I explained above.***

That God and Christ *can* work miracles is beyond any doubt, right?

But this is not the same as if God should have promised that to us, the Body of Christ, the Church which Paul named 'One New Man', and to whom there were not any kind of segregation. The 'Wall of Partition' was as I mentioned, torn down as Paul emerged with the new free Grace Gospel which is a unique *international Gospel* to all peoples. In contrast, we know that while Jesus was ministering, and as Peter and the eleven went out preaching from the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 (and later on also Paul

ministered to Israel during Acts period) – there was strict segregation for the believers, Jews and their Greek proselytes.

Only Paul brought that Grace Gospel we have in our time, and it was revealed 30 some years right after the closing of Acts in 62-63 A.D. as he wrote the Ephesians and Colossians, presenting this new free Grace Gospel revelation.

Folks, we have to *remain loyal to Paul's Gospel* as it is explained in the two epistles.

This Gospel have no miracle-promises, no laying on of hands, no tongues or interpretation of tongues, no exorcism of demons, no prophetic speech, no Holy Communion, no ceremonies for Holidays, or confession of sins. And, of course: There is no 'Mat. 28 or Mark 16' in this new Gospel revelation of Paul, not the least whiff of it! All the ministry/gifts described in 1 Cor. 12-14 are gone, totally suspended by Israel's falling away from God in Acts 28:25-28, and Paul was the one who bade Israel farewell on behalf of God – Israel and God have been entirely apart since then, and in 70 A.D. the Lord had the Romans burn and tear down the temple stone by stone, and thousands of war prisoners sent to Alexandria by ships to be sold as slaves (Deut. 28:68). The whole nation of Israel was *annulled completely*. Mat. 22:7 – Jesus' prophetic parable of the 'Kings Servants' and the revenge of their deaths by burning the murderer's (Pharisees') city – which was Jerusalem!

Still, let us take a look at Mark 16 where we find Jesus promising miracles and signs, Mark 16:17, 18:

*"And these attesting signs will accompany those who believe: in My name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new languages (tongues); - - They will pick up serpents; and (even) if they drink anything deadly, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will get well (my comment: Here it should have said 'get instantly well' – because that is what we see in Acts!)."*

## To drive out demons.

□□□□ We find in Acts that the apostles plus the thirteenth apostle Paul, performed such powerful works. Acts 5:15, 16 says:

*"...they (the people) kept carrying out the sick into the streets and placing them on couches and sleeping pads. (in the hope) that as Peter passed by, at least his shadow might fall on some of them. - - And the people gathered also from the towns and hamlets around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those troubled with foul spirits, AND THEY WERE ALL CURED."*

This was about 18-20 months after Pentecost in Acts 2 – in the year 30 A.D.

These signs and miracles – driving out demons and healing lots of sick people, not only were according to Mark 16 and



the Great Commission: Peter's powerful ministry even surpassed it: He did not at this instance lay hands on the sick or the demon possessed, he wasn't even there to heal or set free anyone at all. He was walking from one place in Jerusalem to another place...and God so happened to arrange this scenario that He just let Peter's shadow fall on the sick ones and demon possessed along the streets – and voila!! – they were cured. Oh, excuse me: I missed out on one word, THEY WERE **ALL** CURED!

Paul also drove out evil spirits in his early ministry, when he preached to Jews and Greek proselytes in Acts period, a few years before he had the revelation of the new free Grace Gospel. Acts 16:16,-18 say:

*“As we were on our way to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who was possessed by a spirit of divination, and she brought her owners much gain (monetary) by her fortunetelling. - - She kept following Paul and the rest of us, shouting loudly, These men are the servants of the Most High God! They announce to you the way of salvation! - - And she did this for many days. Then Paul, being sorely annoyed and worn out, turned and said to the spirit within her, I charge you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her! **And it came out that very moment.**”*

As Paul later arrived at Ephesus, he performed multiple great miracles and wonders, such as had not been seen in that place before. Acts 19: 11, 12 say:

*“And God did unusual and extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul. - - So that handkerchiefs or towels or aprons which had touched his skin were carried away and put upon the sick, and their diseases left them **and the evil spirits came out of them.**”*

In the same chapter we are also reading of the well-known incident of the seven sons of Sceva the priest, who tried to drive out demons of a man, but on their own and therefore not under the authority of Christ. It went all wrong: The possessed man jumped at them and beat them up and really messed with them so much that they fled the house naked and bloody! (Acts 19:13-21). This incident made the people there come under great awe and fear of God, so much as to take their forbidden books of sorcery and burnt them. Paul was armed and authorized by God, and what a difference that made!

We cannot find one single inspired servant of God on earth today. All the special gifts were suspended when Israel fell from God. Paul and John were the last two apostles of Christ, and no one like them has ever showed up... almost 2000 years have passed.

In our modern times there have been and still is, false 'apostles' and 'prophets' who claims to have super-natural power from God to heal and to perform miracles. They have for decades flooded the religious market by their TV-channels and other media, serving lies and fraud trying to pull a lot of money out of the gullible Christian audiences.



But, - without any miracles happening. Heaven is totally mute.

No such operation belongs to this Church dispensation. It was only in the 30 years of Acts that such ministries existed as they offered to Israel to receive Jesus and have the millennial Kingdom established at His Second Advent. But Israel ultimately refused to believe as a nation, and fell away from God.

Even in the apostolic times there were restrictions on the miracle gifts. They could by no means just go about at their own private will and perform healings etc. No, Paul he taught restrictions in 1 Cor. 12:29, 30:

*“Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all have **the power of performing miracles?** - - Do all possess extraordinary powers of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?”*

Driving out demons from possessed people is described as a gift to work powerful works/miracles. It is a very special gift (v. 10).

***At Israel's fall (Acts 28:25-28)  
all  
the miracle gifts and signs and  
wonders  
ceased the very same day.  
Heaven went mute.***

The idea of evangelists entering foreign lands, for example India, Pakistan, Africa and other places, gathering multitudes on large green fields or arenas to try to show forth 'signs, miracles and wonders' to the Gentile multitudes, cannot be found in the Bible at all. It glitters by its total absence!

The idea is false, for such signs were given the apostles to perform before Israel/Jews and the proselytes, to have them believe on Christ. It had restrictions with it, just as there were restrictions as to who could do what in regard to these powerful spiritual gifts.

***To drink something poisonous***

Those who insist that miracles also goes for us today, in the Church dispensation, are not entirely honest in what they teach. They constantly omit *drinking poison and grabbing dangerous snakes* with their hands. They also omit Jesus' commandment to sell all their belongings (that which was not needed to make a living). They have carefully (and doubtfully) sifted out such extreme

signs and ordinances. They only hold to speaking in tongues, laying hands on the sick in prayer (without any results), prophesy, water baptism and baptism with the Holy Spirit.

In USA and possibly also other places, there are□□ sects□□ actually bringing snakes to their meetings to try to convince audiences that they are not hurt by getting bitten. Many of these fanatics have died and many are often sick by the poisoning...and in no way can they prove that they are immune to dangerous snakes. Fake miracles and a false doctrine hand in hand.□□ I have yet to see that anyone drink poison to try to prove they are immune. Maybe someone has tried, but I have never seen any rapport of such activities. It is obvious that□□ *Jesus never meant*□□ that any of His believers should willfully take up deadly snakes or drink any poison. They were protected by God if they by chance happened to get bitten or taking poison thinking it was just orange juice! Most Bible readers do understand this. This is not rocket-science.

In N.T. scriptures we can find only one incident where a snake bit someone: Paul was bitten at Malta as he gathered dry branches to fire up a bon-fire after their shipwrecking, Acts 28:3. Paul did not try to lift it by his hands, but the snake bit his finger, and Paul shook it off into the fire. Regarding drinking poison there are no report in N.T. at all. Why,□□ I don't know. It may have happened, but we do not have a word of God for that.

It happens all the time here on earth – somewhere,□□ somehow – there seem to be□□ *ignorant and illiterate people*□□ fuzzing on with the Bible as if it was a toy to play with. □ They cook up the most□□ *unbelievable crap*□□ of doctrines and speculations.

***Don't listen to such false teachings which adds something to the Gospel that are not there. Such as promises of signs, wonders and miracles.***

No such super-natural miracles exist today in the Church dispensation of the free international Grace Gospel of Paul. Don't ever believe or listen to so-called 'reports' from crusading evangelists saying miracles and healings happened in their□□ crusades. It is total hoax all of it, I can assure you! It has got more to do with money-collection than it has to do with Gospel preaching.

No, we will rather listen to and take heed of what Paul taught us in Ephesians and Colossians, the letters describing our Gospel. We get learned and get real knowledge of Christ by studying his letters, and we are not told to

chase for miracles. But wisdom and understanding. Col. 1:9 is clear:

***“We have not ceased to pray and make request for you, that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and in understanding and discernment of spiritual things”***

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By Jan Lilleby

*(All quotes are from Ampl. Bible)*

□□ □□□□ Paul was in jail for the second time when he wrote these words. The first time□□ he was under the Emperor Nero's justice system, was when he had been taken into custody because he reported his case to his Appeal Court□ due to the false accusations from the leaders in Jerusalem. Nero let Paul free from the custody and case was settled with Paul as innocent.

The custody-period we can learn from reading Acts' three last chapters, starting in Acts 25:10. But we are not told of any specific ways (juridically) how it happened that the Emperor let Paul go. We only know that Paul lived in a rented lodging for about two full years.

Acts 28: 16 and 30 says:

*“When we arrived at Rome,□□ the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard, but Paul was permitted to live by himself□□ with the soldier that guarded him. □□ - - - ...Paul lived there for two entire years in his own rented lodging, and he welcomed all who came to him.”*

It is especially in the epistle to the Colossians that we

find clues that let us know that he at that time had been cast in a Roman jail, for some reason. In his salutes to them he wrote – Col. 4:10 – “Aristarchus **my fellow prisoner** wishes to be remembered to you...”.

Paul had no fellow prisoner as he was in custody in his hired rooms. In Roman prisons there often were at least two-three prisoners up to 5-6 at times, really making it a crowded uncomfortable experience.

So there can be no doubt that both the epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians was written in the time he was in a real Roman jail as a detainee. Check Eph. 3:1 –

“..I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus the Christ...”. Some historians have suggested that it could have been because of the disastrous fire in Rome 64 A.D. – for which Nero put the blame upon Jews and Christians and other minorities in town. Shortly thereafter the Emperor had many tied to poles around his huge garden, and burnt them alive as living torches. Films have been made of this, I have seen some of them years back. But we find no Biblical word of that action, so we cannot hold this as true. Nero was assassinated by one of his own security guards. This young Emperor was looked upon as a psychopath and maniac by many; only rivaled by the mad Gaius Caligula.

However, Paul, as he wrote from his prison cell in Rome – probably 63-64 A.D. – gave his exhortations in writing, without allowing the gloomy perspective of that dark threatening jail cell to hold him back.

Paul allowed himself to use a *metaphor of armament* like that of a Roman soldier, clad in heavy strong materials of metal and leather, and a razor sharp Roman battle sword and a huge shield and a strong helmet with side-protection as well as that typical metal breastplate. But he put forth his teaching on this in the spirit of defensive measures, and not as attacking *‘Christian Warriors’*.



We are *not* supposed to go forth like that crazy and unscriptural movement known as “Word-Faith Movement” – which also kept on with so-called “Spiritual Warfare” – trying to command Satan around. There is no way that the Christian churches have ever been granted such authority, as to go commanding Satan and his fallen angel armies. But the apostles had real authority given them by Christ in The Holy Ghost, and they cast out demons and healed the sick. I thought I should mention this, since such words as those found in Eph. 6 have been greatly misunderstood over the years.

A Roman soldier was one who experienced both to be an *attacker*, as well as one who would line up in *defense*. The image here shows how a soldier looked like at that time. The red feather comb on top of his helmet, was a token

of a superior commander over his soldiers,  
he was a Centurion.

I believe that Paul (who actually had contact with Roman soldiers most of his later years), must have had this kind of armament/armor in mind when he wrote to the Ephesians.

Eph. 6:11:

*"Put on God's whole armor, that you may be able successfully to stand up against all the strategies and the deceits of the devil."*

Verse 12:

*"For we are not wrestling with flesh and blood, but against the despotisms, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenly sphere."*

Verse 13:

*"Therefore put on God's complete armor, that you may be able to resist and stand your ground on the evil day, and, having done all, to stand."*

Paul tells us why we have to be 'armed' – that is, protected against attacks from the spiritual world. The occult satanic world with its fallen angel powers.

Verse 12 has been, and still is, debated in Christendom...thus it is interpreted in several ways.

It has been often taken very wrongly, like the example I mentioned above with the 'Word-Faith' movement and other Charismatic groups. The expression used by Paul, *wrestling*, has made many think that this means to attack the evil forces of Satan. Going into battle with the devil.

But I am utterly convinced that the armament in verse 13 is of protective nature, and we are not meant to go chasing Satan as wild-goose-chase fanatics.

This is why Paul repeats himself from verse 11, that we should *therefore* (pointing to the evil forces in verse 12) put on God's complete armor (Verse 13).

If we do that, we shall be able to be standing upright and in 'one piece' unharmed...after having over won it all.

Any attacks from the evil spiritual world under the leadership of Satan, should not result in any of us going down and out. We shall be standing tall, by faith in Christ, after any such battle.

Our full armor is described by Paul in verses 14-18, as follows:

*"Stand therefore, having tightened the belt of truth around your loins and having put on the breastplate of integrity and of moral rectitude and right standing with God.*

*15: And having shod your feet in preparation of the Gospel of peace.*

*16: Lift up over all the shield of saving faith, upon which you can quench all the flaming missiles (arrows) of the wicked one.*

*17: And take the helmet of salvation and the sword that*



the Spirit wields, which is the Word of God.

18: Pray at all times (on every occasion, in every season) in the Spirit, with all manner of prayer and entreaty. To that end keep alert and watch with strong purpose and perseverance, interceding in behalf of all the saints."

If it could be some problems with the interpretation of verse 12, I have to admit that the stakes have been raised a few notches as we read Paul's detailed explanation on that armor described. But don't forget now that Paul wrote of a defense tactics of spiritual nature, not physical. The armor of the soldier is but a metaphor, but one that we must take seriously.

I will allow myself to give the following 'interpretation' – leaving it up to the reader to eventually accept this or not.

**Verse 14:** The belt around our waist is very important. It keeps the armor for upper body steadily in place so that it shall not become an obstacle in battle. It needs to be held tightly in place, fit for battle of defense. The truth here points to the Gospel which we shall hold forth, Paul also calls it The Word of Truth. But it has to go with the breastplate which protects against sword-strokes aimed at our hearts and lungs. We have to be honest in our faith, and shy away from doubtful enterprises, like for instance the love of money and of living double-lives (Eph. 5:5). I am not talking of Sinless Perfection in any way, but to sustain a true life in the faith in Christ as Paul so often held forth in his writings.

**Verse 15:** The image of having shoes on our feet is a spiritual hint towards us going out with the Gospel of grace salvation. It must be preached to the world. Paul called his Gospel here for The Gospel of Peace.

**Verse 16:** Here Paul exhorts us to put our faith in Christ before all things. As opposed to works or science/knowledge. It is clearly by faith that we are saved, and it is the gift of God, lest any man should boast (Eph. 2:8, 9). This kind of faith is like a strong spiritual shield with which we can quench all the fiery darts of the devil. And believe me: The devil is really busy shooting his darts (or missiles) at us! But we stand fast and firm in the faith in Christ. As victors not losers.

I love that slogan which once was used by Rev. A.A. Allen, you know, that infamous Pentecostal Charismatic healer evangelist known for doing a lot of hoax operating from Miracle Valley, Arizona - - for he was absolutely correct in his slogan: Born to Lose, Bound to Win! In spite of all his peculiar hoaxes and trickery ways of 'healings' – he was right about this. We are all actually losers by nature, a nature we have from Adam. But by faith in Christ we are found being totally victorious, because of the grace of God! We are bound to win.

**Verse 17:** Here we are told to put on the helmet of salvation and to swing the sword of the Spirit. We all

understand what this points to: Keep sound minds and be diligent, use the sword (God's Word) as the situation will demand of us. Teach it and preach it! But be *protected* and keep a sound clear mind and conscience.

**Verse 18:** Paul added his well-known exhortation of the believers to *pray at all times*, and to stay in strict *perseverance* doing so. This indicates that we cannot always see an immediate result of our prayers – but *we keep on* even if we don't see any results. Knowing that the importance is in *the prayer as far as we are concerned*, but God decides the result, the prayer answer. Prayer can solve a manifold of problems - that is for sure.

Colossians 2:15 is often seen as controversial to Eph. 6:12

Some believers are caught up in uncertainty when reading Col. 2:15 up against Eph. 6:12. - Col. 2:15 says,

*"God disarmed the principalities and powers that were ranged against us and made a bold display and public example of them, in triumphing over them in Him and in it (the cross)"*.

Many read this as if these powers and principalities have been paralyzed and disabled, and thus cannot do neither good nor evil to anyone. That makes some uncertain as to how we shall understand Eph. 6:12, and the evil powers and rulers we are supposed to defend ourselves against. Why bother, - Col. 2:15 say they have been put down and ridiculed for all to see. (?)

But the solution in this dilemma of interpretation can be found if we *first* find the correct context. We have to read the verse before and a few verses after Col. 2:15.

**Verse 14:** *"Having cancelled and blotted out and wiped away the handwriting of the note with its legal decrees and demands which was in force and stood against us. This He set aside and cleared completely out of our way by nailing it to His cross"*.

**Verse 16:** *"Therefore let no one sit in judgement on you in matters of food and drink, or with regard to a feast day or a New Moon or a Sabbath"*.

**Verse 17:** *Such are only the shadow of things that are to come, and they have only a symbolic value, but the reality belongs to Christ"*.

Paul's emphasis here, seem to be upon the Jewish members of the assembly – those who had previously lived under the Law and ordinances. Verse 14 has a strong bias towards law keeping, which now finally had been cancelled by Jesus on the cross, taking the Law with Him.

This was true only of the Jews, not the Gentile believer. (Rom. 2:14) - We Gentiles *"...had not the Law..."*.

The powers and principalities (verse 15) which was burdening down these Jewish law-keepers, had been shut down

and made total ridicule of by Jesus on the cross, triumphing over them. They could no longer torment and smite the Jewish believers...acting as accusers (like Satan), for Christ took away all their sin and 'killed' the Law entirely.

Col. 2:15 is about what the evil and accusing spiritual powers did against them previously, and not something which should concern us Gentile believers. We have never been under the Law – we never was charged to keep Sabbath, New Moon celebrations, Holidays and the ordinances regarding food and drink. Only the Jews had to abide by that in the times before Paul had revealed to him the free Grace Gospel – the Mystery. Reading Eph. 2:14, 15 we learn of the Law of Moses *having been abolished*, including all the commandments and ordinances.

Thank God for the free unmerited Grace salvation given by faith in Christ!



# Denominations

By Louis Warren Salvesen  
(1921 – 2018)

He lived in Mt. Vernon, Washington, USA

The writer taught the Bible in a series of articles he called 'Fulness'. He was definitely one who held the 'Acts-28 Belief' like myself. Jan Lilleby.

There are several factors contributing to the dissension among the one claiming to be believers of the Bible, and it is not the purpose of this paper to try to "cure" this, or is it even thought that there will ever be a cure without divine intervention.

The only purpose here is to attempt to inform, and no divine inspiration or "visions" are claimed.

And it is important to know that no person or group living

after the original apostles died has any divine inspiration, whatever the claims.

The proof of divine inspiration possessed by the apostles was their ability to perform miraculous acts so conclusive that these were even admitted by their enemies. No such ability has existed since the last of the original apostles died.

The apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, cites this proof in 1 Cor. 2:1-5: "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power...". He was not a dynamic speaker with a powerful appearance, just the opposite; he had some palsy-like affliction, which caused trembling, giving him a very poor appearance. but he could do, as could the other apostles also, public miraculous acts. The N.T. is full of instances of this.

Anyone claiming authority today would have to produce these miracles and it is repeated, miracles undeniable even to one's enemies.

There is only one teacher today, and that is the Bible, and the proper rules of study have been named in the first issue. One can be added, possibly the most important, a scrupulously ethical approach.

Do you know where the split into denominations started first? Believe it or not, it started with this very group Paul was talking to in the above mentioned letter. 1 Cor. 1:11-13: "For it has been declared to me that there are contentions among you...you are all saying, "I am of Paul, or I am of Peter, of Apollos, or of Christ". Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you?...Chap 3:3-15: "while one says "I am of Paul" and some other, "I am of Apollos", are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed...?"

So it all started under the very noses of the apostles, and, of course, they fought it, but when they were dead it became rampant. And we see what Paul attributes this to, it is carnality, or lack of love. Each group wanted to be the big "I AM." In Hebrew the holy name Jehovah means "I AM." So it was actually an insult to the name of God.

Now there are so many denominations, one can hardly count them.

### Single verse quoting

One of the factors causing confusion today is the wrong use of what are called Bible "Verses". About 1550 someone decided that this division into verses would help students

by enabling them to find passages quickly but it has backfired quite a bit. You see, these verses many times cut sentences right in half, sometimes in quarters. The writings of the N.T. for instance, outside of the Gospels, were simply letters. Just imagine if you wrote a letter and someone divided it in this way, then quoted these half sentences, individually. There would be ideas gotten that you never meant at all. That is just what has happened regarding the Bible.

The fact is, that by repeating single verses one can prove anything he wants to concerning the Bible, that is, unless someone else is present who disagrees and also has many verses memorized. That person can contradict him because, for every single verse in the Bible, there is another single verse that will contradict it.

What one needs to do, is to read a portion of at least four or five verses, sometimes more, in order to understand what the subject of that portion is about. Unless one does this he will be misled. The larger portion is known as the "context", and a single verse by itself is "out of context". Single verse quoting is known as "proof texting" and is the source of many wrong ideas.

Also, this idea of verse quoting is used quite often by those who wish to make the Bible "prove" ideas which come out of their own heads. They gather a large amount of verses which seem to prove what they say and to a person who does not know the context of these verses, the person seems to have proven his point, because he quotes so much "scripture" and in this way many wrong ideas are circulated.

Because of this division of the Bible into verses, it is very easy to fall into the trap of accidentally "proving" one's own ideas. This is something which needs to be carefully guarded against. We all formulate ideas of our own, this is natural, and we like to see our ideas turn out to be correct, this boosts one's morale. But if one claims to be a Bible believer, one must struggle to retain the idea always, that the Bible is the teacher and that we must be ready to give up ideas we cherish when the teacher shows we are wrong. And if we handle the Bible rightly, considering the context always, our ideas will often be proven wrong. The trick is to be able to admit it, and change.

And what is an even tougher trick is to admit you are wrong when another person will confront you with certain evidence. But if the context supports that person, you should change, even if it is ego-deflating. To refuse to change is mishandling the Word. But the toughest trick of all comes when two or more persons find that they cannot



possibly agree on a point, and this point seems important to all. The tendency is to go away angry, this is wrong, because no one today is divinely inspired. The failure to disagree in love, has done more than anything else, to cause the schisms that exist.

## Israel's place in the Bible

The ideal striven for in this study paper is to explain the Bible in terms simple and clear enough so that a person who has never picked one up can understand these articles and learn about the Bible, even though it deals with the so-called "deep" things of that book.

It is believed that the Bible is intended for the common man of every nation and so must be simple. Those who make it seem complex are not presenting it correctly. Everything seems complex when we never heard of it before, but when we understand the parts, the whole becomes clear. In beginning, we must note one overall feature of the Bible. Ninety percent of the thickness of the book is taken up with God's dealings with the nation of Israel. This includes the so-called New Testament. God had them construct a temple for His worship and gave them laws and ceremonies to do. He said the temple was His house in the midst of His people. That temple stood all the while the apostles Peter and Paul and the rest were preaching. God dealt with His physical nation by means of physical miraculous "signs and wonders". Peter and Paul and the rest, were doing exactly this all through the book of Acts, the history book of the early church and only ceased a few years before Israel's temple was destroyed, it must be realized that this means God was dealing with the nation until then.

Now the Hebrew prophets taught that Israel would someday inherit an eternal kingdom on this earth, and if one will read the last two chapters of Revelation, the last book of the Bible, which deals with the end time, we see that the New Earth, created after this imperfect earth is destroyed, is, amazingly, Israel's earth, when they are exalted, as seen by the fact that a light emanates from Jerusalem, and lights the whole of the earth, and the gentiles walk in the light of it; there is no need for the sun. This is the final fulfillment of the prophets.

Here we see the vital significance of the Hebrew nation in the Bible story. Incidentally there are those who feel that the Bible teaches that God was finished with Israel forever when He allowed the temple to be destroyed in 70 A.D. It can only be repeated that the New Earth is Israel's earth. If one says Israel never kept the statutes of God and rejected the Messiah, it must be stressed that God divided the nation into two parts, and looked upon them as if they were separate nations. One was the "Israel of the flesh"

(unbelievers or unrighteous), and the "Israel of God" (those who accepted the Messiah). The one nation is totally unacceptable to God, and will be condemned; the other will receive the blessings. In Matt. 21:33-45, Christ, speaking to the Pharisees tells a parable of the wicked husbandman who tried to steal the property of his employer. In verse 45 we see that the Pharisees knew it meant them. In verse 43, Christ says: "The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruit (good works) thereof". The Pharisees were representative of fleshly, unbelieving Israel. In Gal. 6:14-16 the Israel of God is mentioned. Also Rom. 9:1-8 talks about this.

The Israel of God is called a "remnant" since unbelievers make up the majority of the nation, and the story of God again taking up His dealings with Israel is told in the book called Revelation. Here we see the "signs and wonders", typical of God's dealings with the nation. It is all highly symbolic, for instance in chapter 12 the remnant is pictured as a woman, the child is the Messiah, and the dragon is Satan. In Chap. 7:1-8 12,000 of each tribe are appointed for special service.

In Revelation the other nations are mentioned only as they come into conflict with Israel. God defends His people, punishing those who attack her and blessing those who side with her. It is vital that we understand that this book has to do with future hopes, blessings, and judgments of Israel, and do not apply these things to the people and events of today.

What is actually occurring now is a parenthesis in God's dealings regarding Israel. It began officially when the temple was destroyed in 70 A.D., and we are not told when it will end. There are references to the events of Revelation in the Old Testament and New Testament also, and for hundreds of years many have caused confusion, claiming these were happening "now".

This present era (dispensation or administration) is unique. It is not prophesied. Only the future of Israel is the subject of prophesy. We do not see "signs and wonders" as far as the Biblical miracles are concerned, there is only silence. There are no divinely inspired teachers now and the faith needed is not the "obedience" type needed when God was made physically evident by miracles. We are not justified by "works."

Today belief is on an abstract basis. It is insight, based on logical deduction rather than an eyewitness situation. And this sweeps away all formalities and ceremonies. It is truly "spiritual". Paul was the teacher and announcer of this. He introduced it just before the end of the 40 year

trial period of Israel (30-70 A.D.) and we find it in Ephesians and Colossians. Col. 2:16-23 tells us, "Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holiday...why are you subject to ordinances such as "touch not" or "taste not..."

And the future hope and blessings of the people of this era is not the same as Israel (and those living before Abraham); these share the blessings of the New Earth as told in Rev. 21 & 22. in Eph. 1:20 to 2:7 the present hope are given. It is seen to be not an earthly hope, but a heavenly one: "in the Heavens", as contrasted to "on the New Earth."

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## UNIVERSALISM EXAMINED & UNIVERSALISM DISAVOWED

By Otis Q. Sellers, Bible Teacher

(Otis Q. Sellers (1901-1992) worked The Word of Truth Ministry, and these two articles are from a series he named Seed & Bread.

These two articles are 'made into one' by Jan Lilleby, [www.gracepano.com](http://www.gracepano.com)



The word UNIVERSALISM in this title is not an epithet. No stigma or disparaging sense is attached to it in these studies. It is a simple and honest designation given to any doctrine which holds that all men will eventually be restored to the favor of God. By the use of this term no attempt will be made to lump into one category all the various doctrines which teach the ultimate restoration of all men to God. There are many forms of universalism, each one using a different system of reasoning to prove the ultimate salvation of all men. **IMAGE: Otis Q. Sellers.**

As an independent teacher of the Bible, which I fully believe to be the verbally inspired Word of God, and a writer on Biblical subjects for many years, I feel I have come upon and had direct dealings with individuals holding every form of doctrine covered by the term universalism. And while I can say that I have never agreed with any of these, I have never been guilty of becoming angry with them, abusing them, or hurling epithets at them. No person who has ever approached me with their ideas of universalism can say that I failed to treat him or her in a courteous and Christian manner. This same spirit will prevail throughout these articles, even though some very plain speaking will be done on this subject.

In order to keep my own thinking straight in regard to the many theories that have come to my attention, it has been necessary for me to separate those who hold these theories into four or five groups. The first group we will look at is a denomination called *The Universalists*.

This is not a name that I have given them. There is a definite group of people in the United States called *The Universalist Church of America*. Many of my readers will remember the imposing edifices of this denomination in Grand Rapids, Michigan and Rockford, Illinois. My contacts with the members of this group and an examination of their literature revealed that the early leaders and their followers had never made any real attempt to discover what the Bible taught about the nature and duration of future punishment, but had simply turned en masse from the horrible doctrine of eternal conscious torment to the more comfortable belief of the universal salvation of all men.

In doing this they adopted a view called "the universal fatherhood of God:" and very low views of the saving work of the Lord Jesus. They held without apology that Jesus Christ was nothing more than a good and great man.

They based their belief in universal salvation upon the fact of God's love for all men, and upon their own ideas of His universal fatherhood.

"A God of love will never permit any of His creatures to be lost:" was always their confident assertion. "We can depend upon the Father to take care of all His children" was another cliché they repeated over and over. What the Bible had to say about the future destiny of certain men made no impression upon them. They believed that the Bible contained a revelation from God, and they felt at liberty to ignore any part that did not agree with their concept. I accused them of believing that all men will be saved because they had decided that this is the way it should be.

Another group of considerable size that crossed my path were

designated as *Universal Restorationists*. They made much of Acts 3:21 which they used as the epigrammatic argument for their view. They believed in future punishment, but held that it was remedial in nature, and that consignment to the lake of fire was for purification. They believed the Bible to be God's Word, but they failed to see that "the restoration of all things:" spoken of in Acts 3:21 is limited to "what God has spoken" in the Old Testament. No statement of "universal restoration" can be found from Genesis to Malachi. The transgressors mentioned in Isaiah 66:24 are never to be brought out of the state of destruction that has engulfed them. "Their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched:" is the divine statement as to the permanency of their state. The destruction of the wicked is the testimony of the Old Testament.

A third group of universalists might well be designated as *Racial Salvationists*.

These reject the idea that Satan and all other fallen creatures will be restored to God, but they hold firmly to the idea of the ultimate salvation of every member of the human race. They make much of Romans 5:18 and I Corinthians 15:22, passages which will be carefully examined in later studies, *Deus valente*.

There is a fourth group of universalists who are commonly designated as *Universal Reconciliationists*, a name by which they often characterize themselves. This group goes the very limit in believing in the complete restoration to God of Satan, demons, fallen angels, and every member of the human race. The late A.E. Knoch, translator of *The Concordant Version* and long-time editor of the magazine *Unsearchable Riches* was the able and zealous advocate of this form of universalism. In fact, he is the originator of this form of universalism, even though in its final analysis it is nothing more than a new development of the ancient teaching of Origen, the earliest advocate of universal restoration of all to God. Woven into Mr. Knoch's system are many ancient philosophies in regard to the nature of the universe, the nature of good and evil, and fatalism. These ancient ideas, in a refined and developed form, he vigorously supported by his own understanding of the Word of God.

In presenting his view of *Universal Reconciliation* Mr. Knoch always had the advantage of having his own version of the New Testament to back it up. Many of his followers give to his version all the authority which should be given only to the inspired original. They are quite sure that it is the final word in regard to the true rendering of the New Testament. They are greatly encouraged in their feeling of its infallibility by the claims that he made for it. He

insisted that his methods placed the work of translation on such a permanent and scientific basis that "the probability of error is reduced a hundred fold." An advertisement of this version proclaims:

"Varying versions and differing doctrines now compel every true lover of God and His holy Word to search the Scriptures in the original. Hitherto this could be done only by Greek scholars. Now it is easy for all who know English. A safe simple system enables everyone to go past the opinions and traditions of men right back to the inspired writings. Why untangle discordant versions by means of laborious helps and constant corrections, when the mere use of a concordant version will give far greater results with much less effort? This is what students of the Scriptures have always needed, a method of transferring God's thoughts into English, down to the most minute particulars, uniformly, consistently, by a system conforming to the fundamental laws of language. Other translations are filtered through human minds that do not even claim to comprehend what they translate. The Concordant is the only version which recognizes and bridges human fallibility, and translates beyond the compilers knowledge. Others never could escape the bias of man or men who did the work. This version is bound to be better than the best human interpretation:"

Having made use of the *Concordant Version* for more than fifty years, I feel that most of the claims made in the above quotation are somewhat exaggerated. There never was a time when searching the Scriptures in the original could be done only by Greek scholars. No one else has yet found an unquestionable method for transferring God's thoughts from Greek into English down to the most minute particulars. The *Concordant Version* does not bridge human fallibility.

Many of Mr. Knoch's followers accept without question his claims for his version. If these claims were true, it would seem that a version could be produced that would contain no errors and need very little revision. However, if a comparison is made between the 1930 edition of *The Concordant Version* and the 1944 edition it will be found that hundreds of important changes have been made. Why so many changes should be necessary in a version that claims to have bridged "human fallibility" is a puzzle to me.

I would be the last man in the world to criticize a translator or expositor for making changes, no matter how radical, when things are seen in a clearer light. However, when one puts forth a translation of the New Testament, and claims that it has been produced by some scientific method that makes errors almost impossible, he leaves very little room for change or corrections.



It is not my purpose to enter into an examination of the *Concordant Version*.

Nevertheless, I do want to say that after long and careful examination, I do not think that it is the very zenith of accurate translation. I consider it to be nothing more than just another version of the New Testament, very good in some places, very weak in other places, and utterly impossible in some passages. Its improvement over other versions is seen in the consistency with which it translates the same word in every occurrence. For example, *psuche* is always translated "soul:" never "heart:" "life:" or "mind:" as in the King *James Version*.

Mr. Knoch was accused by many of slanting his translation in order to give support to his teaching of universal reconciliation. He vigorously denied this, but it seems there may be some ground for this accusation when a comparison is made between the 1930 edition and the 1944 edition. In the earlier edition the word "universe" is found four times in Colossians 1:16 to 20. In the later edition, probably due to the severe criticism this received, the word "universe" was changed to "all:" The early version reveals his bias. And it provided his followers with an argument that they use over and over again. The later version wipes out this argument.

## UNIVERSALISM DISAVOWED

The word "disavowed" can mean "to deny any knowledge of," or it can mean "to deny any approval of or connection with." My readers will know that I do not use this word in the first meaning given above, as I claim to have a fair knowledge of all forms of universalism, whether it be called universal salvation, universal restoration, or universal reconciliation. In the more than sixty years that I have been publicly teaching the Bible, I believe I have come upon every form and theory of universalism that exists in the theological and secular world.

In the past fifty years I have given special attention to the universalistic teachings of the late A. E. Knoch, teachings which he and his followers denominate as "Universal Reconciliation." I carried on a correspondence with him during his sojourn in Germany just before the second world war. I have known many in our own country who followed his teaching, being a constant burden to

many of these who could never understand why I could not and did not accept their line of teaching.

As I plan to write several studies on different aspects of universalism it seems best that in order to clear the air, for me to make a full disavowal of all universalistic teachings and tendencies. All previous attempts to connect me with universalistic teachings have been false and completely devoid of any truth.

In this study I will set forth three major Biblical reasons for disavowing universalism; which at the same time will be set forth as reasons why all who believe the Bible to be the word of God should take the same stand.

My first reason for disavowing and rejecting all forms of universalism is based upon a simple statement made by Paul in Philippians 3: 19 concerning certain false teachers, whom he describes as "the enemies of the cross of Christ," and says of them, **"Whose end is destruction."** It is simple logic to conclude that if **"the end"** of even one man is destruction, the end of all men cannot be salvation.

Objections to this conclusion are anticipated. Some will say that the Greek word for "end" does not mean "ultimate destiny," and with this I agree, but it does mean "end," a fact that is clearly established by its usage. They would have us believe that the word "end" here signifies only a dire parenthesis in the experiences of these men, and that destruction is not their end. It is said that this passage deals with the service of the saints in Philippi and merely discloses that their works shall be destroyed. They tell us that the word "destruction" here means "lost," and the threat is that these will lose the wages which should be theirs for their service. This is an "interpretation in desperation," a desperate attempt to rescue their jerry-built doctrine of universalism from the one passage that denies it without qualifications.

While it is true that **telos** may be used in different ways depending upon its context, yet the moment it is given a context its meaning is fixed by the concept to which it has been related. Consider this in Heb. 6:8 where it is said of "thorns and briars" that their **"end (telos) is to be burned."** If this does not mean the finality of these bushes, then what does it mean? Consider also the two occurrences of **telos** in Rev. 21:6 and 22:13, where we find our Lord saying: **I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end."**

My second reason for disavowing all forms of universalism is based upon the nature of the divine punishment that certain transgressors will receive as set forth in Isaiah 66:24 and Mark 9:44,46,48. The declaration, "**For their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh,**" sets forth an unchanging situation and reputation into which they came as a result of their own transgressions, which makes them an object of abhorrence to all mankind. Notice that the Word speaks of "their fire" and "their worm" (singular and personal).

The metaphorical meanings of "fire" and "worm" in these passages must be learned from Scripture. Psalm 97:3 reveals that when "**the LORD reigneth,**" which is after "**Yaweh has become King**" (as Rotherham translates it) that, "**A fire goeth before Him and burneth up His enemies round about.**" This is evidently highly figurative language. The fire is the divine verdict of guilt which precedes the destruction of His adversaries. Any verdict of guilt that results in destruction will never be quenched, or reversed, or altered.

"Their worm" is not some crawling insect. No worm is immortal. A man's "worm" is the reputation which he brings upon himself because of his transgressions. Messiah, in a prophetic utterance said of Himself: "**But I am worm and no man; a reproach of men and despised of the people.**" (Psalm 22:6). This was the reputation He brought upon Himself when He who knew no sin was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21). He used the word "worm" in speaking of the unjust punishment that was inflicted upon Him. Crucifixion was by the Romans not used simply to put a man to death but to malign, vilify, and defame. For three days and three nights our Lord was under the calumny of being an executed malefactor. This was, in all probability so written in Roman and Jewish civil records concerning Him. But this worm died. God raised Him from the dead and has highly exalted Him.

**But of those cast into gehenna, their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched.** No stronger words could possibly have been used to express the unchanging character of the verdict that was pronounced adverse to them, or erase the perpetual blot that their transgressions laid upon them. They will not be saved, restored or reconciled. They have been destroyed. God, the only being that is capable of truly forgetting anything, will blot them from His memory. There will be no appeals, no reversals, no mistakes of judgment. The Judge of all the earth will have done right.

My third reason for disavowing universalism is found in the words of our Lord concerning Judas Iscariot. The Biblical report concerning this man is: "He was a thief." Stealing was his habitual way of living. It was his primary interest, and it is for this habitual iniquity that he will be adversely judged. A reputation as a thief is the "worm" that the Bible lays upon him, and this worm will never die as long as the Bible stands. See John 12:6.

Concerning Judas, the Lord Jesus said: **"The Son of man goeth as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed: It had been good for that man if he had not been born"** (Matt. 26:24).

Our Lord would never have said this if there were any truth in the doctrine of universal salvation. If it were true that all would sooner or later be saved, restored, or reconciled it would never have been said that "it would have been good for that man if he had not been born." A. E. Knoch admits the truth of this. In the notes of his *Concordant Version* he says: "If it were well for Judas if he had not been born, then there can be no justification of all mankind (Rom. 5: 18) or reconciliation of all creation (Col. 1 :20). If he is ultimately justified and reconciled it is well that he has been born."

The reader will see from these two versions that they differ very little from the KJV with the exception that Knoch capitalizes "Him," making it refer the Lord Jesus rather than Judas. This forces the passage to say that it would have been good for Christ if Judas had not been born. To capitalize the pronoun in this passage makes it wholly a matter of interpretation, not of translation.

To interpret this passage as declaring that it would have been good, ideal, or well for the Lord Jesus if Judas had never been born is to make it repugnant to some of the plainest truth to be found in the Bible. Let those who hold this theory tell us just how or in what way it would have been different or better for Christ if Judas had not existed.

In order to accept such an idea it will be also necessary to accept the idea that Jesus was at the mercy of Judas, and that at the time our Lord was betrayed He stood on the brink of great success which was upset by the perfidy of one man. To accept this idea one would have to think that the Lord Jesus could not interfere with Judas' plans and make this dastardly betrayal impossible.

Some are inclined to imagine that the Lord and His disciples were constantly hiding from the Romans and the Temple police; and that if their secret hideout had not been told by Judas He would not have been arrested, tried, and put to death. The New Testament records deny all such ideas. Not one thing would have been different for the Lord Jesus if Judas had never existed.

When He was arrested and Peter sought to defend Him, He ordered Peter to put away his sword, saying: **"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels"** (Matt. 26:53).

At the same time He said to those who arrested Him: **"Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves to take Me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on Me."** (Matt. 26:55).

These words are sufficient to show that the betrayal of Judas had little to do with the Lord's apprehension and arrest. The thirty pieces of silver bought no information that was not freely available. It bought a betrayer. It would have been better for Judas if he had never been born.

The **Word of Truth Ministry** has continued after Mr. Sellers' death, and you may check their website at [www.seedandbread.org](http://www.seedandbread.org) which contains a lot of fine Bible Teaching, even audio files etcetera.

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# N O T

Jesus Coming Down From Heaven,  
But the Church Going Up to  
Heaven!

By Jan Lilleby

Within the denominations of Christianity we do experience various ideas and thoughts regarding the believer's final salvation. An often *major idea and thought* is that the believing

Christian shall have his final salvation in the instance that Jesus is returning from heaven – in His Second Advent. Many denominations let this idea come to the fore in their respective meetings and projects. You can hear such ideas coming from the pulpits.

Another example of how we Christians think regarding the final salvation, can be found as quite dominating inside the Charismatic-Pentecostal movements of various beliefs. It mainly sets forth the idea that the believers shall be lifted up (raptured) in clouds to meet the Lord in the air – and from there be transferred to heaven. Together with those who had laid dead in graves, but are raised up in the same instance. They lean on the doctrine Paul wrote in 1 Thes. 4. I recommend to you to read my article on this topic, called “Paul’s Teaching of a Coming Rapture Had a Sell-by-Date”. Check it out here in my website.

As the headline here suggests, the Biblical facts on our final salvation into the heavens (Greek, *epiouranos*) are like Paul told us, that it will not happen by Jesus coming down from heaven, but rather by God in His might and power have us appear with Christ in glory in heaven – Col. 3:1-4.

In Paul’s only epistles to the Church Dispensation, the Body of Christ, (the one to the Ephesians and the one to the Colossians), he **overruled** what he had been teaching to the Messianic believers in Acts’ period as found in 1 Thes. 4 on the so-called ‘Rapture’ up in clouds to meet Jesus. This rapture-doctrine was something Paul taught only during the Acts period when he offered Israel and proselytes the kingdom on earth, with Jesus as king at His coming (Greek, *Parousia*). It had nothing to do with the Church dispensation, because our dispensation was not revealed to anyone, including Paul, until after the falling away of Israel as God’s holy nation (Acts 28:25-28).

The Greek word *Parousia* means actually and literally that Jesus will ARRIVE on earth, to stay here. So lexica says “..**arrival** of Jesus on earth to establish the millennial kingdom of God..”



If Jesus was to first come down close to earth and rapture believers up to Himself in the air, for then to take these up to the heaven where He just came from, it could not have been written *Parousia*. The word was used to tell of Jesus’ **arrival** to stay here! The concept just mentioned are most often found inside the Charismatic-Pentecostal camps.

Inside the airports we find two sure signs, one says ARRIVAL and the other one says DEPARTURE. There is no doubt



whatsoever what those signs mean. You just can't miss it. *Arrival* has become the international word for a plane of passengers which has landed – it came down from its flight in the air and it landed, it *arrived on earth, namely the respective airport.*

When Paul wrote the two epistles, the one to the Ephesians and to the Colossians, he presented an *entirely new untaught free Grace Gospel*, as something God just had revealed to him and nobody else at that time. Check out Eph. 3:1-9 where Paul declares that revelation. It was a Mystery hidden in God.

In the times reported in Acts, 28 A.D. – 62 A.D., the apostles *only preached the promised kingdom* of God on earth, and Jesus as *the coming king* as soon as Israel had repented as a nation. The Law of Moses was still standing tall, but the apostles added the New Covenant doctrine to Israel on top of that. Thus the new covenant *overruled* the Law in question of sin and guilt and eventual punishments. The New Covenant served God's Grace to them by faith in Christ for all believing Jews and proselytes.

Rom. 3:31, *Do we then by faith make the Law of no effect, overthrow it or make it a dead letter? Certainly not! On the contrary, we confirm and establish and uphold the Law."*

Likewise Acts 13:38, 39, *So let it be clearly known and understood by you, brethren, that through this Man (Jesus) forgiveness and removal of sins is now proclaimed to you; - And that through Him everyone who believes is absolved from every charge from which he could not be justified and freed by the Law of Moses and given right standing with God."*

The Law of Moses was in effect in the times of the apostles as told in Acts, and the New Covenant overshadowed it in cases where believers had sinned, and God gave them Grace because of Jesus having paid their sins on the cross.

God demanded in those times that the sinners had to *confess* sins, James 5:13-16.

But as we come to Paul and the two church-epistles in which God had revealed the free Grace to Paul, (62-63 A.D.) - we learn that God in Christ had the Law of Moses *abolished* entirely – including all the ordinances (Eph. 2:14, 15).

By Moses God had His Law and commandments given to Israel below Mt. Horeb, but by Paul's apostolic ministry as a *"..prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles.."* - God had the very same Law abolished since the falling away of Israel as a nation for God. No wonder, because where in O.T. can you ever find that God had Moses or the Prophets demand the Gentile world to keep the Law served at Sinai? It applied to Israel only, and no other. It lasted for about 1500 years.

The fall of Israel is described in Acts 28:25-28 –

especially verse 27 points out that God considered Israel as reprobate; they **would not repent** and believe on Jesus as Messiah. Thus He broke off all contact with them, and a few years later the nation was destroyed by Rome as we know.

Jesus had prophesied of that judgement in Mat. 22:7 of the "Kings Servants" – because the leaders killed His servants (apostles) and caused the King to get fierce anger and sent His soldiers to kill those murderers and to burn down their city, Jerusalem. It happened in 70 A.D.

The apostles *stopped entirely* their preaching to Israel to try to have them repent, for God had given them over to destruction.

But Paul as I said, had the Mystery (Eph. 3:1-9) revealed to him and we cannot find him anymore going to the Jews and the Synagogues. He went to the Greek, the Gentiles as we can learn from Ephesians and Colossians. He simply stopped preaching New Covenant and the soon coming of the Lord, and went forth with the **free international Grace Gospel for all the peoples**. God shifted the dispensation as it says in Eph. 3:1-3,

*"...I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for the sake and on behalf of you Gentiles – 2: Assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was entrusted to me for your benefit. 3: And that the mystery was made known to me and I was allowed to comprehend it by direct revelation, as I already briefly wrote you."*

It is held for true in most schooled theologian circles, that Paul wrote both the Ephesians and Colossians epistles as he had recently been jailed for the second time, after having been cleared as innocent by Emperor Nero's court.

This shifting of dispensation changed of course the conditions regarding the previous doctrine of the Rapture and the Second Advent in 1 Thes. 4 – since Israel *now had fallen away* as a nation for God.

Instead of Jesus coming down from heaven to earth to establish the promised millennial kingdom, it is now rather – that the Church, the Body of Christ, is going to *come up to Christ*. God shall transfer us supernaturally right into His glorious heaven...we shall be appearing with Christ in glory in heaven as I quoted some from Col. 3:1-4 above. The full quote is found below.

Our hope now as Christians is the hope of heaven (Greek, *epiouranos*) with Christ in glory. Not a hope on earth in the millennial kingdom. We have to get this straight!

Jesus is not the King of the Church, He is the Head of His Body which is the Church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22).

#### THE HEAVENLY HOPE OF SALVATION ACCORDING TO PAUL

Col. 3:1-3 is setting the tone,

*"If then you have been raised with Christ, aim at and seek the rich eternal treasures that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2: And set your minds and keep them set on what is above, not on the things that are*

on the earth. 3: For you have died (from all worldly things), and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4: **When Christ, Who is our life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."**

The verse 4 is related to Eph. 4:30 – saying, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by Whom you were **sealed for the day of redemption."**

The day of redemption is the day when we shall be appearing with Christ in glory in heaven, for sure.

Paul had already pointed to the heaven up above, and so he continuously go on with heaven: That is where we shall be appearing with Christ in glory.

That day of redemption includes all who have died as Christian believers in the times since the apostles and up to that day; and they shall be taken into heaven. Eventual resurrections will happen in heaven and not here on earth.

Don't think vertically or horizontally – but *extra-dimensionally*...heaven is not a planet far out in the universe, no, it is a heavenly world outside of and above the universe, into another dimension entirely. Christ is there now at His Father's right hand in might and glory and power.

I hope this article cleared up the issue of the hope of our salvation. It is clear that our hope is heaven up above, and not the millennial kingdom on earth.

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By Jan Lilleby

A Bible Scholar back in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century once wrote:

"It shall greatly help to understand scripture if thou mark, not only what is spoken or written, but of whom, to whom, with what words, at what time, where, to what intent, and with what circumstances, considering what goes before and what follows."

This saying still holds water!



It is a very good advice to all who wants to assure themselves of getting their Bible understanding correctly. And thus avoid to committing grave error and misunderstanding the Holy Bible. For better make my teaching efforts here *come clear* to the reader, please allow me to use a few simple examples from real life. By comparing with believers way back – who started sects based on totally wrong Bible understanding – we can better learn how these things really were meant from God's side. He did not want us to end up in dead-end streets when thinking of Bible understanding. He wanted us to *fully comprehend what He was talking* of in every single verse in His Holy Writ.

It is fully possible to avoid grave error when reading the Bible.

I think that one of the *most obvious matters* in the Bible comes to light when we make comparison to what God had Moses write down in his time with what God had Paul write down 1500 years later, regarding the very same matter.

I am thinking of the *food ordinances* found in Lev. 11:7 on abstaining from eating pork, for not to mention the much controversial ordinance of the keeping of *Sabbaths*.

The latter found in Exo. 16:23-26. For if a poor Bible student stopped there, in what God told Moses 1500 years before the apostle Paul came on the scene, he would surely end up in a spiritual dead-end street.

Such misfortune has happened to some known sect-leaders way back in time; which I shall come to shortly.

Paul simply, on God's command, *nullified and made out of effect* the Mosaic ordinances regarding food and Sabbath, as well as keeping certain holidays/feast days and even New Moon days, quoting Col. 2:16, 17,

*"Therefore let no one sit in judgment on you in matters of food and drink, or with regard to a feast day or a New Moon or a Sabbath. - - Such things are only the shadow of things that are to come, and they have only a symbolic value, but the reality (the substance, the solid fact of what is foreshadowed, the body of it) belongs to Christ."* (Amplified Bible).

This doctrinal statement from Paul thus confirms to us, that neither food ordinances nor feast days as well as Sabbaths,

are valid for believers of our time.

We do no longer, as it was with Israel under God, have to obey and live by keeping the Law of Moses with its commandments and ordinances, thinking that we would please God by doing so. It is totally obvious that Paul on behalf of God *dismissed these rules*, so that no one can sit in judgment on believers who don't keep any of them.

Unjustified critique against a believer that does not stay off *pork*, or do not keep the Sabbath, most often comes from the Adventist-camp in Christianity. Since these so openly demonstrate that they do keep Sabbath and they do keep certain food ordinances.

But God has never laid such specific rules upon the Church dispensation. That is why Paul so clearly makes a point of this in his epistle to the Ephesians and the Colossians.

The prophet of God, Moses, introduced the Sabbath, but the apostle of God and Christ, Paul, dismissed and entirely called off the ordinance, yes – *all the ordinances* as a matter of fact.

The Law of Moses was abolished as we can learn from Eph. 2:14, 15,

*“For He (Christ) is our peace. He has made us both (Jew and Gentile) one (body), and has broken down the hostile dividing wall between us. - - By abolishing in His (own crucified) flesh the enmity (caused by) the Law with its decrees and ordinances (which He annulled); that He from the two might create in Himself one new man (one new quality of humanity out of the two), so making peace.”*

This strong and true apostolic statement from Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, proves to all of us that if Christ had not annulled the Law and the ordinances, there would NOT have been a Church, the Body of Christ, also called “One new man”.

In other words: The Church *would not have existed* at all if God in Christ had not taken away the Law. Because the Church has this unique foundation in regards to its believers: It consists and exists on the basis of God having made into ONE BODY both the believing Jew and the believing Gentile, by having torn down/removed the wall of partition which actually was the Law of Moses! The Law had to go before there was any Church established. The Bible proves this beyond any doubt, and in a non-negotiable manner.

And so we learn that *all sects*, Adventists being just one of them, are totally in *opposition to the arrangement made by God to have the Church established*. They want to keep Sabbath and to keep food ordinances etc. – which is out of the question regarding the very nature of the Church. The Church has nothing to do with the Mosaic Law!

Paul wrote this doctrine of the Law abolished, 1500 years after Moses wrote the Law. So here we are reminded, as I mentioned in my quote above of the Biblical guide – we must check out what *was written before*, and then also check

out what was written after.

In so doing we find that Moses had done the right thing in his time, and Paul abolishing that Law 1500 years later did the right thing in his time! They both followed God's instructions and therefore there exist no controversy in this.

Why? What was the intention behind it?

Paul explained this in Col. 2 as I quoted above: These things within the Law were only shadows of what was to come with Christ. The Law was never the main thing. But Christ and His taking away all sin were. Paul said in another epistle, that the Law was a schoolmaster for Christ. It pointed into the future, when Christ should come and take all sin upon Himself.

Now that Christ have come, and even ascended to God His Father after being raised from the dead, the Law is out of effect. It has no purpose anymore, thus it is not a part of the faith-doctrine for the Church, which we find in Paul's two epistles Ephesians and Colossians.

Notice carefully how Paul so explicitly links together that the establishing of the Church is made by abolishing the Law FIRST. The Law had to go, so that the Church, the "One new man" in Christ could come forth – and it is now Jews and Gentiles on same level in the faith making up the Body of Christ. But if the Law had still been in effect, it would have been 'Jews first, then Gentile – like Paul wrote in Rom. 1:16. At which time the Law had not yet been abolished (Romans was written in 58 A.D. – but Ephesians/Colossians in 62-63 A.D. AFTER Israel first had fallen away from God as a nation.

We can only find the Church after Acts Book has been closed.

There have been hundreds, yes thousands of believers up through history who have said and preached that they were elected by God through visions, dreams and even visits from angels, and meant that they had been personally established as God's prophets.

But they all have in common that they were false and did not keep to the Biblical truth. And they have managed to establish sects and cults, and a known prophetess was Ellen Gould White (1827-1915) when speaking of the Seventh Day Adventists. Her understanding of the Bible was in full opposition to what Paul taught in Colossians and Ephesians. So we cannot defend her doctrine, however – she might still have been a Christian in the sense of having been saved by faith in Jesus Christ. Only God can judge in that. But she did not conform to Paul's teaching, when we lay up the Church faith doctrine.

All sects have such instigators, believing of themselves as personally elected by God.

The Jehovah's Witnesses follows Charles Taze Russel's system of doctrine, and we find that the Mormons (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) follow Joseph Smith and



his angelic revelations by a false 'Holy book', the book of Mormon. Supposedly given to Smith by an angel called Moroni. It should be mentioned that Charles Taze Russell in his teenage years came out of the fresh Adventist denomination in USA, and ended up with creating a sect himself. It was called " Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society" in the early days, which we now call Jehovah's Witnesses. Russell died one year after Mrs. White, in 1916 in Texas.

Joseph Smith's 'revelations' was of course a full bluff – judge for yourselves: He taught his followers that an angel, Moroni, had lead him to a place where the Book of Mormon was hidden in the ground. It was made of pages in pure gold, and the book told of Jewish-Christian believers in America's ancient times. He 'translated' the book and published it in 1830, calling it for 'The Book of Mormon'. If you wish you may check it out in Wikipedia, as well as many other websites.

It is quite astounding and fantastic that any intelligent normal human being can go on believing such fairy tales which Joseph Smith presented.

Smith was killed by a raging mob when he was jailed in Carthage, Illinois in 1844. He was accused of treason. When Smith was asked to deliver proof of the existence of the gold book which was dug up, he simply explained that the angel Moroni had taken the " book with him. (The gold book has of course never existed – it is a " pure hoax" and a fairy tale at best).

Paul's words in Col. 2 quoted above are in full agreement with his word written in Eph. 2:14, 15 of the Law of Moses having been " abolished." The two epistles were written at the same time around 62-63 A.D. as Paul was in jail for the second and final time.

The Law of Moses was never given to Gentiles. It was only presented to the Hebrews in the wilderness, which later on became the nation of Israel. Rom. " 2:14 say,

*"...Gentiles who have NOT the Law..."*

The Greek text has the meaning of ALL Gentiles – and not just a few Gentiles not having the Law, while other Gentiles had the Law. It is in a definite form and telling of all the Gentiles being without the Law.

We cannot find Moses in Scriptures as a prophet who was sent by God out to the Gentile nations, to have them obey the Law. Has anyone of you thought of that?

On the contrary, the Law was given to make a concise separation between Jews and Gentiles, keeping " them apart. This is the very reason for why we cannot find Moses as a missionary. The Law worked as a wall of partition, and the Jews was on the inside of it, but the Gentiles " **were on the outside**, Eph. 2:12,

*"Remember that you (Gentiles, see v. 11) were " at that time separated (living apart) from Christ, utterly estranged and outlawed (being without the Law of Moses) from the rights of Israel as a nation, and strangers with no share in the*

*sacred compacts of the promise, and you had no hope; you were in the world without God."*

The fact that Israel always has had proselytes from Gentile nations with them did not mean that they had the Law – the entire Gentile world. Only those few singular proselytes was presented the Law and had to take circumcision. The wall of partition was standing, even if a few were proselytes.

But as God had the free Grace Gospel revealed to the world by Paul – an international Gospel – this separating wall was torn down. Since God had Christ taking all the sin upon Himself, thus making the Law irrelevant.

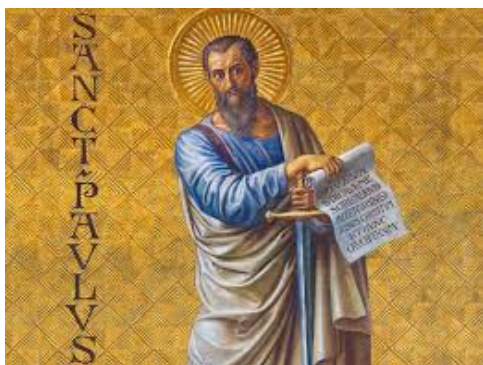
This Grace revelation is found in Eph. 3:1-9 where Paul explains everything and that the revelation *was a former Mystery hidden in God* before Paul was given this Grace ministry. You should read this for yourself!

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## If Paul Didn't Teach It, Nobody Should Teach it!

By Jan Lilleby



Does it sound too stern and categorical – that *only Paul* has the Biblical original truth and Faith Doctrine for the Church Dispensation? Having said this, I shall give a few examples to show how this is really so.

IMAGE: Iconic *portraying* of *Paul*. Jesus Christ sent out Paul to preach and teach to us Gentiles the free Gospel of Grace. This free Gospel is to be found only in the two church-epistles *Ephesians and Colossians*. Written Post-Acts, a period of time in which *(we are still in that very time period)* we find Israel as fallen away from God and thus no longer His nation/people on earth.

The fall is described in Acts 28:25-28 – and it implies that from that moment in time, Israel was *put down a notch* so

she is no longer God's nation sat above all other nations, but only a nation among others. They must be considered as Gentiles compared to the rest of the world. Col. 3:11 says it all.

Ultimately Israel was completely destroyed in 70 A.D. by the Romans. Jesus characterized the Roman army as "the king's army" in Mat. 22:7 speaking His prophetic parable to Israel, and it would be sent to kill those murderers who had murdered the king's servants and to burn down their city, Jerusalem. It was fulfilled in 70 A.D. as I said. It is popular to say of the fallen nation among us Acts-28 believers – that Israel has 'been set aside for a time', but I will tell you that they were not just sat aside, they were actually entirely and utterly ANNULLED AS A NATION. Moses prophesied of that in Deut. 28:68 and Josephus the Jewish Historian/writer confirm this stern intervention by God in his book 'The Jewish War'. All prisoners of war from the age of 17 years, plus eventual spouses, were sent to Alexandria by the thousands, so that the slave markets were totally inflated and nobody would buy. But also some prisoners were sent to Rome to be cast onto the Gladiator arenas as well as becoming slaves and servants.

*"And the Lord shall bring you into Egypt again with ships by the way about which I said to you, You shall never see it again. And there you shall be sold to your enemies as bondmen and bondwomen, but no man shall buy you."*

Paul, like Peter, was first sent out (Acts 9:15) to preach to Jews, proselytes and eventually also kings.

However, Peter seemed only to have been sent to Jews inside Israel's borders. Ref. Gal. 2:7, 8. The only exception was the incident in Acts 10 and the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius. But both Peter's and Paul's messages at that time was the message to Israel of the Kingdom of God on earth, the millennia. It had not become the Church dispensation yet – it laid 30 years into the future. Peter was never commissioned by the Lord to go to Gentiles like we see with Paul.

But at the 'end station' Rome in 60-62 A.D. Paul confronted the official Israel represented by the leaders of the eleven Synagogues in Rome. The majority of these would not repent and accept Jesus as Israel's Messiah King.

Therefore we find Paul's stern judgmental words in Acts 28:25-27 – that the Gospel now was sent to the Gentiles and they would listen; contrary to the Jews who would not. Paul used Is. 6 and the prophet's judgement upon Israel as his own words.

Acts 28:27 says clearly that Israel 'Would not repent so the Lord could heal the land' – meaning: If they don't repent they would be destroyed. See also Peter's speech in Acts 3:22, 23. And that was what happened in 66-70 A.D. as the rebellion against Rome started and was brutally ended in 70 A.D. – the very same calendar day as when the Babylonian army destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B.C. which was 10<sup>th</sup> of

September (Josephus made notice of this in his book *The Jewish War*).

But the fall of Israel in Acts 28:25-28 triggered the *new dispensation*, that of the free Grace Gospel of Paul for us Gentiles (remember: *Also Israel* is now 'gentiles' – they are just one among all other nations).

Paul explains this in Eph. 3:1-9 in particular as well as in Col. 1:25, 26, pointing to God having *revealed His Mystery to him*, the believers in Jesus Christ now called 'One new Man' – and 'Body of Christ' Eph. 2:14, 15.

My reference to Paul as the *only* one who's faith doctrine we shall follow, rest upon this fact. **It was Paul** who was given the revelation of the Mystery – the dispensation of the Church – and therefore Paul is our teacher and our apostle.

Then we come to examples which will teach us how it is that we should put Paul in that exclusive position which God already has put him. The one and only teacher, to whom we must submit and be faithful when we discuss faith doctrine.

If Paul did not teach it, – whatever the topic – neither should we!

### The Case of the Adventists keeping substantial parts of Mosaic Law

Their doctrine of faith has been known to preach certain Mosaic commandments and ordinances such as Sabbath keeping, and certain food ordinances, to mention a few. This is *not* a private campaign against the Adventists. I just use their way of beliefs to point to how Christians oftentimes come out askew compared to Paul, our rightful apostle sent to us by Jesus Christ. Other denominations have quite a number of errors in their doctrines, but I cannot find place here to mention them all. I hope for your positive understanding.

Paul, God's and Christ's elected apostle to us Gentiles, had obviously at least the same level of God-given authority as Moses, if not greater than him.

Moses wrote the Law, but Paul on God's behalf declared it **ABOLISHED**.

Eph. 2:14, 15, quote (Amplified Bible),

*"For He is (Himself) our peace. He has made us both (Jew and Gentile) one (body), and has broken down (destroyed, abolished) the hostile dividing wall between us. 15: By abolishing in His (own crucified) flesh the enmity (caused by) the Law with its decrees and ordinances (which He annulled); that He from the two might create in Himself one new man, so making peace."*

The Biblical fact that the Law of Moses, including all decrees and ordinances (thus covering Sabbath, food regulations, feasts, etc) was abolished/annulled through God's apostle Paul right after Israel had fallen away from God, seem to go unnoticed not only by the Adventists in this world, but many other denominations. Why can they just not

conform to and embrace Paul's clear Grace Gospel teaching? Why try to 'keep the Law' when Paul tells the Church that the Law is gone for now? Excluding the Law of Moses is not the same as excluding high morale and proper respect for God and Christ! Paul always pointed to the fact – when the Law was discussed – that it contained just a foreshadowing of 'things to come' – things concerning Jesus to be crucified so the sin of the world could be taken away by faith in Him.

We should keep in mind that the Law of Moses only was presented to the Hebrews, and never to the Gentile nations! □

Rom. 2:14, □ - □ *"..Gentiles have not the Law..."*

In Col. 2:16 Paul has a word on this issue also, □ - after first having pointed out the sacrifice for sin given by Jesus on the cross (verses 14 and 15) -

***"Therefore let no one sit in judgment on you in matters of food and drink, or with regard to a feast day or a New Moon or a Sabbath."***

Paul never taught punishment in Hell for unbelievers

We find that there is absolutely nothing from Paul regarding eternal punishment and torment in Hell for unbelievers. □

Only Paul is our teacher/apostle, we cannot follow any other prominent person in the Bible regarding faith doctrine. We must learn that Paul is the one and only!

If Paul didn't teach everlasting punishment in Hell, then there is no such punishment for the unbeliever. □ And we as Christians cannot go about scaring people with Hell and fierce torment like we see in Christianity. It is heresy! □

NOTE: □ *Here I will like to point out that the Adventist-movement is not preaching Hell and everlasting torment for the unbeliever. Thank God!*

The unbelievers will not get saved □ nor end up in an everlasting burning Hell, no, they are perishing in the manner of God NOT having them raised up from the dead. They remain dead and gone forever, but in a manner like as if they never ever had existed. The dead knows nothing, they feel nothing, and they are really gone forever and will not be tormented in fire and things like that; gone for good.

If Hell and everlasting torment was a real thing, then Paul would most certainly have preached and taught this since it is such important information to bring out to people. Paul would not have kept Hell as a hidden secret – he would have shouted it out from the pulpits. □ But we cannot find anything of this with Paul.

Neither can we find any clue whatsoever of Paul teaching that unbelievers will be offered a second chance after death

Such beliefs are promoted within certain Christian denominations and organizations. It is a part of the so-

called Universalism beliefs. They hold that all mankind will be saved, no matter what, which is an outright lie. To be able to receive (for people who did not believe on Christ in this life) a 'second chance' one must be alive after death. But there is no Bible word proving that there is an intermediate stage of life, between time of death and time of God resurrecting a dead person. We do not find any such thing with Paul or any other key-persons in the Bible.

When a person – believer or not – die, he remains stone dead until he is eventually brought back to life by the intervention of God Almighty. Nobody wakes up one morning dead!

There is no paradise/heavenly-kind-of-place after death, where unbelievers are kept in wait for an examination whether they will start believing on Jesus.

We all know that such ideas are pure human imagination – a product of the fallen character of man who will not submit themselves to the truth of the Word of God.

Paul has actually a word in this matter, found in Col. 1:22, 23,

*"Yet now has Christ reconciled you to God in the body of His flesh through death, in order to present you holy and faultless and irreproachable in His presence. . . provided THAT YOU CONTINUE TO STAY WITH AND IN THE FAITH IN CHRIST, well-grounded and settled and steadfast, NOT SHIFTING OR MOVING AWAY FROM THE HOPE (THE GOSPEL), which you heard and which has been preached to every person under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister."*

Both the epistle to the Ephesians and the one to the Colossians were written to BELIEVERS in Christ, and not to unbelievers.

Now: Why does Paul make such a paramount issue of our salvation...if it is just 'never mind' how you live and what you believe or not believe in this life, like Universalism teaches?

Why make such a big case and point out the importance of God demanding that His believers are made holy and faultless in His presence?

Why put the warning in there – as in verse 23 – **'provided that you continue in faith and not moving away from that hope'**? Could it be that God has wrath against those who are unholy and living in grave sin? What does the Bible teach us of the character of God? Why burn up Sodom and Gomorra if He is never-minded of grave sin and unbelief? Paul's exhortation to keep up our faith and stay in it, proves to us that it is what we choose here in this life that decide whether you will be saved or go lost in eternity.

It is obvious that Paul makes this non-negotiable condition of staying in the faith in Christ and don't turn away from that faith, as something we can respond to ONLY while we are here on earth in this present life.



Universalism is a foolish lie, since Paul does NOT mention such a belief at all. He wrote and preached of the faith in Christ as something that must be decided now, *here in this life*. If Paul did not teach Universalism, - and he didn't - then we must not teach it neither. ☐☐

It is totally *obvious* that we - through faith in Christ NOW in this present life - are thus made holy and faultless before God because of the atonement made by Jesus for us on the cross. We are *now* reconciled to God by that atonement. ☐☐

While all the unbelievers in this world are NOT. ☐☐

This makes a big difference, we are saved by faith NOW, but those who have no faith are unsaved NOW. It is up to them that they repent and come to faith in Christ in this life, and avoid throwing their salvation opportunity away based on vain and foolish human thought such as the Universalism lies.

There exist no automatic 'life-after-death' like many people believe in, including Spiritism and people inside occultism. The Bible has no doctrine that teaches such things. ☐☐ Paul never taught automatic life after death, - so therefore neither shall we. ☐☐ Besides: If such automatic life after death was true, then it crashes against the Biblical fact that we can only be saved BY FAITH - because if you enter an eternal life and world after death, your faith has been replaced by SIGHT. You see those things which we now, here in this life, only can grasp by faith. So it is impossible to get saved by sight. Salvation is only given us by *faith*, Eph. 2:8, 9. And we walk by faith, not by sight!

There is but one way only to obtain life after death: God have to *raise you from the dead*. ☐☐ Only God can do that. Only those who believe on Jesus Christ in this life shall be raised from the dead by God when time is due.

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## The Great Difference Between Paul and The Four Gospels

By Jan Lilleby

(Bible quotes are from Amplified Bible)

I have already in earlier articles mentioned lightly about it, by pointing out that the four gospels must NOT be taken as if it was doctrine of faith to the church.

These are just historical documents telling of the life and ministry of Jesus and His disciples; how they taught the Jews, and it all ending with Jesus crucified, dead and

resurrected.

Jesus Himself made it all clear to His listeners/followers that He was sent by God to Israel only, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel", Mat. 15:24.

Later on, Paul taught the very same, "...Christ became a servant and a minister to the **circumcised** (the Jews) in order to show God's truthfulness and honesty by confirming the promises (given) to our fathers..." Rom. 15:8.

What I have not dealt with so much in my earlier articles/books is the fact that there exists a number of puzzling historical facts, which only goes to underline that *the four gospels* NEVER were anything more than just pure history, and were never meant to be used as doctrine of faith to the church dispensation.

#### ALL THE GOSPELS WERE WRITTEN ANONYMOUSLY

Please, do not get any sort of fits over this, or other unpleasant reactions...this is nothing but common Bible knowledge at every school/universities which offers Bible Seminars.

Most of the church members inside Christianity have little knowledge of this, but they will have to take much of the blame themselves. They cannot demand that every minister come to them in person to instruct them of Biblical historical facts.

Most Bible Lexica mentions these things and are not trying to hide it or drown it among all the issues found in a Lexicon, the fact that *the gospels were originally entirely anonymous*.

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John did not appear before the Second Century – and they were added to the writings in order to make them seem Apostolic and authoritative.

They do not purport to have been written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Their titles do not affirm it. They simply imply that they are "according" to the supposed teachings of these Evangelists. This again tells us, that it was all according to the tradition of the apostles.

(Still, however, it is probable that it *really was Luke* who wrote that Gospel story and the Acts, which we shall deal with shortly).

None of the four claimed to have been eyewitnesses to the life and ministry of Jesus. Actually – Luke points to the fact that he based his writings upon the reports which had come from those who were eyewitnesses, as we shall all learn.

Even if it is so that the Gospels were not written by them, we shall be aware of that *the stories told are true* and not fiction.

It is proven by the texts in the Gospels that they must have been originally written down by those who were eyewitnesses. We are told many details and even quotes from speeches held; from the visit experienced by Mary as the Arch Angel Gabriel came to her and told her she would be mother to Jesus by the

Holy Ghost.

The escape to Egypt, and later the event of Jesus as a twelve year boy in the Temple impressing the Scribes with His wisdom; John the Baptist in the Judean wilderness baptizing the Jews in Jordan, and then Jesus comes onto the scene at the age of around thirty, causing great attention and admiration by His multiple miracles and healing wonders. Yes, the Gospels are filled with action – all described obviously by those who had been eyewitnesses to it all.

Why remained the Gospel writers anonymous?

We can only use our imagination. One *particular reason* for this, I will suggest that they simply were afraid for their lives. Wouldn't we also be afraid, if we had seen Jesus executed on a cross last week, and seeing His followers take cover and refuge to avoid the attention of the murderous Pharisees and the soldiers?

I think we would, certainly.

We can only read the Acts to find out how things developed in Israel and in the Empire in the days of the apostles. Dangers and threats were everywhere. But in spite of this, they managed to come up with a *full story* telling of Jesus and also of His Apostles after He had ascended into heaven.

And still, this dramatically Bible history cannot – as if by a magical touch – just be taken in as 'Doctrine of Faith' upon which the existence of the Church Dispensation is based.

But certain writings by Paul can! I shall come to this shortly.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN CHRISTIANITY KEEP  
USING THE FOUR GOSPELS, OR PARTS OF THEM,  
AS FAITH DOCTRINE TO THE CHURCH?

Well, then happens that which *already* and regrettably have happened: Many – if not all – assemblies with their pastors, preachers, teachers and ministers go using the promises which Jesus gave to His Jewish believers and apostles – such as the *miracle and healing promises* we can read of in Mark 16 and other passages, telling their believers that *we can expect God to fulfill these promises* to them who have need for healing. Wrongly and in total misunderstanding of the Word of God, they think that Mark 16 are spoken/written to the Church Dispensation, and looks past the Biblical facts that *Jesus only spoke such things to His Jewish believers exclusively*, those who heard Him or His apostles.

The Charismatic/Pentecostal camps in Christianity are holding such views in particular. They have over the decades past been noticed and are actually known for these beliefs. Speaking in tongues, healing the sick, casting out demons, even trying to wake up dead persons – might be the very 'hallmark' of these movements. They keep Mark 16 and the message therein as in full operation today, even if

Jesus explicitly said in His time that He was ONLY sent to Israel's house, "in My name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new languages; they will pick up serpents; and (even) if they drink anything deadly, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will get well."

The Church Dispensation had not yet been established (by Paul) when Jesus sent out His apostles with the promises of Mark 16 given them. The Church as we know it, was still a hidden mystery in God (Eph. 3:1-9; Col. 1:25, 26 - 63 A.D.).

It was only 28 A.D. when Jesus sent out His apostles and shortly after ascended into heaven.

18 - 20 years BEFORE any of the four Gospels were issued/made available for reading, (except Luke which was ten years after) we find that Paul had already distributed and taught his fresh new Gospel of free Grace by faith in Christ in the entire Empire (Col. 1:6).

His two Church epistles, Ephesians and Colossians, in which we have the complete Doctrine of Faith and the free Grace Gospel for the Church Dispensation, - we cannot find the least trace of anything which could resemble Mark 16 and miracle-promises. On the contrary! It glitters by its total absence.

There is nothing in Paul's Church epistles that tells us of Paul operating according to Mark 16, neither is there anything mentioned of his co-workers. Total silence on exorcism, miraculous healings, speaking in tongues, great wonders, - not even anything on Holy Communion or confessing of sins. Also baptism is gone. The preaching of the promised Kingdom of God on earth as we find in Acts, and which was followed by those promised signs and wonders of Mark 16, was ended the very instance as Israel fell away from God, as told in Acts 28:25-28. Paul quoted them the final judgement from Is. 6 of their deafness, spiritual blindness and their unbelief and disobedience and lack of repentance (Acts 28:27) - in an ultimate sense. This was the very end station for Israel as a nation for God. And shortly thereafter, it happened that God had the Mystery of the Church dispensation revealed to Paul, and the Law of Moses was abolished thereby (Eph. 2:14, 15) and the preaching of the New Covenant to Israel and the coming Kingdom with Jesus as their King, was entirely stopped/suspended until further notice. And just 7 years later, God sent the Roman army against them and destroyed Israel and scattered them in the world as we know.

Ephesians/Colossians is entirely void of anything that could match Mark 16 and the working of miracles and healings. Not a single word that Paul or any of his colleagues practiced Mark 16 and having miracles and healings as part of their ministries Post-Acts.

But in the years that went before Paul had the Mystery (Eph. 3:1-9) revealed to him and the Church Dispensation started,

he was ministering as an apostle to Israel and to eventual proselytes, preaching the promised Kingdom of God on earth and the immanent coming of Jesus from heaven in their lifetime. Law of Moses was still operative, but if any believer broke any commandment, God's grace in Christ and the New Covenant forgave the sinners if they confessed. The New Covenant came between and they were cleansed in the blood of Jesus shed on the cross. Rom. 3:31 clearly say that the believers in Israel still had the Law during Acts, "Do we then by faith make the Law of no effect, overthrow it or make it a dead letter? Certainly not! On the contrary, **we confirm and establish and uphold the Law.**"

In Acts period (28 A.D. – 61-62 A.D.) the messianic kingdom believers under the ministries of the apostles confirmed, established and upheld the Law of Moses. But from the year of 62-63 as Paul wrote Ephesians/Colossians, God through Paul declared that the Law was abolished! Quite a big difference don't you think?

During Acts period when the Law was upheld as well as the New Covenant saved them if they sinned against the Law, all the miracles, healings, signs and wonders followed their ministries, even made attestations to prove to the Israeli people that they were sent by God and Christ. Paul was at the peak of his ministry regarding great miracles as he was a long time in Ephesus. Acts 19 reports of miracles and healings, so much as to have the leading class in the city raising persecution against Paul. It tells us that Paul at that time still had not gotten any revelation of the free Grace Gospel, for he was preaching the Kingdom of God on earth to them.

Paul never preached or taught any doctrine that he picked up from any of the four gospels. They did not exist at that time, but came on the market 18-20 years later. No, Paul preached that which Jesus Christ told him, as He revealed Himself to Paul several times. Paul never 'obeyed' Jesus' commandments in Mark 16, like the twelve apostles did in their time.

Paul summed up for all of us what exactly we shall believe – it is all there written down in Ephesians/Colossians.

#### LUKES INTRODUCTION ADDRESSED TO THEOPHILUS

The introduction words of Luke's gospel, addressed to Theophilus contributes to the thought that Luke actually was the one writing both that gospel story and the Acts story.

In Acts we find both Peter's ministry early on, and later comes Paul on the scene – from Acts 7 and on. And in Paul's epistles we find that it must have been Luke who wrote Acts since he was the one who followed Paul on his journeys in the Empire. Thus Luke wrote the story of Acts.

Neither Paul nor other important persons mentioned Luke as an Evangelist or a preacher holding 'revival campaigns'. Paul spoke of Luke as – *"..the beloved physician.."*

Paul was the preacher/teacher and Luke was the doctor who gave most of his time to report exactly what happened in Paul's ministry, detail by detail.

The epistle to the Colossians was the last epistle Paul ever wrote before he died. He listed up a number of co-workers and fellow believers, and Luke was one of them. He was with Paul until the very end (Col. 4:14). Colossians was written around 63 A.D.

Luke went with Paul almost all of the time with few exceptions. In 2 Tim. 4:11 we find that it was ONLY Luke who stayed with Paul! This tells us something.

In the opening phrases of Acts Luke tells Theophilus he had written 'The first book' (some translations say *In my former account*) – pointing to his gospel story – *“..dealing with all the things which Jesus began to do and to teach, until the day when He ascended, after He through the Holy Spirit had instructed and commanded the apostles whom He had chosen.”* (Acts 1:1, 2).

This conforms to Luke 24:51-53 and Luke ending his Gospel story with the ascension of Jesus. Knowing this, we can regard Acts as 'The second book' in relation to Luke's Gospel which was the first one. To be able to write such a story as Acts, one must have been present most of the time in the midst of the happenings if not in all of it. Luke was not an eyewitness to Jesus' ministry or His disciples following Him before the crucifixion. But he certainly was an eyewitness to that which is reported in Acts. First he observed Peter and the eleven, and later on he went with Paul, as I mentioned.

In Luke 1:1-4 we are learning that Theophilus had earlier been taught by him in these things,

*“Since many have undertaken to put in order and draw up a narrative of the surely established deeds which have been accomplished and fulfilled in and among us. **Exactly as they were handed down to us by those, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word.** It seemed good and desirable to me also after having searched out diligently and followed all things closely and traced accurately the course from the highest to the minutest detail from the very first, to write an orderly for you, most excellent Theophilus. **That you may know the full truth and understand with certainty and security against error the accounts and doctrines of the faith of which you have been informed and in which you have been orally instructed.**”*

Here we learn of Bible facts we should not overlook.

Luke pointed to the fact that MANY and not few already had made efforts to write down a story telling of Jesus' life and ministry – and these writers had been eyewitnesses to it all and they also had been ministers of the Word. In other words: The apostles.

We can only make guesses on how many these were. But Luke at least says MANY. It had to be at least twelve (minus those



who eventually had been murdered by their persecutors, the Pharisees?).

So, knowing this – and *in spite of being aware* of an already existing story which already had been written down, he took upon himself this enterprise of first making a thorough *scrutiny and investigative* effort to make sure that his story would be *absolutely and irreproachably correct and faultless*.

Knowing these things, we clearly learn that Luke's gospel is *actually* an epistle/letter addressed to a believer, Theophilus. Luke anticipated that Theophilus would distribute his story in the Empire as well as to the Jewish public. Why else would Luke put down so much work and efforts in this?

It is held for correct in Theological circles that Theophilus probably was an *official governmental Roman minister*, and as such he had a vast number of people under him – a substantial *network* so to speak, through whom he could successfully have spread the Gospel story.

Luke's using the honorable expression *'Most excellent Theophilus'* gives away that he must have been a man of high rank in the Roman rule. Such words of salute were used, not of common people, but only if they had a high rank and status.

Thus Luke made extra efforts to *ascertain* that his story would be entirely accurate and faultless. It all hung on the observation made by those who had been EYEWITNESSES.

The apostles.

And so, saying this, Luke admitted that he was *not* an eyewitness to Jesus' ministry.

#### PAUL – THE APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES



It can be no doubt about Paul's writings, since he names himself in the introduction/greeting. He gives us his name and the name of the eventual fellow believer who is with him. His opening greetings are almost repetitive.

Paul's epistles are filled with *'Doctrine of Faith'* combined often with his warnings against false teachers and heretical doctrine. They are written to assemblies and to certain ministers, and shall not be considered as history. IMAGE:

*Colossians*, a page of an original...lightly damaged as we see.

His epistles of faith doctrine can be classified into two categories:

His early epistles (written in the same time that Acts are reporting of) from 33 A.D. to 62-63 A.D. were

written to Messianic believers of Israel, Jews and proselytes, and the doctrine Paul taught them was The new Covenant to Israel in the blood of Jesus. These epistles were written while the Law of Moses still was in effect and should be obeyed. The new Covenant came to the believer's spiritual rescue in cases where believers had broken any commandment or ordinance of the Law. We learn from these epistles that the teaching promised them God's Kingdom on earth with Jesus as the King of kings, Lord of lords, at His coming from heaven. He was expected to come back in the life time of the apostles, as God first wanted Israel to repent and believe on Jesus Christ – the entire nation.

The second category concerns the epistles which Paul wrote Post-Acts. For in them we find that a **new Free Grace Gospel** for the entire mankind was introduced. And a new hope of salvation was introduced as well: The hope of heaven up where Christ now sit at His Father's right hand (Greek, *Epiouranos*).

*The Kingdom gospel offered to Israel had the hope of the prophesied millennial Kingdom in Israel. But the Free Grace Gospel of Paul revealed in Ephesians and Colossians had the hope of heaven up above.*

We often call the present dispensation the 'Church Dispensation' for only the Church has heaven up above as hope of salvation. It's a fact.

Only Ephesians and Colossians have the complete doctrinal teaching of the Free Grace Gospel. It cannot be found in any other writings whatsoever.

Thus we find that the Church did not come into existence before Paul had the Mystery (Eph. 3:1-9 and Col. 1: 25, 26) revealed to him, which is the Free Grace Gospel to the entire world. Thus it follows that the 'wall of partition' (Eph. 2:14, 15) was torn down and Jews and Gentiles in the faith sat on equal level before God. No longer 'Jews first, then Greek'. Law of Moses was abolished.

Israel had fallen from God as His nation. And that is what we can learn in Acts 28:25-28 as we see that Paul's message of Jesus Christ was denied and opposed against by the majority of the Jewish leadership at Rome. So Paul quotes God's judgement upon them finally, from Is. 6 of their deafness, blindness and lack of understanding and repentance, declaring that the gospel of Christ was now sent to the Gentiles, and they would listen (and receive it).

But as I first mentioned – both these categories of epistles **were signed by Paul** as he wrote them. Let me

list some of these below:

**Romans:** *From Paul, a bond servant of Jesus Christ called to be an apostle set apart to preach the Gospel of and from God.*

**Corinthians:** *Paul, summoned by the will and purpose of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes.*

*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth...*

**Galatians:** *Paul, an apostle not from men nor by or through any man, but by and through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, Who raised Him from the dead.*

**Ephesians:** *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the divine will of God to the saints at Ephesus who are also faithful and loyal and steadfast in Christ Jesus.*

**Philippians:** *Paul and Timothy, bond servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.*

**Colossians:** *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother...*

HEBREWS – It is still disputed some in Theological circles whether Hebrew was written by Paul. It has no typical opening greeting such as we find in the epistles listed above. However, the writer does refer to Timothy who was his near and familiar minister in the faith. Heb. 13:23 say, *Notice that our brother Timothy has been released from prison. If he comes here soon, I will see you along with him.*

1 Tim. 1:1, 2 let us learn that Timothy was in a very familiar relation as Paul characterized him as someone higher than just a 'brother',

*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by appointment and commandment by God our Savior and of Christ Jesus, our hope. To Timothy, my true son in the faith: Grace, Mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus, our Lord.*

The same kind of greetings we also find in 2 Tim.

Also in Titus Paul says same greeting in verses 1-4.

**Philemon:** *Paul, as prisoner of Christ Jesus, and our brother Timothy, to Philemon our dearly beloved sharer with us in our work.*

PAUL HAD ESTABLISHED THE FREE GRACE GOSPEL  
LONG BEFORE THE FOUR GOSPELS WERE PUBLISHED

This Biblical fact I have dealt with in my article-series on the *Great Commission*, and you can look it up here on my site to read it!

Matthew came in 80 A.D., Mark in 82-83 A.D., John around 93 A.D. and Luke, the oldest of them, came around 73 A.D. shortly after the destruction of Israel.

It is held probable that Paul died before Israel was destroyed in 70 A.D. But his death is not mentioned in any portion of the Bible and it is therefore left to our

guesses. Catholic legends want to suggest that he died in 67 A.D. by execution at Rome. But there is absolutely no evidence of such a theory anywhere.

The use of the four Gospels as if they are doctrine of faith to the Church Dispensation, can probably be traced back to the so-called Church Fathers and the early Catholic church with its bishops.

See also my recent article on Colossians here in my site.

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