Although Jesus Christ came to be the Savior for all men, He did not provide for salvation during His three and one-half year ministry. Christ’s atoning work was performed at Calvary. What, then, was the purpose then of the earthly teaching ministry of Christ? What did He minister, and to whom? Moreover, what relationship does this ministry have with the Body of Christ?

The answers to these questions are answered for us by Paul the apostle, in the book of Romans.

*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* (Romans 15:8).

**The BENEFACTORS of the Earthly Teaching Ministry of Jesus Christ**

The first thing that Paul reveals to us concerning the earthly teaching ministry of Jesus Christ is that it was clearly to the Circumcision.

The record of Scripture is quite clear that Christ “was a minister of the Circumcision” (Romans 15:8). Jesus Christ, while on earth, dealt exclusively with Israel (c.f. Matthew 10:5-6; 15:24; Romans 9:5; Ephesians 2:12).

Why was there this limitation in His earthly ministry? Because according to Romans chapter one, the Gentiles (or nations) had turned away from God and God had in turn given them up. At the time of Jesus Christ’s earthly ministry, God was in covenant relationship with Israel only. God’s plan was (and again one day will be) to reach Israel first, and then, through Israel’s instrumentality, reach the nations (Gentiles – see Mark 7:27; Isaiah 60:3).
The PURPOSE of the Earthly Teaching Ministry of Jesus Christ

The second thing that Paul reveals to us concerning Christ’s earthly teaching ministry was clearly one of confirmation.

The record of Scripture is again quite clear: the purpose of the earthly teaching ministry of Jesus Christ was to “to confirm the promises made unto the fathers” (Romans 15:8).

Christ did not come with a new message, but rather His teaching was one of confirming the promises of the Old Testament Scriptures (Matthew 5:17). We must remember that this backslidden nation was near to God by way of her covenants (Ephesians 2:12). Christ was calling these “lost sheep of the house of Israel” back into right relationship with himself through the Baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (Matthew 4:23; 10:7-8). John the Baptist introduced this ministry (Matthew 3:2-3; Mark 1:2-6).

The BEARING of the Earthly Teaching Ministry of Jesus Christ on the Body of Christ Today

There are certain things which are common in all dispensations. We may apply the earthly teaching ministry of Jesus Christ, just as we would any other teachings of the Old Testament. Yet just as with Old Testament teaching, we must always remember that while ALL Scripture is written FOR us, it is not all written TO us, nor is it all ABOUT us.

In the “Gospels” (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) Christ’s earthly teachings were TO Israel, just as in Paul’s letters (Romans – Philemon) Christ’s heavenly teaching ministry is TO the Body of Christ.

Christ in His heavenly ministry gave to Paul “the revelation of the mystery,” which is the foundation for truth in our day.

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more (II Corinthians 5:16).

If any man think himself to he … spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the LORD (I Corinthians 14:37).

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