

When the apostle Paul preached the good news concerning Christ and His kingdom, at Ephesus, his ministry continued there for the space of two years (Acts 19:10). We read that the Word of God grew mightily and prevailed, and that "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus."

However, at the close of his ministry, and of his life, he writes his last letter to Timothy and says;

2Ti 1:15 This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me....

While Paul was writing his last letter, believers were being persecuted for Christ; they were dying for The Lord but "turning away" from Pauline truth and teaching.

Everyone tells us that we must go back to the first three centuries to find the purity of faith and worship of the primitive church.

But it is clear from this comparison of Acts 19:10 & 2 Tim. 1:15 that we cannot go back to the first century. No, not even to the apostle's own lifetime.

This turning away could not have been merely personal; but must have included his teaching also, for in 2Tim.2:18, he speaks of those "who concerning the truth have erred." In chapter 3:8, he speaks of those who "resist the truth." In chapter 4:4, he speaks of those who "turn away their ears from the truth" and are "turned unto fables." Not descriptions of the unregenerate, but Christians leaving the "form of sound words" found with Paul.

It was this turning away from truth as taught by the Holy Spirit through Paul, especially as contained in the letter to the Ephesians, that led necessarily;

1. To the loss of teaching concerning The Mystery; that truth concerning the One Body of Christ given only to Paul after Israel were set aside at the end of Acts. The effect of this was at once to put everything wrong ecclesiastically, and to make room for all the various and different "Bodies," so-called, with all the consequent divisions and schisms of the church.

Instead of recognizing "the One Body" which God had made, men set about making their own *denominations* and with this ecclesiastical confusion came the loss of the truth as to the Christian's perfect standing in Christ as having died and risen with Him. Also lost was the understanding of the difference of gifts that existed during the Acts period (AD 29-70), when Israel was still God's channel, and those given after to the church. Compare 1 Cor. 12 & Eph.4.

2. Also lost was the truth as to what God had made us to be in Christ; and "justification by faith" and by grace was lost. The way was now open for the full tide of error to come in: and in it came, like a flood, with all the corruption and superstition which ended in the centuries described as "the dark ages." And all this after the light of the world had come.

Everyone is familiar with the term, and with the fact. But what were the dark ages? How did they come about? They were not brought on suddenly by some untoward event. There must have been some cause, something that made them possible. The corruption is historical. The Eastern churches today are in similar darkness. And the Western churches, where the reformation has not removed it, are in the same darkness.

The Reformation was the beginning of the recovery of these great truths? The remarkable fact is that the recovery of these truths has taken place in the *reverse order*, and we remind the reader that it was not the gospels which brought Christianity out of 1400 years of darkness. It was Paul's letters.

Justification by grace through faith was the first great truth recovered at The Reformation. This was the truth over which that great battle was fought and won.

Not long after justification by faith was recovered, some Christians began to notice the special dispensational truth taught in Ephesians and Colossians. The Mystery truth is revealed in these two letters of Paul written after Israel was put aside at Acts 28.

The truth of the Mystery, as it was the first to go, so, it seems, is the last to be recovered.

We appeal to all lovers of Bible truth to look once again at the unique writings of Paul in the two letters just mentioned. A close study of Ephesians chapter 3 is particularly encouraged.

We need to ask again the question, "Was Paul the apostle chosen by the risen Christ to reveal a *special phase* of the purpose of God to us Gentiles?" And if he was, to ask, "What was that *special Phase*?"

The cause of all the confusion around is that thousands, who confess to be Christians, know little or nothing of the message which comes through the post Acts Pauline letters relating to the "One Body" Church. Imagine trying to enter any earthly vocation without first showing competence in the duties and responsibilities of that employment. Yet millions of Christians, who claim to be members of the Body of Christ, cling to the dispensational aspects of the Gospels or the Acts period, trying desperately to please God by following rules and regulations which do not apply today.

We must "rightly divide the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15) if we are to be unashamed.

Faith and love are characteristics which apply to all of God's callings, but other aspects may change, for example, there are different promises & hopes made to different parts of His family, these need to be carefully examined. Being faithful to the calling which is The Church His Body, may go well beyond The Lord's prayer, the creeds, and the Ten Commandments. The Sermon on the Mount may not be the essence of Body truth since Christ's ministry was to Israel. Romans 15:8.

May The Lord use this pamphlet to help bring back these vital dispensational truths and that their power may be seen in the lives of an increasing number of Christians, delivering them from all the variable winds of doctrine and the cunning craftiness of deception.

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