



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Issue 13

Divine Acceptance

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved” (Ephesians 1:6).

One of the most amazing truths made known to the believer is his relationship with the Lord. It is often difficult to grasp that position and how we got there. There is nothing in us to warrant favor with God. The fleshly man has nothing with which to satisfy God, or earn any merit of righteousness.

What we must then consider is the relationship between the Son and the Father. God tells us that He is well pleased with His Son.

“And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17).

“While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him” (Matthew 17:5).

Acceptance Does Not Originate From Ourselves.

“... hath MADE us accepted...”

We were totally unworthy and had to be made acceptable before God. This was accomplished by being “... MADE the righteousness of God ...” (II Corinthians 5:21).

Acceptance Is Brought About By Grace.

“To the praise of the glory of HIS GRACE, WHEREIN He hath made us accepted ...”

Acceptance Is In The Person Of Jesus Christ.

“... accepted IN THE BELOVED.”

Acceptance Is The Action Of God.

“... hath made US accepted ...”

We are the ones accepted. God is doing the accepting.

How often we have heard the question, “Have you accepted Christ?” Is this a proper question? Is it scriptural?

We do not accept Him. It is the truth concerning His work that we accept (I Timothy 1:15; 4:9). As far as His person is concerned, it is God that has done the accepting. All we can do is to believe it and depend on it. How wonderful it is that we have a dependable God in Whom we can trust.

We are not asked to accept Him, but rather to trust our ACCEPTANCE IN HIM. We have no worth in ourselves. Our own righteousness can never clothe the nakedness which results from sin. We must be clothed with His righteousness. Then and only then can we be accepted in Him.

God does not NEED us to ACCEPT (favor, approve, etc.) His Son. He has ACCEPTED the Son. And when we hear Christ, upon the pages of His Book, and TRUST in His PERSON and WORK which was done on our behalf, WE FIND ACCEPTANCE BEFORE GOD – **IN HIM**. Truly we are the ones in need of ACCEPTANCE!

(continued on page 103)

Dear Members of His Body,

What a joy to know that we are eternally joined together to our Head, the Lord Jesus Christ! It is with the thought of the EXCEEDING RICHES of our Saviour's GRACE (Ephesians 2:7) that we send forth these greetings.

This is our FIFTH issue of the year! It looks as if we will be able to reach our goal of six. Be assured that this is because of some VERY faithful saints here in the local ministry. MANY COUNTLESS hours of work are placed into each issue of this small paper. The BSN is TRULY a TEAM effort!

The last issue was actually prepared (collated, folded, stapled and hole punched) and mailed (addressed, sorted and taken to the Post Office) in my absence. I returned from the Bible Conference of the Grace School of the Bible to find the work all done. I might add that all the BSN was assembled, as always, by hand. The only equipment that we have to produce the BSN is a computer system and offset press. I offer special thanksgiving to God for the PRIVILEGE to serve with these dear saints.

Exciting developments continue around the ministry here. We look forward to sharing some specifics in the editorial of the next issue. Until then, I remain, because of HIS justification...

One of the "RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS,"



Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.
II Corinthians 4:5
09/1992

Bible Student's Notebook

This biweekly publication (24 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7)
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11)
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25)
- true freedom and liberty apart from the law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12)
- the distinct ministry of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13)
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15)
- the recovery of *rich* Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13).
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with ...
 - total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14)
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6)
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4)

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "Movement," "Organization," "Mission," or separate body of believers, but is sent forth to and for all "saints."

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PATRIARCHS

Remember that it is our responsibility as husbands and fathers to take the truths we learn from God's Word, the truths that we hold dear, and impart them to our families.

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Bible Usage of Acceptance

Frequency

The word accept (accepted, acceptest, accepteth, accepting, etc.) is found 87 times in the Bible. Well over half of these references have to do with God accepting (or not accepting) man, his work, his praise, his prayers, etc., but especially his SACRIFICES.

Hebrew

Seventy percent of the time that this word appears, it is in the “Old Testament” and the two major Hebrew words used to translate it are “nasa” and “ratsah” (or “ratson”). The former word means “to lift up” and is translated in several different ways. Two of the translations are significant - “pardon” and “forgive.” The latter word, “ratsah,” means “good pleasure,” “delight” or “favor.” Strong says that this word is in specific relation to satisfying a debt and is therefore translated in other places as “pardon” and “reconcile.”

English

Even in the English, we see such definitions as: “to receive with approbation or favor,” “In theology, acceptance with God implies forgiveness of sins and reception into His favor,” and “satisfaction” (Webster).

“Old Testament” Usage

Let us look together at some of the “Old Testament” usage of acceptance. Only a portion of some verses is given for the sake of space. The reader is encouraged to read the passages in their context.

“And it shall be upon Aaron’s forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that THEY may be ACCEPTED before the LORD” (Exodus 28:38).

“And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be ACCEPTED FOR HIM to make ATONEMENT for him.” (Leviticus 1:4).

“... The LORD thy God ACCEPT THEE” (II Samuel 24:23).

“... The LORD also ACCEPTED Job” (Job 42:9).

“For in mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me: there will I ACCEPT THEM, and there will I require your offerings, and the firstfruits of your oblations, with all your holy things. I WILL ACCEPT YOU with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen” (Ezekiel 20:40, 41).

“... I will ACCEPT YOU, saith the Lord GOD” (Ezekiel 43:27).

Paul’s Usage

It is beneficial for the believer to observe carefully Paul’s doctrinal teaching of acceptance. We will find that the issue is God’s acceptance of us (and our work after salvation), not our acceptance of Him – Romans 12:1, 2; 14:18; 15:16; II Corinthians 5:9; Ephesians 1:6; 5:10; Philippians 4:18; I Timothy 2:3; 5:14.

Doctrine of Acceptance Applied

Now, we would be careful that we do not take any glory and honor from the Lord and appropriate it to ourselves. We would not substitute any of our empty and worthless works for the perfect and finished work He has done. We would let Him have the glory and honor He so richly deserves.

We do not mean to strive about the words used. But we do know the pride of the flesh, the natural man. We dare not give this pride any foothold in any way whatsoever. So, let us think before we speak, not in any way allowing the flesh to boast of any work whatsoever. Let us not take to ourselves, that which belongs to God. Let us not take to ourselves any of the prerogatives and glory that belong to God alone.

We never find in our search of the Scriptures anyone invited to accept Christ. The appeal is for simple TRUST in He Who gives us acceptance before God the Father.

This is only one of many terms which we carelessly use today in the presentation of the glorious gospel of the Grace of God. Let us learn to trust His terminology as best and not try to present the gospel in a “better” way. We are assured that it cannot be improved upon.

Acceptance Is To Be Enjoyed By The Believer.

It is the privilege of every believer to be consciously in the favor of God – to be in the unclouded knowledge and joy of acceptance. But, alas! many are not in the enjoyment of this privilege. It may be helpful to consider briefly why not.

That which hinders saved persons from having the knowledge and joy of acceptance may be classified under three headings: 1. Self-Righteousness, 2. Self-Improvement, and 3. Self-Occupation.

Self-Righteousness

When we speak of Self-Righteousness in this connection we do not mean the proud self-righteousness of the unsaved man. We refer to a very different form of self-righteousness which leads many to doubt their acceptance with God because of imperfections which they find in themselves. You may say, “But shouldn’t I have misgivings when I find my spirit and state of mind so contrary to that which befits a Christian?” We must understand that your righteousness and acceptance with God in no way depends upon yourself. They are measured by your condition or conduct. To have such thoughts is to suppose that you could be in the favor of God by being worthy of that favor in yourself. It is simply self-righteousness.

Then souls reason in this way: “Surely if I were saved I would be very different. There must be a great change in one who is saved. And if I had the Spirit of God, He would help me to gain the victory over evil habits. I would have victory over the lusts and temptations of the flesh. I would be pleasing to God. But instead of this more temptations seem to come in my way than ever before. And the evil tendencies of my heart seem to have gained greater strength. I have never felt more unworthy of God’s favor and acceptance.” It is not always easy to see that self-righteousness is hidden under all this, yet such is the case. There is the thought that, either by our own efforts, or by God’s grace and the help of His Spirit, we should become in ourselves suitable to God’s favor; and we are disappointed and distressed to find that we make so little progress in this direction.

It is important to know that the effect of salvation is not to bring about some change in us on which we could rest, but to convince us of the impossibility of finding righteousness, or suitability to the favor of God, in ourselves. An unsaved man may think himself worthy

of God’s favor, but every saved person is made conscious of utter unfitness in himself for that favor. The awakened soul gives account in such language as, “I have sinned”; “I am undone”; “I am vile”; “I abhor myself.” Indeed, it is common for such to suppose that since they trusted in God the evil tendencies of their hearts had increased rather than otherwise. Before salvation we went with the stream, and not a ripple hindered our progress; but when, by grace, we went against the current, we began to feel its force, and to be distressed by it, as never before.

Now we should like to bring two circles before your consideration – a circle of darkness and a circle of light – each having for its center the Lord Jesus. The thought of the first is presented to us in the solemn words, “Jesus our Lord ... Who was delivered for our offenses,” (Romans 4:24, 25). Here we are brought to view a circle filled with everything that was due to us. Our sins, with all their righteous consequences, are there; the holy judgment of God is there; death is there. Everything attached to us in our responsibility as creatures of Adam’s race was taken account of at Calvary. And we see Jesus our Lord – the Holy One of God – in the midst of the circle of darkness, having taken upon Himself by the will of God to remove everything that made us liable to divine judgment. None could do it but Himself, and He has done it, that He might bring divine love to us. Well may we adore His sacred Name forever!

Thank God! the darkness of the cross is forever past, and now as we look there we see glory and love. We see the glory of God there; all that He is in majesty, truth and holiness, is fully declared there; and yet there is the most blessed manifestation of His love. Where sin seemed to prevail the glory of redemption is shed.

Now a new scene opens, as we read, He was “raised again for our justification,” (Romans 4:25). An Old Testament saint might stand on a mountain-top, and seeing the landscape blotted out as a dense cloud from the sea rolled over it, might think of the words, “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins,” (Isaiah 44:22). As he looked into the distances of space he would be reminded that, “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us,” (Psalm 103:12). He could hardly catch a glimpse of the gleaming snows of Lebanon without thinking, “*Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow,*” (Isaiah 1:18). But for the believer now all these material figures give

place to a living Person – a Person in spotless suitability to that new world which He has entered as raised from the dead. Jesus our Lord has been “*raised again for our justification.*” The believer is cleared before God of everything attached to him in his ruined responsibility in this world. He is cleared in view of another world, for the Risen Savior is the measure of his justification. Christ Risen is his righteousness. The understanding of this by faith gives peace with God, for we read, “*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*” (Romans 5:1).

Then a further blessing is brought before us by the words, “*By Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand,*” (Romans 5:2). No believer would question that the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Risen Man is in unclouded favor with God. If He was the Center of a circle of darkness upon the cross, He is now the Center of a Circle of Light.

How rightly and gloriously does all the light of God’s favor shine upon Him! It could not be otherwise. The Son of God - the Glorifier of God – the One Who by Himself purged our sins – is unquestionably in the cloudless light of God’s favor. “*This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.*” Let the believer’s heart take in this blessed fact in all its reality and greatness. Let him be divinely assured that he stands in this same favor. A place in that circle of light has been secured by divine grace, and in divine righteousness, for *every* believer. And it is “by faith” that we appropriate our place in that circle of light, and have “access” into this favor.

It is a wonderful moment when by faith, we appropriate our standing in the favor of God – when we know that we are received by God in all the acceptance of Christ. We do not then think of ourselves, or of our worthiness, at all. We think of CHRIST. We think of His perfection, His suitability to divine favor, His infinite acceptance with God. And by faith, we have access into this grace (favor) of which He alone is so worthy.

Self-Improvement

A second hindrance is that many have not given up the thoughts of Self-Improvement, and this robs them of the joys of acceptance. They know that Christ is their righteousness, and they wish to answer to the amazing grace which has come to them; but they cannot bring themselves up to their ideal of what a Christian ought

to be. Hence a painful sense of defect is present with them; they are self-condemned in so many points that their enjoyment of divine favor is clouded.

We do not wish to be misunderstood: self-disappointment is very different from self-judgment. Indeed, if there were true self-judgment, there would never be self-disappointment. If in honesty and sobriety we have judged “*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing,*” (Romans 7:18), we shall certainly not expect anything from ourselves, and where there is no expectation there is no disappointment. But we feel sure that many young believers, and we dare say some old ones too, are very familiar with the wretched and depressing experience which we have spoken of as self-disappointment. They have made many fresh starts; they have often been stirred, and have made up their minds to be more for Christ; they have thought, “I shall do better now; I am more earnest about it than I was before;” but it has all ended in disappointment. They have no idea that they are trying to improve themselves; they would deny such a thought. They suppose that they know better than to look for good in themselves. Yet their disappointment is the plain proof that, in spite of all their knowledge of Scripture, they have expected to make themselves different, for they are disappointed because they have not done so.

Let me use a simple illustration. Suppose your neighbor had a heap of rubbish in his garden, and you saw him turning it over very diligently every day, and constantly coming away looking very disappointed. You would be sure that he had expected to find something that was worth the search. One day you ask him over the heap if there is anything valuable in it. “Oh, no,” he says; “it is only rubbish, of no value to me or anybody else.” But the next day you see him turning it over again, and looking as disappointed as ever. This occurs day after day for weeks. You would think, “Whatever that man says, it is evident he has not given up the expectation of finding something there.”

Many believers are like this. They say there is no good in themselves, and they don’t expect to find any; but, nevertheless, they suffer a good deal of self-disappointment from time to time, and this proves that they have not really given up the thought of self-improvement. It is strange that we should be so foolish, in the light of Scripture, and after all the experience we have had.

Jesus Christ said “*It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life*” (John 6:63). This

is why Paul could make such a statement as "... *We ... worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have **no confidence** in the flesh*" (Philippians 3:3).

Let me carry my illustration a little further. One day you see your neighbor applying a lighted match to the heap of rubbish, and then standing by until it is all consumed. You make some remark about it. He replies, "I can see now what a fool I have been in wasting so much time over the rubbish-heap. The owner of the garden knew all about it, and he told me it was nothing but rubbish, and I proved it to be so every time I turned it over. And yet I must have had an idea there was something good in it, because I was so disappointed to find nothing but rubbish. Now I am glad it is all burned, and I shall waste no more time over it." You can see now that he not only says it is rubbish, but he has really judged it to be such, and has given it up as perfectly worthless.

God has judged the flesh completely in the death of Christ. "*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him,*" (Romans 6:6). Before God our whole condition and standing as in Adam has come under judgment and is over. The heap of rubbish is burned; it is cleared away absolutely. But there is a need that we should reach in the same conclusion as God: that we should realize the need for complete removal of everything that we are in the flesh. We should rejoice to be rid of it by the death of Christ. If we are drawn into the company of Christ it is as one who lives because He lives, as one associated with Him in life. We take account of ourselves as being "alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord," (Romans 6:11). It is thus that we are in conscious suitability to divine light and love. We are in spirit apart from all the imperfection that attaches to us as in Adam; we do not look for, or desire, any improvement of that state; we recognize it as wholly condemned.

"In Whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, Who hath raised Him from the dead" (Colossians 2:11, 12).

Oh, how our hearts are attracted by the perfection and blessedness of that new standing. We are found absolutely suitable to all the thoughts and love of God. Only ONE MAN is found having this standing naturally. The Spirit of God delights to make that MAN attractive to us,

to lead our hearts into the immeasurable satisfaction and good pleasure which God has found in Him. Thus He forms in our affections the appreciation of that in which life to God really consists. It is perfectly disclosed in Christ Jesus; our souls learn it adoringly in Him, and thus learning it we are formed in it. We believe if we are responsive to the Spirit of God, He will confirm us in utter and unreserved self-judgment, but He will lead our hearts into the blessedness of that which is infinitely acceptable to God, as it is found in completeness and perfection in Christ Jesus. And He will lead us into this, not as an unattainable ideal, but as that in which we live to God. He is the "*Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,*" (Romans 8:2), and He would form us in knowledge and appreciation of that which alone is life to God, as set forth in Him, that we might be consciously "in Christ Jesus." Our old standing in Adam is only for us, as it is for God, a condemned thing. We live to God as "in Christ Jesus." "*And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him,*" (Colossians 3:10).

Self-Occupation

I am sure that this underlines the hindrances which we have already looked at, but there are forms of self-occupation which perhaps hardly fall under the other two previous heads, and yet are a withering blight upon the joy of Acceptance. There are three kinds of self-occupation with which we will deal: 1. Experience, 2. Service, 3. Physical weakness.

Self-occupation with Experience:

We never knew a soul much occupied with experience that did not end in making self a great object of consideration. Some minds are not seeking an increased knowledge of the grace of God, or deepened acquaintance with Christ; their object of desire is to have a more satisfactory experience. That is, self is still their center. And such souls are constantly occupied either in bemoaning how little they have got or in complacency assuming that they have reached a certain stage of experience. Even the focus upon Christ is that He is one Who can bring about a new experience in the believer. The experience receives a more prominent place in the mind than Christ

No standard of experience, however exalted, and no goal of attainment, however advanced, could possibly come up to the sonship which we have in Christ. Whatever your ideal may be, the purpose of God's adoption eclipses it. Your standard of perfection dims

and fades before the glorious light of this divine purpose. Indeed, there is but one Person in Whom you can learn the exceeding greatness and blessedness of your place, and that is the Son of God.

You will find that when souls are occupied with experience – whether holiness, power for service, or spiritual attainment – they always have something before them less than the purpose of God. They are either pursuing, or are satisfied with, something less than that which divine love proposed. Thus they are losers to an incalculable extent. It is when the purpose of God in its greatness is before our hearts, and we are mightily attracted by it, that our experience becomes like that of the beloved servant (Paul) who could say, *“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,”* (Philippians 3:12-14).

Self-Occupation with Service:

It is sad when service interferes with soul prosperity. Service may take possession of the heart until it becomes the theme of conversation, the subject-matter of correspondence, and the center round which the thoughts continually revolve. It is possible to be so engrossed with service that meditation is colored by it, prayer is full of it, and the Word of God becomes simply a quarry out of which material for sermons and addresses on service can be found. This is a serious loss to the soul, and many are thereby hindered from making spiritual progress. Very often young believers are encouraged to take up service, and they become so occupied with what they are doing that they are not at leisure to learn or take their place in the favor of God. Hence, so long as the service prospers, and they get on pretty well with it, they are happy. The service is their life. But when there is no success, and it all seems a failure, their joy collapses, and they have to discover how little they really got. They often find that they are perfect strangers to the liberty and joy of acceptance.

I am sure that God values greater the believer's enjoyment of peace with Him, the knowledge of His favor, and the acceptance of sonship, than that our service of preaching, teaching, or giving away tracts. We do

not mean to undervalue service, and we thank God for every true servant, but we are sure that the first thing in the mind of God is to bring us to Himself - into the enjoyment of His favor. Anything which occupies us so we are diverted from this, is a hindrance, even if it is apparently so excellent as service.

Self-Occupation Induced by Physical Weakness:

Believers with weakly bodies are in special danger of becoming very self-centered. Their condition and circumstances tend to make them very much objects of consideration to themselves. There may be need for great care, for special diet and treatment, and this very often turns to self-occupation, and the soul's spiritual joy declines. We dare say some readers have no difficulty in recognizing the symptoms of this baneful malady. You would like to know if there is a cure for it. Well, we believe there is. The remedy for this self-occupation is to know the love and support of Christ. In nearness to Himself, through His Word, we enjoy His love, and are assured of His support, and the moment our hearts come consciously into the circle of His love self is no longer the center. We are to be sustained by the joy of God's favor.

It is thus, as having *“access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God”* (Romans 5:2), as being *“alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Romans 6:11), as being armed with the mind to suffer in the flesh, and as delivered from self-occupation of every kind, that we may know what it is, not only to be clear about the doctrine, but to be in the joy of acceptance. God would have us enjoy His favor, which is better than life.

CONCLUSION

We are accepted by God in view of the fact that what Christ did was acceptable to Him. When Christ died for our sins that was all that God required for sin's payment. Now we are brought into His presence by Jesus Christ, God's Son and made acceptable before Him.

“He hath MADE US ACCEPTED IN THE BE-LOVED” (Ephesians 1:6).

(The section entitled “Acceptance is to be Enjoyed by the Believer” and following have been taken from the writings of C.A. Coates, edited and revised.) ■

What?

What Do You Mean Another Gospel?

by – Elvis Williams

The “another gospel” of Galatians 1:6-9 would be most confusing without the right division of God’s Word. Paul states to the Galatians *“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto **another gospel**: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.”* There were those who were perverting the gospel by trying to put the **free** Galatians back under the law. This can be seen by studying the entire book of Galatians, where Paul taught that they were made free from the law and were now **full grown** sons of God. In Galatians chapter four, Paul tells them that *“... when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons”* (vs. 4, 5).

In II Corinthians 11:4, Paul warns against any that would come preaching **another Jesus**. Here is not only **another gospel**, but **another Jesus**. In Galatians Paul said let him who would do this be accursed. In II Corinthians Paul said that they were being *“corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ”* (11:3).

What is Paul doing when he refers to **another gospel** and **another Jesus**? The answer is:

1. Paul preached the gospel of the grace of God, committed to him by the **resurrected glorified** Lord Jesus **from heaven**; who gave unto Paul the **revelation of the mystery** to the Gentiles. This message had been **hid** from the foundation of the world (Ephesians 3:8-10).

2. Peter and the Eleven preached the gospel of the **kingdom of heaven** which had been **plainly spoken** for many years and announced to be at hand (Matthew 4:17-23; 10:5-8; 19:28). This was offered to Israel as a **nation** in the book of Acts (1:6-7; and chapters 2, 3 and 7).

3. The **other Jesus** and **other gospel** would then be Jesus in another **aspect**. Jesus as He walked the earth, and ministered to an earthly people, Israel; but not as He appeared to Paul from heaven. The Holy Spirit made this very plain when He spoke through Paul in II Corinthians 5:16: *“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.”* If we will be honest with ourselves and take God at His Word, the Bible plainly teaches that there is a vast difference between the message of the coming kingdom announced to be at hand in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and the message of Paul the apostle.

Paul’s gospel was the good news of the **free gift** of the grace of God revealed to him by Jesus **from heaven**. The first and second chapters of Galatians makes this very clear. Let’s not try to claim the promises and blessings given to Israel under the gospel of the coming kingdom, but enjoy our position in the heavenly places **in Christ Jesus** (Ephesians 1:3). If this tract has been a help to you, we would like to hear from you. ■