

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God..."

Abraham's Bosom

By J. Preston Eby

ABRAHAM'S BOSOM

“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and sees Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and you are tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from there to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from there. Then he said, I pray therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house: For I have five brothers; that he may testify unto them, unless they also come into this place of torment. Abraham said unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, No, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead” (Luke 16:19-31).

THE PARABLE

The story of the rich man and Lazarus is without doubt one of the most misunderstood of all the stories in the Bible. Is it a parable, or an actual statement of facts concerning life beyond the grave? It is strenuously denied by most evangelists that this story, as told by Christ, could be a parable. They hold that this is not a

parable because it starts out in narrative form. It is argued, because it reads, "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day," that Christ is speaking here of an actual incident that took place. But in the parable of the prodigal son, in the fifteenth chapter of Luke, the narrative introduction is found also, for it says, "A certain man had two sons..." Yet it is generally conceded that the story of the prodigal son is a parable and all the fundamentalist preachers love to preach from its beautiful figures, thus applying it as a parable.

Jesus continually spoke in parables. A parable is an analogy - a simile, representation or analogous story - which could even be a fable, so long as it is used to illustrate certain essential points of TRUTH. An analogy is not necessarily the truth all by itself - but is analogous to the TRUTH which it helps to illustrate. For instance, a person might say, "My wife is a regular rabbit." This is a metaphor, or a parable; but we would not conclude from this statement that his wife had two long ears and four feet and that she hopped about clad in fur, but would simply come to the conclusion that this lady is a great lover of vegetables perhaps even a vegetarian. If we were to push the parable to its ultimate analysis, the woman would cease to be a woman and would become an animal.

The disciples were curious as to why Jesus spoke in sometimes confusing parables. "And the disciples came, and said unto Him, Why do you speak unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given" (Mat. 13:10-11). Notice, the carnal minded Pharisees and others in His audience were not privileged to understand. Only His disciples received the later, fuller explanations of His parables. Notice! "Therefore speak I unto them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand! And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which says, By hearing you shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing,

and their eyes they have closed; LEST at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them! But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear!" (Mat. 13:10-16). A parable, then, will confuse, bewilder and perplex the doubting and the unbelieving! It will enlighten only the quickened, true disciple of Jesus Christ! It is quite obvious, from the context, that the story of Lazarus and the rich man is in fact a parable!

Usually, when the story of the rich man and Lazarus is considered, its setting is ignored. At the time the story was told Jesus had just eaten dinner with a Pharisee, at which time He not only healed a man with dropsy, but gave some pointed advice about how to give a dinner party. When He left the house, great throngs followed Him. Many of this great company were publicans and sinners who drew near to hear His teaching, and mingled with them were a great number of the scribes and Pharisees. The scribes and Pharisees complained openly and bitterly against Jesus, condemning Him because He received sinners into His company and ate with them. Against this background of biting criticism Jesus stood and gave the teachings found in chapters fifteen and sixteen of Luke. There are five stories which follow consecutively. It is well known, of course, that chapters and verses were not in the original scriptures. We are at liberty to change them when they do not synchronize with other scripture. Any arrangement of chapter and verse division that clarifies or harmonizes other scripture, is more authoritative than that division that beclouds other statements of the Bible. At the beginning of Jesus' discourse in chapter fifteen of Luke the statement is made that "He spoke this parable unto them, saying," (Lk. 15:3). The Greek is very definite in making the word for parable clearly a singular noun. It is "the parable this.." This statement is followed by five separate stories, the first of which is the story of the lost sheep, and the last is the story of the rich man and Lazarus. You see, the teaching in chapter sixteen is but the continuation of the discourse in chapter fifteen, without interruption. Now, which of the five stories He gave them in this sermon was called a parable? The only one of

the five which is prefaced by the claim, "And He spoke this parable unto them," was the story about the lost sheep. Was the lost sheep the only one that could be called a parable? And yet, any preacher or believer that I know will answer that the story of the lost coin, as well as the prodigal son, were also parables. Then why was the singular used - "this parable"? It should be clear to any thinking mind that all these stories were ONE PARABLE, like the facets of a diamond, as they turn each scintillates with new brilliance. Each was illustrating a view point of one great truth, and together they compose a whole. And this parabolic discourse of Jesus is continued into chapter sixteen of Luke, including the story of the rich man and Lazarus. The truth is that all five stories are each a fractional part of the complete parable, and when we read, "He spoke this parable unto them," this embraces the entire collection of symbol-pictures which in their completeness constituted the parable which He spoke. It is a careless assumption and an unfounded assertion to argue that the story of the rich man and Lazarus is not a parable!

L. F. Hurley wrote, "Jesus loved the publicans and sinners and wanted to help and save them. But these self-righteous Pharisees and scribes, whose business it should have been to teach them the love of God and to invite them to love and obey God in return for His grace, not only hated these publicans and sinners, but ostracized and excommunicated them from all the privileges of Jewish worship and fellowship. So, in the presence of both leaders and outcasts Jesus gave this parable, part of it to bring hope to the outcasts and part of it to condemn the leaders for their heartlessness and neglect. The first part consisting of three stories, was for the encouragement of the publicans and sinners; the last part consisting of two stories, expresses His condemnation of the Pharisees and scribes."

There are some serious, solemn and grave implications if indeed this story is not a parable, but a vivid description of conditions as they actually exist for all men immediately after death, as the preachers are wont to proclaim. If this parable is describing conditions actually as they will be in the life to come, then those in heaven will be able to talk to those in hell. Fathers and

mothers, sisters and brothers, husbands and wives will be able to look across the gulf and see their loved ones in the torment of the fiery regions. Not only will they be able to see them in the lurid flames of hell, but they will hear their piercing cries as they call for a drop of water to cool their tongues. How awful that would be! Could anyone enjoy the bliss (?) of heaven while compelled to listen to the hopeless, screaming pleas of unsaved loved ones and friends just across the narrow gulf. Would not such harrowing din somewhat disturb the heavenly choir with its discord? Worse yet, could that satisfy the heart's love of our heavenly Father who went all the way to Golgotha to save us? Suppose a mother from the heavenly regions could look across the fixed gulf and see her son in the torments of hell; suppose she could hear him crying day and night for a drop of water to cool his tongue because of the burning heat of those lower regions. Would not the mother be as much in torment as the son, and in fact, would it not be more a place of hell for the mother than it would actually be for that son? Therefore, it would seem impossible for anyone to believe that in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus Jesus is depicting conditions exactly as they will be in that world to come.

From what you know of Jesus' teachings, could you say that He would use the figure of a rich man, well clothed, and well fed, to represent all the sinners of mankind? Is that condition in itself representative of all iniquity? Again, will you insist that a poor beggar, full of sores, is a proper representative for all the righteous of mankind? Please remember that Jesus said not one thing concerning the rich man being a sinner. He laid not one crime at his door. He did not accuse him of doing a wrong thing. He was simply a rich man, and lived a good life every day, just like millions of people do today, including CHRISTIANS AND PREACHERS. Abraham's word to him was, "Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things." I would point out that the vast majority of the people in the United States today has as much or more than the rich man possessed. If the rich man of that day could have had the possessions that the majority of people has today, he would have been in a class entirely to himself. He could not dream of

the luxury that the modern day person thinks of as necessities. This being the case, and if the popular church doctrine be true, WE HAD BETTER GET RID OF ALL OUR POSSESSIONS, OR WE WILL SURELY END UP IN ETERNAL BURNING HELL! Then again, Jesus never did say that Lazarus was a good man, a righteous man, a Christian or anything of the sort. The only reason given by Jesus for his being in the bosom of Abraham was that he had lived a hard life in the flesh. If that is the sole requirement for a good life in the hereafter, then we say again, that all the teachers, preachers and believers of such a doctrine had better get busy living that kind of life! Instead of praying for healing and blessing and prosperity we should all be seeking to be homeless beggars, full of sores, rotting away with loathsome disease! Otherwise we are liable to end up in the same condition in which the rich man found himself.

Furthermore, of those who believe this story to be a literal statement of the condition of men after death, and that the wicked are tortured in an abyss of fire and brimstone, none actually believes that a single drop of water from one finger of one man could in any measure alleviate the excruciating pain of hell's merciless flame. None actually believes that a drop of water could actually exist anywhere near the place, much less cool the tongue of any unfortunate victim of this abominable torture chamber. The only thing in the parable which the advocates of eternal torture insist is literal is its reference to fire and torment. If they attempt to explain the remainder of the parable at all they are compelled to give it a symbolic meaning, else they are faced with unreal circumstances which they do not themselves believe. Another difficulty with the literalist interpretation involves the rich man being bodily and physically in a place of torment and flaming heat immediately after his burial. Do disembodied "souls" in the spirit world have tongues? Now, who would deny that if we could have exhumed the body of the rich man at the very time at which Christ spoke of him that it would have been stone cold in the tomb and possibly in a state of decomposition? If he had a tongue at all it would be in the grave - not in hell!

These are but a few of the difficulties which confront us when we try to take the story of the rich man and Lazarus literally. Many have contended that, by the very words of Jesus, the doctrine of ETERNAL DAMNATION is confirmed and established, and all the so-called fundamentalist preachers thus misapply this parable completely, using it as the basis of belief in eternal punishment - BUT IS IT? Who has ever heard an evangelist explain the meaning of the "purple and linen" in which the rich man was clothed? What explanation has ever been given for the fact that the rich man had "five brethren" and not, say, four or six? What significance is there in "the dogs licking the poor man's sores"? All these significant details, which must have meant something, or else they would not have been included in the story, are never explained by evangelists and are passed over as if they were entirely superfluous, having little or no special meaning. It is my deep conviction that this parable, like all the parables and teaching of Jesus, is a parable of the Kingdom of God and teaches us KINGDOM TRUTH. That is what Christ meant it to do. It is not instruction of the existence of heaven and hell, or the conditions therein. It is not instruction on the state of the departed. On many occasions the Son of God spoke a parable, thereby conveying spiritual truth as well as prophecy. In this parable both abound!

THE RICH MAN

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus is without question one of the least understood of all the teachings of our Lord. What is its aim? It is a similitude of something; for all the parables are similitudes, even though, like the parables of the prodigal son, and the unjust steward, both of which are in direct connection with this one, they are uttered like simple narratives, always beginning with, "A certain man," or "There was a certain man." Of what, then, is this parable the similitude? Whom does the rich man represent? Who is the poor neglected beggar full of sores, lying at the rich man's gate?

This story was never intended to be Jesus' belief and teaching on heaven and hell, but Jesus was holding up to ridicule all the

teaching and spirit of the Pharisees and scribes and doctors of the law. It is real satire - par excellence! In this marvelous story the Holy Spirit bids us behold the power of Jesus' prophetic spirit as His vision scanned the unborn centuries still to emerge from the bosom of time. Behold the power of our God! in whose hand are the nations; He sets them up and knocks them down as if they were tin soldiers. The fact that He foretells the future, fulfilled in detail by the march of events, constitutes the proof of God's reality, of His power, of His omniscience, as well as the fact that He has revealed Himself clearly and unmistakably to man.

Why was the rich man lost, and why was the poor man saved? There was nothing in the position of either that would of necessity open or shut to them the gates of the Kingdom of God. No man was ever lost simply because he was rich, neither was any man ever saved simply because in this world he had been poor and miserable.

Both the rich man and the beggar had passed through life in the position in which it had pleased God to place them, and that position could not be in itself a position of sin; on the contrary, to both were entrusted talents which they were bound to employ for God's service, and to both He had given opportunities to honor and glorify Him. It was not the difference in their earthly position, but the difference in their response to that position, that made the difference between them when they were called into judgment.

Both the connection of the parable, and its particulars throughout, show that its awful warning is addressed to those who in Christ's day enjoyed the greatest privileges. Observe the particulars respecting the rich man. He was one of Abraham's seed, one who even in hell could not forget his election, but still cried, "Father! Abraham." He was "clothed in purple and fine linen, "the raiment of the Kingdom, and, as a child of the Kingdom, he "fared sumptuously every day." Who is this man? The rich man in this parable represents the Jewish nation, the house of Judah, and particularly their leaders who embody and

personify the spirit and character of the nation. This rich man, in torment, calls Abraham, FATHER. Abraham also recognized such a relationship for he speaks to the rich man as SON. "Son, remember..." Here the rich man is seen to be separated from his father, for "In hell (Hades) he lifts up his eyes, being in torments, and sees Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, FATHER ABRAHAM, have mercy on me...but Abraham said ... SON (Grk., teknon-offspring), between us and you (Grk., YOU PEOPLE) is a GREAT GULF FIXED: so that they (Grk., the ONES) which would pass from hence to you (Grk., YOU PEOPLE) cannot; neither can they pass that would come from thence." If we rightly divide the Word of God we will see that a plurality of people is being addressed, rather than a single individual. Clearly, this rich man was of Israel, of the seed of Abraham, and a blessed and highly favored company. The Pharisees boasted of their descent from Abraham and expected to enter Paradise because of that fact.

Purple is the color of royalty. Fine linen stands for righteousness in this instance the righteousness of the law, established by the priests and Levites who, dressed in white linen, officiated in the sacrifices and ceremonies of the nation. The rich man was "clothed in purple and fine linen." Those who are in purple are rulers. The rich man was a ruler. And Jesus never uttered His parables or sermons concerning someone away off in Siberia or China. He spoke to and of the Jews, the church of His day. Judah was the royal tribe, and purple is the color pertaining to royalty. The kingdom of Judah had the ministry of the priesthood - clothed in fine linen. The whole nation, in fact, was called to be a kingdom of priests unto God (Ex. 19:6). By this language Christ was making His meaning very clear to the Pharisees.

This rich man "fared sumptuously every day." But this is not talking about natural food. The Jewish nation was the favorite of heaven - rich in the mercies and blessings of the Lord. No nation in the history of time had been so highly favored as the house of Judah. They had the elaborate sacrificial service of the great and glorious temple in Jerusalem. They had the scriptures, the holy law and covenant of Yahweh. They had the oracles of God, the

prophets. They were rich in covenants and promises, rich in the word of God that had been delivered to them. Judah was, indeed, a RICH MAN - with the very riches from the hand of God - rich in oil and wine, rich in doctrine, rich in word, rich in history of holy men, rich in ritual and pomp and ceremony. Ah - how rich he was! Paul spoke exultantly of this vast wealth possessed by Judah, saying, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites; to whom pertains the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom. 9:3-5).

The final factor identifying the rich man is the fact that he had "five brothers." "I pray thee therefore father ABRAHAM, that you would send him to my father's house: for I have FIVE BRETHREN; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment" (Lk. 16:27-28). He mentions the fact that his brethren were five in number. But why five? If this is not a parable we can hardly see the reason why the number of his brethren should be so definitely enumerated. If it is a parable then the number given is as symbolic, and significant, as any other item in the story. Naturally we ask who are these five brethren. The rich man is a son of ABRAHAM, through Isaac and Jacob, and you have only to read through the lists of the offspring of Abraham to find out who it was that had five brethren. "Now the sons of Jacob were twelve: the sons of Leah; Reuben, Jacob's first born, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun: the sons of Rachel; Joseph, and Benjamin: and the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid; Dan, and Naphtali: and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid; Gad, and Asher: these are the sons of Jacob, which were born to him in Padan-aram" (Gen. 35:22-26). This passage plainly reveals that JUDAH had five brethren. Jacob's first wife was Leah, and of Leah were born Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. These were all full-blood brothers. Judah was one of Leah's six sons. He had five brethren! So when this rich man says, "I've got five brethren," it identifies who he is! If this telling

detail has no significance for modern evangelists who preach from this parable, let me assure you that it meant a great deal to those to whom Jesus was speaking, because they knew their history, they held great pride in their ancestry, they knew who their brethren were, they knew exactly who He was talking about! It established to them the identity of the rich man Judah, the southern kingdom of the Jews!

The table laden with rich foods and dainties, at which the rich man dined, reminds us of God's unbounded provision for His people. But Judah's condemnation stemmed largely from his preoccupation with the gifts instead of the Giver. That Judah's blessings became Judah's curses is clear from Rom. 11:9 where the divine pronouncement is recorded: "Let their table become a trap." Was it not Judah's perverted attitude towards the good things God had given them which brought the swift judgment of God against them? The law with its damning glory was but cause for pride to their Pharisaic self-righteousness. What they were, and what they had - their prophets, their kings, and their position led the nation on to its awful fall. It was natural that the Jews, having sole possession of a pure and divine religion, should think themselves the chosen of heaven. But rather than becoming a Kingdom of priests and a blessing to all the nations of the earth as God intended, they despised and hated all who were not favored as they were, and regarded the other nations with contempt. Their spirit was indeed one of extreme exclusiveness. They were the prototype of the Laodicean church who in the book of Revelation is Pharisaic in its boast, "I am RICH ... and have need of nothing" (Rev. 3:17). That utterance embodies in a simple phrase the abominable attitude of the Pharisee towards God and man. It echoes the language of him who thanked "the God within" that he was not as other men, "not even as this publican." Little glimpsed he the truth of his real state, that he was "poor, blind, miserable, and naked" even as the Laodiceans were to be in all their vain self-sufficiency.

Christ's condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees was not an invective tirade against His enemies; for He loved His enemies as He taught that others should. But He saw piety turned into a

pretense by the religious teachers of His time. He saw how they shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men and went not in themselves; how they devoured widows' houses and for a pretense made long prayers; how they compassed sea and land to make one proselyte, who, when he was made, was but a child of perdition; how they painfully kept the letter of the law and the traditions of men, while they omitted the weightier matters of judgment, mercy, faith, and love toward God and man; how they loved the uppermost seats in the synagogues and the greetings in the marketplace; how they bound on men burdens that were grievous to bear, while they touched them not with one of their fingers; how they disfigured their faces and put on a sad countenance that they might appear unto men to fast, while they were full of all hatred and hypocrisy. Such insincerity toward God, such degradation of holy office, such wrong done the sacred rights of souls, such blind leading of the blind, such obstruction to the entrance into the Kingdom of God was to Him high crime against all that is holy in heaven and earth. It grieved Him. It was a sight that saddened Him wherever He went as long as He lived. They might call Him a sinner, a sabbath-breaker, a blasphemer, a devil, a mad man; they might dog Him at every step, ply Him with catch questions, try to trap Him, weave a web of conspiracy about Him, stir up the people against Him, incite the fear and jealousy of the civil power, resolve on putting Him to death; all this He could endure with serenity, and utter not a word in self-defense. But the hypocritical religious tyranny of His time was to Him a perpetual grief. They required rebuke; and in His scathing, consuming denunciation of them there must have been in His voice such inimitable pathos and power, and in His face such an expression of sadness, sweetness, and fearlessness as to terrify His foes and sting them into fury as He tore the mask from their depravity.

Thus ends the portrait of the Rich Man!

LAZARUS

Who is the poor neglected beggar full of sores, to whom the very dogs show more pity and kindness than the rich man? The rich

man “fared sumptuously every day” while Lazarus was lying at his gate a mass of sores, loathsome and in want, and yet uncared for and unpitied by him who enjoyed so many blessings. Who is this poor, wretched, pathetic, despised man?

The Jews looked upon the heathen nations about them as barbarians and dogs. It seems quite clear therefore that in this parable Lazarus is the people lying at Judah’s gate who are recipients of none of the blessings so lavishly bestowed upon them. In the rich man we see the children of the Kingdom, who as such were clothed in purple and fine linen, rich and increased with goods, daily feasting on the finest of delicacies, contrasted with the heathen world, lost, full of sores, and lacking everything. Lazarus was laid at the rich man’s gate full of sores, which denotes his cast-out and spiritually deficient condition.

“Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores” (Lk. 16:21). A more accurate translation of the phrase, “moreover the dogs,” would be, “the other dogs.” The Greek word translated “moreover” is ALLA which means OTHER and not MOREOVER. My good friend, Elwin Roach, has done exhaustive research on this passage and shares the following enlightening information: Thayer’s Lexicon gives this definition: “alla... derived from ‘alla, neuter of the adjective ‘allos, meaning OTHER THINGS.” Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance also gives this same definition of ALLA. In Lk. 16:21 ALLA is in the NOMINATIVE case, indicating that it is a word that names the subject, and that it belongs to the noun or pronoun that it names. Therefore, the DOGS, as the subject, are named or modified by the word OTHER (the OTHER DOGS). The word OTHER is an article in this case and is an adjective and, like ALL ADJECTIVES in the Greek, it is declined and agrees in gender, number, and case with the word it modifies. In other words, if the noun is in the nominative, plural, and neuter case, then so will the adjective be also. And this is what we have with “OTHER” and “DOGS”. Both words are declined in these three declensions, indicating that “OTHER” definitely belongs to “DOGS” and is its modifier. What is the word saying then? Primarily, for all who cannot follow the grammatical intricacies stated above, it is saying that LAZARUS

IS JUST AS MUCH A DOG AS THE ONES LICKING HIS SORES! I am sure that all my readers are aware that dogs will on occasion lick the sores of humans and other animals but most often they are found licking the sores of their own kind - other dogs! Neither Lazarus nor the dogs are, of course, literal dogs, but they serve as figures of the heathen nations surrounding Judah, and without the abundant blessings of God they soothe one another the best way they can, except when they are fighting - as dogs often do. Lazarus was a dog - a Gentile - for he found himself in the dog class.

In this parable Lazarus was both a beggar and a dog - a beggar in his own eyes, but a dog in the eyes of the rich man. Begging in Bible days was always done at the gate of the city where people passed by. To understand the picture presented here let us go back for a moment to an interesting and informative passage of scripture found in Gen. 10:25. "And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg; FOR IN HIS DAYS WAS THE EARTH DIVIDED..."Peleg - or rather, the event associated with his name - is of special interest at this point. "In his days was the earth divided." Evidently this was a most memorable event, and Eber named his son in commemoration of it. The name "Peleg" means "division." Almost nothing else is said about Peleg apart from mention of his family line and how long he lived. The fact that the earth was divided in his days seems the only possible item of distinction that can knowingly be attributed to Peleg himself. The important thing concerns the meaning of this indicated "division of the earth." It is obvious that this division was the division of the peoples that took place beginning with the Tower of Babel. We have such statements as this: "From these were the isles (coasts) of the Gentiles DIVIDED IN THEIR LANDS; and every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations," and again, "These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were THE NATIONS DIVIDED in the earth after the flood" (Gen. 10:5,32).

The descendants of Noah migrated over the whole face of the earth, forming tribe after tribe, city after city, and NATION after

NATION. Let all men know that it is the almighty God who is the designer and architect of all the nations in the world. The time periods and localities in which nations flourish have all been pre-arranged by the will of Him who “works ALL THINGS after the counsel of His own will” (Eph. 1:11). The truth of this cannot be made any plainer than it is by Moses in Deut. 32:8: “When the Most High DIVIDED 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.” Paul refers to this verse when in Acts 17:26-27 he says, “And has made of one blood ALL NATIONS of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and HAS DETERMINED THE TIMES BEFORE APPOINTED, and the BOUNDS OF THEIR HABITATION; that they should seek the Lord.”

How clearly the passage quoted above reveals that it was GOD who, from the beginning, set the bounds of habitation (national boundaries) of ALL NATIONS. These boundaries were established in relation to Israel and with a view to their being able to seek after the Lord. While there may yet be a future, and more glorious fulfillment of this, yet it is remarkable that the ancient land of Palestine was originally reserved by the wisdom and goodness of the Lord for the possession of His ancient people and the display of the most stupendous signs and wonders. The theater was small, but wonderfully suited for the convenient observation of the whole human race - at the junction of the two continents of Asia and Africa, and almost in sight of Europe. From this spot as from a common center the reports of God’s wonderful works, of His mighty power and awesome glory, of the glad tidings of salvation through the obedience, suffering and resurrection of His glorious Son, of the wonder filled outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as the faithful disciples of Jesus were set ablaze by the life and power of their glorified Lord, might be rapidly and easily wafted to every part of the globe. Yes, God set the bounds of habitation for all nations and set the children of Israel at the crossroads, to the end that ALL NATIONS should seek after the Lord. Out of Israel came Christ; out of Christ has come the church, His bride; out of the church shall come the manchild, the holy sons of God destined to bring

deliverance to the whole creation that the word promised to father Abraham might be fulfilled: "And in your seed shall ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED" (Gen. 22:18). ALL NATIONS shall be blessed! From the dawn of human history the mighty God not only designed the nations of men to inhabit this planet - He also planned and purposed to bless them - each and every one of them!

Without doubt Lazarus represented the neighbor kingdoms in Asia, Africa and Europe, right at Judah's gate, without promise, without covenant, without hope, without Christ, without God in the world. It is interesting to note that LAZARUS is the Greek form of the Hebrew name ELEAZAR meaning "he whom God helps," or "whom God aids." The Greek word for "name" is ONOMA, and not only means "a name," but also carries the thought of ONE POSSESSING A CERTAIN CHARACTER. Putting this all together the passage could well be translated, "There was a certain begging one who POSSESSED THE CHARACTER OF NEEDING GOD'S AID."

Stand with me for a moment while with bowed head and reverent heart we behold a scene which illustrates in tones clear and vibrant the sacred key contained in the remarkable name of this beggar, Lazarus. Our Lord Jesus Christ in the course of His preaching comes into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. A very remarkable people dwelt there. The Syropheonician were directly descended from those who had invented letters. The first written language we know anything about is Phoenician. But they were heathen; they were very enterprising; they were renowned for their industries, and their magnificent houses, and their wonderful enthusiasm in everything they undertook; but, like the ancient Greeks, with the highest culture, and the most extensive commerce, and great valor on sea and land, they were debased idolaters. When the people of Israel came into possession of the land of Israel, they halted in their work, and did not drive these heathen out, and there never was a time when they were not a thorn in the side of Israel. The Philistines, the Phoenicians, and all that bordered upon the sea were a perpetual curse to Israel

and a defilement to the land. They were held in great contempt and abhorrence!

Now a remarkable thing about Jesus going into such quarters as these is this, that He never went beyond the borders of Palestine to preach His Gospel; so far as we can tell, not a step. Some contend that He did, but their information is rooted in legend and fable, not in the Word of God. So Jesus came to the borders of Tyre and Sidon. He came to His own (Judah, for He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah), and His own received Him not, and He came in these three years to minister to His own people, and to die, first for Israel, and then for the world. Now the Israelite had the conception that all nations outside were Gentile heathen outcasts, that God would not listen to them. Coming into the borders of Tyre and Sidon a woman, who evidently was a woman of station, is attracted by the splendor of Christ. This woman was a Gentile, for it says she was a woman of Canaan. But she beholds the Christ, His love, His magnanimity, His great divine personality goes out as He speaks to the multitudes there, and proclaims that He Himself has the power to give rest to the weary, to give salvation to the sinful, healing to the sick, and out of the depths of despair to guide all humanity into the paths of faith, and hope, and life, and love that lead to heaven here, and heaven above.

In that wonderful instant this woman begins to pray to Him. She has a daughter that has a devil, and she is emboldened to ask for healing for her daughter. Oh, I see Him standing there, and He looks at her with great compassion, and yet He utters words that are just the bitterest that can come from His divine lips. He looks at her, and she is pleading, "Oh Lord, you will not send me away. You have healed so many; you have saved so many; please don't send me away." He looks at her and He says these words: "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and He walks right off. There she is, and He is gone. Now she is going to give up praying surely. She has gone in vain to Him; she has gone in vain to the apostles, and she has come back to Him, and she is told that He is not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Now, she is a Canaanite; she

belongs to that accursed race, and, almost in despair, she looks at His retreating figure. Oh, how hard it is! How hard that answer is!

This woman did not know how to stop praying. She had been to Christ, and to the apostles, and she goes after Christ the second time, and always finds a repulse. Yet she goes after Him again. I like to see that woman. Now, you watch what she says this time. This time she goes right off, and sees where her error has been. She goes after Him, and she seeks Him until she finds Him, and then she falls at His feet; and for the first time she does that which gets her an answer to her prayer - she worships Him. Notice her prayer. The first prayer was a long one, a very long one, and this prayer is a totally different one. It is a very short one. "Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, LORD, HELP ME." When she worships Him her prayer comes right down to three words. What are they? When she worships Him, she says, "Lord, help me!" And how does He answer her? Oh, how mysterious it is; the most cruel answer that could come from human lips seem to come from His lips that day. There she is; she is worshipping Him. She says, "Lord, help me." And now the great Lord raises Himself, and points down at her, and says, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs." How many American women would go on praying after that? I can imagine how you would start up and say, "I thought you were a kind man. I thought you were God, but you call me a dog, I am not a dog, Sir. I am an American lady. I have rights. You are discriminating against me because of my race. You are a male chauvinist pig!" Every bit of the devil of pride and feminism would be aroused. How the eyes would flash hell-fire, and the teeth clinch, and the face become pale with passion, and the heart cry out for revenge, if you, oh women of America, were refused bread and called "a dog!" I do not believe there are a dozen women upon God's earth that would stand that, and I tell you that the greatness of this woman's faith is measured by just that fact, that she lay there at Christ's feet, and she heard Him lift His voice and point His hand, and say, "You dog!" and go off, and she still loved Him.

Now, did she stop praying? Not a bit of it. That woman went right after Him quickly. She went to His feet, and she made her last appeal, and I think it one of the most touching things in all the story of prevailing prayer in the scripture. All her heathen pride has gone. She cannot give up the hope that is bound up in her. She hears Him call her, even in the words that repel her, and she goes to His feet, and she says: "Lord, that is true; I am only a dog; but the little dogs" (for that is the word in Greek - the little dogs, the wee little dogs) "eat from the crumbs that fall from their master's table, and I will take the place of a dog, but I want this crumb. Help me; help my devil-possessed daughter. Give me that crumb." Now, the Lord looks up, and now He speaks the words that ring through the ages. "O woman" - His own heart is touched to the deepest depths by her humility - "O woman, great is your faith! It has stood all these testings; it has stood all My hard answers, all My silence, all the apostles' reproaching, all of My driving you down and back; and now you are willing to take the place of a dog. YOU SHALL TAKE THE PLACE OF MY OWN DAUGHTER. O woman, great is your faith: be it unto you even as you will." She willed her daughter's deliverance from the devil that grievously vexed her, and her daughter was delivered in that same hour.

Lazarus means, "Whom God helps." And the plaintive cry of this Canaanite woman, at the very border of the land of Israel, in all her spiritual poverty and ethnic loathsomeness was, "Lord, HELP ME!" What could be a greater commentary on the true meaning of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus than the expressions found in this remarkable story. When you remember the expressions, "the dogs," and, "the crumbs which fall from the master's table," these parallel precisely the expressions found in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. "And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: the other dogs came and licked his sores." Lazarus' association with the dogs and his lying at the rich man's gate, fed upon crumbs that fell from his table, places him quite convincingly in both the "dog" class and the "Gentile" class. In the encounter with the Canaanite woman it was the "dogs" that ate the crumbs, while in the parable of the rich man it is Lazarus who eats the crumbs.

How beautifully this confirms to our understanding Lazarus' identity with the "dogs." The "dogs" of that day were the non-Jewish pagans, and this woman was a Canaanite, the vilest of the vile. Lazarus lay at the rich man's "gate," and this woman encountered the Lord at the "border" of the land of Israel. How plainer can language be! As to religion, all that the nations had of truth and reality were the crumbs that fell from the Jewish table. The heathen had no prophet; they had no scripture revealed by the Holy Spirit; they had no great temple service instituted by the God of heaven; they had no covenant with the true and living God; but in Eph. 2:11-12 Paul calls the saints to remember that they being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, at that time they were:

1. Without Christ
2. Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel (the house of Israel, many nations)
3. Strangers (foreigners; aliens) from the covenants of promise
4. Having no hope
5. Without God in the world.

Some who read these lines will concur that the rich man is Judah, but will insist that Lazarus represents the gentilized ten-tribed house of Israel which was carried away by Assyria, whom they believe had, by the time of Christ, migrated and settled in the territories and nations around the Mediterranean Sea - Italy, Greece, Asia Minor, etc. There is, however, strong evidence against such a concept. First, the peoples inhabiting the nations of the Mediterranean area at that time were ancient peoples whose origins were historically known - and the Greeks and Romans, among others, definitely were NOT estranged Israelites! There is no basis in historical fact for such a notion. Both the secular historical and scriptural evidence place the "lost ten tribes" much farther away than that - as we shall see later. The second, and more damaging evidence against such

teaching, is contained right within the parable of the rich man and Lazarus itself. Now pay close attention! The rich man is Judah. The rich man begged of Abraham, "I pray, therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham said unto him, **THEY HAVE MOSES AND THE PROPHETS**; let them hear them" (Lk. 16:27-29). Judah's five brethren were: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Issachar and Zebulun. Now, of these brethren four - Reuben, Simeon, Issachar and Zebulun - were part of the northern kingdom of Israel which had been dispersed; they were, in fact, four out of ten of the "lost tribes"! Can it not be clearly understood that as tribes of the northern kingdom - if ten-tribed Israel be Lazarus - these four brothers would be **INCLUDED IN LAZARUS AND ALREADY IN ABRAHAM'S BOSOM!** Obviously, no ministry would be needed to save these four brothers from the fate of the rich man. And, if Lazarus is prohibited from going to these brothers, while at the same time he is the brothers, do we not encounter a most remarkable absurdity! There is something wrong with such a faulty theology as that, for it is certain that if four of the rich man's brothers were confronting him from Abraham's bosom in the person of Lazarus, he would recognize them; and our Lord would not manifest such glaring ignorance as to set forth in detail the rich man's pleas for his brethren who were already saved, and with whom he was, even then, conversing! This is a ludicrous misapprehension which can only produce confusion.

THE DEATHS OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried. And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and sees Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom" (Lk. 16:22-23). The language is highly symbolic and the deaths of both the rich man (Judah) and the beggar (the nations) represent a fundamental change in their condition and status. It does not say that Lazarus was buried - it says that Lazarus was carried to the bosom of Abraham but the rich man was buried, never to

become the favored nation of God in their own right again. I want to emphasize this, because it is a very essential point. Lazarus was never buried, he was carried away to a bosom. But the rich man, it says, died AND WAS BURIED. Never again would the kingdom of Judah become the chosen nation of the Lord in their own right. Not until Judah is joined unto the Lord and His sanctified people in Christ Jesus will they ever be recognized as the people of God.

But what does this death of the rich man and Lazarus mean? We must travel back in our consciousness to the time in which our Lord related this parable and the tremendous events then transpiring. The coming of Jesus Christ into the world brought a dispensational and spiritual change not only for Israel, but for every nation and people on the face of the earth. It is written, "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven" (I Cor. 15:45,47). Can the natural mind ever fathom the depths of the eternal truth that there has never been in the history of the world but two men? There is a deep and hidden meaning in the words, "the first man Adam" and "the last Adam." The natural mind would conclude that, if there were two Adams coming four millenniums apart, the first of these being the first Adam, it would logically follow that the next Adam would be the second Adam. The Lord Jesus Christ is here called the last Adam. But he who is called the first Adam is also called the first man. And He who is called the last Adam is also called the second man. The first Adam is the first man, but the last Adam is the second man, and the second man is also the last man. These simple statements, which on the surface seem so insignificant and scarcely worth our notice, are in fact pregnant with meaning, and full of wisdom and understanding. The first Adam is said to be the first man. The last Adam is declared to be the second man. If the second man is also the last Adam, He is also the last man. Now if the first Adam is the first man, it would of necessity follow that there were no men on earth before him, for he was the first. And if the last Adam is the second man, then there were no men on earth between the first Adam and the last Adam, for the last Adam is

the second man, and there can be no men between the first man and the second man. If there were even one other man between the first man and the second man, obviously the second man could not BE the second man; he would be the third man, the one hundredth man, or the five billionth man. And since the second man is also the LAST MAN, there can not have been any men since Him, for if others have followed Him, He is not then the last man. So then, the first man was the first man, the second man was the second man, and the second man is the last man, so that there have been only TWO MEN who have ever lived upon this planet - Adam and Jesus Christ! There were none before Adam, none between Adam and Christ, and none since Jesus Christ. Only two men. No more. No less. These simple statements portray as nothing else can the great truth that all men who have ever lived ARE INCLUDED IN THESE TWO MEN. These two men are corporate men, many-membered men. And since all men are contained in these two men, what happens to these two men happens to us ALL. Let our minds grasp the significant truth that when the first man sinned we all sinned, for we were, each and every one of us, genetically, substantially, and experientially right there in him. The same death that passed upon him because of his sin passed likewise upon us all, even to the last man of Adam's race, for all have sinned.

Now God has declared that our Lord Jesus Christ, the second man, should be both the last Adam and the last man. I cannot explain how divine power can accomplish such wonders, but God has decreed that all men of all ages should be included in Him. God has gathered up all the members of Adam's sinful race out of all ages past, out of the present, and out of all ages yet to come and included them ALL in Christ, the last Adam. Therefore, by one divine and omnipotent stroke God has included all men in His Son, declaring Him to be the last Adam and the last man, the end of the old Adamic creation. God, almighty and omnipotent, gathered up every tribe and tongue and people and race and nation and without either their knowledge or consent, included them in Christ, the last Adam, even as He included them in the first Adam; and, having included them in the last Adam, He

crucified Him and them in Him. May our minds be enlarged by the quickening of God's blessed Spirit of truth that we may comprehend in the wisdom of God how this last Adam included in Himself all the people and nations that had sprung out of old Adam, putting them all out of the way, nailing them to His cross, crucifying the W-H-O-L-E W-O-R-L-D in His Son.

Let all who now read this message know assuredly that, when our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified and died, both the rich man and Lazarus died WITH HIM and IN HIM! A great change came about after the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross. The old dispensation passed away for both the rich man and the beggar, and they both walked up on the other side of Calvary under new conditions. The language of the apostle Paul might clarify this thought of dying as brought to view in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. In pointing out how by the death of Jesus men are delivered from the old conditions and claims of the law to serve God in newness of spirit in resurrection life, Paul explained, "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of the letter (Rom. 7:6). In other words, the rich man and Lazarus both were dead to the conditions that existed under the old dispensation before Calvary, and they woke up to the new conditions ushered in via the unfolding of God's redemptive processes by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Under these new conditions, the Jew who had lived so sumptuously every day before the days of Calvary, awoke to find himself subject to a new redemptive process, namely, divine correction - buried in the torments of hell, persecuted, cast out, despised. The beggar, on the other hand, had arisen to the position formerly occupied by the sumptuous Jew, for he is now found in Christ, the seed of Abraham - in the bosom of Abraham!

The rich man "lift up his eyes in hell," says the Word of the Lord. The Greek word translated "hell" is HADES. Concerning the literal meaning of the word HADES there can be no doubt. It comes from the Greek A(I)DES. The "a" is a prefix which is equivalent to our "un-" and the stem "-id" means perceive. Thus we have UN-PERCEIVE or imperceptible; the unseen. That is

Hades - the unseen world, the unknown realm. Our English word hell is derived from an Anglo-Saxon word "hillan" or "helan," meaning a cavern, anciently denoting a concealed or UNSEEN place. In parts of England men still say, "I plan to hell my potatoes," meaning to bury them in a hole or pit, that is, a covered place, out of sight. And in the old days a young couple seeking to be alone, sought a hell, a place where they could make love without being seen by prying eyes. The rich man went to hell, into the unseen, entering upon a new condition which he could not in a million years have anticipated, nor would he have sought or desired it. It is a land of shadows, of unrealities, of clouds and mists, of whispers and mystery. What metaphors could more appropriately or adequately describe the condition of the Jews throughout the past two millenniums of their wretched, hunted, haunted, driven, excluded, rejected, outcast, despised and hated Diaspora among the nations of earth! The miserable Ghettos of Europe are certainly vivid examples of the "hell" in which the rich man lifted up his eyes, being in torment!

ABRAHAM'S BOSOM

There is an old Negro spiritual, the chorus of which concludes its message with the lyrics, "Rock-a-ma-soul in the Bosom of Abraham," repeated several times for emphasis. This spiritual reflects the traditional idea that Abraham's bosom is a figurative expression meaning heaven as the blissful and eternal abode of the saved. Most evangelists in the churches today graphically describe how the rich man died and went to hell, whereas the beggar died and went to heaven. Now, where, I ask, in the Bible is there any warrant for saying that heaven is "Abraham's bosom"? If the popular preachers are right and heaven is Abraham's bosom, then may I be permitted to ask - What happened to righteous departed who died in the ages before Abraham? What about Abel, Seth, Enoch and Noah? Where did they go? Apparently heaven was not then open to receive visitors!

The expression "in Abraham's bosom" signifies being in the favor and in the place of honor of Abraham. The expression is

borrowed from the custom of Christ's day of speaking of the honored guest who reclined nearest the host as reclining on his bosom. The word bosom is used 41 times in the Bible and always means the same thing - the area of the chest or breast of the human being. Anything one embraces is "in the bosom." When I take my wife and wrap my arms about her and hold her close, I take her into my bosom. Isaiah tells us that the Saviour will carry the lambs in His bosom, indicating a close, personal relationship. The people of the East reclined at meals. By this arrangement, the head of one person was brought almost into the bosom of the person who lay above him, and the guests were arranged so as to bring the most honored nearest to the host. At the "last supper" of Jesus Christ, John was leaning on Jesus' bosom (Jn. 13:23) - that is, he was reclining next to Jesus, in the most honored position, indicative of the close, personal relationship that existed between Jesus and John, for John is mentioned in the Bible as that disciple "whom Jesus loved." Christ is in the bosom of the Father; He possesses the closest intimacy with the Father. Even today when we wish to speak of those especially intimate with us, we call them "bosom friends." This expression has come down to us from those earlier days. Because of the association of the bosom with the arrangement of eating at a meal, we get the idea of a banquet. Lazarus, an ulcerated and crippled beggar, who had lain at the rich man's gate, contented with the scraps thrown out to him, was translated to a feast, and he had the most intimate place among all the guests, reclining on the hosts' (Abraham's) bosom. It means he was carried into a close, personal relationship WITH ABRAHAM! So the Jews had for centuries great honors and benefits bestowed upon them as the chosen of God for Abraham's sake, but now this place of honor and blessing would be given to those people represented by Lazarus.

God made great promises to Abraham. You can read them in the book of Genesis. He was to become "a great nation." He was to become "a multitude of nations." God said, "Kings shall come of you." Abraham's posterity were to emigrate and colonize and "spread abroad to the west, the east, the north, and the south." Included in these gracious promises to the founding father of

God's chosen people was the promise that his "seed" would "bless all nations."

Take great care, my beloved, to notice the nature of the promises and blessings. The carnal mind which is enmity against God, the God who is spirit and life and speaks a spiritual language, is ever eager to grasp the divine and heavenly promises of God and apply them on the low plane of the natural and the physical. That we might better comprehend the deep spiritual implications of God's wonderful promises to Abraham, the inspired apostle wrote, "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to CONFIRM THE PROMISES made unto the fathers" (Rom. 15:8). In words clear and penetrating Paul shows that one of the primary purposes of Christ's ministry, His death, and His resurrection was to "confirm the PROMISES made unto the fathers." The word "confirm" is from the Greek BEBAIOO meaning "to make strong, firm, or sure." Jesus came for the express purpose of MAKING SURE or GUARANTEEING the fulfillment of all the promises made to the fathers, that is, the INHERITANCE promised by God. The question follows - WHO were the fathers, and WHAT are the promises? "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His Son Jesus" (Acts 3:13). "I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Acts 7:32). You will notice from reading these passages that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are the fathers. When the rich man in the parable addressed Abraham, he called him Father Abraham, indicating that he counted himself his son, or as belonging to Abraham's seed.

But what are the promises? We must now prepare to follow into deeper waters. You will not be able to hear with natural ears nor understand with natural minds the words that flow from the anointed pen of the apostle Paul when he writes, "that the BLESSING OF ABRAHAM might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the PROMISE OF THE S-P-I-R-I-T through faith" (Gal. 3:14). You must beseech God to open the eyes of your understanding that you might comprehend

spiritual realities, for I declare unto you that reading back through the promises of God to Abraham, aided only by the understanding of the natural mind, you will never find any place in the Old Testament where God promised Abraham THE SPIRIT! Apparently, no promise of the Spirit was ever given to father Abraham. Land, yes! Posterity, yes! Blessing, yes! Greatness, yes! But - the SPIRIT?

Let us examine briefly but one of the remarkable promises made to father Abraham. In Gen. 13:15 we read, "For all the land which you see, to you will I give it, and to your seed FOREVER." If you will read this promise with the illumination of the Spirit you will see that it is something beyond a piece of real estate that God promises to Abraham. You see, the promise of the land is given both to Abraham and his seed F-O-R-E-V-E-R. This is clearly one of the first direct promises made by God to man in which He promises man ETERNAL LIFE. For the only way that Abraham himself, or his seed, can possess the land forever is to first of all possess eternal life! This is not merely the promise of a land for Abraham's descendants, but the promise to Abraham personally, and to his descendants of ETERNAL INHERITANCE!

Did Abraham inherit this promise? Hear the words of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, in Acts 7:2-5: "Men and brethren and fathers, hearken: the God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, and said unto him, Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and come into a land which I will show you ... and He gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet He PROMISED that He would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child." Note that God gave Abraham no inheritance (at that time) in the land - but promised that He would give it to him AFTERWARD. Can we not see by this that Abraham never received the promised inheritance during his lifetime. Yet the land was promised to him. And so we read, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should AFTER receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of

promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. These ALL DIED in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them AFAR OFF, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them..." (Heb. 11:8-9).

The promise of eternal inheritance, incorporating within itself the necessity for everlasting life, is the promise made to Abraham! The fact of eternal life is implicit in the promise of eternal inheritance. It is a matter of simple reason that leads to the conclusion that one can only inherit something forever if he is able to live forever. All who go by way of the grave leave their inheritance to their heirs. Jesus came to CONFIRM this promise! In pleading his case before king Agrippa the apostle Paul eloquently elaborated on this very truth, declaring, "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of THE PROMISE made of God unto our fathers: unto which our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should RAISE THE DEAD? Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue ... saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should RISE FROM THE DEAD, and should show light unto the people (of Israel), and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26:6-8, 22-23).

Consider now the remarkable statement of Jesus found in Jn. 10:7-10. 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.' The man Jesus stood one day in the center of the religious world and made the astonishing statement, "ALL that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers." Did He not take into consideration Abel, who "by faith brought God a better and more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, because of which it was testified of him that he was righteous - and God bore witness by accepting and acknowledging his gifts. And though he died, yet

he is still speaking” (Heb. 11:4). Did He not take into consideration Noah, that preacher of righteousness, that man perfect in his generation, who “being forewarned of God concerning events of which as yet there was no visible sign, took heed and diligently and reverently constructed and prepared an ark for the deliverance of his own family. By this he passed judgment and sentence on the world’s unbelief and became an heir and possessor of righteousness” (Heb. 11:7). Did He not take into consideration that great man of faith, Abraham, who “when he was called, obeyed and went forth to a place which he was destined to receive as an inheritance” (Heb. 11:8). Did He not take into consideration that mighty man, Moses, who “when he had grown to maturity and become great, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, because he preferred rather to share the oppression and bear the shame of the people of God than to have the fleeting enjoyment of sin. He considered the contempt and abuse and shame borne for Christ to be greater wealth than all the treasures of Egypt, for he looked forward and away to the reward. By faith he left Egypt behind him ... urged on by faith the people crossed the Red Sea as though on dry land” (Heb. 11:24-29). When Jesus uttered these extraordinary, audacious words, “ALL who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers,” did He not know of all the patriarchs and prophets, and men of faith and exploits? Yes He did! Furthermore, when Jesus was on earth there was already here Hinduism, Buddhism, and all the Eastern religions, and the founders of them. All of those were before Him. Can we believe that Jesus was calling all these good men THIEVES and ROBBERS?

The Jews were greatly offended when Jesus said that HE was the door to life and ALL who came before Him were thieves and robbers, and the thief comes only to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. They understood not the words that He spoke unto them. Oh how good it would be if God’s dear people would only seek to understand the vital message contained in the words which fell that day from the anointed lips of Jesus the Christ! To those who can receive it, our Lord was saying that ANY MAN OR ANY MESSAGE THAT BRINGS TO MANKIND ANY THING BUT LIFE IS A THIEF AND A ROBBER! All who came before

Jesus were thieves and robbers because the revelation and message they bore LED TO DEATH. They gave mankind great teachings, inspiring philosophies, wonderful laws and valuable precepts, but not one of them possessed eternal, incorruptible life, and not one of them could minister that life to those to whom they were sent. Many centuries ago the apostle Paul penned an inspired assertion when writing to the saints at Corinth he said, "For HE must reign, until HE has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is DEATH" (I Cor. 15:25-26). Death is not a friend, as the preachers of Babylon are wont to tell us. The greatest enemy of mankind is still DEATH. And good men, holy men, great men like Abraham and Moses and David, men who heard the voice of God and by faith did exploits in their generation, DIED AND PASSED INTO CORRUPTION. The Holy Spirit witnesses with absolute certainty that "These ALL DIED in faith, not having received the promises" (Heb. 11:13). Jesus looked at all these men with their message and ministry and works and saw that not one possessed life or the ability to impart life into mankind. They all, in very fact, deprived mankind of the most precious gift of all - life! The law that came by Moses was a ministry of death, and the message of every other holy man fell short of life, incorruption and immortality. Jesus came bearing a truth, a reality, a power never before possessed by any man who came before Him. He came with LIFE, eternal life, incorruptible life, abundant life! Life enough for Himself and all mankind! Confucius is dead; Buddha is dead; Moses is dead. I have stood by the tomb of David on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, and by the tombs of other great men and I testify that they are both dead and buried and their sepulchers are with us to this day. But Jesus Christ is alive, and all who believe on Him are transformed by His Spirit. There is a coming forth from the tomb of a new kind of life and a new kind of experience which we have not known before. Unto quickened men today Jesus is speaking these magnificent words: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever live and believes in Me shall NEVER DIE. Do you believe this?" (Jn. 11:25-26).

Jesus came to confirm the promise made to the fathers, the promise of eternal life, and thereby eternal inheritance, by Himself tasting death for every man, and becoming the FIRST TO RISE FROM THE DEAD in immortality and incorruption, never to die anymore! Jesus indeed came to confirm - MAKE POSSIBLE - the fulfillment of the promise. "And for this cause He is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death ... they which are called might receive the promise of ETERNAL INHERITANCE" (Heb. 9:15). It seems to me that to comment on a passage like this would be to do it an injustice, for the unimpaired clarity of its meaning transcends the eloquence of men. Yet be it known to all men that just as eternal inheritance demands eternal life, so does eternal life necessitate the effective work of the ETERNAL SPIRIT, for Jesus Christ was raised from the dead by the Spirit of the Father, and if the Spirit of Him that raised Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you (Rom. 8:11).

It is important to understand that the divine plan of God in redemption begins with Abraham. Before Abraham, God dealt with several important individuals. But God did not deal with them in the light of His ultimate and eternal purpose, only in relation to the time in which they themselves lived. Abel was a righteous man and offered sacrifices in accord with the will of God, but he offered for himself alone. He was not specially chosen in relation to the ultimate and eternal purpose of God. Enoch, too, walked with God, but only in an individual walk. In Noah's day all mankind was living in the depths of corruption, but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord and survived the deluge, but yet we do not find that he was chosen or called in relation to the ultimate and eternal purpose of God, but only in relation to the situation and need of his own day.

But it is when we come to Abraham that we encounter the first example of a man specially chosen of God with the future in mind - the eternal purpose of God in consideration. This is why we say that the divine plan of redemption begins to be worked out with Abraham. When Jesus came to confirm and ratify with

His own blood the promises to the Fathers of eternal inheritance, it is not said that He took upon Him the seed of Adam - but "He took on Him the seed of ABRAHAM" (Heb. 2:16). He came not as Adam's "seed," but as Abraham's "seed." All the promises of God which embody the redemptive and eternal plan and purpose of God were made to two specially called and chosen people - Abraham and his "seed" (Gal. 3:16). Jesus did not come to confirm the promises made to Noah, or to Enoch, or to Abel. He came to confirm the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. So everything begins with Abraham; he is the starting point of everything in the redemptive and eternal purposes of God.

There is neither time nor space to examine the many facets and ramifications of God's promises to Abraham, but you can read of them in the book of Genesis and ask God for wisdom and understanding. He was to become "a great nation." He was to become "a multitude of nations." God said, "Kings shall come of you." Abraham's posterity were to emigrate and colonize and "spread abroad to the west, the east, the north, and the south." Abraham was not only to have a multiplicity of seed or offspring, but one particular "seed" through whom ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH WOULD BE BLESSED. This singular seed "is Christ" and yet it is a corporate seed composed of many members - the sons of God (Gal. 3:16; 1 Cor. 12:12). When Abraham received these staggering promises, what did he do? He believed them. "...to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all; (as it is written, I have made you a father of many nations,) before Him whom he believed, even God, who quickens the dead, and calls those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall your seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to

God; and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform” (Rom. 4:16-21).

Abraham was persuaded of the promises and EMBRACED THEM (Heb. 11:13). Now, any thing that a person embraces is in his bosom. This is what is meant by Abraham’s bosom - the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant and the gracious promises which God made to him and his descendants! To be in Abraham’s bosom is to be like him in heart and faith and to embrace, with him, the promises which he saw afar off - the promises of his covenant-keeping God who had sworn that He would give him a “land”; that the land would be given to him and to his “seed”; that this inheritance would be to him and to his seed FOREVER; that he would become a great nation and a company of nations; that in him and his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed; that his seed would become not only as the dust of the earth, but as the stars of heaven - a glory and dominion extending to the whole earth and far beyond to the eternal vastnesses of the unbounded universe, both earthly and heavenly, terrestrial and celestial, natural and spiritual! To be in Abraham’s bosom is to be “embraced” by the Abrahamic covenant, being brought into close, personal relationship with Abraham as a recipient of the promises! It means to be an Israelite, indeed!

LAZARUS IN ABRAHAM’S BOSOM

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus the rich man stands for the Jewish nation which at that time enjoyed the favor and blessing of God above all the nations of the earth. Lazarus, on the other hand, represents the people lying at Judah’s gate who were recipients of none of the blessings so lavishly bestowed upon them - the “Gentile” nations. Lazarus found himself in the “dog” class - an ostracized “Gentile,” an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, a foreigner from the covenants of promise, without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world. As to religion, all that the nations had were the crumbs that fell from the Jewish table. The influence of the Jews, as we have shown, permeated the whole of Roman life throughout the

Empire in the days of Christ, so that the nations did indeed eat the crumbs from their spiritual table. No more graphic picture could have been drawn of conditions at that time than that portrayed by Jesus in this remarkable parable. The story, however, contains a striking and astonishing PROPHECY - the rich man and Lazarus are to change places - the rich man finding his lot in estrangement, impoverishment and punishment, while Lazarus is spectacularly promoted to "Abraham's bosom" - the place of honor by Abraham, the position of favor and blessing, and of close, personal relationship. Oh, let us grasp this great truth! So few have ever gone deep enough with the Lord to discern its great import and far-reaching consequences. Very few really understand or believe this truth. To reject it is to parade the mere words of man and his ignorant imaginings as superior to and more dependable than divine inspiration. We dare not listen further to man. We must listen only to "Thus says the Lord." Now let us consider the actual fulfillment of our Lord's prophecy, and its wonderful significance and far-reaching consequences.

"Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:2-3). This text is taken from Paul's epistle to the Philippians. In the course of Paul's Spirit-inspired admonition to the saints in Philippi he states, "Beware of the concision." The word "concision" is an ironical expression which means mere "mutilation," that is, to cut off an essential part of; to render imperfect; to maim; to cut up; to destroy. Through the entire period of Paul's ministry, he constantly waged warfare against a class of Christians known as Judaizers. These Judaizers were actually Jews who made it their business to follow around in the places where Paul had ministered, creep into the midst of the believers (vast numbers of whom were Gentile "Proselytes of the Gate") whom Paul had founded on the truth, and defile these believers by proclaiming error and persuading them to become legalistic in their thinking and life-style by placing themselves under the law. And by so doing, the law became the rule by which they measured their righteousness. They were placing

their confidence of righteousness in the works of the flesh; in the external observances, the things which they could or could not do, thus making the platform of their salvation to be flesh rather than the reality of HIS INDWELLING LIFE.

We find the description of these Judaizers in the fifteenth chapter of Acts. They were from Judea (Acts 15:1). They were "Pharisees which believed" (Acts 15:5). They had belonged to the Church at Jerusalem (Acts 15:24). They were, or had been, in fellowship with the apostles. We learn these facts in Acts 15:1-2: "And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved ... therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them..." 'But!' one may exclaim, "what possible harm could be done simply by being circumcised or keeping some tenet of the law?" In answer we hear the words of the apostle Paul: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty where with Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that IF YOU BE CIRCUMCISED, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; you are FALLEN FROM GRACE. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which works by love" (Gal. 5:1-6).

Those Judaizers who taught legalism, law, and works, were those of whom Paul spoke when he cried out, "Beware of the concision." Beware of the concision! Beware of the mutilators! Those who would mutilate, cut off, cut up, make maim your faith in Jesus Christ and your standing in Him by grace, thus making your faith void and of no effect through the keeping of the law. They would mutilate your flesh by having you circumcised; but in the mutilating of the foreskin of your flesh they would in reality be mutilating your faith and standing in Christ by grace. For says the apostle, "Your circumcision is made uncircumcision," and again, "and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter (law); whose praise is not of men but of God" (Rom.

2:25,29). How clear that our circumcision is spiritual, in the heart and spirit of the inner man; but if we put confidence in the flesh we then make void that which is spiritual, life, and reality.

For what then did circumcision serve? Paul tells us in Rom. 4:11 that circumcision is merely a “sign,” symbol, indication, or token. It is a seal or stamp; a mark of the righteousness of that faith which Abraham had BEFORE he was circumcised. Circumcision was a mere ordinance, an outward sign or symbol of an inner work of grace. The inspired apostle declared that Christ came to bring into being the circumcision which is in the heart and in the spirit. Stand with me for a moment with bowed head and reverent heart while we hear Paul speak again, “What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, has found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he has whereof to glory; but not before God. For what says the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that works is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that works not, but believes on Him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describes the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputes righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Comes this blessedness then upon the circumcision (Jews) only, or upon the uncircumcision (Gentile proselytes and Gentile believers) also? For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be THE FATHER OF A-L-L T-H-E-M T-H-A-T B-E-L-I-E-V-E, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: and the FATHER OF CIRCUMCISION to them who are NOT OF THE CIRCUMCISION only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but

through the righteousness of faith. For if they which be of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: for the law works wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to A-L-L T-H-E S-E-E-D; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM; who is the FATHER OF US ALL, (as it is written, I have made you a father of many nations)” (Rom. 4:1-17).

What could be any plainer than these words of the apostle?

Abraham believed God. And it (his faith) was credited to him for righteousness! He then received the sign of circumcision, which was a seal or symbol of the righteousness which he already had by faith when he was not yet circumcised (still a Gentile!), that he might be the father of all those who now believe, though they are uncircumcised, in order that this righteousness might be credited to them also, as it was to Abraham before he was circumcised, before he was of God’s chosen family by covenant.

Abraham is emphatically declared to be the father of A-L-L who believe! There is no distinction as to race, nationality, or color. There is no distinction between Jew, Israelite, or Gentile. Abraham is the father of ALL those who believe, who are of the faith of Abraham! That includes every born-again believer through the ages, of whatever ethnic origin or color, whether he be Jew or Greek, bond or free, male or female. Flesh, racial lines, color, station, and class, all fade and pass away in Christ. In HIM there is no middle wall of partition: no distinction. Can we understand that? That regardless of a man’s race, nationality or color; if he is a believer; if he is of the spirit and faith of Abraham he can stand and say, “I have Abraham to my father! Father Abraham has many sons and I am one of them!” And being a son of Abraham of necessity makes him an Israelite. Who, then, shall inherit the promises made to father Abraham? Who are his heirs? Hear the answer! “For the promise that Abraham should be heir of the world, was NOT made to Abraham, NOR to those who are his seed through the law, but rather, to those who are

His seed through the righteousness of faith!” (Rom. 4:13). The apostle goes on and says that it is this way so that the promise made to Abraham might be sure to ALL the seed, to ALL his offspring; not only those who were under law, but also to those who are made heirs through faith.

There is no distinction. All are one. Paul then closes his argument by declaring that Abraham is the father of us ALL. Paul was writing this letter to the believers in Rome, composed of Jews and Gentile proselytes and converted pagans, and stands as it were in their midst and with one grand inclusive gesture declares, “Abraham is the father of us A-L-L!” Then hastily he adds, “As it is written, I have made you a father of many nations.” The significant phrase, “AS it is written,” makes the fact that Abraham is a father of many nations contingent upon the foregoing fact that he is the father of US ALL: and the fact that he is the father of us all rests firmly upon the blessed foundation that he is the father of ALL WHO B-E-L-I-E-V-E. So while it is true that a great company of nations has come from Abraham according to the flesh, a beautiful tenderness fills my spirit when the precious thought thrills my soul that Paul is here talking about something higher and grander far than flesh. It is not through natural lineage that Abraham truly fulfills the promise of being a father of many nations, but through those, gathered out of every tongue, and tribe, and people, and nation who have become the children of Abraham through faith!

God’s chosen people are not counted according to the natural line of descent. They never will be. Faith in God through Jesus Christ is all that matters. Faith makes all the difference. Those who have received this living faith are children of Abraham. All others are simply strangers and foreigners. Natural lines make no difference whatsoever. “For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him” (Rom. 10:12). Some would question this word of the Lord and protest, “Oh, but there IS a difference!” But the Holy Spirit says, ‘There is NO DIFFERENCE between the Jew and the Greek.’ There is N-O D-I-F-F-E-R-E-N-C-E! For the same Lord over ALL is rich unto ALL that call upon Him. All

nationalities are on exactly the same footing. "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Know therefore that they which are of faith, the same ARE THE CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen (ethnos: nations) through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In you shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:6-9). These words speak for themselves.

When Jesus Christ came to this world of the seed of Abraham through his son Isaac, He came as a seed. Abraham was the seed from which sprang the millions of the house of Judah and the hundreds of millions of the house of Israel. But Paul, in unfolding this great mystery, fastens the hope of all creation on one particular seed, and that seed is Christ. This he does in Gal. 3:16 by saying, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He said not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to your seed, which IS CHRIST." Therefore of all the vast multitudes as the dust of the earth, the sands of the sea, and the stars of heaven in number, the one seed of greatest importance, and the only seed which is made the heir of all the promises given to Abraham, is Jesus Christ.

It is a thing of magnificent wonder that our Lord is called the seed of Abraham! It seems a most singular thing that in that long ago Eden the Lord God told the serpent that the seed of the woman would bruise his head. Why did He not say that the man that should come from the woman would bruise the serpents head? Why did He refer to that man as "her seed," the seed of the woman? It will be a great blessing to your heart to understand the vital truth that "seed" is not only the product of some other life before it but seed is also that which reproduces itself and its kind many thousand fold from generation to generation. On a certain day some Greeks approached the disciples of Jesus with the request, "Sirs, we would see Jesus." This request was promptly carried to Jesus by Andrew and Philip, and our Lord gave this strange and very remarkable reply,

“The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone: but if it die, it brings forth much fruit” (Jn. 12:23-24). In this cryptic statement Jesus likened Himself to a seed, a grain of wheat, which was to fall into the ground and die. He would be sown as a seed into the earth and be raised again. Not only would He be raised in glorification, but in centuries yet to come this seed, which was Jesus Christ, would produce a vast harvest of many sons of God in His exact image and likeness. No seed is raised from the earth as just a singular seed, there is always an increase, the natural law of development being “first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.” Only one seed was planted in the earth, and the Christ who came out of that Palestinian tomb was not the harvest - merely the blade breaking the ground. The multitude that will appear in the time of harvest will be the seed of the seed, the increase, every one bearing the image and likeness of that Christ seed which was planted in death.

I am certain that our Lord’s reply was a mystery to those men to whom He spoke. They made their earnest request, “Sirs, we would see Jesus,” and He responded with His mysterious dissertation. We are not told whether Jesus ever consented to have these Greeks interview Him, but in answer to their request He gave the strange reply, “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone: but if it die, it brings forth much fruit.” His message to them was simply this: If they saw Jesus at that time they would see only one seed, one grain in the image of God - the man Christ Jesus. But there would be more, much more to Christ than appeared to them that day! A whole universal field of ripened grain was to follow in His likeness, born of that original seed, imbued with the very same life, raised in the same resurrection, who would be the SONS OF GOD and THE CHRIST even as He is a Son of God and the Christ of God. The many sons would form ONE CHRIST, Head and body, each having the seed of life in himself. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the seed of Abraham, appeared as the firstborn among many brethren (Rom. 8:29). And you, my beloved, will understand a great mystery when you understand that ALL who are products

of and partakers of the life of Him who is the seed of Abraham themselves become T-H-E S-E-E-D OF ABRAHAM.

Those in these last days whom God is giving, by His Spirit, understanding of the whole mystery of God in Christ that is in the scriptures, know that the whole mystery and purpose and plan of God in Christ is revealed in the family of Abraham, and in God's dealings with the family of Abraham, from Genesis through Revelation. This mystery begins in Genesis 12, where God called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees, and gave Abraham a promise saying, "Leave your home, your country, and your father's house, and go into a new land that I will show you, and I will bless you, and make your name great, and in you and in your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Few of God's people today and not very many of God's ministry fully understand this promise that was given by God to Abraham. What God was really saying was that some day, yea, in these last days He would ultimately bring forth a perfect seed, a many-membered perfect seed, a descendant from the line of Abraham who would rule and reign and govern this earth, solve all the world's problems, and bring perfect blessing to all the families of the earth.

Now the apostle Paul, in the book of Galatians, tells us that when God gave this promise to Abraham, if He had said seeds, plural, in you and in your seeds, instead of seed, singular; then the promises of God to Abraham would be fulfilled to the Jews in the State of Israel, or in the great Israel nations of Europe and America, the natural descendants of Abraham according to the flesh. But the apostle tells us by the Spirit that since God said seed, singular, and not seeds plural, then the seed that God was referring to which would bless all the families of the earth is THAT SEED WHICH IS CHRIST, and since we are the body of Christ, then we the body of Christ are that ultimate seed of Abraham that God promised in the long ago would come forth in the earth, and ultimately govern the earth, solve all the world's problems, and bring blessing to all the families of the earth. Therefore, the whole Bible from Genesis 12 through Revelation 12, is just the divine record of God progressively working in

every generation through the family of Abraham to purify and perfect the line of Abraham, until ultimately in these last days He would bring forth from the line of Abraham a perfect seed, a many-membered perfect seed, who would govern this world, rule and reign in the earth, solve all the world's problems and bring perfect blessing to all the families of the earth.

When once one's eyes are opened to this mystery in the scripture it is very easy to follow the lineage of Abraham, generation after generation, down through the ages, and see how God has been working in each generation to progressively purify the line of Abraham more and more, to ultimately bring forth that perfect seed. Therefore, when we follow the line of Abraham down through the scriptures we find that out of Abraham came Isaac; and Isaac was the seed in his generation. Then out of Isaac came Jacob; and Jacob was the seed in his generation. Then out of Jacob came twelve sons, a many-membered seed; and they were the seed of Abraham that God worked through in their generation. Then out of twelve sons came twelve tribes of Israel, and they were the seed that God worked through in their generation. Out of them came twelve more tribes in the next generation, and they were the seed in their generation.

Finally, two thousand years ago, out of the twelve tribes came Jesus, and HE WAS THE SEED while He was here. Then Jesus, while He was here, purchased a bride with His own blood, the woman the Church, and on the day of Pentecost His Spirit roared back into this Church which is His body, and this people were born again of the incorruptible seed of the Word (Christ) of God, which lives and abides forever. The first generation of spiritual Israel was born, and they were the seed of Abraham in their generation. The ministry of that generation preached into the spiritual womb of the Church the incorruptible seed, the Word of God, and the second generation of spiritual Israel was born, and they were the seed in their generation. Out of them came the third generation of the true Israel of God, and they were the seed in their generation. Finally now, in these days out of them has come us, the present generation of Israel, the seed of

Abraham. We are the seed of Abraham that God is working through in our generation, and out of us is going to come a many-membered manchild who will grow up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ, be changed into the incorruptible, immortal, eternal nature of God, and become that perfect masculine seed through whom Christ will reign throughout the age and ages of the Kingdom of God on earth, solve all the world's problems and bring perfect blessings to all the families of the earth, even as God promised Abraham long ago.

All the wonderful promises of God made to Abraham were given to only two people - Abraham and his seed. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He said not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to your seed, which is Christ." Then follows the enlightening proclamation: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). As many of Y-O-U (Galatians: Jews, Israelites and Gentiles) as have been baptized INTO CHRIST have put on Christ! And to this very Christ ALL THE PROMISES TO ABRAHAM ARE GIVEN! Can we not see by this that the Abrahamic promises are realized only in that people who are MADE ONE IN HIM, partakers of His life; the promises are to the body of Christ, irrespective of race, color or nationality. No wonder Paul cries out in the very next verse: 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for YOU ARE ALL ONE in Christ Jesus. And IF YOU BE CHRIST'S, THEN ARE YOU ABRAHAM'S SEED, AND HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE" (Gal. 3:28-29). Oh, let us grasp this great truth! Whether you be Jew, Israelite, Greek, Galatian, British, American, Spanish, African, Chinese, or any other nationality - I-F you be Christ's, T-H-E-N (and then only) are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

One day Jesus was speaking with some Jews. They were the religious leaders of their day, honored and respected. They thought that they amounted to something because they claimed the distinction of being the natural descendants of Abraham. They said, "Abraham is our father. "Jesus said to them, "If you

were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill Me ... you are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do" (Jn. 8:33-44). These were, without doubt, the natural seed of Abraham. But they made the fatal mistake of rejecting the Christ - THE seed of Abraham; the co-sharer of all Of Abraham's promises - realizing not that their position in Abraham and also in God depended upon their position in Christ, who was both the son of Abraham and the Son of God. IF YOU BE CHRIST'S, T-H-E-N are you Abraham's seed, says the Lord. And not until THEN! If the Jew be outside of Christ, he is not the seed of Abraham. It is just as simple as that. And, precious friend of mine, the white, English-speaking Anglo-Saxon man or woman outside of Jesus Christ is no more the seed of Abraham than the Ethiopian bushman or the Australian aboriginal! When the heathen do believe in Christ, being washed by the water of regeneration, partakers of His life, born of His Spirit, a new creation in Christ Jesus, they then become the seed of Abraham by the faith of Abraham, and heirs according to the promise. When, because of a Roman centurion's great faith, his servant was healed, it was with this very truth in mind that Jesus remarked, "And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom (natural heirs, fleshly offspring) shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mat. 8:11-12). In a coming day Abraham will stand at the head of a vast multitude and will look upon his Seed which has sprung forth out of every tribe and kindred and tongue and nation and people. There will be the red, brown, yellow, black and white; and Abraham will be able to say, "These are my children, for they have my faith!" Then Abraham will step back and merge with the multitude, and Jesus will include His father Abraham in the company of His own sons, and the Head of this great Christ will say, "Behold, I and the children which God has given Me are for signs and wonders in Israel" (Isa. 8:18; Heb. 2:12-13).

My sincere purpose in writing of these mysteries is that all who read might see WHO ISRAEL IS. There is a marvelous prophetic

passage of scripture in Gen. 28:24-28 in which is related the experience of the very first Israel of God. "And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaks. And he said, I will not let you go, except you bless me. And he said unto him, What is your name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, your name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince has your power with God and with men, and has prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray, give me your name. And he said, Why is it that you ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."

It may stagger your imagination to hear what I now say, but once you grasp the truth, you will be mightily helped by it. The kernel of truth in the story related above concerns how Jacob became Israel, Prince of God. It's so very important for those who would go on to sonship to study the life of Jacob who was first called Israel. For, as a brother has written, "Jacob was not the only Israel, but he was only the first Israel of God. For you see, the word Israel simply means PRINCE OF GOD, and Jacob was only the first man that God called out of the world to deal with him until He had changed his nature from the nature of a schemer and a grasper and a supplanter, which was what his name Jacob meant by interpretation, to the nature of one who no longer went through life and thought to conquer life by his own scheming and grasping and supplanting, but became one who, completely helpless in his own strength, could take hold of God and say, I will not let you go until I get the blessing. And when God had changed Jacob's nature from the nature of a schemer, a grasper, and a supplanter to the nature of a prince of God, He gave him a new name to fit his new nature.

"The Bible says there wrestled a man with him all night long. And toward the breaking of the day, when he prevailed not, the man touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh and Jacob became

absolutely helpless and could walk no longer in his own strength. And then the picture changes. No longer is the angel of the Lord wrestling with Jacob, but now Jacob is wrestling with the angel of the Lord. And he takes a fresh hold and the angel of the Lord said, Let me go, for the day breaks. The angel really didn't want him to let go, he was only testing Jacob to see how hard Jacob could hang on. And Jacob takes a fresh grip, and says, I will not let you go until I get the blessing. And the angel of the Lord says, What is your name? He says, Jacob, schemer, grasper, supplanter. And the angel says, No, you shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, prince of God. For as a prince has your power with God and men, and have prevailed. No longer Jacob, schemer, grasper, supplanter, but Israel, prince of God. And as such Jacob was only the type of all those in every generation that God calls by His Spirit, out of the world, to change their nature from the nature of schemer, grasper, supplanter, fleshly dependency and effort to a prince of God with power. Then He gives them a new name to fit their new nature. Therefore, Jacob was the first Israel for he was the first called out of the world that God might change his name and his nature. Out of Jacob came twelve sons and they were God's Israel for that generation. Out of them came twelve tribes and they were God's Israel for their generation. Then, finally, out of the twelve tribes came Jesus, and while Jesus was in the world, He was God's Israel, God's Prince. And then out of Jesus came a generation of enchristed Israel and they were God's Israel in their generation. Then over the last 2,000 years have come generation after generation of enchristed Israel. Each out of the other generation, and they were God's Israel for their generation and now, we, who have been called by the Spirit of God out of the masses of the world and religious Babylon that God might deal with us and change our nature, that He might change our name, we are God's Israel for our generation.

“Dearly Beloved, this is the place that God has been apprehending you and me for, waiting for us to come to from the day we were born. Yea, the river Jabok where we have been brought to the place of aloneness with God, separated from the world and religious Babylon. Here we sit completely helpless and

the hollow of our thigh has been touched where we can no longer walk in our own strength. No more schemes to depend on, no more of our own thinking, ways, and effort. The flesh has schemed and worked our way into a corner where we can't go backward or forward, the only way we can look is up. Then the Spirit of God begins to wrestle with us through that long night of darkness wherein He seeks to change our nature from one who is always seeking to grasp and scheme and push our own way through life, to one who has become completely helpless. No longer able to walk in our own strength, but in prayer and the spirit can take hold of God and say, I will not let You go until I get the answer. There is going to come a breaking day for us; yea, our long night of darkness and testing is coming to an end, and the daybreak is coming to us where we'll become that helpless in our own strength. And God will have finally changed our nature from one who continually tries to grasp and supplant our own way through, to one who, completely helpless, takes hold of the Lord, and in the spirit says, I will not let you go until I get the blessing and the answer.

When that happens God will change our name and give us a new name to fit our new nature. Only the new name that He gives us is not just Israel, Prince of God. The name that He gives us is CHRIST SON OF GOD. For then will be fulfilled the scripture wherein Jesus said, "Him that overcomes ... I will write upon him My new name" (Rev. 3:12). From that hour forth we have power with God and with men and have prevailed over every battle that will ever come against us, for God has changed our nature from one who fights his own battles to one who has become completely helpless; one through whom God fights. Then the angel of the Lord will say to us, 'What is your name? Jacob, schemer, grasper, supplanter? Oh no! From henceforth you shall have a new name. Not just Israel, Prince of God, but Christ, Son of God. And you have prevailed. Hallelujah!' " And these, my beloved, as Jacob-Israel of old, ARE THE TRUE ISRAEL OF GOD! "If you be Christ's, T-H-E-N are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Paul says to the saints in Galatia, "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, ARE THE CHILDREN OF PROMISE" (Gal. 4:28).

The Philippian Church most certainly consisted of both Jews and Gentiles. The first convert was Lydia, who was a Jewess (Acts 16:14). Then followed the case of the girl possessed with a spirit of divination. Paul cast out the spirit, and undoubtedly the girl was saved. In Acts 16:19-21 we learn that her masters were Romans, which means in all probability that the girl was also Roman. Then followed the conversion of the Philippian jailer, who most certainly was a Gentile. It is only reasonable to conclude that the greater part of the Philippian Church were Gentile Proselytes of the Gate or pagans, as were the other Churches founded by Paul who was the apostle to the nations. And note carefully, that he draws no distinction between himself and his Gentile converts. "WE are the circumcision" (Phil. 3:3). And oh, that the Church today might learn this simple, yet immensely important truth! "W-E (both Israelite and Gentile) are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH. "It is high time for us to understand that natural birth has nothing to do with being of the circumcision or the Kingdom of God. "Except a man be born again he cannot... enter into the Kingdom of God" (Jn. 3:3,5). Natural lineage and natural rites and ceremonies and ordinances have nothing whatever to do with making us a part of Gods chosen people. WE are the circumcision who have NO CONFIDENCE in the FLESH! But we, Jew, Israelite, and Gentile; rich and poor; free and bond; male and female, worship God in the Spirit, having received a circumcision of the heart by the operation of the Spirit of God.

This blunt expose of the fleshly confidence of the natural Israel was certainly a blow to the Jews of Paul's day. The new standard of righteousness and favor with God no longer depended on their genealogy or lineage, for now the axe was laid to the root of the tree. The Jews' religion was based on the fact of their ability to trace their ancestry back to Abraham, but fleshly lineage would no longer count or be acceptable to God. "WE are the circumcision ... who have NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH." When Jesus was selecting His twelve disciples the scripture says, "Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of

him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile” (Jn. 1:47). Jesus’ reference to Nathanael as “an Israelite indeed” implies that at the time Jesus came there were those who were Israelites in name only. One unmistakable mark of an Israelite in name only is one whose confidence is in the flesh. It pains me to say it, but it has been my experience that many who embrace the identity of Anglo-Saxon-Celtic Israel are High-Masters in the cult of those who place confidence in the flesh. Some, like the Jews of old, feel that ancestry with Abraham gives special claim to the promises and purposes of God, even claiming that fleshly descent is the first prerequisite for sonship. God forbid! We might well fill this whole book with the glorious truth of sonship, but no factor of this truth is more solemn or of greater import than the words of our Lord wherein He stated, “It is the Spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing” (Jn. 6:63). Notice that Jesus did not say that the flesh profits a little, or has a small advantage, or that the flesh gives you a head start towards sonship. He said plainly, “The flesh profits N-O-T-H-I-N-G.” It is vain and foolish to trust in the flesh, and John the Baptist put it rather succinctly, “And begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father...” (Lk. 3:8). So you have Abraham for your father! That fact alone will not get you into the Kingdom, nor will it enable you to inherit the promises. In order to qualify as the Israel of God one must come by way of the cross and the resurrection power of Jesus Christ. John went on to say, “...for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.” And let me ask you, precious friend of mine, If God is able of stones to raise up children unto Abraham, should it be thought a thing incredible or impossible that He should of the Gentiles raise up seed to Abraham? Because men walk in the natural and are thus incapable of grasping spiritual realities, even though they may profess to be spiritual, we have on every hand those who think of Israel almost wholly on the natural plane. Brethren, WE are Israel. WE are the Kingdom of God. WE are the elect. WE are the many-membered Christ. WE are God’s chosen people. WE are the sons of God. WE are God’s witnesses. And it is not because of our national or blood lines, but altogether by grace and through faith. “They which are

of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.” Do you believe it?

All who partake of this circumcision of which Jesus is the minister, are the true Israel of God. And so, contrary to popular belief, the natural Jew is, in reality, no Jew at all! That is, if the Word of God means anything at all. And it does. Hear me you all! “He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly (in the flesh); neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter” (Rom. 2:28-29). The testimony is sure: He is NOT a Jew, which is one outwardly in the flesh! But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly, in the heart and spirit, REGARDLESS OF WHAT HE IS IN THE FLESH. The inner man of the new creation is unaffected by what a man is outwardly, in the flesh He has no confidence in the flesh, but worships God in the spirit. And, I might add, he is NOT an Anglo-Saxon Israelite, who is one outwardly, in the flesh! But he is an Israelite, which is one inwardly, in the spirit. Do you believe it? Do you? God says so. Is His Word true or false?

Those who say they are, and without doubt are, the natural descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; who call themselves Jews and Israelites are nothing more than counterfeits and frauds. The real Jew and the real Israelite is one who has become the seed of Abraham through faith. Not by natural blood, but by the transfusion of the blood (life) of the Christ. These are they who have been circumcised in mind and heart and spirit, without hands. It is all by faith, the faith of Abraham. Therefore, all who call themselves the seed of Abraham, or the circumcision, or Jews, or Israelites, without being born again are bastards, or as our Lord said, “You are of your father the devil.” These are spoken of in Rev. 2:9, “I know your works, and tribulation, and poverty, and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan.’ These solemn words of wisdom and understanding are written to the Church which is His body. Again, “Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and

worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you” (Rev. 3:9).

In spite of these scriptures, there are some who still declare that the “circumcision” or these false Jews will rule the world. Shame on them! Those who are true Jews are going to rule the world! Those who are Christ’s, irrespective of race or color. Of course there will be natural Jews (and Anglo-Saxon-Celtic Israelites!) among them; those who through faith in Jesus Christ, like every other man, have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ALL of God’s chosen people, those who worship God in the spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh, will rule the world. “For the saints of the most High shall take the Kingdom, and possess the Kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever!” (Dan. 7:18). The SAINTS shall possess the Kingdom. The Jews, as a people, have never been saints. The Anglo-Saxon-Celtic peoples, as a race, have not been saints either! No one will dispute who the saints are. They are most certainly those who have been regenerated by the power of the Holy Ghost, irrespective of nationality. This fact is testified by the whole of the New Testament.

As the glory has departed from the natural seed of Abraham, and from the fleshly circumcision, so it long ago departed from the earthly Jerusalem, and has fallen instead on the heavenly Jerusalem, the New Jerusalem, which is from above, which will rule as the city foursquare from pole to pole and from sea to sea. To believers at Ephesus Paul declared, “Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom you also are built together for an habitation of God through the spirit” (Eph. 2:19-22).

Those who would relegate the blessings and promises to a natural seed of Abraham seem to have forgotten that it is those who “suffer with Christ” that shall also reign with Him (Rom. 8:17;

II Tim. 2:12). The natural Jews would not have “this man” to reign over them. They said “His blood be on us, and on our children” (Mat. 27:25). They cited, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!” Little wonder that Jesus said unto them, “Therefore I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard His parables, they perceived that He spoke of them” (Mat. 21:43,45). So we learn that there definitely was a transfer of the Kingdom of God from the house of Judah to a nation born of the seed of the Christ, gathered out of all nations, sanctified by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, made precious and elect. And it is this great multitude which IS NOW LAZARUS IN ABRAHAM’S BOSOM! The Kingdom of God was taken from the house of Judah and their house has been left unto them desolate unto this day. THE RICH MAN IS IN HELL! Now, we must all enter into the Kingdom of God by the same route. Jesus said, “I am the way. I am the door.” He that climbs up any other way, even by claiming natural descent, is a thief and a robber. Intimate relationship and vital union with Jesus Christ is all that counts. And that’s all that ever will count. He that has the Son has life. He that has not the Son of God has not life. He that suffers with Christ shall reign with Him. He that is of faith, the same is the child of Abraham. It’s just that simple.

This brings us to the question raised by the apostle Paul in the eleventh chapter of Romans where he says, “I say then, Has God cast away His people (natural Israel)?” (Rom. 11:1). The apostle is asking, Is there no hope left for the natural seed of Abraham? Is the door forever closed on them? Are they utterly rejected from the favor and blessing of God? Are they cast away from the purposes of God with no promise remaining? He then answers his own question by saying, “God forbid!” The apostle goes on to assert that he, himself, is an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. If they were utterly rejected, then he himself would be hopeless, cut off from Christ, rejected from his apostleship. Following this he speaks of how Elijah thought that all Israel had rebelled against the Lord and had been abandoned by Him. But in that hour, God made Elijah to

know that there were yet 7,000 who remained faithful to Yahweh. Then the very definite and glorious statement shows just how the fleshly Israel is preserved as God's chosen people: "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11:5). Oh no! God has not utterly rejected the descendants of Abraham, for they, too, like any man of any race may be saved! And so the apostle says that there is a remnant, a portion, a company of the natural seed which now has found favor with God according to the election of GRACE. They too, can become recipients of the promises - through faith in Jesus Christ! It is by grace through faith. Interestingly enough, in our day there is more than merely a small remnant, there is a vast multitude of Abraham's seed that serves the Lord. And the great majority of these are from Anglo-Saxon-Celtic Israel! The inspired apostle hastily adds, "And if by grace, then it is NO MORE OF WORKS (natural means): otherwise grace is no more grace. What then? Israel (natural) has not obtained that which he seeks for; but the election (of grace) has obtained it, and the rest were blinded. According as it is written, God has given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear; 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. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness? For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. 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 you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them partakes of the root and fatness of the olive tree (Abrahamic Covenant); boast not against the branches. But if you boast, you bears not the root, but the root you. You wilt say then, the branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. But be not high-minded, but

fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not you. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness; otherwise you also shall be cut off. And they also, IF THEY ABIDE NOT STILL IN UNBELIEF, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again” (Rom. 11:5-23). This whole matter of branches broken off and other branches grafted in is but another parable illustrating the same truth contained in our Lord’s story of the rich man and Lazarus. The branches broken off are the rich man; the branches grafted in (in Abraham’s bosom) are Lazarus. Blessed be the name of the Lord!

THE RICH MAN IN TORMENT

One of the cherished doctrines of those who know not the truth, is the pathetic ignorance that such as call themselves Jews, and have returned to the land of Palestine will, in time, rule the world. They are merely too ignorant of facts to know that the new land of Canaan for the new age is a domain on which the sun never sets. “His dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even unto the ends of the earth” (Zech. 9:10; Ps. 72:8). They are also too ignorant to know that this worldwide dominion is even now ready to be established by the sons of God, the Christ, the seed of Abraham, through whom all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. All of this was prophesied by our Saviour in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

Alas, for the poor rich man, how many things he does now that he never did in his day of splendor. Old things have passed away, all things have become new. The purple, the fine linen, the sumptuous fare, are all gone, and in their place is torment, want, prayer; and, though last mentioned, not the least point recorded for our learning - the eyes of the rich man have been opened and he sees the Kingdom of Heaven. What a reversal! “And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and sees Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.” Oh, what a rude awakening! Here he had thought himself to have a through ticket straight to glory. But he was wrong! The poor, despised, insignificant Lazarus, whom

he would not even countenance on earth, is now at the place of honor afar off, where he thought he should be. This indicates the house of Judah or the Jews of this dispensation seeing the Abrahamic Covenant fulfilled in another people (Mat. 21:43), and as far as they are concerned the prospect of the gracious promises given to Abraham being fulfilled in them is certainly "afar off," and it devastates them. And you will find that they are ever envious of the constant blessing God has given to His people.

"And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame" (Lk. 16:24). What? Think about it! If he is in a literal, raging flame, completely surrounded and engulfed by seething fires, would he be carrying on a conversation? Instantly his hair, eyebrows, eyelashes would have dissolved; his skin would begin blistering, and he would have only a fraction of a second to emit a bloodcurdling SCREAM! No, this conversation is not coming from a man who is completely engulfed in literal fire! What then is **TORMENTING** the rich man? Why, what he **SEES!** Notice: It says he "lift up his EYES..." even as Jesus warned the Pharisees, You shall **SEE** Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom, and you yourselves cast out!" Shocked realization comes to the rich man's mind. According to the parable, he instantly recognizes Lazarus, and Abraham. He sees them as if in a glorious state; perhaps even engaged in partaking of a sumptuous banquet, not unlike the hundreds of banquets the rich man enjoyed during his life, all the while offering only the leavings of his table for Lazarus! The fire is a word, a burning word of authority, as Jeremiah said, "Your word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones" (Jer. 20:9). Ah, it was the **WORD OF THE KINGDOM** brought by Jesus, which always angered, enraged, and infuriated the Jews! Provoked and indignant beyond explanation his mouth becomes completely dry, his tongue virtually cleaves to the roof of his mouth, and he cannot even moisten his lips! In mental anguish and paralyzing fright he calls out for Lazarus to at least "dip his finger in water" and **COOL** his Pharisaic **TONGUE** (doctrine of the Pharisees), for he was **TORMENTED** in this flame!

In the Greek, the word used here for “torment” is BASANOS which is what is commonly known in English as the “touchstone.” Its proper usage in olden times was to try the genuineness of gold. The pure gold rubbed on the stone would leave a peculiar mark, different to that of other metals or alloys. Therefore it acquired a symbolic significance: a test or criterion for determining the quality or the genuineness of a thing; to test for purity or truth. The hell of the rich man was not a place where he was tortured by a torment sadistically inflicted, but a condition of testing for truth or purity. Our great God is not an almighty monster, a celestial Hitler or a heavenly Stalin, but ever the Lord of compassion and tender mercies. However, the best of earthly fathers must at times find it expedient to inflict a measure of pain and suffering on a son, to serve as a means of correction. That is the way in which the word “touchstone” is used in this parable. The rich man’s torment, then, is that which is effected by the LIVING and ENERGETIC WORD of God, for this Word is the “discerner and analyzer and sifter (Wuest) of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). When the rich man was being tormented in the flames, as he watched Lazarus from afar in Abraham’s bosom, he was having his GENUINENESS AND QUALITY tested by the ESSENCE-WORD of God, which is the living spirit of prophecy, which is, in reality, God Himself - for in the beginning was the Word, and the Word WAS GOD! Truly, OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE!

On the individual level I have seen many a man tormented by the living Word of God! A friend has ably written, “We have seen that the pouring out of the New Wine, which is the positive anointed Word of the Kingdom, will break the old wineskins. What we are confronted with here, however, is the awful truth that there are two ways that it will work to destroy the wineskins. In the first, which relates to the remnant, the election, the New Wine is poured in, bringing such an essence of truth with it that the elect will automatically reject and move out of the realm of static religious form. This brings life! But to those who cannot release the form and offer it up as a sacrifice to God, there comes an altogether different effect. God must move in to claim His own

sacrifice. This is what happened in the period that brought the Church age. Those who formed the remnant of Israel received the New Wine of the Spirit with joy, and left behind the animal sacrifices, because they knew they were partaking of the true sacrifice. They forsook the law and commandments, the rituals and ceremonies and endless ordinances because they had grasped the reality of the new day. The essence of Judaism was fulfilled in them. But to those who clung desperately to the old, the New Wine had another effect. Fulfilled in the firstfruits of that day, the old form was already cracked, and because it was already fulfilled God sent the Roman armies in to carry out the garbage that remained. Thus we find that it was as Paul said, 'We are a fragrance of life unto life, but we are a fragrance (odor) of death - unto death.' To those who are alive, we smell fragrantly alive. But to those who are dead, we have the stench of death! But it was the same anointing that did both works. There was not a word of life for one group and a word of death and judgment for another. It was the SAME WORD - but falling on different ears. It was the same rain - but falling on different ground. It was the same sun rising - but shining on different material. As the old saying goes, 'The same sun that melts wax, hardens clay.' That is why, in Rev. 22:11 the Lord says, 'He that is unjust let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.' One Greek commentator said that the sense of the Greek in this passage is, 'Let him be more and more filthy, more and more unjust, more and more righteous, more and more holy.' In other words, the LIGHT reveals the condition - it does not CREATE IT! I like what I read in Wuest the other night: 'Light rejected, blinds!' Jesus said, 'Men refuse to come to the light because their deeds are evil.' The same Word that blesses one will become a curse to another because of the difference in the heart that receives it. This is why I say there is no need to judge Babylon, because 'He that believes not is condemned already.' A BEAUTIFUL WORD will condemn an unrighteous heart - and will at the same time deliver the righteous" -end quote.

The rich man was tormented by the effect of the very Word of the Kingdom which brought salvation to Lazarus! But beyond this - there is also that sense of torment that has been experienced by the rich man by virtue of the very condition in which he has found himself throughout the centuries since the dispensations changed. History interprets the rich man's doom. The story of Judah is the story of the flame of fire. Jewry as such has been in a veritable lake of fire ever since they as a nation rejected Christ. "You serpents, you generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of hell?" (Mat. 23:33). Jesus Christ foresaw and foretold the rejection of the Jews and the long night of wandering in unbelief that would follow. In Mat. 23:37-38 we have depicted the Lord Jesus Christ standing on the mount of Olives. He was weeping over the great city of Jerusalem that lay just below Him, and the great love of His heart for the Jews was poured out in most tender and sympathetic words. He exclaimed, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kills the prophets, and stones them which are sent unto you, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

What a beautiful figure Christ is using here to express His tender love for His own people according to the flesh! "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah" (Heb. 7:14). When the mother hen sees a storm brewing, immediately her first concern is for the fluffy little chicks that compose her brood. She gathers them under her wings, and protects them from the storm or from the hawk that may be flying overhead. Close to her breast they are sheltered and can feel the very heartbeat of the mother bird's love for them. This is the picture of the MOTHERHOOD OF GOD revealed in Jesus Christ. So He expressed Himself concerning the Jews. He would have gathered them to His bosom, and they would have felt His heartbeat of love for them, if they had only given Him a chance to do so; but they had rejected Him and were just getting ready to cry, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" He knew all about it. Jesus could foresee the entire scene of trial and crucifixion, and as He stood there upon the mountaintop weeping over them He was forced to exclaim, "Your house is left

unto you desolate.” The great and beautiful temple would soon be a desolation and a mass of debris. The service that had been the center of the worship of Jehovah for centuries was about to come to a close. Great Zion, the glory of the whole earth, would soon be a heap of ruins, lying in the dust.

The Roman people came to the city of Jerusalem some thirty-five Years after Jesus Christ was sent to the cross, and besieged the Holy City. When the city was captured, it is said that over a million Jews perished. Every tree that grew around the city of Jerusalem for over the radius of a mile was used in making crosses to crucify the Jews. History tells us that as many as ninety Jews were crucified upon one tree. Thus was fulfilled the prediction made by the Jews themselves - Let His blood be on us and on our children. Whereas the Jews sowed one cross upon Calvary’s hill, they reaped thousands for themselves at the destruction Of the Holy City. The Romans scattered the Jews to the four winds of heaven; and for two long milleniums they never came back again to Jerusalem and have not to this day returned to the bosom of Abraham. They have been rejected and despised as they have gone from nation to nation, until the Jewish name became a byword in almost the entire world. Just a few Jews continued to dwell in the city of Jerusalem during the centuries, and from week to week they came and continue to come out to a spot called the “Wailing Wall,” and there they have wept, longing for the return of those wonderful days of the long ago when Judah was basking in the sunlight of the favors of God and they were considered the favorites of the Most High. At the Wailing Wall the mournful wail of the Jews is heard: “On account of the priests, who have stumbled, we sit lonely and weep. On account of our kings who have despised Him (Jehovah) we sit lonely and weep. Oh, make haste, O Redeemer of Zion: speak to the heart of Jerusalem. May the royal government shine over Zion. Comfort those who mourn in Zion.” But although twenty centuries have passed by, their tears and prayers have been of no avail, for there is still a great gulf fixed and there is no way for them to pass over again to the old days of glory.

The Wailing Wall is mentioned in scripture. "Their heart cried unto the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river day and night: give thyself no rest" (Lam. 2:18). The Wailing Wall is an ancient wall, consisting largely of huge blocks of stone, which once formed part of the old temple of Solomon. This to the Jews is by far the most sacred part of the city of Jerusalem. They know that these colossal fragments of the time of Solomon antedate by a thousand years even the oldest of all other such memorials. There, century after century, the wretched exiles from Mt. Zion have come to kiss or bathe with tears these relics of their former glory. Now they are free to do so; but in past ages they paid enormous sums to their oppressors for this miserable privilege. It is a most pathetic instance of a nation's grief. How well I remember that when we were in Israel the scene at the wailing wall was to me the most pathetic scene of all. No one who has a particle of sympathy with human sorrow can gaze upon that scene without emotion. For, while some read aloud from the Old Testament words which describe the splendors of the ancient Kingdom, others moan and sob and beat their trembling hands against the wall. Everyone seems to be in motion, either nodding rhythmically, or rocking back and forth while chanting, mumbling, whispering, or shouting forth their words, while interspersed among the jumbled murmur of prayers are deep groans and sighs, and betimes a sudden shriek as if of pain.

What wonder that they mourn! For two thousand years this former rich man has been in hell, tormented in his flame! For long centuries his history has been one of almost uninterrupted tragedy. Scattered throughout the world, scorned by all nations, Judah has been forced to suffer every form of persecution which men have been sufficiently cruel and ingenious to invent. Words fail to depict their sufferings. To torture, rob, and exile them, the despotism of a hundred kings has been exhausted. They have been bought and sold as slaves. The plague which devastated Europe in the Middle Ages was ascribed to them with horrible results. In France, throughout whole provinces, every Jew was burned. In Germany, too, their history for centuries is a hideous chronicle of human cruelty, culminating in the monstrous

holocaust during the second World War. We shudder at the brutal policy of Russia toward the Jews in this century and before, but let us not forget that all other nations, except free America, have acted in a similar way. The desperate situation into which the Jews fell as a result of their rejection of Jesus Christ is unequaled in human history. The Jews have been in torment ever since. And although a remnant now possesses the land of their fathers, their unending troubles make them a cup of trembling unto all who burden themselves with them. At this date the rich man is still in hell!

While the rich man had previously fared sumptuously, he is now seen in dire need - but he makes a mistake - he cries for the lost promises in Abraham instead of his Saviour! He pleads for Abraham to send help instead of Israel's Redeemer. He is all mixed up. His prayer is addressed to a person who has no power to answer prayer. Abraham has no power to save. Israel has no power to save. Fleshly identity and carnal works have no ability to bring the glory of God. He cries amiss and pleads his affliction which he has brought upon himself when he crucified his Saviour, even the Lord of Glory. He pleads for a drop of living water at the hands of Lazarus to cool his Pharasaic tongue, but it cannot be! The man is in want, and his need is a need that in this world God not only promises, but delights to supply. The scriptures abound with invitations to the poor and needy lacking water. To them "the Spirit and the bride say, Come." And they who have accepted the invitation for themselves, are commanded to say, "Come." And to all the words are addressed, "Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." But the same God, who without exception gives to every thirsty soul these most gracious invitations, tells them also to WHOM they must come for water. Not to saints, or angels, or the spirits of just men made perfect, but to the Lord Jesus Christ; to Him of whom, under the teaching of God's Spirit, the Samaritan woman asked water; to Him who in the temple stood and cried, "If any man thirst let him come unto ME and drink"; to Him who has said, whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up

into everlasting life.” The rich man went to Abraham and asked him for water, and had he asked him for it when he was on the earth, Abraham would have been just as unable to give it to him, as he was when he asked him for it in hell.

But, thank God! it can be obtained. Never has the cry, “I thirst,” gone up unto GOD, never did man feel his need of God, and cry for Him, and unto Him, without getting God. To every thirsting soul on earth, thus says the Lord: “When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue fails for thirst, I, the Lord, will hear them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water” (Isa. 41:17-18). As certain as the rising of tomorrow’s sun is the faithful promise of the almighty Lord, “For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so A-L-L I-S-R-A-E-L SHALL BE SAVED: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as you in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God has concluded them ALL in unbelief, that He might have mercy UPON ALL. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!” (Rom. 11:25-33).

THE GREAT GULF

“Abraham said, SON” (Lk. 16:25). What bitter retrospection of privileges enjoyed, of opportunities neglected, must that first word have called up! And remember, that like all other scripture, that word was written for our learning. “Abraham said, SON.”

What! A son of Abraham in hell! Can this be possible? And will Abraham himself, to whom the promises were made, acknowledge as his son one of the children of the wicked one? Yes: for no one knew better than did Abraham the distinction between a mere Israelite after the flesh, and the true descendants of that SEED in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed.

When the rich man in hell begs for mercy he is reminded that "there is a great gulf fixed" in between the poor man in Abraham's bosom and him in his hell, "so that they which would pass from us unto you cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from thence." Surely this was to clinch agony with agony and to rivet it with despair. There is certainly a great gulf fixed today between the Jews who have suffered hell during this dispensation of the Church, and the people who are now enjoying the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. The Jews believe that Jesus is an imposter to this very day. They are Christ rejecters, and know nothing whatever of life and reality and blessing and glory in the Spirit; but the body of Christ gathered out of all nations, enjoying the covenant blessing, is the seed of Abraham by faith, inheriting the promises. And between these two there is "a great gulf fixed." For the house of Judah to return to Abraham's bosom today would mean for the Jews to return to the bosom of Jesus Christ and this seems to be far from the present tendencies or aspirations of the Jewish people.

Certainly THIS GREAT GULF explains the mystery of why the Jew is the hardest and most discouraging mission field in the world. Has it never amazed you that many heathen can hear the Gospel once, see it clearly, accept it, and be born again by faith in Him? Prostitutes, drug addicts, the poor, the illiterate - all have gladly received the message of Christ and have been wondrously transformed thereby. They have been awakened! Their eyes see it - their ears hear it - their hearts understand and respond! Yet the Jew is under the grip of the spirit of slumber! A deep sleep from the Lord has fallen upon them, and they simply cannot understand anything that is said or preached about the Lord Jesus Christ. There are thousands of Jews dying right now

in total spiritual darkness about the Christ - going out into the spirit world under the spell of a thick darkness. It is not that they will not hear, rather, it is that they CANNOT! What a tragedy - millions of spiritually hungry, searching, seeking Jews; and they cannot find what they are looking for. The Messiah came - He lives today - and they can't see Him! They can't hear Him! They are in the dark about Him! They are in a spiritual coma!

Resigned, at last, to his fate, the rich man begs Abraham to send someone to his father's house, to warn his five brothers "lest they also come into this place of torment." Abraham then says, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them!" Amazing. It was by means of Moses and the prophets that Jesus opened the eyes of the two men that were with Him on the way to Emmaus, which caused their hearts to burn within them as they listened to Him on the way. It says in Lk. 24:27, "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself." And later these two men said one to the other, "Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures?" And when He stood in the midst of the eleven that night, and they were full of doubt and fear concerning His resurrection, even after He had eaten in their presence, and they had had a chance to gaze upon Him for some time and to become convinced that He was actually risen from the dead, yet it seems that the greatest confirmation came from the scriptures to which He referred. In Lk. 24:44-45 we read, "And He said unto them, These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures."

We live in an hour when many, including those who embrace the truths of sonship, reconciliation, etc., depreciate the value of the written Word of God. But it is through the power of the scriptures that nations are brought to the obedience of the faith of Christ. "Now to Him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the

revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of the faith” (Rom. 16:25). The prophecies of Moses concerning the Lord Jesus Christ are very clear and convincing. Just before Stephen was stoned, he mentioned one of those predictions made by Moses, which said unto the children of Israel concerning the coming of Jesus Christ, “This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall you hear” (Acts 7:37). Moses looked forward to the coming of Jesus Christ as seeing Him that is invisible and our Lord Jesus used Moses repeatedly to confirm His teachings. He even quoted Moses to the devil at the time of His temptation in the wilderness of Judea. Moses and the prophets were of special significance to the house of Judah and all Israel, and Stephen indicted the Jews for their blindness and unbelief in what was written in the scriptures concerning the Christ. He said, “Of this man’s (David’s) seed has God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus ... and ... they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him. And though they found no cause of death in Him, yet desired they Pilate that He should be slain” (Acts 13:23,27-28).

Notice what the rich man’s final argument is. “Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.” In his vision of the Kingdom of God he hears Abraham finally say, “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, **THOUGH ONE ROSE FROM THE DEAD!**” What a shocking truth! For in these very words the Lord Jesus proclaimed to the Pharisees **HIS OWN RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD**. For Jesus Christ of Nazareth, did, literally, **RISE FROM THE DEAD** - and the vast majority of Jews and Israelites scattered throughout the nations still didn’t believe, even though the fact was proclaimed to them from the scriptures and by eye witnesses to His majesty. On another occasion the Lord told them, “For had you believed Moses, you would have believed

Me: for he wrote of Me. But if you believe not his writings, how shall you believe My words?" (Jn. 5:46-47). So Jesus commissioned His apostles, sent the Holy Spirit, and formed them into the nucleus of His Church. He delivered to that Church the commission to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, and to disciple A-L-L NATIONS - Lazarus in Abraham's bosom! The rich man went to his hell. And there is a Great Gulf between to this very day!

A dark picture, yes. But wait, we are not through. We have yet a bright picture to present of this selfsame nation. These black clouds of judgment have a bright silver lining. There is a better day coming for the house of Judah, a glorious day. "Oh," you exclaim, "but no one can cross the Great Gulf - how can the Jews be saved?" Let us not be guilty of adding to the divine words. A. Burns wrote, "Here the parable comes to an end. It bears the marks of being an unfinished picture. The revelation of truth concerning the rich man's future rests, so to speak, while waiting the further unfolding of the divine plan concerning him. That unfolding takes place elsewhere in scriptures. This particular passage does not contain the entire history of this unhappy nation. It is but the darker side of it." There is a glory beyond the gloom, as Romans nine to eleven makes clear: "What will their taking back be but LIFE FROM THE DEAD?"

The Bible says that Abraham could not cross that abyss, nor could Lazarus. There is no denying that. But this fact must not be warped into the assertion that no one can cross it, or that it can never be crossed, for that would be adding to the Word of God. Let it be carefully noted that if inability to cross the Gulf is taught, as it certainly is, it is man's inability and not God's. The "Great Gulf fixed," which severs those who once were nigh but now are cast out, though utterly impassable for man, is not so for "Him who has the key of David, who opens and no man shuts, and shuts and no man opens, who HAS THE K-E-Y-S OF DEATH AND HELL" (Rev. 1:18; 3:7). Andrew Jukes asked, "Who are we, to say that the gulf, impassable to man, cannot be passed by Christ, or that He cannot bring the last prisoner safely back, even out of the lowest prison? As well might we argue that because

‘the Ethiopian cannot change his skin, or the leopard his spots,’ - because the evil man can never by his own act make himself good, - therefore God can never change him. The firstfruits are a proof of what God can do.”

I declare to you today that THE CHRIST HIMSELF CROSSED THAT ABYSS. There is the difference! You say that Abraham said, “Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they which would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us.” Let me remind you that, although Abraham said that, the Christ did not. That is right, Abraham; you could not bridge it! And even if you could, you did not have the keys to the gates. But the Christ crossed that Gulf, and HIS SALVATION BRIDGED IT. Christ bridged it! The Christ Himself IS THE BRIDGE! It is no use talking nonsense, saying that the Gulf was not bridged. It was not bridged at the time Jesus told that story, but when He arose and grasped the keys of death and of hell, He made a way for His banished to return. Granted, the Gulf still exists in the consciousness of the people, of both the rich man and Lazarus, but from Christ’s standpoint it is bridged so that even now “Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17).

It was bridged by Jesus Christ, and there is not any gulf that He cannot bridge. I believe it! If there is, then He is not God, because there is no gulf that God and His love cannot bridge. Jesus Christ has bridged the gulf between God and man, between Israelite and Gentile, between bond and free, between male and female, between rich and poor, and between heaven and hell. He has bridged all the gulfs, blessed be His name, and so “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). Thank God! a greater than Abraham is here! He bridges the gulf between heaven and earth and between earth and hell, for it is written, “That at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:10-11). Weymouth translates, “That in the name of Jesus

every knee should bow, of beings in the highest heavens, of those on the earth, and of THOSE IN THE UNDERWORLD, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Every knee, every tongue, every being certainly includes the rich man and Lazarus! The hymn writer captured the wonderful truth when he penned these immortal words:

Oh, the love that drew salvation’s plan!

Oh, the grace that brought it down to man!

Oh, the mighty GULF THAT GOD DID SPAN - at Calvary!

The Jewish nation has passed through a time of great darkness. They have had deep sorrow. But if we are sure that God’s Word has been fulfilled in scattering them among the nations, and blinding their hearts to the glory of Christ, the Messiah, we should have no hesitation in believing that at the conclusion of this age God will gather them, and lift the dark veil from off their minds, for the promise of the Almighty unto them is sure: “And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you shall call them to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord your God has driven you, and you shall return unto the Lord your God, and shall obey His voice ... you and your children, with all your heart, and with all your soul; then the Lord your God will return your captivity, and have compassion upon you, and will return and gather you from all the nations ... and He will do you good, and the Lord your God will CIRCUMCISE YOUR HEART, AND THE HEART OF YOUR SEED, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, that you may live” (Deut. 30:1-6).

The dark covering that has been cast over the minds and hearts of the people of Judah for lo! two thousand years will be completely destroyed when the sons of God reign in the Kingdom of their Father. We have not yet witnessed the

magnitude of ministry that shall be revealed through the manifested sons of God. God is preparing His perfected and matured body, anointed with the fullness of the seven-fold Spirit of God, and this enChristed company shall appear on the cosmic stage of history in these last days with ten thousand times more power than a Moses, a Joshua, a Samuel, a David, an Elijah, a Peter, a Paul, a St. Patrick, a Wesley, a Whitfield, a Finney, or any of the mighty ministries of this century. God has moved deeply upon my heart in these days to prophesy to God's elect that there is coming a great and glorious MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST before the face of all nations and the whole earth. There will be a fresh and universal and dispensational revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. It's going to come in the midst of a people who truly "love His appearing," and I see and hear signs that already He is beginning to come. We are standing on the threshold of a new and fresh and transcendental manifestation of the Lord. These things are burning like a furnace inside of me. I am being quickened by these things. I know God is on the move, and my deepest desire is to be a participator in this outflow of HIS LIFE that will usher in a new day for this sin-cursed planet. The Lord wants to reveal Himself in our midst in a new way, and through us to creation. I am asking God to unveil and manifest Himself to me in these days in a fuller way. Oh God! do a new thing!

To the same Jews in whose hearing Jesus gave the parable of the rich man and Lazarus He also said, "YOU shall not SEE ME henceforth, till you say, Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord" (Mat. 23:39). "Until" recalls the words of divine grace. He will not hide His face forever. He left their house unto them desolate, He dispersed them into the flame of hell, and hid His face, His presence, His favor, His glory - from them, "till" - not for ever, but "till you say, Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!" Again, "And they shall SEE the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Mat. 24:30). "Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall SEE Him" (Rev. 1:7). Every one who is a scholar knows that the words "see" and "know" are identical in their spiritual meaning. When I tell a brother something he did not see before, and I am trying to

get him to see it, all at once there passes over his face the illumination which indicates intelligence. He says, "Brother Preston, I see it!" What does he mean? He does not mean that he sees anything with the eye of flesh. He means that he "knows" it. I talk to a blind man who has no eyes to see at all. I explain something to him and presently he says, "Brother, I SEE it!" Does he see anything? No! But he KNOWS it. How many times in the day do you say, "I see it." Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall SEE GOD," yet no man has seen God at any time, the scripture affirms. Suppose I give you the meaning of this passage: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall KNOW God." It is better to know God than even to see Him by the eyes of sense. There are many who saw Jesus who did not know Him. They saw the Christ, but they knew not that He was the Christ. They saw His miracles, but they did not know Him. They even rejected Him and hated Him, many of them. It took the illumination that comes only by the effectual influence of the Holy Spirit to say with the Roman centurion, "Truly this was the Son of God." You could see Jesus Himself in bodily form today, but unless you had purity of heart you could not know Him to be the Christ. It is only purity of heart which gives purity of sight.

Yes, the hour is wonderfully near at hand when the words of Christ shall be finally fulfilled, "You shall not see Me henceforth, till you shall say, Blessed is HE that comes in the name of the Lord." The time is nigh when the Jewish nation shall behold with astonishment the matchless wonder of the Christ coming again to be "glorified IN HIS SAINTS, and to be admired IN all them that believe in that day" (II Thes. 1:10). The history of Jewish persecution at the hands of so-called Christians forms a significant part of the backdrop against which Jews have tended to perceive both Christ and Christians. The Christians they have known have, for the most part, been citizens and ambassadors of Mystery Babylon. They have not seen THE CHRIST. They have not beheld the love, wisdom or glory of God in His saints. Can we not see by this that when Jesus said, "You shall not see Me henceforth, till you shall say, Blessed is He that COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD," He spoke of the arising of a people

into the name or nature of the Lord to so become the revelation of HIMSELF to the house of Judah that they shall cry, "BLESSED IS HE THAT COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!" IN scripture "name" means "nature." Ah, methinks that the Jew has not for two thousand years SEEN THE NATURE OF THE LORD in His people! All creation, including the Jew, stands on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of God's sons coming into their own, a people fashioned into His image and likeness, showing forth the virtues and excellencies of our God. When at last they behold this their hearts shall be ravished with the revelation of HIS LOVE, God shall anoint their eyes with heavenly eye salve, the divine harmony of truth shall sound upon their hearts until their spirits are caught away to the mount of the Lord, and in that vision of the sons of God standing with the Lamb on mount Zion they shall say, "Blessed is HE that COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!" Blessed is that many-membered Christ that comes in the nature of the Lord. Blessed is He, the Christ, Head and body, the revelation of the likeness of the God of Israel.

Judah is being regathered in unbelief. They know not the Christ. No fruit has grown on the fig tree of their nation for a whole age. But now the hour is at hand for the curse to be lifted and Judah will accept the Christ and the whole nation and people will be born again in this day by the power of the Holy Spirit. The next great event of earth-shaking importance, following the manifestation of the sons of God, will be the national conversion of the Jews. Jesus Christ will soon reveal Himself to the Israeli people in and through the sons of God. The veil shall be lifted from their eyes and they shall SEE HIM IN HIS BODY and shall cry, "Blessed is HE that comes in the name (nature) of the Lord!" The hour is wonderfully nigh at hand when the word of the Lord by the prophet Zechariah is to be fulfilled, "And I will pour upon the house of David (Judah), and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the

inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness” (Zech. 12:10; 13:1).

The first step in this wondrous process here described is the descent of the Spirit upon them nationally, and first He comes upon them as a “spirit of grace,” to which they are “twice dead” - devoid of it by nature, but over and above this judicially graceless because of the curse of their awful sin in rejecting their Messiah and Saviour. But along with this He shall come as a “spirit of supplications,” leading them out of the depths to cry mightily unto God for mercy and light. Thank God! the long night is almost over. He who has the KEYS OF HELL is none other than the blessed Saviour. The age of curse and judgment is even now swiftly drawing to a close. And now, at last, “A-L-L Israel shall be saved” (Rom. 11:26). He who sent the rich man to hell, and put in place that ominous Gulf of separation from Abraham’s bosom, is the very same One of whom it is written, “For God has concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon ALL” (Rom. 11:32).

And now, my friend, you know the real TRUTH about the parable of the rich man and Lazarus!