

# SCRIPTURE RESEARCH - VOL. 1 - NO. 3

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**PANORAMA OF GOD'S REVEALED PROGRAM**

by Ray I. Psalmonds

## INTRODUCTION

These pages are written in an attempt to present a brief, over-all picture of God's program as revealed in His Holy Word. The many details of this wonderful program have been intentionally omitted in order, first of all to present a panoramic view of God's purpose. Following this, the details of that purpose can be more easily fitted into their proper place.

Any statements made by the writer are not intended to be taken for granted. His only desire is that the reader may be challenged to turn to the only source of Truth, God's Holy Word, to "see if these things be so" (Acts 17:11).

## TO THE UNSAVED

As the reader begins to peruse these pages, it is of utmost importance that he determines his own position before God.

My dear reader, ARE YOU SAVED? Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour from the guilt and penalty of sin?

If your answer to this question is "No" or "I'm not sure," then please consider very carefully the next few statements.

Everyone needs a Saviour, because God says, "There is none righteous, no not one" (Rom. 3:10), and "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

The ONLY Saviour is Jesus Christ, for God says, "Neither is there salvation in any other for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Also, Jesus Christ says of Himself, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6).

One cannot earn salvation by works. It must be by the grace of God or not at all; for we read, "By grace are you saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8 - 9).

Anyone can have salvation and rejoice in the knowledge of sins blotted out forever by only believing the record God has given concerning His Son Jesus Christ. In the Gospel of John we read, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John

3:16). In Colossians we read, "Ye are complete in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power" (Col. 2:10).

Will you take God at His Word and believe what He has declared in the Scriptures? That is all God requires in order to give you eternal life. This salvation is ours because of what Jesus Christ has already done. He took the penalty, which we deserved, and paid the price with His death at Calvary. The proof that the sin question had been settled was shown by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. God not only raised the Son from death but exalted Him to the throne in Heaven where He lives as the ONLY Saviour for man. Claim Him as your Saviour now, for Romans states, "He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). If you will claim Jesus Christ as your Saviour you will be made a "new creature," because God says, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature" (II Cor. 5:17). In accordance with the statement, "Ye put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24), you will have indeed put on the "new man." This "new man" will enable you to better understand and enjoy the remainder of what is written on these pages, for God says, "Having put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created Him" (Col. 3:10). Take Jesus Christ as YOUR Sin-bearer NOW and rejoice with us in the things of our God as we continue in His Holy Word.

If you will not claim Jesus Christ as your Saviour, you need not read any further, for what more is written will only be foolishness to you since God has declared, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2-14).

### THE BASIS FOR THIS PRESENTATION

This word picture concerning God's plan and purpose is based on the premise that:

God has spoken.

What God has spoken is verbally inspired.

The truest source of knowledge comes from the most ancient manuscripts.

All present-day Bibles are only translations of the most ancient manuscripts and must be checked against these manuscripts for accuracy.

All Scripture must be "rightly divided" (II Tim. 2:15) in order to be correctly understood.

By the term "rightly divided" we refer to that principal of Scripture interpretation which insists that any verse of Scripture under consideration must be kept in its own context and related only to the people to which it is addressed, or people who have the same hopes and promises.

### BEFORE CREATION

Before the existence of anything that was created, there was God, and He had a plan, for we read, "He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (Col. 1:17), and, "According to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (II Tim. 1:9). Also, notice John 1:1-3, which states, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." Then in Ephesians 1:4 we read, "He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."

God has revealed in the Bible His wonderful purpose, and all believers can enjoy His plan by only reading, and believing what He has declared.

### AFTER CREATION

The Scriptures reveal that before the heavens and earth existed as we know them today, there were created beings who occupied parts of the universe. God refers to "the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation" (Jude 6) and, "The world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished; but the heavens and earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store" (11 Peter 3:5-7). This "world that then was" is the world to which the fossils and remains belong. There is no indication in Scripture as to how long ago that "world that then was" existed, but the fact remains that it did exist.

### REBELLION

Due to a rebellion by some of God's created beings, which was led by Satan, the "world that then was" became "without form and void," for we read, "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep" (Gen. 1:2). This appears to be the result of a judgment from God. It is possible that the statement recorded in Psalms 104:29-30 refers to this same time of judgment. The phrase "without form and void" is used elsewhere in the Bible, but only in connection with a judgment from God. Notice the statement, "I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form and void; and the heavens they had no light" (Jer. 4:23). The context of this statement shows a judgment from God.

There is much evidence in Scripture which points to the fact of a judgment, or disruption, sometime before the first verses of Genesis. The statements, "Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34), and "The blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world" (Luke 11:50), along with, "He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4), all contain the word "foundation." This Greek word, translated "foundation," does not mean "a beginning." The strict meaning of the Greek word "katabole" is a "casting down." We find the verbal form of this same Greek word translated "cast down" in the statement, "The accuser of our brethren is cast down" (Rev. 12:10), and, "Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (II Cor. 4:9).

As we read through God's Word and begin to get a picture of His purpose, we are impressed by the fact that God dates His plan with specific reference to this time of "casting down." The many verses in Scripture which refer to this time will use either the word "BEFORE" or "SINCE" the "casting down."

God dates some phases of His program "FROM" this casting down, and others from "BEFORE" this casting down. Notice these statements: "I will utter things which have been kept secret FROM the foundation (casting down) of the world" (Matt. 13:35), and, "Inherit the kingdom prepared for you FROM the foundation (casting down) of the world" (Matt. 25:34). Also, "Who verily was foreordained BEFORE the foundation (casting down) of the world" (I Peter 1:20), and, "According as He hath chosen us in Him BEFORE the foundation (casting down) of the world" (Eph. 1:4). These statements show clearly how God dates His program with reference to this "casting down" or foundation of the world.

### GOD REORDERS

After the rebellion led by Satan that resulted in this "casting down," God moved to reorder the heavens and earth. This move, made by God the Spirit, is given in some detail beginning in Genesis 1:2. This act of God, as recorded in Genesis, presents to us the first knowledge we have of God's dealing with man, or the present heavens and earth.

### THAT PROGRAM WHICH IS DATED "FROM" THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD

From the reordering of the universe and the creation of man in the image of God, we see that purpose of God dated "FROM" the foundation (casting down) begin to unfold.

Soon after man is created and placed on this present earth, we see Satan, the one who caused the first rebellion, on the scene again, for we read, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:1-5).

Ever since this account in Genesis, Satan has been trying to interfere with the purpose of God. He will continue in this all-out effort until that time he is placed in the "lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night" (Rev. 20:10).

The program of God, as it unfolds in Scripture, is focused on certain families, or households. We prefer to use the word "household" as it means more than just people who are born into a certain family. The word "household" includes people as well as their possessions.

From the sons of Adam down through the centuries we see the program of God directed toward, and tuned to, the household of Abraham, or Israel, for God says, "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deut. 32:8).

Notice this refers to a time which was hundreds of years before there was an actual nation of Israel.

We can follow the plan and purpose of God as it unfolds by simply following God's dealing with His chosen households.

God made a covenant with Abraham and his household, and everything God did was in accordance with His purpose for this chosen household. The household of Abraham, or Israel, was to be a special nation through which God would bless all the other nations of the earth, for God declares, "Now therefore if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exo. 19:5-6). Also, "The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto Himself, as He has sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in His ways. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord: and they shall be afraid of thee. And the Lord shall

make thee the head, and not the tail, and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath" (Deut. 38:9-13). The blessings promised to the household of Abraham were also to be enjoyed by the Gentiles who believed, for we read, "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal. 3-14).

The household of Abraham was very disobedient. They turned from God to idols and refused to live by the covenant they had so willingly accepted. In spite of all their sin and unfaithfulness, God forgave them and continued to focus His plan and purpose through them, for God says, "When they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name. . . but I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen... For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you unto your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you" (Ezek. 36:20-25). The household of Abraham continued to have cycles, sometimes living under the wrath of an angry God, and sometimes in the heights of God's glory. In all the ups and downs of Israel we still can trace the plan and purpose of God as it is unfolded through the nation Israel. If we wish to know how any man, or group of men, stood before the Lord during the time God was dealing through the household of Abraham, we need only to note their attitude, or relationship, toward this chosen household, for God says to Israel, "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:2-3).

Although the household of Abraham was small in number at times, God still performed His purpose through this chosen nation, for we read, "I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase" (Jer. 23:3). Then, many years later, we read, "Even so at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11:5). God continued to work His program through this household because He made a covenant with them, and He must be true to it. He did not continue with them because of their goodness or faithfulness. He continued with them in spite of their sinfulness, as we read, "The Lord will not forsake His people for His great Name's sake; because it hath pleased the Lord to make you His people" (I Sam. 12:22). God's manner of dealing with the household of Abraham changed many times over the centuries, but He still kept them as His chosen household. Because of sin and unbelief, this chosen nation was divided into two parts, the northern and southern kingdoms; but still God did not forsake them.

In due time, after a period of several hundred years which has no record in the Bible, God sent His Son as the promised Messiah to this chosen nation, Israel. Notice this

statement, "When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law" (Gal. 4:4-5). Also when Christ came He said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15-24). When Jesus Christ sent forth His apostles, they were instructed not to go to the Gentiles, but to go to the chosen nation Israel, for we read, "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:5-6). Of course, there was provision made in God's program for all the nations of the earth to be blessed, but this blessing was to come ONLY through the nation Israel as HEAD NATION. The nation Israel must FIRST recognize that Jesus Christ was their Messiah before they could become the KINGDOM NATION. The household of Abraham, or Israel, was the nation which God had chosen to be FIRST. This is the primary reason for the instructions not to go unto the Gentiles at that time for "the children (of the covenant) must first be fed" (Mark 7:27). The establishment of the Kingdom was contingent upon the receiving of Jesus Christ, as Messiah, by the household of Abraham. Israel, as the Kingdom nation, was to take the gospel to all the world, for Matthew 24.14 states, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

In spite of God's covenant, with its manifold blessings, made with the household of Abraham, this nation still rejected the promised Messiah as well as the covenant. Certainly, a small number of Israelites recognized Jesus Christ as Messiah, but the vast majority turned their backs. They not only rejected their Messiah, but they also crucified Him, for John declares, "But though He had done many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him" (John 12:37). Also, Matthew 27:22 states, "Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all said unto him, 'Let Him be crucified.'"

### UNDER THE NEW COVENANT

The chosen household of Abraham had already broken the first covenant, for Jeremiah 11:24 states, "The house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers." Regardless of this fact, God tells them in the same book (Jeremiah 31:31), "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with, the house of Israel, and the house of Judah."

When Jesus Christ shed His blood on Calvary, that blood not only made the complete sacrifice for sin, but it also was the basis on which the new covenant was established with Israel. Just before Christ was crucified, He took the cup which pointed to His shed blood and said, "This cup is the new testament (covenant) in My blood" (I Cor. 11:24). The major problem with Israel was unbelief. The majority of the nation simply



refused to take God at His Word, which caused Jesus Christ to say, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). Nevertheless, God, in His longsuffering to His chosen household, gave Israel another opportunity, because on the cross Jesus Christ prayed, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

After Jesus Christ was resurrected, He gave His apostles special instructions concerning a Kingdom program, as recorded in Acts 1:3. These instructions were given on the basis of the new covenant, for we read, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith the Lord, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh... For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:16-39). God's desire was to have His chosen household become the channel through which blessing would flow to the entire world. The fact that Israel must "turn again" (I Kings 8:33-34) unto the Lord in order to receive the full blessing had been known for centuries. Therefore, the apostles appealed once again to the nation Israel to repent of their sins and take God at His Word. Note the statement, "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:17-25).

The first forty years (approximately) following the resurrection of Jesus Christ are covered by the Book of Acts. During that period of time, the apostles of the Lord were guided by, and endued with, Power from God. They were the most powerful men ever to live on the face of the earth, and miracles and wonders of all types were in evidence almost every day. Special gifts of the Holy Spirit were given to the believers (Acts 2:4; 11:15), as well as the apostles (Matt. 16:19; Acts 5:1-10). We see a great turning to God on the part of Israel as the program of God begins to unfold under the new covenant (Acts 2:41; 4:4), but soon we see the opposition begin to mount and the zeal of the chosen household begins to wane (Acts 6:10-13; 8:1).

### KEYS TO THE KINGDOM

The Apostle Peter had been given the "keys to the kingdom," as recorded in Matthew 16:18-19, and we see him opening the door of salvation and blessing to the nation Israel in Acts 2:6-40 when he says, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ.... Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..., for the promise is unto you and your children, and to all that are far off, even as many as The Lord shall call." Since the program of God, under the

new covenant, called for a large number of gentiles to be saved, we see Peter using the other "key to the kingdom" to open the door of salvation to the Gentiles as recorded in Acts 10:28-35. The Gentiles who became saved were to be identified with Abraham's household, according to Galatians 3:29, but they also were to remain secondary to the nation Israel, who was FIRST. Paul states, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth to the Jew FIRST, and also to the Gentile" (Rom. 1;16). The saved Gentiles of the Acts period were to be blessed with Abraham and enjoy the same hope which was promised to Abraham and his household, for we read, "If ye be Christ's then ye are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29). Also notice the statement, "If the Gentiles have been made partakers of their (Israel's) spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things" (Rom. 15:27). Note also Romans 9:23-24 and 8:17.

To Be Continued in the Next Issue -

### **"WHY DID CHRIST DIE?"**

Dr. Robert A. Hadden

1. To fulfill the Old Testament Scriptures: I Cor. 15:3
2. For our sins: I Cor. 15:3; Rom. 4:25.
3. For "Us"-for "Me": Rom. 5:6-8; Gal. 2:20.
4. To reconcile men to God. Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18-20.
5. To save men from coming wrath: Rom. 6:9; 1 Thess. 1:10.
6. To justify the believer in Christ: Rom. 3:24.
7. For all men, everyone, everywhere: 2 Cor. 5:14.
8. To redeem from the curse of the law: Gal. 3:13. 9.
9. To impute Divine righteousness: 2 Cor. 5:21.
10. To deliver from this present evil age: Gal. 1:4.
11. To bring men near to God: Eph. 2:13-18.
- 12: To make men accepted in the Beloved: Eph. 1:6.

13. To enable men to live for Him: 2 Cor. 5:15.
14. To join men eternally to Christ: Rom. 8:31-38.
15. To bestow every Divine blessing: Rom. 8:32; Eph. 1:3.
16. To condemn sin in the flesh. Rom. 8:3.
- 17 To usher in spiritual peace: Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 1:20.
18. To redeem men: Titus 2:14; Col. 1:14; Eph. 1.7.
19. To draw all men without distinction: John 12:32.
20. To enable men to live righteously: I Peter 2:24.
21. To express the evidence of His love: Gal. 2:20.
22. To bring men to God: I Peter 3:18.
23. To destroy the works of Satan: I John 3:8; Col. 2:15.
24. To taste death for every man: Heb. 2:9.
25. To succor the tempted: Heb. 2:18.
- 26 To provide forgiveness for men: Eph. 1:7.
- 27: To become Lord of the living and the dead: Rom 14:9.
28. To abolish the law: Col. 2:14-17; Eph. 2:13-15.
29. To fulfill the will of the Father: Gal. 1:4; Phil. 2.5-8.
30. To rise again from the dead: John 10:17; Rom. 1:4.
31. To enter into His glory: Luke 24:26; John 17:5; 1 Pet. 1.11.

### **WHAT IS GRACE?** (Part 2) by Russell Schaefer

As we continue to examine the varied facets of those words that convey to us the truths concerning the "grace of God," we would state here that a correct view of "grace," while not putting the believer under law or legalism,

nonetheless exerts a disciplinary force upon the believer that leaves him no excuse for sin, no light view of sin, no "free to sin" concept (Titus 2:11-14). In this great passage, not only is grace the "bringer-near" of his salvation, but also the rule under which the believer is placed. The word translated "teaching" (Titus 2:12) is "paideuo," elsewhere translated twelve times (Gen.) "chasten," "chastise." If the reformers had discovered the doctrine of discipline by grace instead of placing the believer under the Mosaic law, under an economy that was set aside even for Israel and one which was not addressed to Gentile believers at any time, we would have been spared the untold havoc that has attended the putting of the believer under a defunct economy as a "rule" of life. It is no wonder that the so-called Christian life became a mere reflection of Judaism with its attendant heartbreak and defeats. It is no wonder that the historic churches issuing out of the reformation, with only an echo of grace in their doctrines and little or none in their practices, should go back into the bondage of statism, of ritualism, of tradition, of civil and social sanctions to enforce their powers, and, even now at this writing, be seeking to re-embrace the system that has always polluted the doctrines of the Scriptures; and this for political and religious advantage. The poor child of God, untaught by the Word, caught up in this "follow-the-leader" parade, and in the name of "service for God," is robbed of ever seeing "Christ his life" (Col. 3:1), his "completeness in Him" (Col. 2:10), and "grace" as the rule of this new life "in Christ." How thou art robbed, poor child of God! Grace points away from sin and self to the spotless Son of God and does this without putting one under duress or bondage. It is a life and service of perfect freedom - because of a grace so great, so vast, so overpowering, that seeing this grace and not enlisting under its banners could only mean that we had been stripped of all spiritual perception, too tradition-bound for any revelation from God.

With these opening thoughts in mind, let us now resume the study of those words which reveal the very nature of God and His purpose to us.

### CHARISMA, Noun

What is the charisma? We see in this the Greek stem charis and the suffix ma. The ma added to the Greek stem charis (grace) is to show the result of an action of grace as in Romans 5:15,16 where it is translated "free gift." In this account we are shown the extreme results of Adam's "paraptoma" (offence), and in inverse proportion, the results of that free gift by the Grace of God, justification of life, a reigning in life through Jesus Christ for those receiving the benefit of this great, free gift (Romans 5:17). The rival effects of sin and grace are shown. That the roadblock to stem the havoc of Adam's sin and Adam's sins should be "grace" shows the power and majesty of this doctrine.

Aside from the free gift of grace, all would be total ruin and irrevocable loss. The free gift met and abounded over every sin, Over the many offenses, and, though the death-stroke fell on Him, through the certainty of His resurrection and our life in Him, the charisma, the free gift, making available the righteousness of God for all (Romans 3:21-24; 4:25). This free gift enables God to be "just" and "justifier" of the believer (Romans 3:25-26), to show grace to sinners and to His enemies (Rom. 4:5; 5:6-8).

In Romans 6:23 we find charisma translated "gift" - the gift of God. The contrast here is between what were the "rations" for sin and results of "grace." There is only one letter different in "grave" and "grace." What a different goal they provide!

The structure of Romans 6:20-23 casts light upon this "gift" as well as the passage:

Verse 20 - servants of sin

- 20 - free men as to righteousness
- 21 - the fruits, shame
- 22 - free from sin (from, with regard to)
- 22 - servants of God
- 22 - the fruit, holiness
- 22, 23 - the end, eternal life

By "wages" were meant a day's "rations" for the soldier (cp. Luke 3:14). Sin has certain apportionments, certain exactments. But the "gift" of God, the end result or effort of grace as it surveys this field of death, this vast graveyard, is one of "life" through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The charisma (gift) is used of sign gifts in Romans 12:6 and I Cor. 12:4, 9, 28, 30, 31. The passages encompass the full range of miraculous gifts revealed in Scriptures from raising the dead (Matthew 10), handling serpents, drinking poison (Mark. 16:17,18), and cleansing lepers, to striking others dead (as happened in Acts 5:1-11) and with blindness (as in Acts 13:9-12). That these were not solely "signs of an apostle" (II Cor. 12:12) is seen by checking the text.

The charismata (gifts) were designated as "powers of the age to come" (Heb. 6:4), and the powers displayed throughout the Book of Acts era were a foretaste of what would take place in its fatness when Israel would be in the place of blessing. The Book of Hebrews sets forth the anticipated "age to

come" of which the signs, miracles, and wonders of the Book of Acts were a part, a foretaste, of Israel's future glory. That these things pertained to the people of the covenants is an almost unknown truth; and it is an equally unknown truth that when God set aside the covenant people, the economy and order governing that period also closed!

A curious sidelight is the great differing reaction to sign gifts between the Jew and Gentile. The Jew was led to expect signs. They were a part of his national heritage (Deut. 4:32-35) and were an attestation to the God of Israel; whereas, whenever a miracle was performed for Gentiles, as with Paul in Acts 14:8-18 and 28:6, the Gentile sought to worship the performer of the miracle. Even Peter had to remind Cornelius (Acts 10: 25, 26) that he was only a man. Of course, the gift of language, the ability to speak to a person of another nationality with full knowledge and grasp of his language, would be a sign to an unbeliever. But not even the greatest of the "tongue groups" has ever demonstrated a single instance of this ability. They, like others, must learn the language the hard and studious way. Nor, for that matter, have they ever had one of their group who claimed the power of interpretation, being able to interpret a language not native to them or one they haven't studied. Of course, in their emotion-packed services anything and everything is claimed. But on the cold fronts of a plain, useful, foreign language, mutterings are useless. The list of known, orderly languages given in Acts 2:8-11 and spoken by that company under divine power, spells out the folly of the present charisma tongues movements, or are such "tongues movements" native only to Christianity.

The concept that everything appearing to be "super-human" is of God has again and again been dealt with in the Word of God. It is inexplicable how anyone knowing the old nature can surrender his will and judgment and act upon the directed or undirected emotional suggestions attendant upon these manifestations. "The most fearful errors may be propounded under the guise of greater light and zeal for God's truth." (1). Satan's coming "as an angel of light" may well be a travesty of truth, a bending of the light that comes from the Word of God, from not heeding the command to rightly divide the Word of Truth, and from trying to obtain by fleshly powers or otherwise that which belongs to a former and future dispensation and which in its non-counterfeit form God does not intend for them to have now. Even when on earth, Christ would not own miracle-made disciples (see John 2:23, 24). He distrusted such believers and "continued" (see Greek text [2]) to distrust them.

- (1) Baxter.
- (2) An imperfect indicative active, describing a continual past state.

As to miracles and signs, most of us have been brought up on the concept that Christ came into the world to found the religion of Christianity, taking the best of Judaism and adding precepts of a higher and moral and religious nature to evoke followers. This religion was supposedly proved divine by the miracles He performed. That signs and miracles had another and completely different purpose is not considered by the ordinary Christian. This "religion" is an utterly false concept. While fitting in with the so-called "religious Kingdom of God" so lauded by present-day liberals, it is contrary to the Word of God. The Christ of the Scriptures and the Christ of modern theology have nothing in common. The Christ of Scripture died as God's appointed Sin-Bearer, was raised literally from among the dead and ascended through the heavens to be seated at the right hand of God the Father. That the Christ of Scriptures is now enthroned "in grace" does not argue against the truth that He shall be the wearer of the vesture dipped in blood and shall be the Divine Arbitrator of the fate of men and of nations (Rev. 19:11-16).

The Biblical use of these charismata points up the great truth that, as of old, God was dealing again with His ancient people, Israel, first during Christ's earthly ministry and then during the period covered by the Book of Acts. The psalmist well describes the God of Israel as the God Who only doeth wondrous (miraculous) things (Psalms 72:18; 77:14). The whole of Psalms 78 is a commentary on God's miracles when dealing with Israel, but for all that they hardened their hearts or, as Psalms 78: 32 puts it, "For all this they sinned still and believed not His works." Israel rejected the Christ and attributed His signs to Satan. Israel rejected the testimony and signs of the Spirit of God in Jerusalem; and, as the Book of Acts draws to a close, we see the Jews of the dispersion likewise rejecting the sign-accredited testimony. Finally, Israel is no longer "first," their nation is destroyed, they are left among the Gentiles, and are no longer God's agency and instrument to and for the nations.

Chapter one of Romans describes why God "gave up" the nations, and Genesis 11 describes the confusion of languages to implement the separation of peoples, while Acts 2 shows that, although Israel had been scattered amongst these nations, still there were a people owned of Him by a common understanding of languages and the ability to converse with the dispersed of Israel in the languages of their adopted countries. We have yet to see the literal, cloven-tongues of fire rest in these modern innovations of the Biblical sign-gift of tongues. This was not "worked up" through hypnotic suggestion and motor-center repetitions, but sent down from heaven.

Even while these charismata were operative, Paul admonished the Corinthians in I Cor. 12:31, "Covet earnestly the best gifts, and yet I show you a more excellent way." In I Cor. 13:8 tongues are among the things listed as ceasing when perfection came. While we do not pretend that the perfection spoken of in I Cor. 13:10 is the dispensation of the mystery (Eph. 3), nonetheless, when the purpose for which sign-gifts were then given failed, then this timeless and signless dispensation of grace for Gentile believers (to all intents and purposes) made imperative the sign-attested program of the Book of Acts era where "to you Gentiles" replaced "to the Jew first." What a missionary church the gift of languages would make of any assembly possessing it! But our hats go off to those dear saints of God attending language schools, devising grammars, translating difficult dialects, often after years of study only to be barred from their chosen fields of labor.

As to the charisma of healing (I Cor. 12:9, 28, 30), only recently a missionary working in a torrid climate wrote, "Oh, that I knew more of medicine to help these poor people." Peter's shadow sufficed to heal at one time, but now, while the Word still speaks, the shadow cast by a silent heaven in the needy realms where there are no hospitals calls for a scriptural answer, and we believe the Scriptures of the post-Acts ministry of Paul give an answer, the substance of this answer being that God has arbitrarily chosen to associate signs, wonders, miracles, hearings, etc., with His dealings with Israel, His beloved covenant people of old, and that now God has a dispensation of the secret (A. V., "mystery") (Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:26) that had been hid in God and kept secret from all ages and generations until revealed to the Apostle Paul. This is still a "mystery" to so many of God's people. Unless one takes into account this secret dispensation (secret in origin, in time, in operation and consummation) then the absence of God's intervening in the affairs of men and nations is inexplicable, especially now that He is revealed as the God of all love and grace. The same divine Hand that shook off Peter's chains later left Paul's on. The prison doors that once shook open now remain closed. The healing apron gave way to a medical prescription. Yet from that prisoner's cell came forth a revelation of God's purposes antedating man and concerning a calling and a position "in Christ" in the heavenlies, far above men, nations, Israel, the earth - a people called to a "seating" (authority and privilege) at the right hand of God the Father.

That this should be "spiritual and heavenly" instead of being a blessing in material and miraculous things seem to weigh against its acceptance by the believer. That God is not judicially dealing with our sins now, that He is not "striking sinners dead," seems to weigh against this doctrine of grace. But



long as we might for a shaking from the heavens, a Voice of wrath for the godless despot, still He will show love to His enemies and en-grace His own in Christ (Eph. 1:6, accepted). No voice will break heaven's amnesty or cancel His present program of grace until the time appointed and the prophetic clock starts anew.

To be continued in the next issue.

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Rev. 1:10. WHAT DAY IS THIS? The Book of Revelation has a message of its own, the key to the Book lies at the front door and here it is. The scenes, signs and symbols are those of that day known as "The Day of the Lord." (See Isa. 2:11-12, 1 Thess. 5:2, 2 Thess. 2:2, 2 Pet. 8:10.) The Apostle John was transported in spirit to that coming day and beheld scenes that will be accomplished in that darkest period of human history, the day of the Lord's wrath and victory. This is the message of Revelation, the Book of the Consummation. Take this key and you may unlock the door and enter the realms of its infinite area.

#### TYNDALE - 1534. Ephesians 3:14-21

might be known by the congregation the many fold wisdom of God, 11. according to the eternal purpose, which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 by whom we are bold to draw nye in that trust, which we have by faith on him. 13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not because of my tribulations for your sakes: which is your praise.

14. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15. which is Father over all that is called Father In heaven and in earth, 16. that He would grant you according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthen with might by his Spirit in the inner Man, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts by

faith, that ye being rooted and grounded  
in love, 18. might be able to comprehend  
with all saints', what is that breath and  
length, depth and height: 19 and to know  
what is the love of Christ, which love  
passeth knowledge: that ye might be  
fulfilled with all manner of fullness which  
commeth of God.

20 Unto him that is able  
to do exceeding  
abundantly above all  
that we ask or think,  
according to the power  
that worketh in us, 21  
be praise in the  
congregation by Jesus  
Christ, throughout all  
generations from time  
to time Amen.