

SEVEN WONDERS OF THE WORD



by Bruce Woolard



EPILOGUE: THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY

Our final Wonder of the Word is one of the most overlooked and neglected truths in Christendom. The following is an overview:

HISTORIC RECORD – PROPHESIED KINGDOM

The Old Testament records the history of Israel and how the nation morphed into the religion of Judaism. Much that is said in the Old Testament is in anticipation of the arrival of the Messiah. The promise of a utopian society under the rulership of the Messiah would usher in God's Kingdom on earth and the King would reign from Jerusalem. The nation would become a nation of princes and priests and goodwill and peace would follow. (Israel means "prince with God and man")

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy"

1 Peter 2:9-10

The Old Testament prophecies pronounced this period of equity and justice

"Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel." Exodus 19:5-6

THE RECORD OF THE GOSPELS – PROCLAIMED KINGDOM

It is evident to the casual reader of the Bible that the birth of Jesus and the announcement of the heavenly messengers heralded the arrival of the Messiah.

"Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

Luke 2:10-14

GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

John the Baptist, as the Messiah's forerunner, preached the Kingdom Gospel – **Matthew 3:1-2** - and called on the nation to demonstrate their acceptance of the Kingdom by being baptized in preparation for service. This baptism or washing was a Mosaic requirement and initiation of priests commencing their priesthood.

"Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle of meeting and wash them with water. You shall put the holy garments on Aaron, and anoint him and consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest." Exodus 40:12-13

Priests had to be at least 30 years of age.

"Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 'Take a census of the sons of Kohath from among the children of Levi, by their families, by their fathers' house, from thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, all who enter the service to do the work in the tabernacle of meeting.'" Numbers 4:1-3

JESUS' BAPTISM

When Jesus was 30, he was baptised. Why? He identified Himself with the priesthood, to meet the requirements of the Law, to fulfil righteousness.

"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?' But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness.'" Then he allowed Him. Matthew 3:13-15

JESUS' EARTHLY MINISTRY

Jesus called the 12 apostles to preach the Kingdom.

"And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give." Matthew 10:7-8

The signs of the coming Kingdom were manifest through healings and miracles, but note in the preceding verses, Jesus commanded them to preach this Gospel only to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (**verses 5-6**). Why? Because the Kingdom was being proclaimed and Israel, the peculiar (called out) nation, had to repent and prepare to become priests and kings under the Kingship of Christ.

"These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: 'Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'" Matthew 10:5-6

A WITNESS TO NATIONS

This Gospel of the Kingdom would ultimately be preached to all nations.

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come." Matthew 24:14

What was the Gospel of the Kingdom? That Jesus was the Messiah and that Israel would become a nation of nations, winning all Gentile nations for Christ. The commission of **Matthew 28:19-20** is an extension of this proclamation.

PENTECOST GOSPEL

What Gospel or good news did Peter and the Apostles deliver at Pentecost and in the days that followed?

“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before.”
Acts 3:19-20

There it is! If Israel repented, Jews would return and the Kingdom promised to Israel would come. Note that this message of the Kingdom was designed to reach the Jew first – **Acts 3:24-26**.

REJECTION OF THE KINGDOM

Instead of accepting the Kingdom, only a remnant of Israel repented and the rest were made blind to the promise. Only the elected remnant accepted.

“I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, “LORD, THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS AND TORN DOWN YOUR ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY SEEK MY LIFE”? **Romans 11:1-3**

“What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded.” **Romans 11:7**

So we see that Israel to this day remains blinded to the reality of God’s promise – **Romans 11:25-26**. God will one day restore ethnic Israel and make her a leader of nations.

MY GOSPEL

The mystery of Israel’s inability to recognise the Gospel of the Kingdom’s significance, in terms of their peace as a nation, was revealed to Paul the Apostle – **Romans 16:2-5**. Paul refers to “My Gospel”. Why? Because the Gospel he was called to preach was the Gospel of Grace revealed to him which includes Jews and Gentiles in one body, the Body of Christ.

That He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.
Ephesians 2:16

THE MYSTERY - MUSTERION

Paul preached Christ to the Jews first – **Romans 1:16** – entering their synagogues and trying to convince them that Christ Jesus was the Messiah. The rejection of the message by the Jews did not deter Paul from preaching to the Gentiles, salvation through God’s Grace independent of the Jews and ordinances.

“So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.” **Colossians 2:16-17**

The writings of Paul contain the Mystery revealed by Christ to Paul from heaven.

BODY OF CHRIST

Paul is the only New Testament writer that employs the term “Body of Christ.” His early letters i.e. Galatians, Corinthians and Romans contain a partial revelation and make up the transition from Israel’s hope and message to the Christian’s message and hope. Israel’s hope was the coming Kingdom whereas the Church’s hope is the rapture.

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

1 Corinthians 13:11 uses the metaphor of a child growing to adulthood. The transitional period of the 1st century church was the infant “phase” because the complete or perfect revelation (complete Scriptures) had yet not been given by Christ to Paul. When the “perfect” is come then the imperfect or incomplete revelation reaches full maturity. The latter letters of Paul reveals this perfection.

UNITY OF THE BODY

Ephesians 4:1-7 gives the **SEVEN FOLD** unity of the church.

“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.”

FINAL WORD

Ephesians 4:13-14 declares the need to receive this fullness so that we no longer remain children in the faith, but mature into spiritual adults.

“Till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—

Ephesians 4:13-15

Remember all Scripture is **for** us but not all Scripture is **to** us:

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,” 2 Timothy 3:16.