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Correlation—Christian and Church

The Apostle Paul, trained by years of promulgation and defense of the gospel of Christ, was the first of Jesus' followers to define for the Christian and the Church the nature of Christianity—its fundamental truths and precepts. He understood its redemptive regenerative power “not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (I Th. 2:13).

Paul had much to say about the life or “walk” of the Christian. The work of the Christian is to overcome “the world, the flesh, and the devil.” To aid him in his warfare, Paul wrote in definitive terms of the nature of “the old man,” “the new man,” and “the perfect man” (subject matter developed by no other New Testament writer). His verbs are those of action: “believe,” “follow,” “put off,” “put on,” “strive,” “fight,” “watch,” “edify,” “pray,” “overcome.”

He defined that which is carnal as “the old man,” “the body of sin.” He threw a penetrating light upon the depraved and impenitent character of the old man, which must be put off, for every propensity is unworthy, negative, sinful, destructive. He defined the man who is being regenerated—experiencing the new birth—as “the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” He showed the progressive steps that follow the new birth, and pointed out the warfare in putting off the old and putting on the new. That the perfect man might stand forth to the apprehension of the Christian, Paul presented to view the man who has “the mind of Christ.” When the “putting on” is complete, man is seen in his full stature, conformed to the image of God's son.

What relates to the Christian individually Paul applied to the edifying of the Church collectively; the Church's redemptive mission becomes clear; and the Church is seen as the very “body of Christ.”

The material presented in chart form in this section is topical studies that correlate significant aspects of Paul's doctrines. Some of the charts are designed to be read from the bottom of the page upward, a further reminder of the progressive development of revelation and understanding.

“PUT OFF . . . THE OLD MAN”

“WHICH IS CORRUPT ACCORDING TO THE DECEITFUL LUSTS” Eph. 4:22

Paul writes: “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [the day of Christ] shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God. . . .” (II Th. 2:3, 4).

Read chart downward line by line

“THE BODY OF SIN” Rom. 6:6

EVIL THINKING

“the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not” II Cor. 4:4

“the carnal mind is enmity against God” Rom. 8:7

“haters of God, spiteful . . . inventors of evil things” Rom. 1: 30

“unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure;

but even their mind and conscience is defiled” Tit. 1:15

“Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute

of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness” I Tim. 6:5

“fleshly wisdom” II Cor. 1:12—“cunning craftiness” Eph. 4:14

“unthankful, unholy. . . despisers of those that are good” II Tim. 3:2,3

“envy . . . evil surmisings” I Tim. 6:4

EVIL SPEAKING

“Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness” Rom. 3:13,14

“unruly and vain talkers and deceivers . . . Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole

houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake” Tit. 1:10,11

“profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called” I Tim. 6:20

“proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words” I Tim. 6:4

“tattlers . . . busybodies, speaking things which they ought not” I Tim. 5:13

“doubletongued” I Tim. 3:8—“Speaking lies in hypocrisy” I Tim. 4:2

“backbitings, whisperings” II Cor. 12:20—“boasters” II Tim. 3:2

“anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication” Col. 3:8

“handling the word of God deceitfully” II Cor. 4:2

“their word will eat as doth a canker” II Tim. 2:17

EYES THAT SEE NOT

“their eyes have they closed; lest they . . . should be converted” Acts 28:27

“spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see” Rom. 11:8

“Having the understanding darkened” Eph. 4:18

“no fear of God before their eyes” Rom. 3:18

“eyeservice, as menpleasers” Eph. 6:6

EARS THAT HEAR NOT

“Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand” Acts 28:26
“they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” II Tim. 4:3,4
“giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” I Tim. 4:1

IMPENITENT HEART

“impenitent heart treasurest up . . . wrath against the day of wrath” Rom. 2:5
“Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil” Rom. 2:9
“lovers of their own selves . . . Without natural affection” II Tim. 3:2,3
“Traitors . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” II Tim. 3:4
“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” II Tim. 3:5
“own conceits” Rom. 12:16—“bitterness . . . anger . . . malice” Eph. 4:31
“covetousness” Eph. 5:3—“greedy of filthy lucre” I Tim. 3:3
“covenantbreakers . . . implacable, unmerciful” Rom. 1:31
“spiritual wickedness in high places” Eph. 6:12
“reprobate concerning the faith” II Tim. 3:8
“hidden things of dishonesty” II Cor. 4:2
“unbelievers . . . infidel” II Cor. 6:14,15

UNSEEMLY CONDUCT

“rioting and drunkenness . . . chambering and wantonness . . . strife and envying” Rom. 13:13
“they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house” I Tim. 5:13
“disobedient to parents” II Tim. 3:2—“selfwilled . . . soon angry” Tit. 1:7
“serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy,
hateful and hating one another” Tit. 3:3
“whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame,
who mind earthly things” Phil. 3:19
“drunk with wine, wherein is excess” Eph. 5:18

UNFRUITFUL WORKS

“the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like” Gal. 5:19–21
“Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways” Rom. 3:15, 16
“in works they deny him [God], being abominable . . . unto every good work reprobate” Tit. 1:16
“he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption” Gal. 6:8
“filthiness of the flesh and spirit” II Cor. 7:1
“unfruitful works of darkness” Eph. 5:11
“the wages of sin is death” Rom. 6:23

Read chart upward line by line

“PUT ON THE NEW MAN, WHICH AFTER GOD IS CREATED IN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND TRUE HOLINESS”

“Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind” Rom. 12:2

Read chart upward line by line

A CROWN “INCORRUPTIBLE”

- “then shall I know even as also I am known” I Cor. 13:12
- “then [we see] face to face” I Cor. 13:12
- “when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away” I Cor. 13:10
- “a perfect man . . . the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” Eph. 4:13
- “hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” Col. 1:12
- “aged women . . . be in behaviour as cometh holiness . . . teachers of good things” Tit. 2:3
- “aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience” Tit. 2:2

THE AGED (“aged” —senior, advanced, patriarchal, ripened and matured for use)

- “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free” Gal. 5:1
- “thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through . . . Jesus Christ” I Cor. 15:57
- “it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” I Cor. 4:2
- “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life” I Tim. 6:12
- “every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things” I Cor. 9:25
- “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” Phil 3:14
- “let us run with patience the race that is set before us” Heb. 12:1

“SO RUN, THAT YE MAY OBTAIN” I Cor. 9:24

- “patient continuance in well doing” Rom. 2:7
- “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” II Tim. 2:1
- “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt” Col. 4:6
- “abound in love one toward another, and toward all men” I Th. 3:12
- “be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” Eph. 5:17
- “let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober” I Th. 5:6
- “walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time” Eph. 5:15,16
- “Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer” Rom. 12:12
- “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves” II Cor. 13:5
- “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against . . . the devil” Eph. 6:11
- “continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of” II Tim. 3:14
- “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” Phil. 2:5
- “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” II Cor. 10:5
- “thou, O man of God . . . follow after righteousness . . . faith, love, patience, meekness” I Tim. 6:11

THE MAN

“IN UNDERSTANDING BE MEN” I Cor. 14:20 (“a man” —one reaching full age; fig. a mature Christian)

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God” II Tim. 2:15
“Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded” Tit. 2:6
“exercise thyself . . . unto godliness” I Tim. 4:7—“keep thyself pure” I Tim. 5:22
“be thou an example . . . in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity” I Tim. 4:12
“Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace” II Tim. 2:22
“earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven” II Cor. 5:2
“henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro . . . with every wind of doctrine” Eph. 4:14

YOUNG MAN “WHEN I BECAME A MAN, I PUT AWAY CHILDISH THINGS” I Cor. 13:11

“walk in the Spirit” Gal. 5:25—“Walk, as children of light” Eph. 5:8
“Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts” I Cor. 14:1
“the creature . . . delivered . . . into the glorious liberty of the children of God” Rom. 8:21
“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children” Eph. 5:1
“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right” Eph. 6:1
“the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though . . . lord of all” Gal. 4:1

THE CHILD “I SPAKE AS A CHILD, I UNDERSTOOD AS A CHILD, I THOUGHT AS A CHILD [Fig., an immature Christian]”

“thou standest by faith” Rom. 11:20
“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above” Col. 3:1
“let us cleanse ourselves . . . perfecting holiness in the fear of God” II Cor. 7:1
“nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine” I Tim. 4:6
“I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it” I Cor. 3:2
“I, brethren . . . speak unto you . . . as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ” I Cor. 3:1
“after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” Eph. 1:13

THE BABE BIRTHRIGHT “ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” Rom. 8:15
“PUT ON THE NEW MAN” Eph. 4:24—“PUT ON INCORRUPTION. . . PUT ON IMMORTALITY” I Cor. 15:53

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God . . . ?” I Cor. 3:16
“grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” Eph. 4:15
“charity [love] edifieth” I Cor. 8:1 (“edify”—build, construct, establish)
“let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon” I Cor. 3:10

THE ONLY FOUNDATION—JESUS CHRIST

Read chart upward line by line

THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF THE PERFECT MAN

“a perfect man . . . the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” Eph. 4:13

GOD

“the head of Christ” I Cor. 11:3

CHRIST

“the head of every man” I Cor. 11:3

“in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead
bodily. And ye are complete in him” Col. 2:9, 10

THE PERFECT MAN

“whom he [God] did foreknow, he also did predestinate
to be conformed to the image of his Son” Rom. 8:29

“after the image of him that created him” Col. 3:10

“chosen . . . in him [God] before the foundation of the world” Eph. 1:4

“in him we live, and move, and have our being” Acts 17:28

“we are . . . his offspring” Acts 17:28

“there is a spiritual body” I Cor. 15:44

“fashioned like unto his glorious body” Phil. 3:21

“as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly” I Cor. 15:48

“a building of God, an house not made with hands,
eternal in the heavens” II Cor. 5:1

He abides in “the kingdom of his dear Son” Col. 1:13

He has “the spirit which is of God” I Cor. 2:12

He has “the mind of Christ” I Cor. 2:16

He is “spiritually minded” Rom. 8:6

He has “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God

in the face of Jesus Christ” II Cor. 4:6

He has “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” Phil. 4:7

He walks “in love” Eph. 5:2

He walks as a child “of light” Eph. 5:8

He understands “what the will of the Lord is” Eph. 5:17

He does “the will of God” Eph. 6:6

He is inseparable from “the love of Christ” Rom. 8:35

He is “glorified” Rom. 8:30

He is “incorruptible” I Cor. 15:52

He has “immortality” I Cor. 15:53

He has “eternal life” Rom. 6:23

THE TRUE CHURCH

“The Church has existed from all eternity as an idea in the mind of God (Eph. 3:3–11), the heritage prepared for Christ (Eph. 1:10,11).”¹

Through God’s grace and Paul’s own labor in that grace, whereby he could truly compare “spiritual things with spiritual,” he discerned Christ’s Church not only as a visible society of believers in the world needing edification but also as the very “body of Christ,” subject to Christ, its Head.

GOD

“the head of Christ” I Cor. 11:3

CHRIST

“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church. . . .” Col. 1:15,17,18

CHURCH, “THE BODY OF CHRIST”

“an holy temple” Eph. 2:21

“the Israel of God” Gal. 6:16 (cf. 3:29)

“the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” Heb. 12:22

“the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven” Heb. 12:23

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. . . . Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.” I Cor. 12:1,4–6

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” I Cor. 12:12,13

“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” I Cor. 12:27

“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Eph. 4:4–6

“Speaking the truth in love . . . grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” Eph. 4:15,16

EDIFYING (BUILDING UP) OF THE CHURCH

Read chart upward line by line

GOD

“the head of Christ” I Cor. 11:3

CHRIST

“the head of the church” Eph. 5:23

THE CHURCH

THE SOCIETY OF CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS

“Which is his [Christ’s] body” Eph. 1:23

HOLINESS—“ye have your fruit unto holiness” Rom. 6:22
GRACE—“the grace of God that bringeth salvation” Tit. 2:11
LOVE—“the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge” Eph. 3:19
PEACE—“the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” Phil. 4:7
HEALING—“the gifts of healing by the same Spirit” I Cor. 12:9
SUFFICIENCY—“ye, always having all sufficiency in all things” II Cor. 9:8
WISDOM—“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom” Col. 3:16
POWER—“God hath . . . given us the spirit . . . of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” II Tim. 1:7
RIGHTEOUSNESS—“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ” Phil. 1:11
LIGHT—“the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” II Cor. 4:6
LIFE—“if Christ be in you . . . the Spirit is life because of righteousness” Rom. 8:10
SPIRIT OF GOD—“we have received . . . the spirit which is of God” I Cor. 2:12

“as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church” I Cor. 14:12

SPIRITUAL GIFTS—“the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal” I Cor. 12:7

AMBASSADORS—“we are ambassadors for Christ” II Cor. 5:20

STEWARDS—“stewards of the mysteries of God” I Cor. 4:1

MINISTERS—“able ministers of the new testament [new covenant]” II Cor. 3:6

SERVANTS—“he that is called, being free, is Christ’s servant” I Cor. 7:22

LABORERS—“we are labourers together with God” I Cor. 3:9

ELDERS—“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour” I Tim. 5:17

BISHOPS—“a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God” Tit. 1:7

OVERSEERS—"the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God" Acts 20:28
DEACONS—"they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase . . . a good degree" I Tim. 3:13
APOSTLES, PROPHETS, EVANGELISTS, PASTORS, TEACHERS Eph. 4:11

VOCATION—"walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" Eph. 4:1

ELECT—"the elect of God, holy and beloved" Col. 3:12

PARTAKERS—"we are all partakers of that one bread" I Cor. 10:17

FELLOWCITIZENS—"ye are . . . fellowcitizens with the saints" Eph. 2:19

SAINTS—"them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints" I Cor. 1:2

FREEMEN—"he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman" I Cor. 7:22

FELLOWHEIRS—"Gentiles . . . of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ" Eph. 3:6

HEIRS—"heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" Rom. 8:16

BRETHREN—"brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath . . . chosen you to salvation" II Th. 2:13

HOUSEHOLD—"ye are . . . of the household of God" Eph. 2:19—"the household of faith" Gal. 6:10

MEMBERS—"ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" I Cor. 12:27

TEMPLE—"ye are the temple of the living God" II Cor. 6:16

HABITATION—"In whom [Jesus Christ] ye also are builded together for an habitation of God" Eph. 2:22

HOUSE OF GOD—"which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" I Tim. 3:15

WORKMANSHIP—"we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" Eph. 2:10

BUILDING—"ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" I Cor. 3:9

"Let all things be done unto edifying" I Cor. 14:26

But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon" I Cor. 3:10

"As a wise masterbuilder, I [Paul] have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon.

"In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord" Eph. 2:21

"JESUS CHRIST himself being the chief CORNER STONE" Eph. 2:20

"[YE] ARE BUILT UPON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS" Eph. 2:20

Read chart upward line by line

Many of these Pauline passages which relate to man individually apply also to the Church collectively.

REDEMPITIVE HEALING MISSION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Individual, Collective, Universal

Jesus Christ declared: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
As Jesus' life and ministry revealed this Way, so his Church offers salvation to all men through this one redemptive Way. The mission of the Christian Church is the extension of this basic truth (as correlated from Paul's Epistles).

Read chart upward line by line

BLESSINGS "Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance" Gal. 5:22,23
"Blessed be the God . . . who hath blessed us with all spiritual *blessings* in heavenly places in Christ" Eph. 1:3

SALVATION "For the grace of God that bringeth *salvation* hath appeared to all men" Tit. 2:11
"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain *salvation* by our Lord Jesus Christ" I Th. 5:9

SANCTIFICATION "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through *sanctification* of the Spirit" II Th. 2:13
"Ye are washed . . . *sanctified* . . . justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" I Cor. 6:11

ATONEMENT "Whom [Christ Jesus] God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood" Rom. 3:25
"We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the *atonement* " Rom. 5:11

REDEMPTION "In whom [God's Son] we have *redemption* through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" Col. 1:14
"Our Saviour Jesus Christ . . . gave himself for us, that he might *redeem* us from all iniquity" Tit. 2:13,14

ABOLITION "Our Saviour Jesus Christ . . . hath *abolished* death" 11 Tim. 1:10
Christ "having *abolished* in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances" Eph. 2:15

HEALING "By the mercies of God . . . present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God" Rom. 12:1
"God hath set some in the church . . . apostles . . . prophets . . . teachers . . . miracles . . . gifts of *healings* " I Cor. 12:28

COMMUNION "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" I Cor. 11:26
"The cup . . . is it not the *communion* of the blood of Christ? The bread . . . the *communion* of the body of Christ" I Cor. 10:16

ACCESS “By whom [Jesus Christ] also we have *access* by faith into this grace wherein we stand” Rom. 5:2.
“For through him [Christ Jesus] we both have *access* by one Spirit unto the Father” Eph. 2:18

MEDIATION “Christ . . . that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God . . . maketh intercession for us” Rom. 8:34
“There is one God, and one *mediator* between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” I Tim. 2:5

RECONCILIATION “We pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye *reconciled* to God” II Cor. 5:20
God “hath *reconciled* us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of *reconciliation*” II Cor. 5:18

JUSTIFICATION “Therefore being *justified* by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” Rom. 5:1
“By the righteousness of one [Jesus Christ] the free gift came upon all men unto *justification* of life” Rom. 5:18

UNITY “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” I Cor. 1:9
“One body . . . one Spirit . . . one hope . . . One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all” Eph. 4:4–6

BAPTISM “He [God] saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost . . . through Jesus Christ” Tit. 3:5, 6.
“By one Spirit are we all *baptized* into one body . . . and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” I Cor. 12:13

CALLING “Who [God] hath saved us, and *called* us with an holy *calling* . . . according to his own purpose and grace” II Tim. 1:9
God “*called* you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” II Th. 2:14

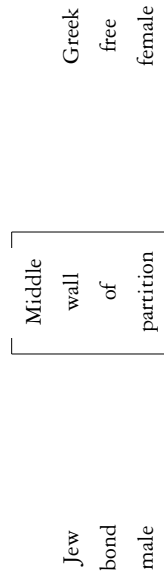
GOSPEL “Our Saviour . . . hath brought life and immortality to light through the *gospel*” II Tim. 1:10
“It [*the gospel* of Christ] is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” Rom. 1:16

Read chart upward line by line

“CHRIST IS ALL, AND IN ALL” Col. 3:11

“YE ARE ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS” Gal. 3:28

Christ “hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us” Eph. 2:14



The Israel of God

Old Testament

To the Hebrew prophets *Israel* signified not only the natural posterity of Jacob but also a spiritual entity—that segment of the nation faithful to God’s covenant and law. “The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel.” (Is. 9:8) “The Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.” (Is. 44:23)

New Testament

To Christians the *Israel of God* designates a spiritual Israel, those who follow Christ in faith, for such become the true seed of Abraham and so heirs of the Abrahamic covenant which was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Jesus foresaw a new Israel at the Last Day, a believing Israel, when he said to his apostles: “Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Mt. 19:28).

Paul saw the true Israel not as confined to the descendants of Abraham or to those who kept the Mosaic Law, but as those who accepted Christ: “Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham” (Gal. 3:6,7); “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule [of faith], peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God” (Gal. 6:15,16).

John recorded the apocalyptic prophecy of the full salvation of the redeemed of all nations, spiritual Israel, typified in the sealing of “twelve thousand” of each of the twelve tribes, with the exception of Dan (Rev. 7)—the redeemed were stamped with the seal of the living God to mark their godliness and their exemption from His judgments on the ungodly. “Dan is omitted because Anti-Christ is to spring from him (compare Gen. 49:7). Manasseh is substituted for Dan, though he is already included under Joseph.”² “There were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel [an apocalyptic number signifying completeness]. . . . After this I beheld . . . a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. . . .”

The true Israelite is a real Christian; collectively the true Israel is the Church, the people of God who serve Him continually.

the kingdom of heaven,” then, mean those glorious Gospel truths which at that time only the more advanced disciples could appreciate, and they but partially.³

The word *mystery* appears in the Epistles of Paul more often than in any other portion of the New Testament. At his conversion Paul was indeed initiated into the knowledge of Jesus Christ; as he grew in spiritual stature, the mysteries of God—His divine will and purpose concerning Christ and his Church—were revealed to him. He never considered this knowledge a personal possession but rather a gift of the Spirit obtainable only through selfless love: “Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity [RV love], I am nothing” (I Cor. 13:2).

Mysteries

In the New Testament there is a term used by Jesus, Paul, and John that is not found in Hebrew Scripture. It is the word *mystery*, whose Old Testament counterpart is the word *secret*. In Old Testament times God revealed Himself to mankind (specifically to His chosen people) under the Abrahamic covenant. The deep things of God were perceived only by His godly servants and prophets, and by them only in part, but what they did perceive became the spiritual heritage of the nation.

“The *secret* things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.” Deut. 29:29

“The *secret* of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.” Ps. 25:14; compare Pr. 3:32

“He revealeth the deep and *secret* things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.” Dan. 2:22

The same thought of divine revelation is found in the New Testament word *mystery*, for which the Greek word is *mysterion*—initiation into mysteries or secrets, into that which is hidden or concealed. In the New Testament context mysteries are revelations, “knowable secrets.” Jesus used the term only once (with the overtone of wonderful things), when he said to his disciples: “Unto you it is given to know the *mystery* of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them” (Mk. 4:11,12; compare Mt. 13:35). It was only the obtuseness of men and their love of the world that kept them from fully appreciating the spiritual truths he taught.

The word “mysteries” in Scripture is not used in its classical sense—of ‘religious secrets,’ nor yet of ‘things incomprehensible, or in their own nature difficult to be understood’—but in the sense of ‘things of purely Divine revelation,’ and, usually, ‘things darkly announced under the ancient economy, and during all that period darkly understood, but fully published under the Gospel’ (I Corinthians 2:6–10; Ephesians 3: 3–6,8,9). “The mysteries of

Iniquity

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [the day of Christ] shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. . . .

“And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the *mystery* of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” II Th. 2:3–10

The Hidden Wisdom of God

“Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect [ASV full-grown]: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a *mystery*, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so

the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." I Cor. 2:6–11; see I Tim. 3:9

Resurrection

"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

"Behold, I shew you a *mystery*; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." I Cor. 15:50–54; see I Th. 4:13–17

The Blindness of Israel: Conversion of the Gentiles "I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. . . . God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. . . . At this present time . . . there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. . . .

"What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded . . . unto this day. . . . I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy [zeal]. . . .

"For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou [Gentiles], being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. . . . Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. . . . Continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

"And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again. . . . For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this *mystery*, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved. . . ." Rom. 11:1–26

God's Will: His Divine Purpose in Christ "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. . . .

"Having made known unto us the *mystery* of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Eph. 1:3, 4, 9–11

Joint-heirship of All Men in Christ's Riches ". . . by revelation he made known unto me the *mystery*. . . . Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel." Eph. 3:3–6

Christ's Love for His Church "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. . . .

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. . . . For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. . . . This is a great *mystery*: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." Eph. 5:23–32; compare Jn. 3:29; Rev. 19:6–8

The Indwelling Christ "Whereof [for the church's sake] I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Col. 1:25–27; see Lu. 17:21

Christ, the Incarnate Fullness of the Godhead “For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea. . . . That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the *mystery* of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. . . . In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.” Col. 2:1–3,9,10

Godliness

“Without controversy great is the *mystery* of godliness: God [RV He who] was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” I Tim. 3:16

There are three mysteries in the book of Revelation, and John, using apocalyptic language, makes them “knowable secrets.”

The Seven Stars

“I [John] was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. . . . And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man. . . . And he had in his right hand seven stars. . . . The *mystery* of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.” Rev. 1:10–13,16,20

The Mystery of God Finished

“The angel [with the little book] which [John] saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever . . . that there should be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the *mystery* of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. . . . And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.” Rev. 10: 5–7; 11:15

The Great Whore

“There came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me . . . Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters. . . .

“So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold . . . having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, *MYSTERY*, *BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH*. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. . . .

“And the angel said unto me . . . I will tell thee the *mystery* of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. . . .

“The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

“And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

“And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

“And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

“And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” Rev. 17

Apostolic Church, 61–96 A.D. and Secular History

54–66 A.D.

54–68 A.D.—Nero, Roman Emperor
 61–63—Paul imprisoned at Rome
ca. 61—*Epistle of James*
ca. 62—*First Epistle of Peter*
 62—Martyrdom of James, head of Jerusalem church, by Pharisees and Sadducees
 64—Burning of Rome—Nero persecutes the Christians of Rome
ca. 66—*Second Epistle of Peter*
 66—Palestinian Jews revolt against Rome—Vespasian leads Roman army against Galilee and Judaea

66–70 A.D.

66 A.D.—Jerusalem church flees for safety to Pella in Perea
 66/67—Paul's epistles, *First Timothy*, *Titus*
 67/68—Paul's second imprisonment at Rome—his *Second Epistle to Timothy*
 67/68—Peter's martyrdom—Paul's martyrdom
 68–69—Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Roman Emperors
 69–79—Vespasian, Roman Emperor
 Before 70—*Synoptic Gospels*, *Acts*, *Jude*, *Hebrews*
 70—Fall of Jerusalem to Titus, son of Vespasian

79–96 A.D.

79–81 A.D.—Titus, Roman Emperor
 81–96—Domitian, Roman Emperor (younger brother of Titus)—Domitian enforces cult of emperor worship throughout Roman Empire—persecution of Christians spreads to Asia Minor
ca. 80–90—*Fourth Gospel* by John
ca. 90—*First, Second, and Third Epistles of John*
 95–96—Apostle John is banished to isle of Patmos
ca. 96—*Book of Revelation* by John

The apostolic history of the Church as recorded in Acts closes with the first imprisonment of Paul at Rome, 61–63 A.D. There are a few allusions in Paul's pastoral epistles that suggest another journey to Greece by that apostle before a second imprisonment, but these do not throw light on the state of the Church during that interval, and the other New Testament writers of the period between 61 and 96 A.D. deal with doctrine rather than church history. We must turn to secular sources for events that affected the Church between Paul's martyrdom and the time of the writing of John's Apocalypse.

During the first decade of this period the Jewish nation perished in the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Its end began in 66, when the Jews of Judaea and Galilee revolted against Roman rule, beginning their insurrection in Jerusalem. Cestius Gallus, governor of Syria, came down with his Roman legions to besiege the city but retreated in defeat. Nero then sent Vespasian, one

of his ablest generals, to crush the revolt. Jesus in his Olivet discourse had forewarned the apostles: "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains" (Lu. 21:20,21). So before the Roman standards were at the gates of Jerusalem, the Church fled for safety to Pella, a Hellenistic city of Decapolis, east of the Jordan.

Vespasian fought Galilee and Judaea for almost two years until he was recalled to Rome to be crowned Emperor after Nero's death. Titus succeeded his father Vespasian as general of the army, and in April 70 laid siege to Jerusalem with an army of sixty thousand. This attack occurred during Passover week, when thousands of pilgrims overflowed the city. Jerusalem was soon divided into angry factions fighting for control and, in the strife which followed, the city's granaries were destroyed by fire. Hunger was rampant, and those who dared to search the hillsides for food were crucified by Roman soldiers.

After many days of pounding with battering rams, the Romans breached the walls and took part of the city. In the ensuing weeks, upon the Jews' repeated and even scornful refusal to surrender, Titus stripped the hills of all houses and trees and built a wall, the height of a man and five miles in circumference, locking in well over a million inhabitants and strangers. A terrible famine ensued; bodies piled up in the streets; looting, betrayal of brother by brother, even cannibalism ravaged the city. So terrible was the Jews' suffering that Titus implored them to yield, but they continued their desperate resistance. One by one Jerusalem's strongholds were captured until, early in August 70, the Temple was assaulted and the soldiers gained entrance to its outer court. Titus wished to spare the sanctuary but after six days a soldier threw a blazing torch into its window and the sanctuary burst into flames. A dreadful carnage followed as thousands of priests, women, and children perished by fire and sword. The massive stones of the Temple, cracked by the intensity of the heat, soon fell into ruins. The lower city was set on fire but fanatic Zealots retreated to the upper city to fight on for almost a month more. When the siege was ended, after 134 days, more than a million Jews had been slain, and of the survivors nearly a hundred thousand were taken into slavery. Except for three towers and the western wall reserved to protect the Roman garrison, Jerusalem's walls were leveled and the city totally destroyed (compare Mic. 3:12; Lu. 19:43,44).

During the latter half of the first century A.D. the Church suffered rising persecution at the hands of Rome. By 64 Rome had come to regard Christians as troublemakers since clashes between Jews and Christians frequently disturbed the local peace. Hostility flared into violence when the half-mad Nero—to divert suspicion from himself—blamed Christians for the burning of Rome. The bloody persecution that followed was initially restricted to Christians at Rome, but Nero's edict against them set a precedent. Persecution spread to Asia Minor during Domitian's reign (81–96), when emperor worship became the imperial religion (see p. 490). Christians, regarding such worship as blasphemous, refused to bow the knee, and Domitian wrought a terrible vengeance upon them.

Not only was the Church endangered from without, but its life within was threatened by heretical doctrines of apostate teachers and by the spread of Oriental mysticism which tended to adulterate the purity of the gospel. Between 61 and 90 the General Epistles (James, I and II Peter, I, II, and III John, Jude) appeared, so-called because they were addressed to Christians in general. They were written to safeguard Christian doctrine, to steady Christian adherents to meet the impending crises of their day. In 96, at the height of Domitian's persecution, the Church was buttressed by the mighty Patmos vision of John's Apocalypse.